GOVERNING POST-IMPERIAL SIBERIA AND MONGOLIA, 1911–1924

Buddhism, socialism, and nationalism in state and autonomy building

Ivan Sablin

ROUTLEDGE

Governing Post-Imperial Siberia and Mongolia, 1911–1924

The governance arrangements put in place for Siberia and Mongolia after the collapse of the Qing and Russian empires were highly unusual, experimental, and extremely interesting. The Buryat-Mongol Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic established within the Soviet Union in 1923 and the independent Mongolian People's Republic established a year later were supposed to represent a new model of transnational, post-national governance, incorporating religious and ethno-national independence, under the leadership of the coming global political party, the Communist International. The model, designed to be suitable for a socialist, decolonized Asia, and for a highly diverse population in a strategic border region, was intended to be globally applicable. This book, based on extensive original research, charts the development of these unusual governance arrangements, discusses how the ideologies of nationalism, socialism, and Buddhism were borrowed from, and highlights the relevance of the subject for the present day world, where multiculturality, interconnectedness, and interdependency become ever more complicated.

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Note on transliteration, dates, and maps

Bibliographic entries, unconventional terms, and personal names in Russian, Buryat, and Mongolian were transliterated from Cyrillic into Latin characters using the International Organization for Standardization standard ISO 9 due to its univocal system of representation. Chinese characters were transcribed using Pinyin without tone marks. Rōmaji was used for the Romanization of Japanese. The Gregorian calendar was used for dates after February 14, 1918, and the Julian calendar for earlier events related to the Russian Empire. In some sources the relevant calendar could not be determined. The Asia North Equidistant Conic Projection was used for the maps.

Abbreviations

AEF	American Expeditionary Forces
AMBR	Autonomous Mongol-Buryat Region (Buryat-Mongol Autonomous Region) of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic
BMAR	Buryat-Mongol Autonomous Region of the Far Eastern Republic
BMASSR	Buryat-Mongol Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic
Burceka	Central Committee of the Buryat-Mongols of Eastern Siberia
Burmonavtoupr	Administration of the Buryat-Mongol Autonomous Region of the Far Eastern Republic
Burnackom	Central Buryat National Committee
Burnarduma	People's Duma of the Buryats of Eastern Siberia
Burnarrevkom	All-Buryat People's Revolutionary Committee
Burrevkom	Revolutionary Committee of the Buryat-Mongol Autonomous Region of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic
Centrosibir'	Central Executive Committee of Siberian Soviets
CER	Chinese Eastern Railway
Comintern	Communist International
Dal'bûro	Far Eastern Bureau of the RCP(b), later the Far Eastern Bureau of the Central Committee of the RCP(b)
Dal'revkom	Far Eastern Revolutionary Committee
FER	Far Eastern Republic
GARB	Gosudarstvennyj arhiv Respubliki Burâtiâ, State Archive of the Republic of Buryatia
GARF	Gosudarstvennyj arhiv Rossijskoj Federacii, State Archive of the Russian Federation
JACAR	Japan Center for Asian Historical Records
Komsomol	Russian Young Communist League
MPP	Mongolian People's Party
MPR	Mongolian People's Republic
MPRP	Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party
Narkomnac	People's Commissariat of Nationalities
NKID	People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs

Politbûro	Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the RCP(b)
POW	prisoner of war
RCP(b)	Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks)
rev.	reverse
Revvoensovet	Revolutionary Military Council
RGASPI	Rossijskij gosudarstvennyj arhiv social'no-političeskoj istorii, Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History
RGVA	Rossijskij gosudarstvennyj voennyj arhiv, Russian State Military Archive
RRSC	Russian Railway Service Corps
RSDLP	Russian Socialist Democratic Labor Party
RSFSR	Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic
Sekvostnar	Section of the Eastern Peoples
Sibbûro	Siberian Bureau of the Central Committee of the RCP(b)
Sibrevkom	Siberian Revolutionary Committee
Sovnarkom	Council of People's Commissars
SR	Socialist Revolutionaries
USNA	United States National Archives
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VCIK	All-Russian Central Executive Committee

Introduction

The fall of the Qing and Russian empires in the early twentieth century resulted in economic and political turmoil throughout Eurasia, quest for restructuring social organizations, and formation of new political entities. Between 1911 and 1924 several independence and autonomy projects were developed and implemented in the areas populated by Mongolic peoples in North and East Asia ultimately leading to the establishment of the Buryat-Mongol Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic (BMASSR) within the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic (RSFSR) of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and independent Mongolian People's Republic (MPR) which introduced new boundaries to Asia's post-imperial spaces.

The study covers the period between the collapse of the Qing Empire in 1911 and the creation of the MPR in 1924 and focuses on the northern part of the former imperial borderland, the area around Lake Baikal, where most of the new state and autonomy projects were developed. Some of the events which were crucial for the topic took place in Urga (Khüree; Ulaanbaatar after 1924), Vladivostok, Harbin, Saint Petersburg (Petrograd in 1914–1924; Leningrad in 1924–1991), Omsk, Moscow, Beijing, Tokyo, Paris, Lhasa, and elsewhere.

The Baikal region (Figure I.1) (Pereselenčeskoe upravlenie 1914a; W. & A. K. Johnston 1912) had long been a zone of dynamic interactions between various European, Asian, and Eurasian actors. Its entangled social environment had been shaped by the movement of people and transfer of ideas and material objects. Politically active exiles, Christian missionaries, Buddhist monks and scholars, Siberian and Mongolian shamans, Asian and European settlers, merchants, explorers, diplomats, and soldiers came to the region with their beliefs, knowledge, values, practices, and goods, whereas people of various ethnic, religious, and social backgrounds born there traveled to other places in Eurasia and beyond. The Baikal region had long played a major role in the political and economic topologies of the Russian Empire securing its control over Siberia, the Russian Far East, and even Alaska, granting access to Mongolia and Manchuria, and connecting Europe with East Asian and American markets.

The creation of the BMASSR in 1923 and MPR a year later was supposed to provide the Bolsheviks with effective control over the strategic border region between the recently collapsed empires and demonstrate a globally applicable

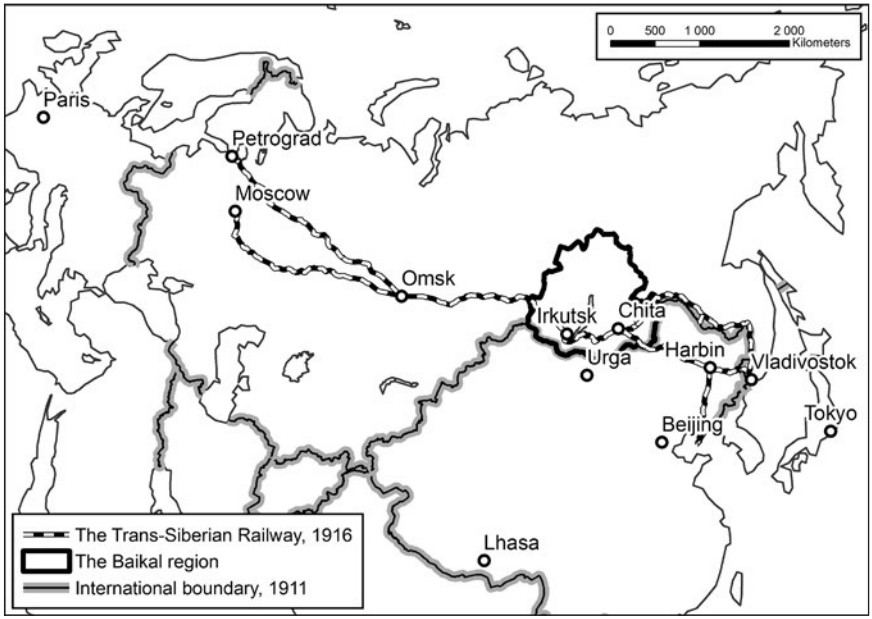

Figure I.1 The Baikal region and the recognized international boundaries in Asia, 1917.

model of transcultural governance to follow the World Revolution and fall of imperialism. The project proved effective in the short term: the MPR turned out to be the only successful attempt to create a socialist state outside the Soviet Union before the Second World War. Although both republics were nominally based on ethno-national categories (Buryat-Mongols and Mongols), the non-national religious, political, and economic considerations played a major role during the development and implementation of the Soviet project.

The initial boundaries of the two political entities changed, but they still exist today as independent Mongolia and the Republic of Buryatia within the Russian Federation. The overarching structures, which were supposed to connect and govern these and other entities, the Communist International (Comintern) and the Soviet Union, collapsed in 1943 and 1991 respectively.

Even though by the time of its demise the USSR had ceased to be the once envisioned globally applicable model of governance, its understanding as a centralized unitary structure proved misleading. The collapse of the USSR was largely unexpected by the academic community and unmasked major flaws in contemporary approaches to Russian and Soviet history, which were outlined by Ronald Grigor Suny whose critique and suggestion to pay more attention "to the non-Russian peoples, to the extrapolitical social environment, and to the particular contexts, contingencies, and conjunctures of the Soviet past" (Suny 1993, 1–2) contributed to the view that Russian history featured a multitude of

influential actors beyond the political center and heterogeneity in imagining and shaping political spaces. The category of empire, which foregrounded the polyphony of political, social, and cultural practices, has gained prominence in recent works dealing with Soviet and earlier Russian historical experience (Bassin 2006; Burbank *et al.* 2007; Hirsch 2005; Martin 2001; Remnëv 2004a).

The quest for multifaceted histories of Russia and the Soviet Union became especially relevant against the backdrop of global change in the late twentieth century. The global retreat of socialism made capitalism predominant once again. The global market and new means of communication fostered transboundary interactions. The solidarity of the international community during the Persian Gulf crisis seemed promising for a global political unity. The humanitarian interventions in Iraq after the Gulf War, Somali, Haiti, Rwanda, East Timor, and ultimately Yugoslavia, and the formation of the supranational European Union challenged the notion of sovereignty, the cornerstone of international law. All of these developments fueled the discussions of globalization and a possible post-national world (Appadurai 1996; Featherstone 1990; Mann 1997; Miyoshi 1993; Risse-Kappen 1995; Robertson 1992; Wolf 2001).

The developments in communication, international economy, and politics in the twentieth century made human interconnectedness and interdependency evident. Yet the phenomena covered by the term globalization in its broadest understanding are not new, which was pointed out by Immanuel Wallerstein (2011a; 2011b; 2011c; 2011d) and Eric Hobsbawm (1989; 1995a; 1995b; 1996). Transculturality, the continual processes of interaction and intermixture between vaguely delineated populations, the processes of border crossing, and the numerous asymmetric entanglements, has a very long history, even though its dynamics and scale may have varied (Appadurai 2010; Borgolte and Tischler 2012; Brosius and Wenzlhuemer 2011, 6–9; Herren *et al.* 2012, 5–6; Robertson 1992, 28).

The perspectives on the past which foreground transculturality include the transdisciplinary field of transcultural studies as well as the interdisciplinary approaches to history framed as global, transnational, or entangled histories (Mazlish 1998; Nadig 2004; Randeria 2002; Rothermund 2007; Werner and Zimmermann 2006). Studying the post-imperial reconfigurations in North and East Asia which ultimately led to the formation of the Soviet Union, "a separate sub-universe within global history" (Suny 2002, 304), from a transcultural perspective could therefore bring new insights not only to the field of East European and Eurasian studies, but also to global history.

The Soviet governance structure may be read as an empire. The proponents of the New Imperial History offer a poststructuralist notion of empire which is an analytical model rather than a historical phenomenon. Defined as "a special form for organizing multi-confessional and multi-ethnic polities" rather than a "symbol of repressive and undemocratic political organization," the concept could be used for deconstructing basic and normative ideas of social sciences and better understanding of not only the pre-national, but also the emerging post-national world (Gerasimov *et al.* 2005, 35, 43). According to Terry Martin, the major difference between the Soviet empire and all previous imperial formations was that it was an

affirmative action empire which responded to the rising tide of anticolonial nationalism. Although it is hard to disagree with Martin's main thesis, the leading role of the Bolshevik elite, especially that of Vladimir Lenin and Iosif Stalin, in designing the new structure (Martin 2001, 1–9; Slezkine 1994) needs reassessment.

The evidence coming from North and East Asia demonstrated that Lenin and Stalin were not unanimous on the issue of national autonomies within the RSFSR. Besides, the Bolsheviks split into more than two groups on the matter. Apart from the "internationalists" and "nation-builders" (Martin 2001, 2) there were people whom one might call "transnationalists." This group, which included two major Bolshevik leaders in North Asia, Ivan Smirnov and Boris Šumâckij, viewed the creation of autonomies on the territory of the former empire as an instrument for spreading the revolution beyond its boundaries. Smirnov and Šumâckij, who were credited for the successful export of revolution to Mongolia, found support from Lenin and Georgij Čičerin in their disagreement with Stalin over the form of the Buryat-Mongol autonomy. These "transnationalists" were the practitioners who implemented the new structure on site and modified it based on their experiences.

Smirnov and Šumâckij formulated their suggestions in close contact with prominent indigenous politicians, such as Èlbek-Dorži Rinčino and Cyben Žamcarano, and hence may not themselves be seen as the authors of the Soviet project in North Asia. Similar to many other contexts, the Buryat educated strata actively participated in the process of national formation (Suny 1993, 11). An important role in rallying official support for the Buryat-Mongol Republic and securing special status for Buddhism in the new structure was played by the eminent Buddhist monk Agvan Doržiev.

Francine Hirsch underlined the role of a third group of actors, the imperial experts in ethnography (Hirsch 2005, 5–15). Although they undoubtedly participated in shaping some ethnic territories, her argument is only partially supported by the evidence from the Baikal region. Žamcarano, Bazar Baradijn, and Gombožab Cybikov were indigenous politicians and imperial experts at the same time. Having received education from famous ethnographers and Buddhologists, they did not cease to belong to and identify themselves with the groups which they studied and defined (Tolz 2011).

The named actors are missing from the recent narratives of early Soviet history which pay little attention to North Asia (Hirsch 2005; Kaiser 1994; Martin 2001; J. Smith 2013; Suny 1993). It therefore appears apt to shed some light on the formation of the Soviet Union from local and regional perspectives and assess the role of indigenous actors in designing the transcultural governance structure. The relevance of many local actors is reinforced by the fact that they were also transnational actors whose activities spanned across the boundaries of the Russian and Soviet empires. Most authors paid attention to the global context of the Soviet project and viewed the Great War and the Russian Civil War as the premise and background of its development and implementation. This study goes further and argues that the two wars (which in North and East Asia flowed together with the clashes in the former Qing territory into one multilayered

conflict) and the corresponding power relations were the driving force behind the making of the new governance structure. The adversaries of the Bolsheviks in the Civil War, Grigorij Semënov and Roman von Ungern-Sternberg, and the representatives of foreign governments, especially Japanese officers, contributed to the mobilization of regional population, articulated the need for restructuring post-imperial Asia, and indirectly co-authored the Soviet project.

Hence, the post-imperial boundaries and the Soviet project had no definitive authorship. The new governance structure was a product of interactions between numerous and diverse actors. The Soviet federalist project was a compromise on the way to a nationless society, just like state capitalism which was reintroduced during the New Economic Policy presented a compromise on the way to socialism (Ball 1987). The purpose and design of the Soviet structure changed tremendously between the October Revolution of 1917 and Stalin's rejection of the World Revolution (Hirsch 2005, 63).

The ultimate demarcation of Mongolia and Buryatia was preceded by several alternative suggestions about how to draw new boundaries on the remains of the empires. Among these projects developed and partly implemented in the Baikal region (Figure I.1) in 1911–1924 there were the theocratic Outer Mongolian state (autonomy) proclaimed in 1911, the Buryat Autonomy proclaimed at the First All-Buryat Congress on April 25, 1917, by Mihail Bogdanov and other indigenous intellectuals; the federation of Inner, Outer, Hulunbuir (Barga), and Buryat Mongolia proclaimed in February 1919 (Figure I.2) (GARF 200–1–406,

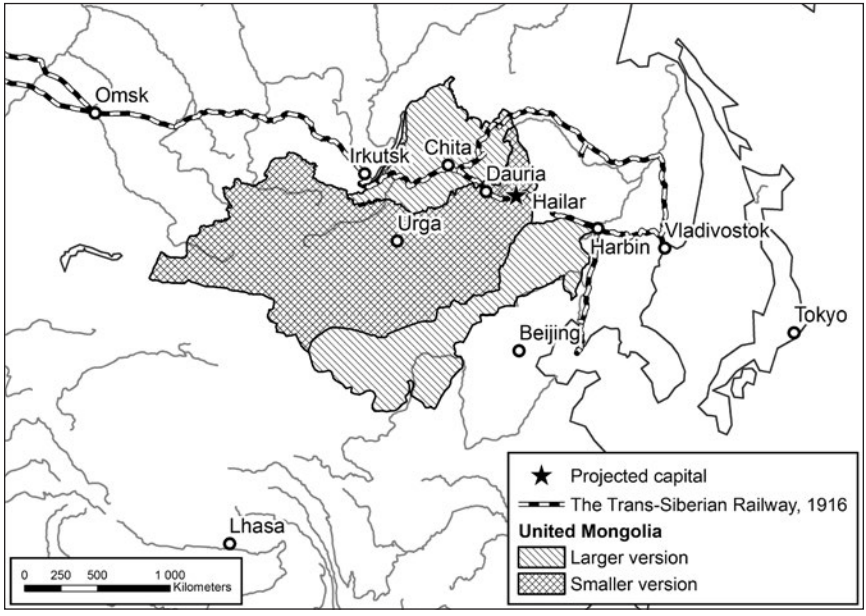

Figure I.2 The Mongol Federation.

1–2; GARF 200–1–478, 78; Pereselenčeskoe upravlenie 1914b; The Edinburgh Geographical Institute 1922b; RGASPI 495–152–20, 43); the Buddhist theocracy created by a dissident Buddhist monk Lubsan Samdan Cydenov and his disciples later the same year (Figure I.3) (Bazarov and Žabaeva 2008; Dandaron 2006); the federation of Asian peoples from the Caspian Sea to the Pacific envisioned by Ungern in 1921 (Figure I.4) (GADM 2012; The Edinburgh Geographical Institute 1922b; Ûzefovič 2010); and the autonomous regions within the Far Eastern Republic (FER) and the RSFSR created in 1921 and 1922 respectively.

The proponents of the BMASSR and MPR (Figure I.5) (Burnarkomzem 1924; The Edinburgh Geographical Institute 1922a, 1922b) considered the experience of the failed projects and paid much attention to the identities they sought to articulate. Furthermore, many actors who developed or opposed them helped in shaping the two republics, both of which were established with substantial participation of regional intellectuals.

Although all suggested boundaries technically partitioned the Earth's surface, they were constructed not in the geographical space, but in the many spaces formed by various relations between people, places, institutions, and other objects (Wenzlhuemer 2010; Löw 2001). Some spaces were created by the relations between, within, and beyond various social groups and sites (for instance, the religious spaces constituted by churches, Buddhist temples, lamas, priests, missionaries, congregations, and legislation). Other spaces emerged from interactions of technological and economic nature, including transport and communication spaces shaped by railways, roads, and telegraphs.

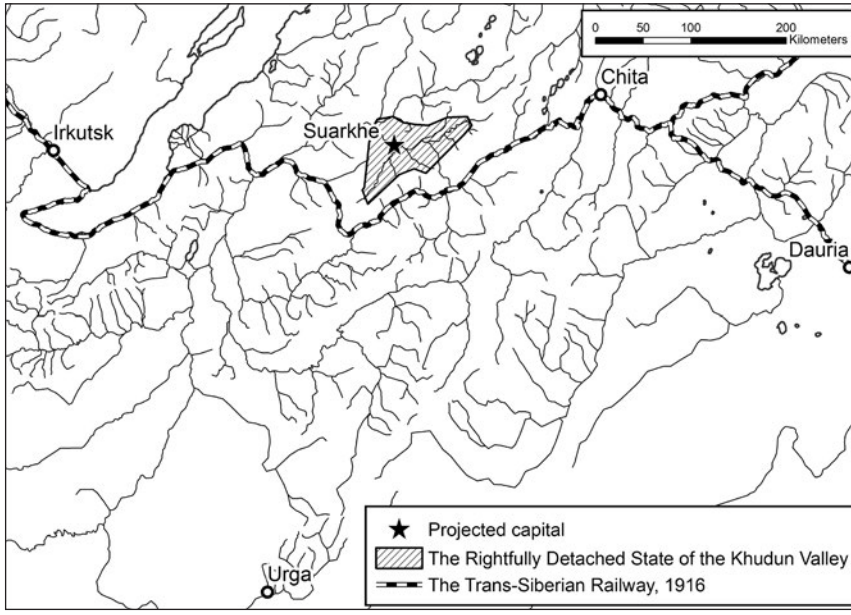

Figure I.3 The Rightfully Detached State of the Khudun Valley.

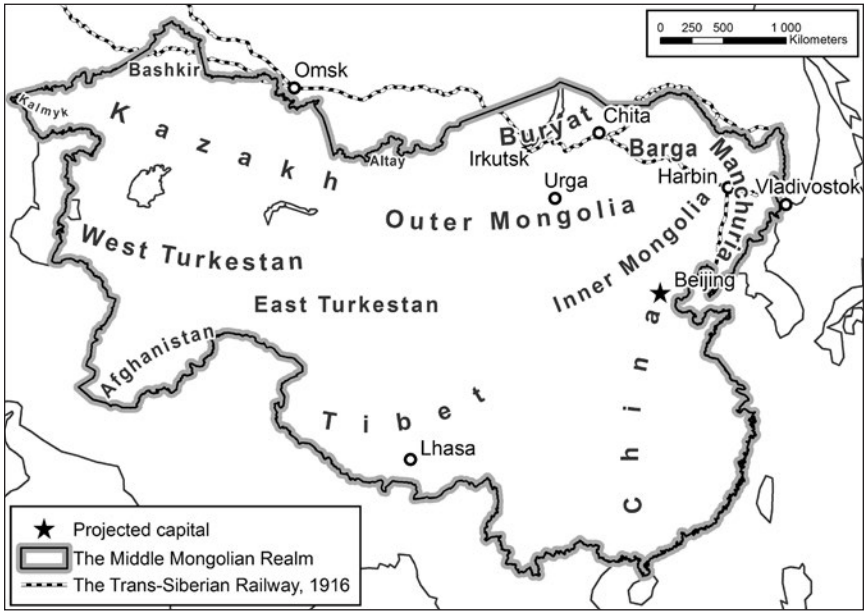

Figure I.4 The Middle Mongolian Realm.

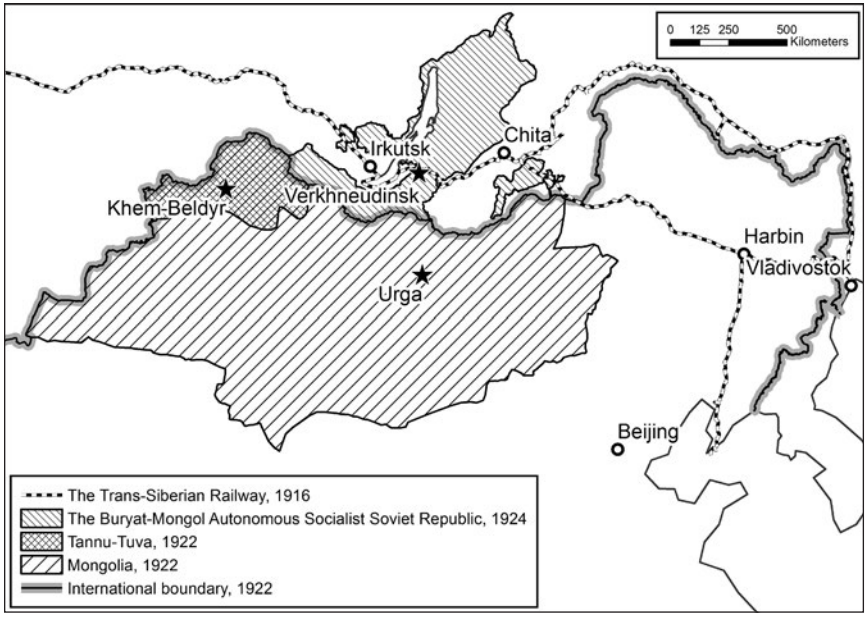

Figure I.5 The Buryat-Mongol Republic, Mongolia, and Tannu-Tuva.

In some of these transcultural (entangled and overlapping) relational spaces, boundaries were imagined and articulated in terms of group identities or social categorizations (ethnic, religious, or occupational) and then projected onto the geographical space suggesting demarcation of territories. Just as the groups themselves, corresponding cultures (Lévi-Strauss 1967; Ortner 1984) were multiple, overlapping, and dynamic; they were produced and reproduced through interpretative interactions.

Although cultures as fuzzy networks of mental constructions cannot be delineated and compared, the intersections between them reveal themselves in historical sources through the diverse interpretations of the same individuals, groups, places, objects, ideas, practices, and phenomena. An individual is placed in complex power relations and can be subject to a variety of forms of domination, exploitation, and subjection (Foucault 1982, 778, 781, 786, 788, 793). This variety can be described in terms of social identities (gender, race, ethnicity, class, and others) and relational spaces which feature multilayered or intersectional power asymmetries (Valentine 2007). Transculturality, as a multitude of complementary, coexisting, or conflicting interpretations (Bourdieu 1985, 731–732), broadens the scope of possible response, making the outcome of power relations less predictable and lowering thereby power potential of their participants.

As Michel Foucault suggested, the term to govern should be understood in a broader non-state sense, as "to structure the possible field of action of others" (Foucault 1982, 790), and there are many actors who attempt to govern within different social spaces beyond states. This means that in a stateless context there is no power vacuum. In the case of Eurasia after the fall of the Qing and Russian empires political, economic, religious, clan, gender, and other power relations persisted and occasionally intensified. In a stateless context, global and local interactions come to the forefront, as these are now not mediated, structured, or constrained by state authorities. At the same time, the struggle to reestablish the state may increase the dynamics and complexity of power relations, which include competition, negotiation, and mutual tensions. The key question here is to determine which major group and individual actors engaged in power relations in post-imperial North and East Asia.

Trying to legitimize their claims over particular populations or spaces, participants in power relations invest much effort in social mobilization (Regan and Norton 2005). Using existing global or regional discourses and adjusting them for local public and particular purposes, actors respond to the need of framing their arguments (Snow 2004) in a way that is understandable for their recipients. Discourses provide actors with sets of meanings to choose from and thereby impose constraints on scopes of action and interpretation (Suny 1993, 13). In the early twentieth century, major global discourses from which actors extensively borrowed were those of self-determination, anticolonial nationalism (Manela 2007), social justice, and class struggle (Eley 2002). In some regional contexts the discourse of nationalism engendered various pan-movements advocating regionalism based on superethnic commonalities (Conrad and Sachsenmaier

2007, 11). Internationally, these and other discourses intermingled in a great variety of combinations. In the Caucasus of the early twentieth century, for instance, actors relied on such major intellectual trends as socialism, nationalism, Pan-Turkism, Pan-Islam, and liberalism (Suny 1993, 41). A further important question is, hence, what notions from what discourses the participants of post-imperial power struggle used.

Across the former Russian Empire, those nationalists and socialists who neglected transculturality and failed to "appreciate the complex meshing of social and ethnic grievances in situations where class and ethnicity reinforced individual and collective positions in the hierarchy of power and powerlessness" faced major difficulties in social mobilization (Suny 1993, 29). Boundary construction is a way of coping with transcultural complexity through imposing categorization (be it a list of social groups and categories in a text; a boundary, an isocline, or a contour line on a map; or articulation of a uniform group identity); it is a way of limiting transculturality with univocal interpretations of particular spaces; it is a way of constructing meanings and setting up bases for action (Wood and Fels 2008); it is disentanglement and detachment for the sake of governance (Fall 2002).

Governance of transcultural spaces does not necessarily involve their detachment, that is, the introduction of a boundary more or less acceptable in one space and its imposition on other spaces connected to the first (for instance, imposition of borders based on ethnicity disregarding other identities), and may also be conducted through recognition and institutionalization of existing entanglements (for instance, imperial systems of local government formally and informally incorporating indigenous forms of clan and religious authority) and through the introduction of new entanglements (for instance, the introduction of new overarching identities). Disentanglement may be regarded as governance through homogenization, whereas selective recognition and institutionalization of entanglements may be called governance over heterogeneity. The proponents of the New Imperial History render such an approach to governance as empire (Gerasimov *et al.* 2005).

In practice governance of transcultural spaces is most likely to involve a combination of these two modes and include boundary construction either in terms of detachment of particular spaces from others (the detachment of religious spaces in a secular state may be a good example) or in terms of mental reduction of social complexity (religious pluralism suggests categorization of a larger space into several distinct religious spaces; guarantee of minorities rights implies separation of these from majorities; construction of an overarching identity in a polyethnic or multilingual state involves categorization of the population into constituent groups). Major questions here are what spaces of post-imperial Asia the actors attempted to disentangle and delineate and how they constructed the boundaries.

The use of a geographic information system (GIS) allowed for discussing boundaries and the spaces they were supposed to demarcate in detail. Maps and other spatially referenced representations of categories and identities (statistics,

legislature, and so on) were integrated into a GIS and analyzed jointly (Knowles 2002, xiii–xv). With GIS it was possible to reconstruct and reentangle the multi-dimensional social environment of the Baikal region through combining data from maps depicting ethnic and religious divisions, land use, religious institutions, economic activities, communication lines, and textual sources into a four-dimensional system (featuring latitude, longitude, altitude, and time). Without the GIS comparing some of the data would hardly be possible due to the large volumes and equivocality of representations. Following the post-representational approach to cartography (Crampton 2003), the four-dimensional GIS did not aim at reconstructing a historic reality, but combined many different views of it instead, with interpretation becoming a further parameter of the system.

The two modes of dealing with transculturality were combined in Siberia and Mongolia, but the proportion between them and emphasis varied. All unsuccessful and provisional projects preeminently followed the disentangling strategy and attempted to find a foundation for an imagined community (Anderson 1991) and a respective territorial entity to be detached from "the others." They envisioned political commonalities and constructed boundaries through exclusion. Such an essentialist approach proved ineffective. The successful Soviet project also involved boundary construction, but placed the emphasis on the institutionalization of entanglements. It utilized both, existing and newly created identities which were addressed and altered through a macro-identity. This macro-identity on different occasions was articulated as the one uniting socialists, communists, revolutionaries, proletarians, or simply all those under oppression globally. The Soviet project led to the redefinition of local ethnic, superethnic, gender, age, and religious categories, and the emergence of new transboundary socialist identities supported by specialized organizations, such as the Comintern. The macro-identity of formerly oppressed strata in its broadest understanding allowed for constructing a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional polity (Gerasimov *et al.* 2005, 43; Suny 1993, 37) which spanned beyond the boundaries of the former Russian Empire.

The categories of state, nation (G. Smith *et al.* 1998, 8–9), and empire (as a descriptive historical term) do not grasp the difference between the two modes because both, colonial empires and nation-states were legitimized through chauvinisms and racisms (Wimmer and Schiller 2002). The metaphors of the "affirmative action empire" (Martin 2001) and "empire of nations" (Hirsch 2005) are more applicable for the period after the Bolsheviks gave up the Marxist ideal of a post-state borderless world (Marx 1970), opted for building socialist nationalities, and developed the Soviet Union into a structure resembling other sovereign states. The difference in strategy, we argue, is crucial for understanding the success of the Soviet project and the failure of the others in North Asia. Unlike the authors of the pre-1924 state and autonomy projects, the proponents of the Soviet project suggested restructuring regional transcultural spaces instead of their detachment, pioneering thereby transnational or even post-national governance.

The choice of the period and area for a case study was motivated by the extreme dynamics of transculturality in a practically stateless context which

allowed for the unmediated interactions between the global and the local. The collapse of the named and other Eurasian empires (German, Austro-Hungarian, and Ottoman) intensified local power relations, brought many external actors into play, and triggered complex processes of boundary construction. Although the Russian and Qing empires attracted much attention, the borderland between the two could not find its place within either national histories or area studies, often being neglected by Eastern Europe and East Asia scholarship. The case of the Baikal region, however, provides a great deal of material for studying how the conflicts between overlapping identities are resolved, how multilateral power relations unfold, and how global and local discourses intermingle and interact.

Some of the events, personalities, and phenomena relevant for our research were discussed in Russian, Mongolian, Czech, American, Japanese, French, Italian, Canadian, and British works (Bazarov and Žabaeva 2008; Batsajhan 2011; Graves 1941; Gajda 2008; Hara 1989; Mautone 2003; Janin 1933; Moffat 2008; Ward 1920). A plausible way to reconstruct the region as a zone of transcultural interactions (Clarence-Smith *et al.* 2006) is to bring fragmented and disconnected literatures together, intersect national and international narratives, and write a transcultural history based on relevant primary sources without a major historiographical and political construction (Herren et al. 2012, 15–19) behind it.

Most of the works which touched upon the Baikal region, relevant actors, and the state and autonomy projects focused on the Russian Revolutions, the Russian Civil War, the Allied Intervention, and the formation of the Soviet Union. Studies on Mongolia's independence, the Buryat national movement, and international relations in the region were less numerous (Bazarov and Žabaeva 2008; Bradley 1984; Ewing 1980; Fitzpatrick 2008; Friters 1937; Hirsch 2005; Kaiser 1994; Lobanov-Rostovsky 1927; Martin 2001; Pipes 1997; Slezkine 1994; Smele 2006; J. Smith 2013; Suny 1993). Despite questionable political interpretations of the Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary periods, the works published during the Soviet period offered a great deal of reliable statistical data and grounded critique of the Tsarist regime. The analyses conducted by P. T. Haptaev and other scholars (Bogdanov 1926; Girčenko 1927; Gudošnikov and Ubugunè 1933; Haptaev 1938) proved invaluable for this study. Non-Soviet authors of the 1930s–1980s briefly referred to the history of Buryat-Mongols during the imperial crisis within broader topics (Ewing 1980; Friters 1937; Sarkisyanz 1958). One of the few exceptions was Robert A. Rupen who published several works with the Buryats in focus (Rupen 1964; 1956a; 1956b).

The collapse of the Soviet Union allowed for accessing previously unknown or restricted sources suggesting new interpretations of Pan-Mangolism, Mongolian and Siberian Buddhism, interethnic and interreligious relations in the Baikal region, and exploring personal histories of important individual actors such as Doržiev, Cydenov, Rinčino, Ungern-Sternberg, Daši Sampilon, Cyden-Eši Cydypov, and Semënov. The works by A. I. Andreev, B. V. Bazarov, O. V. Buraeva, N. V. Cyrempilov, L. V. Kal'mina, L. V. Kuras, S. L. Kuz'min, L. A. Ûzefovič, P. K. Varnavskij, L. B. Žabaeva, and others proved especially illuminating (Andreev

2006; Bazarov 2002; 2011; Bazarov and Žabaeva 2008; Buraeva 2005; Čimitdoržiev and Mihajlov 2009; N. V. Cyrempilov 2007; 2010; 2013; Kal'mina and Kuras 1999; Kuras 2011; Kuz'min 2011; Ûzefovič 1996; 2010; Varnavskij *et al.* 2003; Žabaeva 2001). The opening of archives both in the USSR and Mongolia fostered international scholarship. Here we have to mention the studies conducted by Jamie Bisher, James Boyd, Futaki Hiroshi, Dittmar Schorkowitz, John Snelling, Willard Sunderland, and others (Bisher 2005; Boyd 2010; Futaki Hiroshi 1995; 1997; 1998; 2000; Narangoa and Cribb 2003; Schorkowitz 2001; Snelling 1993; Sunderland 2014). The works by Mark Bassin, Susanne Frank, A. V. Remnëv, David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, Claudia Weiss, and other authors on Russia in Asia (Barkey and Von Hagen 1997; Bassin 1991; 2003; 2006; Burbank *et al.* 2007; N. V. Cyrempilov 2013; Damešek *et al.* 2007; Frank 1997; Narskij 2001; Remnëv 1997; 2004a; 2004b; Schimmelpenninck van der Oye 2001; Weiss 2007a; 2007b) helped to understand the larger historical and geographic contexts.

Primary sources used for this study included texts and maps. Many maps showing regional divisions before 1917 based on a variety of criteria (ethnicity, religion, economy, natural resources, administration, and so on) were published by the imperial Settlement Administration of the Central Administration for Land Management and Agriculture (Pereselenčeskoe upravlenie Glavnogo upravleniâ zemleustrojstva i zemledeliâ) and made by the Cartographic House of the A. Marks Company (Kartografičeskoe zavedenie tovariŝestva A. Marks) and other workshops. These maps were published both as part of an atlas (Glinka 1914) and as separate maps (Pereselenčeskoe upravlenie 1911; 1914c). Further maps showing regional ethnic divisions included a map by the A. Il'in Cartographic House (Kartografičeskoe zavedenie A. Il'ina) published in a 1899 encyclopedia (Kartografičeskoe zavedenie A. Il'ina 1899) and a map made by Soviet ethnographers published in 1961 (Bruk 1961). Contemporary military cartographers mapped the locations of particular units and zones of control in North and East Asia. International and administrative boundaries were examined based on maps produced by Russian, Soviet, and British authors. A map published by the new authorities of the Buryat-Mongol Republic shortly after its creation proved to be one of the most valuable cartographic sources (Burnarkomzem 1924). Most of the Russian and Soviet maps were accessed at the National Library of Russia in Saint Petersburg, whereas other maps were retrieved from the David Rumsey Historical Map Collection (David Rumsey 2012).

Categorizations, interactions, and projects were widely discussed in private and business correspondence, intelligence summaries, reports, statistics, and legislation. The most important documents were found in the State Archive of the Republic of Buryatia (Gosudarstvennyj arhiv Respubliki Burâtiâ, GARB), the State Archive of the Russian Federation (Gosudarstvennyj arhiv Rossijskoj Federacii, GARF), the Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (Rossijskij gosudarstvennyj arhiv social'no-političeskoj istorii, RGASPI), the Russian State Military Archive (Rossijskij gosudarstvennyj voennyj arhiv, RGVA), the United States National Archives (USNA), and the Japan Center for Asian Historical Records (JACAR).

The State Archive of the Republic of Buryatia holds a large collection of documents produced by indigenous self-government bodies. The collections 483: The Central Buryat National Committee (Burnackom), 305: People's Duma of the Buryats of Eastern Siberia (Burnarduma), 477: The Revolutionary Committee of the Buryat-Mongol Autonomous Region of the RSFSR (Burrevkom), 476: The Revolutionary Committee of the Buryat-Mongol Autonomous Region of the FER, 484: The All-Buryat People's Revolutionary Committee (Burnarrevkom), 485: The People's Revolutionary Committee of the Buryat-Mongols of the Far East, and 278: The Administration of the Buryat-Mongol Autonomous Region of the FER (Burmonavtoupr) allowed for reconstructing ideas and activities of numerous indigenous intellectuals who participated in constructing post-imperial projects and developed from colonial subjects into key participants of power relations.

In the State Archive of the Russian Federation the collections of the anti-Bolshevik All-Russian Government located in Omsk were of particular interest. The collection 200: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Government (Omsk) contains diplomatic correspondence, intelligence reports, and original documents covering the relations between the various Russian political and military groups, Buryat intellectuals in Siberia and Mongolia, indigenous armed forces, Outer, Inner, and Hulunbuir Mongolian lamas and noblemen, Japanese and American military personnel, and diplomats of various countries in Siberia, Mongolia, Manchuria, China proper, Japan, and elsewhere. It also provided detailed information on the Mongol Federation project. The collection 1701: the Native Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Government (Omsk) includes correspondence and other documents related to the indigenous population of the Baikal region, indigenous self-government, Transbaikal Cossacks, and the activities of Buryat emigrants in Outer Mongolia. This collection offered much material on the Buryat-Mongol Autonomy. The collection 1318: The People's Commissariat of Nationalities (Narkomnac RSFSR) was another important collection in the State Archive of the Russian Federation. This collection holds extensive correspondence between various groups within the Soviet political establishment concerning the Buryat-Mongol autonomous regions within the RSFSR and the FER and the project of their unification into the BMASSR.

In the Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History, which holds the documents of the Russian Communist Party and the Comintern, the most important materials were found in the collection 372: The Far Eastern Bureau of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks). The named collection contains several reports on the Rightfully Detached State of the Khudun Valley and much material on the Balagad anti-autonomous popular movement closely connected to the project. It also provided evidence of major disagreements within the Communist Party on the matter of the Buryat-Mongol Republic, offered information on non-Russian, non-Buryat, and non-Buddhist groups of the region, and shed some light on gender politics. Besides, it contained many captured documents of regional anti-Bolshevik groups. The documents of the Executive

Committee of the Comintern make up the collection 495 of some 152,306 files. The inventories 152: The Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party and 154: The Eastern Secretariat of the Executive Committee of the Communist International elucidated the transboundary activities of some Buryat-Mongol intellectuals, the Comintern's policies towards Mongolia and Tibet, and difficulties caused by boundaries in the region.

Further documents which proved relevant for this study included the collection 39454: the Headquarters of the Asian Cavalry Corps holding the documents of Ungern's forces, 40138: The Headquarters of the Eastern Siberian Independent Army containing the documents of Semënov's troops, and 40308: The Collection of Documents of the White Guard Forces, Formations, Units, and Institutions "Special Varia" of the Russian State Military Archive; the United States National Archives Microfilm Publication M917: Historical Files of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) in Siberia, 1918–1920; and separate files related to Japanese involvement in Siberian affairs in the Japan Center for Asian Historical Records.

Some relevant documents were published over the last two decades in thematic collections. The volumes on the Buryat national movement (Batuev 1994), international politics in the Far East (Malyševa and Poznanskij 1996), Doržiev (Nimaev 1993; Samten and Tsyrempilov 2012), and Ungern (Kuz'min 2004a; 2004b) offered access to some rare documents.

The writings of individual actors comprised another group of sources. These were the articles and books by Bogdanov, Cybikov, and Rinčino (Bogdanov 1926; Cybikov 1981; Nimaev 1994). Even though some of these texts were not devoted to the region during the period under study, they made it possible to understand how the authors positioned themselves within their social environments and perceived them. Many actors wrote autobiographies and memoirs. Even though such sources are problematic and only verified information from them can be used, some of them (G.-D. Cyrempilov 2013; Doržiev 2003; Semënov 2002) provided additional information on interactions, personal likings, and antagonisms.

The evidence supporting our main argument was organized into seven chapters: Chapters 1 and 2 discussed the transcultural spaces of the Baikal region reconstructed in a post-representational GIS. The discussion began with the economic and communication spaces, passed on to the groupings of population into ethnic, religious, and other categories, and finished with the pre-revolutionary transboundary entanglements. Chapter 3 addressed the collapse of the imperial structures in the region after the February Revolution and the Buryat Autonomy designed and implemented by indigenous intellectuals. Chapter 4 concentrated on transcultural violence and formation of the international regime of the Trans-Siberian Railway. Chapter 5 focused on the global interactions in a stateless context which led to emergence of new projects: the Mongol Federation and the local Buddhist theocracy. The formation of the Far Eastern Republic and its consequences for the Buryats was studied in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 concentrated on the design of the Soviet project and its implementation, including the ethno-territorial autonomous

regions in the RSFSR and the FER, the alternative project reverting to superethnic and religious commonalities, and the opposition to the final boundaries in popular and party circles and discussed the role of identities and transboundary entanglements in the new transcultural governance structure.

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1 Demographics, economy, and communication in the borderland, 1911–1917

1.1 Russian and Qing governance structures

The representatives of the Qing and Romanov dynasties arrived at the future border region in the seventeenth century. The incorporation of the Baikal region into the Russian state began when the "men of service" (služilye lûdi), regular soldiers, and tradesmen (promyšlenniki) advancing eastwards of the Urals reached the lake, overcame the opposition of the local population, and established tributary relations with most regional groups (Forsyth 1992, 28–47). The rule of the Qing had spread to Inner Mongolia in the 1630s, before they established themselves as a new dynasty in China. The Treaty of Nerchinsk in 1689 set the boundary between the two states along the Argun'. Two years later Outer Mongolia was incorporated into the Qing Empire (Cosmo 1998, 291–292). The Treaty of Kyakhta (1727) specified the Russian-Qing boundary. According to the Treaty of Aigun (1858) and the Convention of Peking (1860), the areas north of the Amur and on the Pacific coast became part of the Russian Empire (Bassin 2006; Habarov 2008, 1:21, 30–37) and the international boundary took the form which can be seen on the map (Figure 1.1) (Pereselenčeskoe upravlenie 1914b; 1914c; 1914g; W. & A. K. Johnston 1912).

For the regional population engaged in nomadic herding the boundary turned out to be a disaster, as it disturbed their seasonal migrations. The people had to decide which pastures to choose and on which side to pay tributes. All this resulted in major transboundary migrations before 1727 when the border was closed and minor resettlements throughout the rest of the eighteenth century (Bogdanov 1926, 52, 63, 74–75; Haptaev 1954, 1:101).

The Qing ruled Outer Mongolia, which was understood as the four Khalkha aymaks[1] or the four aymaks plus Khovd and Tannu Uryankhai, through the regional nomadic elite. In the early twentieth century the four aymaks of Khalkha Mongolia consisted of khoshuns.[2] Somons[3] were the smallest administrative units from which the nobles with their dependents and the Buddhist clergy were exempt. The Qing authority was exercised by a military governor in Uliastai and two civil governors (amban) in Khovd and Urga. The highest religious authority in Mongolia since 1639 was the Jebtsundamba Khutuktu, a prominent lama in the Gelug tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. Inner Mongolia,

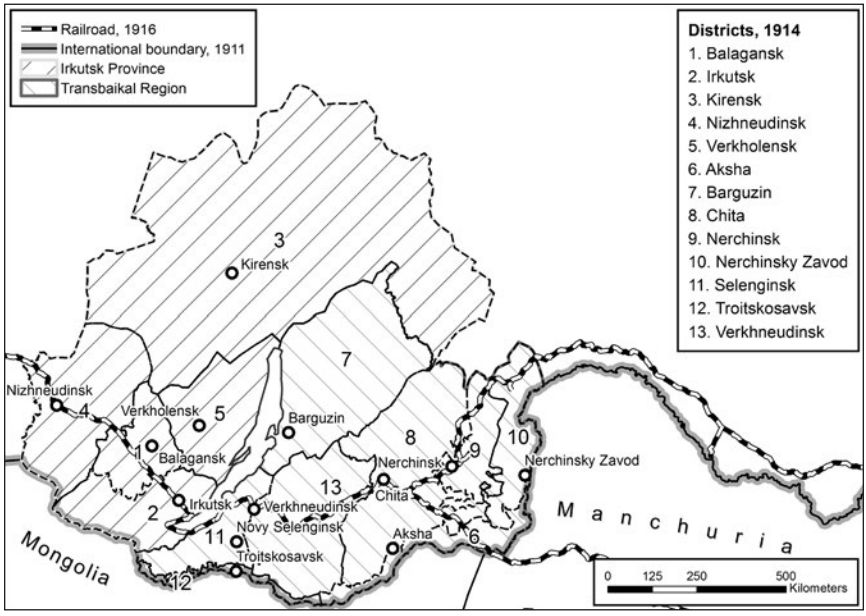

Figure 1.1 The political and administrative spaces of the Baikal region.

which consisted of khoshuns united into six leagues, was administered by the Qing more closely. Apart from more self-government rights, Outer Mongolia was subject to more restrictive immigration policies for Chinese settlers as compared to Inner Mongolia (Cosmo 1998, 297, 300–302).

The administrative structures of the Russian Empire were marked by variety. In the early twentieth century the two Baikal provinces, the Irkutsk Province with the center in Irkutsk and the Transbaikal Region[4] with the center in Chita, consisted of thirteen districts (Figure 1.1). Two Orthodox Christian eparchies corresponded to the provinces and shared their names. The two provinces also gave names to respective state chambers and settler districts. The larger Irkutsk Military Region, the Irkutsk Judicial Circuit, the Irkutsk Educational Circuit, the Irkutsk Supervisory Chamber, and the Irkutsk District Administration of Agriculture and State Property united the entire Baikal region with other areas in Siberia (Glinka 1914, fig. 10–17). These numerous administrative structures occasionally conflicted with each other (Damešek *et al.* 2007, 103).

Between the 1820s and early 1900s, the complex structures of imperial administration featured bodies of indigenous administrative, economic, and judicial self-government based on clan and territorial groupings: Clan Administrations, Alien Administrations, and Steppe Dumas (councils) (Vysočajše Utverždennyj 1830). The abolition of self-government in 1896–1901 resulted in major protests (Žalsanova 2008). The introduction of uniform Russian

administrative divisions in the Baikal region can be seen as an attempt to turn the heterogeneous empire into a homogenous nation legally. This reform, which apart from the new divisions imposed land regulations unfavorable for the non-Russian population of the region, triggered the emergence of an organized Buryat national movement which manifested itself during the First Russian Revolution (1905–1907). Gombožab Cybikov, Tsyben Žamcarano, and other intellectuals campaigned for self-government, and education in the native language at Buryat congresses and in the press (Bazarov 2011, 15–16; Bazarov and Žabaeva 2008, 48–50).

The Buryat national movement responded to the grievances caused by the imperial policies. In 1901, indigenous peoples and Jews were the only two groups not allowed to acquire public land in Siberia. The land-use regulations passed in 1896–1901 and 1905–1917 put indigenous peoples in a marginalized position: their lands were seized to form the land fund for settler colonization and resolution of land shortage in European Russia; the lands which were ascribed to the indigenous peoples were not their property and the people had to pay land tax for it. Indigenous peoples were subject to social inequality, racial discrimination, and Russification policies which aimed at a full merger of Russians and non-Russians. Driven by racism, some high officials described the Transbaikal Buryats as potential allies of the "yellow race" in the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905) and discussed the idea of their mass resettlement to the inner provinces of the empire (Damešek *et al.* 2007, 58, 67, 213–214, 221, 236, 238–239).

The political space of the Russian Empire extended beyond the international boundary. With the construction of the Chinese Eastern Railway (CER) in 1897–1903 Russian presence significantly increased in Manchuria. The CER Zone with the center in Harbin became Russia's de facto colony. After its defeat in the war with Japan, which contested Russian presence in East Asia (Schimmelpenninck van der Oye 2001), the Russian Empire lost control over most of the South Manchuria Railway (Urbansky 2008). By 1911 semi-official Russian presence was also significant in Tannu Uryankhai. A 1911 Russian map of northern China used the colors of the Russian and Japanese empires to depict their zones of influence along the railroads and in Tannu Uryankhai (Kartografičeskoe zavedenie A. Il'ina 1911).

1.2 Waterways, railroad, telegraph, and other communications

The Baikal region of the early twentieth century was often referred to as a periphery of the Russian Empire (Bazarov and Žabaeva 2008, 48; GARF 1701–1–16, 21; Gerasimova 1964, 3; Haptaev 1964, 23; RGASPI 372–1–210, 27 rev.). Indeed, the distance between the region and European centers in the geographical space was tremendous. In communication spaces and power structures of the Russian Empire, however, it played a very important role. The Lena, Angara, Ilim, Selenga, and Shilka all belonged to the major waterways of North Asia. It

was not only the exploration of Siberia, which had been carried out along the rivers, but also control over it (Forsyth 1992, 39, 48, 54).

The waterways were supplemented by portages before the first overland highway was built in the late eighteenth century. The Siberian Post Road provided a stable West–East connection up to Baikal. From Irkutsk a major way led northeast along the Lena to Yakutsk, Okhotsk (Figure 1.2) (Glavnoe upravlenie počt 1914; Irkutskij gubernskij 1916; Morev 2010; Pereselenčeskoe upravlenie 1914f; Zabajkal'skij oblastnoj 1914), and then by sea to Kamchatka, Alaska, and the Aleutian Islands. The commodities from Siberia, North Asia, and North America were first transported to the Baikal region making Irkutsk a major trade center (Kationov 2004; Minenko 1990; Naumov 2006, 108–109).

Several overland routes connected the Baikal region to Central Asia, Mongolia, and China. The city of Troitskosavsk and two satellite trade settlements, Kyakhta on the Russian side and Maimaicheng on the Qing side, were founded after the Russian-Qing agreements of 1727. The agreements initiated dynamic trade relations between the two empires and their border regions. Tea gradually became one of the key commodities transported along the route connecting Kalgan, Kyakhta, Verkhneudinsk, Irkutsk, and Moscow (Figure 1.2). Trade in agricultural and manufactured products stimulated transboundary economic relations attracting many Russian and Chinese traders to the Baikal region, northern Mongolia, and Barga, the western part of Manchuria between the lakes Hulun and Buir and the Greater Khingan Range (Avery 2003; Lincoln 2007, 145–146; RGASPI 495–152–20, 43).

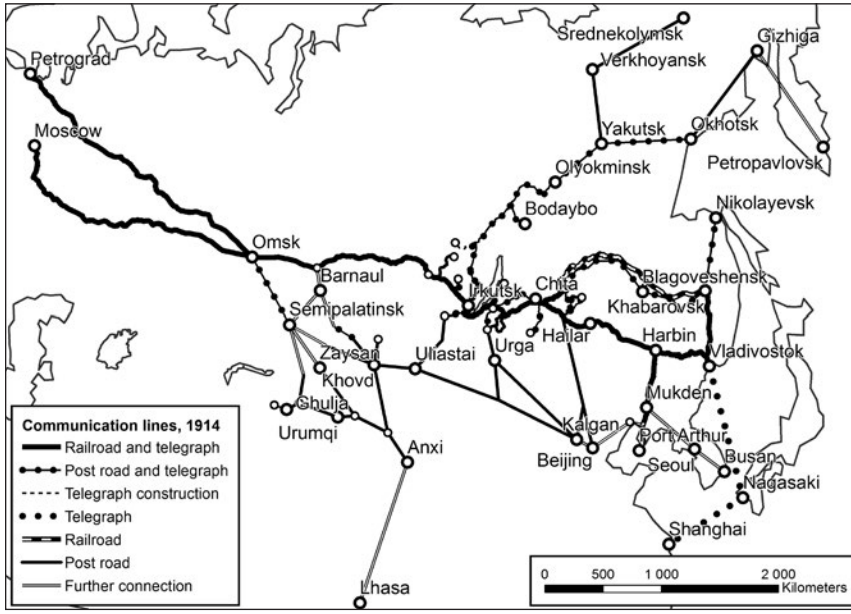

Figure 1.2 The Baikal region in the larger communication space.

Trade further intensified with the construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway (Haptaev 1964, 23), which to a large extent followed the route of the Siberian Post Road up to Irkutsk. In 1899 the line connecting European Russia and Irkutsk was put into operation. Although with the completion of the CER in 1903 the Great Siberian Route connecting Saint Petersburg with Russian Pacific ports was officially finished, the space of the railway communication was interrupted by Baikal. Before the very expensive and technically complex Circum-Baikal Railway was put in operation in 1905 the gap had been bridged by two icebreaking ferries the Baikal and the Angara. The icebreaking capacities of the vessels enabled navigation only for a few days after the lake froze and in winter a cart road was set up to transport passengers, goods, and post (Sigačev and Krajnov 1998).

During the Russo-Japanese War the transportation capacity of the carts was not enough for military needs and rails were laid on the ice. The defeat in the war did not result in Russia losing the entire CER, but significantly challenged its security. The security of the CER was an issue already during its construction, as the railroad workers and guards were attacked by the Chinese population during the Boxer Rebellion (1899–1901). It was therefore decided to build the previously planned route across Russian territory – the Amur Line – which was several hundred kilometers longer than the line through Manchuria and was partly situated in the permafrost areas. The construction began in 1907 and in 1916 the traffic between Petrograd and Vladivostok was launched (Sigačev and Krajnov 1998). A short narrow-gauge railway also functioned from 1897 in the gold-mining region near Bodaybo (Guzenkov 2004).

By 1917 the Trans-Siberian Railway provided a rapid and reliable connection between Europe and North and East Asia. The railway provided the empire with stable access to the Pacific maritime trade (Haptaev 1964, 37). The Baikal region occupied a central position in the space of railway communication. The Great Siberian Route's major strategic parts, the Circum-Baikal Railway and the junction of the CER and the Amur Line, were situated here. The control over the transcontinental communication space depended very much on the control over the Baikal region (Gerasimova 1957, 28).

The increase in both traveling and transporting goods by the railway demanded improving both post roads and waterways in Siberia (Marks 1991, 205) in order to consolidate and diversify the communication space. The transportation space of the Baikal region was constituted by the railroad; post, country, and dirt roads; and waterways (Glavnoe upravlenie počt 1914; Pereselenčeskoe upravlenie 1914c; 1914f; 1914g).

Apart from transportation and traveling, the abovementioned networks provided information exchange. As of 1910 the Baikal region with its 178 postal settlements occupied top position in North Asia's space of post communication, with the Irkutsk postal network being the largest in Siberia in terms of number of nodes and extent (Blanuca 2010). The post space of the Russian Empire extended from the Baikal region to the neighboring Qing territories after a private Russian post began operation in Urga in 1863. After the Russian post

network in the Qing Empire became public in 1870 offices were opened in Beijing, Kalgan, Tianjin, Khovd, Uliastai, and Tsetserleg. Further offices were set up in Yantai, Shanghai, Lüshun (Port Arthur), Dalian, Harbin, Mukden, Urumchi, Hankou, and other places (Vladinec 2012).

Exchange of information also occurred by the telegraph which was laid along the Siberian Post Road in the nineteenth century. By 1864 the line connecting European Russia and Irkutsk via Omsk was complete. Irkutsk became the center of the telegraph network in eastern Siberia. In 1868 the telegraphic communication began in Chita, Nerchinsk, and Sretensk. The Siberian telegraphic mainline soon became the longest in the world. With the completion of the underwater cable from Vladivostok to Nagasaki and Shanghai in 1871 the Siberian telegraph provided almost instantaneous communication between Europe and East Asia. By the end of the nineteenth century the telegraph had completely ousted the post in business communication. The construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway further fostered the development of the telegraph and many stations were soon equipped with telegraph offices. The railway significantly lowered the maintenance costs of the Siberian mainline raising its competitiveness against the Indian line managed by the British Eastern Telegraph Company (Morev 2010). By 1917 the telegraph connected all major populated places of the Baikal region with European Russia, the Far East, and northeastern Siberia (Figure 1.2). By this time major Siberian cities also had telephone networks (Šilovskij 2003, 183), but this type of communication had not yet been established for longer distances. The networks of rapid communication were sparsely and unevenly spread in the geographical space and many populated places had no direct access to them. This brought discrepancies between the communication, economic, and political spaces in the Baikal region.

1.3 Mineral resources, regional economies, and trade

In the early twentieth century Siberia in general was considered to be extremely rich in mineral resources (Reutovskij 1905, 1:3, 7). As the map (Figure 1.3) (Pereselenčeskoe upravlenie 1914d) demonstrates, gold deposits were numerous in the area around Lake Baikal (Reutovskij 1905, 1:2). Other major resources widespread in the region were iron, copper, coal, and salt. Transbaikalia was rich in complex ores. Besides these, there were graphite, mercury, oil, and tin occurrences.

All major deposits discovered and exploited in the Baikal region were situated along the rivers, the Siberian Post Road, and the Trans-Siberian Railway. As can be seen on the map (Figure 1.3), the space of mineral resources was partitioned into administrative mining districts which did not correspond to any previously discussed divisions. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century the Nerchinsk Mines became the property of Her (His) Imperial Majesty's Cabinet (Novikov 2009, 152, 154–155). In 1914 the Nerchinsk District of His Majesty's Cabinet consisted of seven estates and included the territory of the Nerchinsk, Aksha, Chita, and Nerchinsky Zavod administrative districts and the

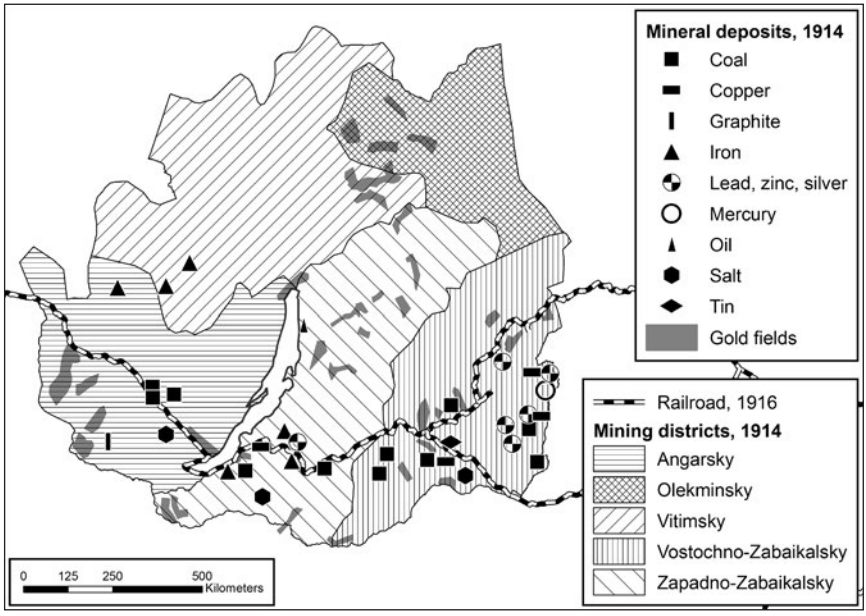

Figure 1.3 Major mineral deposits in the Baikal region.

area around the town of Petrovsky Zavod (Glinka 1914, fig. 39). Given that its boundaries did not match the boundaries of the Vostochno-Zabaikalsky Mining District (Figure 1.3) and that the estates did not correspond to administrative districts (Figure 1.1), the power structures in the regional space of mineral resources proved to be very complex.

The Baikal region in general and the Nerchinsk District of His Majesty's Cabinet in particular were infamous centers of exile and penal servitude. Most prisons were situated in the mining areas. Since the mid-nineteenth century the system of penal servitude was considered outdated and irrelevant to the idea of criminal's correction by some policy-makers. Even though in early 1917 it was still in place, the economy of the Russian Empire primarily relied on wage labor by then (Voločaeva 2009).

By the early twentieth century gold mining[5] had brought in more revenue than mining of all other resources combined. The production of silver was inefficient because of the lack of fuel in the area and silver's low price, even though the deposits themselves were rich. The exclusive availability of tin in large amounts in Transbaikalia further raised the significance of the region (Reutovskij 1905, 1:479–482).

The construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway resulted in tremendous increase of the coal production in Siberia. In the Baikal region the output of the richest Cheremkhovo coalfield west of the lake (Figure 1.3) increased from 69,311 tons in 1900 to 1,259,164 tons in 1917 (Haptaev 1964, 27–28).

Although the railway stimulated mining activities, it hampered industrial production in the region which could not compete with the empire's European and Ural industrial centers. A cast-iron factory, which processed the iron ore mined in the Nizhneudinsk District, for instance, was shut down in 1899 after the railway reached the region (Blanchard 2000; Reutovskij 1905, 1:61). In 1917 the Baikal region had only several small factories. In the space of Russia's industrial production it could indeed be regarded as a periphery. The working class (in the narrow sense) was not numerous and mainly consisted of coal miners and railroad workers (Haptaev 1964, 28–29).

The Baikal region played a more prominent role in the economic spaces constituted by hunting, agricultural production, and trade. The furs of squirrels, sables, foxes, kolinskies, ermines, and other animals had been a major Russian export since the times of the Kievan Rus and retained their importance in the early twentieth century (Bašarov 2005, 55–56; Belikov 1994, 27; Forsyth 1992, 38, 247). As the map (Figure 1.4) (Pereselenčeskoe upravlenie 1914e) demonstrates, hunting was a major occupation in many parts of the region. The exceeded pressure on animal populations, however, resulted in their depletion and decrease of hunting in the early twentieth century (Buraeva 2005, 69; Serebrennikov 1925, 149–150).

Taiga was also a major source of wood, edible plants, and mushrooms. Lumbering and gathering were widely practiced across the region's forestlands. Berries and nuts gathered in high volumes were marketable, whereas wood was the main construction material and fuel. The construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway and population growth increased demand for lumber and made logging into a major occupation in the early twentieth century. After the railway was finished the lumber market began to decline (Buraeva 2005).

Fishing was a major occupation on the banks of Baikal and on the Lena in the north (Figure 1.4). Many fishing waters were owned by monasteries and other Orthodox Christian organizations which rented them out to entrepreneurs. The enterpreneurs' control over the best fishing waters led to conflicts with local peasants (Bašarov 2005, 5; Haptaev, 1954, 1:376, 446).

Although exploitation of regional natural resources through mining, logging, hunting, fishing, and gathering played a significant role in the regional economy, the majority of the people engaged in agricultural production: livestock breeding and crop farming (Figure 1.4).

Grain farming was the predominant occupation of the population west of Baikal and in some parts of Transbaikalia. The farmers largely relied on manual labor and used only basic tools, such as sickles, flails, wooden plows and harrows. Winter rye, wheat, barley, oat, hemp, and flax were among the most popular crops grown in the Baikal region. In the villages close to towns and the railway many peasants engaged in market gardening and tobacco cultivation. The harsh climatic conditions and relief posed limitations on crop farming. Spring frosts and droughts were frequent in Transbaikalia and caused years of bad harvest when there was not enough bread for the population. Despite the challenges the area under crop in Transbaikalia increased by 39 percent between

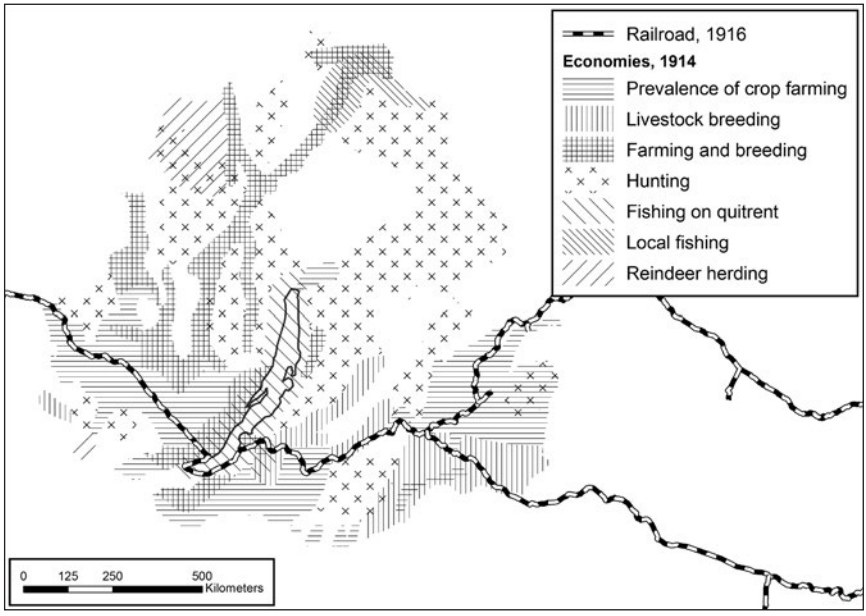

Figure 1.4 Economies in the Baikal region.

1897 and 1916. The growth had both economic and political reasons. On the one hand, in the early twentieth century the Baikal region experienced a tremendous increase in population and development of trade which raised the demand for agricultural products. On the other hand, the Tsarist government enforced the spread of crop farming with administrative measures in order to increase the supply (Abaeva and Žukovskaâ 2004, 126; Haptaev 1964, 45–47, 49).

Animal husbandry was popular in Transbaikalia where breeders raised horses, cattle, camels, sheep, goats, and pigs. Reindeer herding was spread in the northwest of the Baikal region and in the Eastern Sayan Mountains (Figure 1.4). The population growth and development of trade increased the market for livestock products. The Russo-Japanese War and the First World War created a huge demand for both horses and meat, which resulted in excessive pressure on livestock populations and crisis in some areas of the Baikal region, since many animals were commandeered. Epizootics, weather, and predators had a further negative impact on the livestock populations, especially in Transbaikalia where the animals were in the open for most of the year. Besides, the Tsarist land policies and spread of crop farming resulted in reduction of pastures. The head of livestock demanding larger pastures and much forage (horses, sheep, and goats) decreased in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, whereas the total number of productive livestock (cattle and pigs) increased (Haptaev 1964, 49, 51–53).

The two main occupations, crop farming and animal husbandry, differed not only in terms of product, but also in the corresponding non-economic practices and lifestyle: crop farmers were sedentary, whereas many livestock breeders led nomadic and semi-nomadic way of life. Although in some areas livestock breeding and crop farming effectively coexisted and complemented each other (Figure 1.4), with some households engaging in both, the attitude towards the land and consequent land-use patterns were incompatible in many cases. The economy of the nomadic herders was based on gradual usage of different pastures over the year, whereas crop farmers were attached to their fields. The Tsarist support for crop farmers and mass settlement resulted in the reduction of pastures, marginalized nomadic livestock breeders, and fostered conflicts between the two economic groups (Abaeva and Žukovskaâ 2004, 94–95; Serebrennikov 1925, 16).

The diversity of economies fostered exchange between the different occupational groups on the regional level, whereas the lack of industry stimulated import of manufactured goods from other parts of the Russian Empire and beyond. The Baikal region mainly exported agricultural products (grains and meat), fish, game, and pine nuts. The main imports were sugar, metal goods, steel, kerosene, agricultural tools, and machinery. Historically much of the trade was conducted at annual fairs which were especially suitable for the nomadic herders and hunters. By the early twentieth century towns and cities had manifested themselves as major trade centers (Lejkina 2004; Švec 2002; Zabajkal'skij oblastnoj 1914). The turnover at the fairs was nevertheless still significant in the 1910s. The construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway greatly intensified material exchange and reconfigured the trade spaces of the Baikal region. Former centers far from the railroad, such as Kyakhta, witnessed a recession in trade. The railroad itself became the axis of both regional and imperial trade spaces (Buraeva 2005, 26–32; Haptaev 1964, 26–27, 37–38). Through the regular transboundary exchange and merchants from the Russian Empire living abroad the regional trade space extended beyond both administrative and international boundaries to Mongolia, Manchuria, Tannu Tuva, and other territories of the former Qing Empire (Endicott 1999; Williams 1916).

The growth of trade and the expansion of the communication space created further occupations. Locals serviced the communication lines and transported passengers and goods. For many farmers seasonal work as coachmen was a significant source of income (Buraeva 2005, 72–73).

1.4 Population

The location of the Baikal region in the communication and economic spaces made it into a very attractive destination for settlers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The region's relief, climatic conditions, and soils, however, made the available land scarce. Both population growth and the lack of land intensified the construction of social boundaries, articulation of group interests, and multilayered intergroup conflicts.

The maps published by the Tsarist Settler Administration proved to be a valuable source when discussing the economic, administrative, and communication

spaces in the Baikal region. When analyzing the spaces produced by social categorizations, one had to be cautious and keep in mind the main objective of the aforementioned body. The administration was designed to support Russian mass settlement in Siberia, which became part of the new Tsarist policy towards the region during the construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway (Marks 1991, 46–54). Not surprisingly the Settler Administration's version of the ethnic spaces (Figure 1.5) (Pereselenčeskoe upravlenie 1914a) showed unoccupied areas ready for colonization. The inconsistency between the maps published in the same atlas (Figure 1.4 and Figure 1.5) further proved the agency's agenda, as economic activity was shown in presumably unoccupied areas.

According to the calculations made in the Albers equal-area conic projection, Russians on this map (Figure 1.5) occupied the largest territory in the Baikal region (around 450,000 sq. km). "Tungus" came next with some 361,000 sq. km. Buryats and "Other Mongols" occupied 91,000 and 1,700 sq. km respectively, whereas the territory of the "Tatars" was 6,800 sq. km.

The "Tungus" on the map are interpreted in modern anthropological terms as the Evenks who speak a Tungusic (Manchu-Tungus) language. Contemporary sources also indicate the presence of the "Orochens" in the northern Baikal region. In a 1923 report (GARF 1318–1–269, 92, 95, 96), they were interpreted as a category separate from the Tungus and Buryat, but "kindred" to the latter.[6] V. V. Belikov interpreted the "Orochens" unequivocally as the Evenks, even though in the sources, which he cites, the terms "Tungus" and "Orochens"

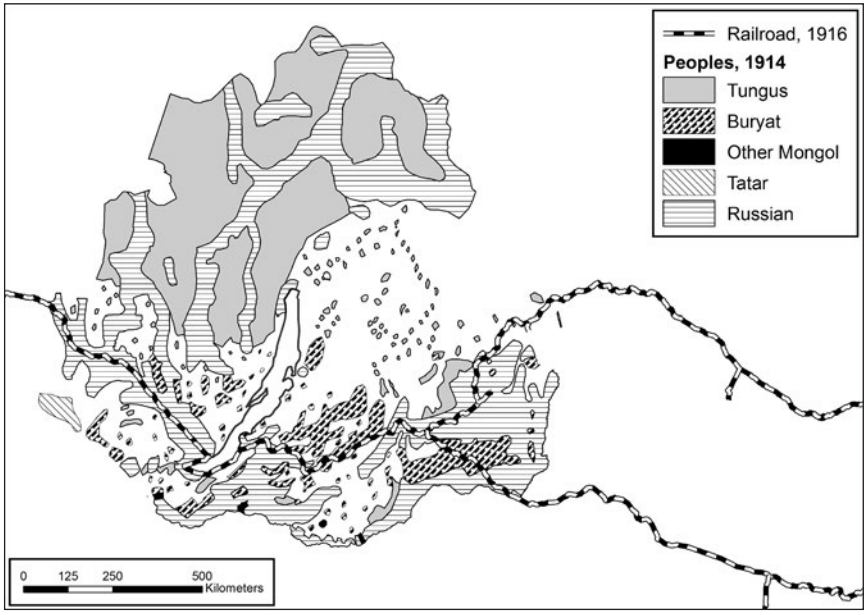

Figure 1.5 Ethnic spaces in the Baikal region in 1914.

appear independently (Belikov 1994, 18, 22, 27–28, 55–56, 63–64). Fengxiang Li and Lindsay J. Whaley state that the treatment of the Oroqen people (鄂伦春族) as a "nondescript subdivision in an Evenki ethnic complex" is a tendency in the non-Chinese academic community and oppose such a view. The Tungusic-speaking Oroqen, however, were stated to have moved to Northern China long before the late nineteenth century and there is no indication of their presence in the Russian Empire during the period under study (Li and Whaley 2004, 109–110, 116–120).

The necessity to map nomadic populations was a further challenge every cartographer trying to depict regional ethnic spaces had to face. The challenge was addressed on the map (Figure 1.5) in two different ways. In the northwest the area occupied by the Tungus showed no major discontinuity and was evidently mapped based on the spread of economic activities of the named group. In other areas the Tungus population was represented by a number of small disconnected polygons showing apparently the dwelling patterns. It was in fact these areas which still had potential for mining (Figure 1.3) and were advertised via the map. The nomadic and semi-nomadic Buryats (or Buryat-Mongols) were depicted in a similar manner.

There is still some value in the map (Figure 1.5) beyond that of providing an example of cartographic claims. The authors identified some groups of population as "Other Mongols," accenting the kinship between the Mongolic-speaking Buryats and the neighboring population of the former Qing Empire and demonstrating transboundary settlement patterns and movements.

The mass settlement campaign and general population growth resulted in a great decrease in unoccupied lands suitable for agricultural activities. As animal husbandry demanded large grazing areas, now less and less available on the Russian territory, many Buryats of the southern Baikal region surrounded by the arriving Russian settlers had to practice seasonal migration and emigration to Mongolia and Manchuria. There is no reliable information on the actual numbers of the Buryat emigration to the former Qing territory prior to 1917. According to some estimates, in the early twentieth century the emigration practically reduced the natural increase of the Buryat population in the Baikal region to zero (Bogdanov 1926, 167). According to other contemporary estimates, some tens of thousands of people emigrated from the region during the construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway and increased Russian settler colonization. The Tsarist government did not hamper migrations to Mongolia; the Buryats there were under the protection of the Russian diplomatic mission (GARB 485–1–14, 52). The Buryats living far from the international boundary had to combine livestock breeding with farming which stimulated migration within the Baikal region in search of suitable lands (Bogdanov 1926, 167) and increased tensions with the arriving settlers.

The "Tatars" appearing on the map (Figure 1.5) were the Turkic-speaking Tofas living in the Sayan Mountains area. This ethnic group appeared on an alternative depiction of the region's ethnic spaces in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century produced by Soviet ethnographers several decades later

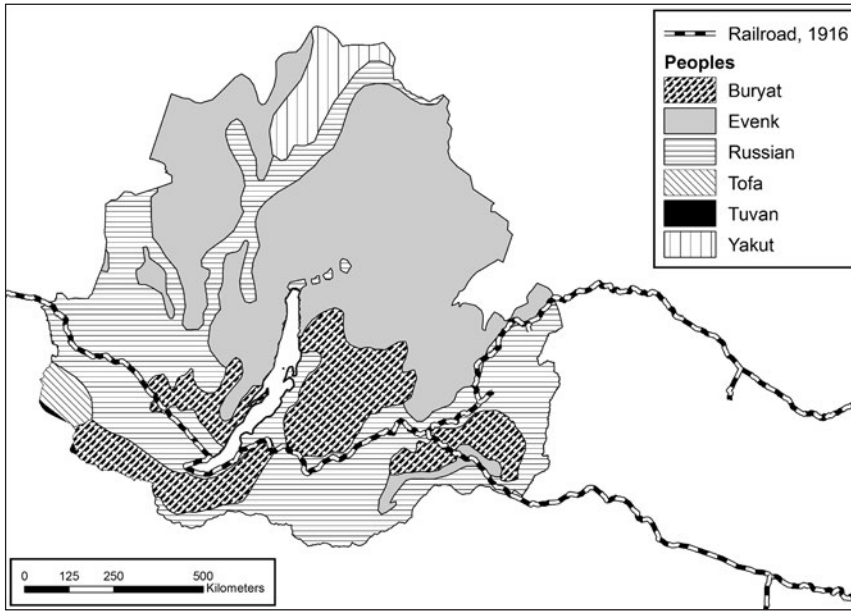

Figure 1.6 Ethnic spaces in the Baikal region in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

(Figure 1.6) (Bruk 1961). The Soviet map featured no unoccupied land, as the nomadic and semi-nomadic groups, the Tofas, Tuvans, Evenks, Buryats, and the Turkic-speaking Yakuts in the north, were all mapped based on their economic activities. Calculated in the Albers equal-area conic projection, the territory of the Evenks was now the largest and comprised 641,000 sq. km. The Russians followed with 528,000 sq. km. The Buryats (227,000 sq. km), the Yakuts (51,000 sq. km), the Tofas (18,500 sq. km), and the Tuvans (1,000 sq. km) came next. The difference in the areas on this (Figure 1.6) and the earlier map (Figure 1.5) is tremendous.

The Soviet map (Figure 1.6) also suggested homogeneity of the ethnic areas, which was a justification of the ethno-territorial boundaries introduced by the Soviet government. The Tuvans officially living in neighboring Tannu Uryankhai in the early twentieth century were probably not supposed to be mapped within the Irkutsk province. We preserved the slight divergence between the ethnic and political boundaries, since no one in the Sayan Mountains could really control the movement of nomadic hunters and herders and since the contemporary maps provided different versions not only of the political spaces, but also of the geographical space (Pereselenčeskoe upravlenie 1914b; W. & A. K. Johnston 1912). The map (Figure 1.6) featured no information on the kinship and transboundary settlement patterns and economic activities of the Mongolic-speaking groups: after

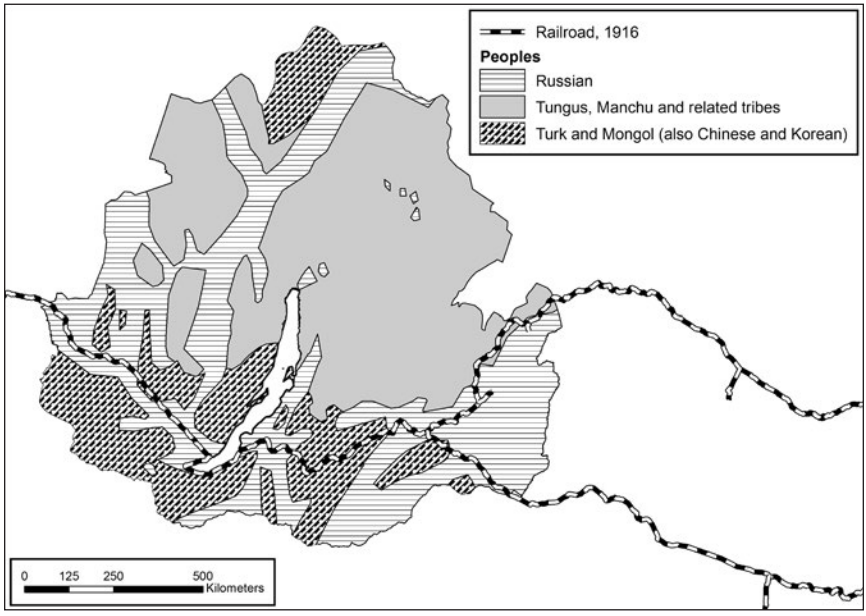

Figure 1.7 Ethnic spaces in the Baikal region in the late nineteenth century.

major shifts in Soviet politics the Buryats could no longer even be called Buryat-Mongols (Sili 2007).

Another version of regional ethnic spaces (Figure 1.7) (Kartografičeskoe zavedenie A. Il'ina 1899) was published in 1899 in a general encyclopedia. Since the primary purpose of the publication had nothing to do with the mass settlement campaign (which then had just started), the map also suggested no unoccupied areas in the Baikal region. It also featured broad categories of the regional population. The territories of the Manchu-Tungus, Russian, and Turk-Mongol populations, calculated in the Albers equal-area conic projection, comprised 642,000 520,000 and 304,000 sq. km respectively. The category of "Turk-Mongol" population, despite its obvious general character, is useful when addressing the population of the western Baikal region near the Oka River where the initially Turkic-speaking Soyot people lived among the Buryats (Sirina 2003). The category also allowed for grasping further groups of indigenous population who were not part of the official ethnic categorizations when the sources were produced, for instance, the Tozhu living in the Sayan region (Donahoe 2006).

The three versions of the ethnic space (Figures 1.5–1.7) combined together in the GIS unmasked the extreme dynamics of interpretation and the great diversity of the Baikal region. They all demonstrated a correlation between the ethnic, communication (Figure 1.2), and political spaces (Figure 1.1): the Russians

settled along the major communication lines and along the international boundary. The GIS also showed that there was no concurrence between the economic (Figure 1.4) and ethnic spaces. The occupational groups were transethnic, as people of different ethnic origin engaged in hunting, fishing, livestock breeding, reindeer herding, and crop farming or combined several economic activities.

Each of the ethnic spaces extended beyond the Baikal region. The spaces of Buryat-Mongols, other Mongols, Tuvans, and Tozhus extended south, southwest, and southeast to the former Qing Empire. Individual Buryats who went to study to Russian and even foreign urban centers, as well as to Mongolian and Tibetan Buddhist monasteries extended the space even further. The Yakut ethnic space incorporated vast areas northeast, north, and northwest of the Baikal region. Tofas also lived west of the Baikal region in the neighboring Yenisei Province. The space of the Tungusic-speaking peoples extended from the Urals to the Pacific Ocean and covered most of northern Asia (Sablin and Savelyeva 2011). Russian population concentrated along the major highways (Figure 1.2) and was spread throughout the whole Russian Empire and beyond.

None of the maps provided information about the size and density of the mentioned ethnic groups or the regional population at large. According to textual sources, the population of the Baikal region was 1,186,304 in 1897 (672,037 in the Transbaikal Region and 514,267 in the Irkutsk Province). In 1897 Russians (66.2 percent of the population in the Transbaikal Region and 73.58 percent in the Irkutsk Province) and Buryats (26.7 percent in the Transbaikal Region and 21.17 percent in the Irkutsk Province) comprised an absolute majority. The Evenks made up 4.5 percent in the Transbaikal Region and only 0.39 percent in the Irkutsk Province. The 1897 Census also listed several other significant ethnic groups (based on native language) absent from the maps (Figures 1.5–1.7), which each comprised 1.2 or less percent in the population of the whole Baikal region, including the Jews, Tatars, Poles, Chinese, and "Gypsies." Further groups which had more than 100 people included the Germans, "Cherkess," "Altai Turks," "Kyrgyz," Mordvins, Armenians, Romanians, and Latvians. The booming trade, the construction works at the Trans-Siberian Railway, and the exile system brought representatives of at least seventy officially recognized ethnic groups to the region. The greatest diversity was found in the cities, but some groups such as the Poles, who were massively exiled to Siberia after the January Uprising of 1863, lived in rural areas as well. The regional indigenous peoples (the Buryats, Evenks, Tofas, Yakuts, and Tuvans) mainly lived in the rural areas: in the Irkutsk Province, for instance, only 0.5 percent of indigenous population lived in cities (Trojnickij 1904a, 75: xi, xiii).

The region had a very uneven population density. The calculations done for the administrative districts (Figure 1.2) in the Albers equal-area conic projection indicated that in 1897 the Balagansk District with 308 people per 100 sq. km was the most densely populated territory. The Troitskosavsk, Irkutsk, and Nerchinsk districts with the density ranging from 277 to 229 people per 100 sq. km came next. The population density in the Selenginsk, Verkhneudinsk, Aksha, and Nerchinsky Zavod districts was between 191 and 102 people per 100 sq. km. The

Chita, Verkholensk, and Nizhneudinsk districts had less than 100 people per 100 sq. km; the northernmost Barguzin and Kirensk districts were very sparsely populated having only sixteen and ten people per 100 sq. km respectively. Generally, the highest density was in the crop farming areas (Figure 1.4) along the Trans-Siberian Railway (Trojnickij 1904a, 75:iv; 1904b, 74:1).

By 1911 the total regional population grew to 1,618,790 (Haptaev 1964, 44). Such a tremendous increase was accounted for by both mass settlement and natural increase. Most trade centers (Lejkina 2004; Švec 2002; Zabajkal'skij oblastnoj 1914), especially the ones on the Trans-Siberian Railway, were booming. The population of Irkutsk increased from 51,473 in 1897 to 126,700 in 1910; Chita and Verkhneudinsk grew over the same period from 11,511 to 74,300 and from 8,086 to 15,200 respectively; the population of Nizhneudinsk, Balagansk, Bodaybo, Nerchinsk, Troitskosavsk, Barguzin, and some other towns increased as well. The population of Kirensk remained the same, whereas Verkholensk, Selenginsk, and Aksha experienced a slight decline (Pereselenčeskoe upravlenie 1914h; Trojnickij 1904a, 75:v; 1904b, 74:2).

The share of Russians in the regional population increased to 78.4 percent in the Irkutsk Province (588,148) and to 68 percent in the Transbaikal Region (590,645) in 1911. The indigenous population made up 134,363 (17.9 percent) in the Irkutsk Province and 244,003 (28 percent) in the Transbaikal Region. The non-Russian non-indigenous population comprised 61,631 in the two provinces. In 1916 the Buryat population of the whole Baikal region was reported to be 250,097 (Haptaev 1964, 44–45). The share of Russians decreased during the Great War when many joined the military.

Despite the outflow of soldiers and Cossacks to the front, the Great War increased the population of the Baikal region and further diversified regional population in ethnic terms. In 1914 the Russian military command ordered POWs from the Austro-Hungarian and German armies of German, Austrian, and Hungarian ethnicity to be sent to Siberia. POWs from the Ottoman Empire of Turkish ethnicity were also sent there. In the summer of 1915 the Irkutsk Military Region alone hosted some 200,000 POWs. By January 1, 1917, there were 135,594 POWs in the Irkutsk Military Region. In 1914–1916 POWs made up a large share in the population of the Baikal region. Eight thousand were sent to Irkutsk, 8,000 to Verkhneudinsk, 6,700 to Troitskosavsk, 32,500 to Chita, and 11,000 to Sretensk (Šlejher 2005).

The available statistical sources were of limited use for studying population dynamics. The 1897 general census and later surveys contained incomplete and generalized data, since some remote areas were not incorporated into the statistics gathering. It is also unclear how intermarriages were dealt with and to what group children of mixed ethnic origin were ascribed. The questionaries differed in their approach to distinguishing members of particular ethnic groups and did not ask people if ethnic identity was at all important to them. According to a report produced in the early 1920s, there were no special "demographic" censuses and there had been a great deal of confusion in population groupings. The indigenous population could be understood in different surveys as a social estate

(soslovie) or as an ethnographically separate group (non-Russian, but native). Differentiations based on native language, descent, and official registration led to further divergence in returns (GARB 476–1–72, 24 rev.). The claims that people could consciously provide false data about their ethnic identity (GARF 1701–1–16, 46) made the census returns even more problematic.

The boundaries between the ethnic groups were further diluted by mutual acculturations and linguistic assimilations. The sources mentioned the Buryatized Tungus (GARB 305–1–12, 15; GARF 200–1–478, 187, 187 rev.), the Russified Buryats, and the Russified Tungus (GARF 1701–1–16, 6, 66, 68). In the 1897 census the former were included into the Buryats (Serebrennikov 1925, 13); this is not to mention the numerous multilinguals (Buraeva 2005, 147, 173–174) who were the interfaces between the overlapping and entangled linguistic spaces of Buryat, Evenk, Mongolian, Tibetan, Chinese, Russian, and many other Asian and European languages. These linguistic spaces were further constituted by written and print media in a broad variety of languages and enabled transfer and exchange in ideas and knowledge between different symbolic networks. It was natural for contemporary authors that this transculturality could and had to be dealt with and that clear boundaries between ethnic groups could be drawn by establishing firm criteria to be set by "some competent scientific institution" (Serebrennikov 1925, 13).

Despite the prevalent interpretations, the Baikal region could not be unequivocally described as a periphery. Its location on the boundary between the Russian and Qing empires, vast mineral resources, the Trans-Siberian Railway, the telegraph, and other communication lines made it into a strategic part of the economic, communications, and political topologies of the Russian Empire and Eurasia. Even though in the physical space it was indeed far from both the Russian and Qing capitals, the telegraph and later the railroad made the geographical distance much less relevant. The mineral wealth contributed to its strategic economic significance. In terms of industry the Baikal region was indeed a periphery. Agriculturally it was, however, self-sufficient. Both Russian and indigenous population engaged in crop farming and livestock herding, as well as other economic activities. The region's location in economic and communications spaces made it an attractive destination for agricultural settlers. The construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway, development of trade, and state-sponsored settler colonization in the early twentieth century contributed to the tremendous increase in population and complicated its composition.

Notes

1 *Ajmag* is a Mongolic and Turkic term literally meaning "tribe."
2 *Hošuu* (旗) means "banner."
3 *Sum* (苏木) means "squadron."
4 Regions had simpler administrative structures than provinces, see Damešek *et al.* (2007, 80).
5 In 1911–1912, workers at the Lena goldfields near Bodaybo protested against poor working conditions. A major strike began in late February 1912. Following orders from the authorities, soldiers opened fire on a peaceful manifestation on April 4, 1912,

killing between 150 and 270 people. The massacre had a wide response across the Russian Empire leading to increased public attention to working conditions and numerous strikes, see Melancon (2002).

6 A closer discussion of this claim and the document follows in Chapter 7.

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2 Transcultural spaces and entanglements, 1911–1917

2.1 Social estates and land use

Some 1,618,790 people (Haptaev 1964, 44) lived in the Baikal region, the northern part of the Qing-Russian borderland consisting of the Irkutsk Province and the Transbaikal Region, in 1911. The Russians and Buryats comprised the absolute majority. Ethnicity was, however, not the only criteria used for social categorization. Textual sources provide the following population groupings: most of the indigenous population belonged to the category of aliens (inorodcy, literally "those of different descent"); the Russians were divided into "old settlers" and "new settlers"; many Russians, Buryats, and Evenks belonged to the Cossacks, a privileged military estate. In terms of the legal estate categories in 1897 peasants were the largest group in the Baikal region (35.6 percent in the Transbaikal Region and 60.01 percent in the Irkutsk Province). Aliens (27.4 and 22.53 percent), town dwellers (meŝane, 3.9 and 7.28 percent), merchants (0.2 and 0.28 percent), clergy (0.3 percent and 0.5 percent), nobility (1.55 percent in the Irkutsk Province), and army Cossacks (29.1 percent in the Transbaikal Region) followed. Other mentioned groups included foreigners, exiles, settlers, government officials, and honorable citizens (Trojnickij 1904a, 74:vi; 1904b, 75:x). In 1917 250,978 Cossacks (including up to 17,570 absent) were registered in the Transbaikal Region, of which 21,092 were ethnically Buryat (Serebrennikov 1925, 39).

By the 1910s the new settlers (novosëly) had been playing a major role in the economic life of Siberia due to their large numbers and extensive participation in agricultural production. The areas of forest steppes, steppes, and edges of taiga, which were suitable for crop farming and livestock breeding, attracted the migrants coming mainly from European Russia. The shortage of arable land and frequent bad harvests in European Russia were the major reasons for the mass resettlement to Siberia since the 1890s. The Tsarist Government, which had impeded the migration before, now actively supported it by issuing loans, establishing settler stations, providing discount railway tariffs, creating the Settler Administration, and even distributing invitations through village administrative bodies. The construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway, a further strategic reason for settlement, fostered the migrations tremendously. Between 1900 and

1912 over 3.5 million people resettled east of the Urals. Since their regional origins were extremely diverse, the new settlers by no means represented a homogenous group. In the Baikal region it was mainly the Irkutsk Province which attracted settlers, whereas the Transbaikal Region was among the least popular destinations (Golovačev 1914, 16–17). As the map (Figure 2.1) (Pereselenčeskoe upravlenie 1914a; 1914c) shows, the area of settler lots east of Baikal was smaller than west of the lake.

As can be seen from the map (Figure 2.1) the indigenous population was split into further categories. In the 1822 charter, these categories were sedentary, nomadic, and wandering aliens who enjoyed different rights (Vysočajše utveržděnnyj 1830). The map (Figure 2.1) shows that the lands used by the third category, the wandering northern aliens, were practically considered unoccupied. It was also very easy to deprive the more privileged sedentary groups of their lands, as "the vast majority of Siberian aliens did not have any indisputable property documents" (Golovačev 1914, 25). In order to counteract the practice of transferring their lands to the Russians, the Buryats, through their self-government bodies, kept precise land records and invested community money in European education for promising young people who would later deal with Russian authorities and private companies and protect community interests. The aspiration for education and respect towards science among the Buryats were noted by contemporary observers (Kir'âkov 1902, 295–297; Serebrennikov 1925, 42). Èlbek-Dorži Rinčino, Cyben Žamcarano, Gombožab Cybikov, and

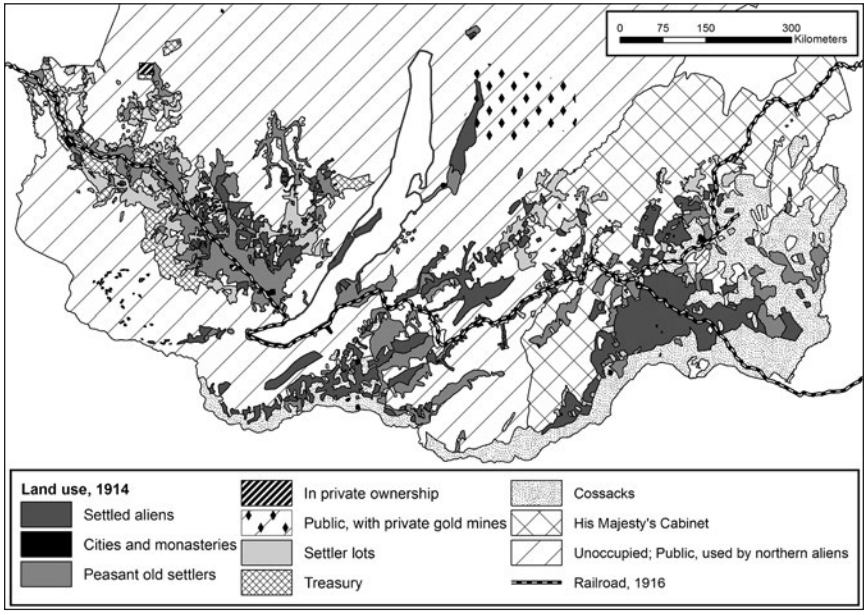

Figure 2.1 Land use in the Baikal region in 1914.

some other Buryat intellectuals received sponsorship from their communities. Others studied at their own expense. Baârto Vampilon faced major hardships when trying to earn money for education. Mihail Bogdanov had the opportunity to study in Irkutsk, Kazan, Tomsk, Saint Petersburg, Berlin, and Zurich thanks to the sponsorship of his father (Čimitdoržiev and Mihajlov 2009, 1:65–69).

Russian scholars who shared the transnational interest in Buddhism and Asia in general, Sergej Ol'denburg, a native to the Baikal region himself, Andrej Rudnev, Boris Vladimircov, and others, played an important role in making higher education accessible to the Buryat intellectuals. Žamcarano and others communicated and cooperated with them in Saint Petersburg, in the Baikal region, and in Mongolia (Bazarov and Žabaeva 2008, 51–52; Tolz 2011).

Participation of indigenous intellectuals in settling administrative issues proved to be beneficial for the natives beyond the Baikal region (Čimitdoržiev and Mihajlov 2009, 1:65). During 1909–1913 Bogdanov worked as a land-surveyor in the Yenisei Province. His contribution to the protection of Khakas land rights there was recognized in 1917 by the Khakas National Council (Bogdanov 1926, 178).

The creation of settler lots amidst the lands used by the indigenous population resulted in widespread strip holding in the Baikal region. These stripped land-use patterns, mentioned in most textual sources and seen on the map (Figure 2.1), were the main source of intergroup tensions and conflicts. Textual sources also indicate the much less regulated expansion of the newcomers to the hunting grounds of the indigenous population (Belikov 1994, 28).

The comparison between two maps showing land-use patterns in the Irkutsk Province in 1909 and 1914 proved the extreme dynamics of the settlement. In 1909 large areas in the rich-soil (Trojnickij 1904b, 75: xiv) and densely populated Balagansk District appeared as belonging to the aliens (and partly under land survey). In 1914 they were already marked as settler lots. Similar developments occurred in other parts of the western Baikal region (Pereselenčeskoe upravlenie 1909; Pereselenčeskoe upravlenie 1914d).

The artificial increase of the strip holding between different ethnic groups through the land management, seizure of Buryat and Evenk lands, and creation of settler lots amidst Buryat rural areas, as well as the abolishment of the Steppe Dumas and exclusion of native language from record keeping and education were part of the intentional Russification policy of the Tsarist government (Bogdanov 1926, ii; Damešek *et al.* 2007, 58, 67, 214, 218, 221, 238–239, 241–242; Haptaev 1954, 1:290, 292, 383). According to Daši Sampilon, this "offensive nationalism of the Russian Government" gave birth to the "defensive" nationalism among the Buryat population (GARF 200–1–478, 189 rev.) which inter alia led to an increase in indigenous literacy rates (mainly in Mongolian and Tibetan script) in Transbaikalia (Serebrennikov 1925, 42) and played a major role in the political mobilization of Buryat intellectuals during the First Russian Revolution of 1905–1907.

The overlay of the spaces produced by ethnicities and social estates was interpreted differently by the contemporaries and important actors in the years to

come. Cybikov, for instance, noted that only the interethnic strip holding produced conflicts, while the mixed settlement patterns of Buryat Cossacks and non-Cossacks did not cause any trouble, because the two groups were very close in terms of everyday life, religion, and culture (Cybikov 1981, 2:161, 164). Grigorij Semënov, a Transbaikal Cossack of Buryat-Russian ethnic origin, however, interpreted the Cossacks not as a social estate, but practically as an ethnic group with distinct characteristics and shared interests, comparing them to the Ukrainians (Semënov 2002, 94–96).

Indeed, the shared everyday experiences, training, and participation in the Great War served as a firm basis for the collective Cossack identity, at least among the members of the Cossack hosts who were sent to the front, such as Semënov himself and Roman von Ungern-Sternberg. The Baikal Cossacks, including some Buryats, fought against the German and Austro-Hungarian empires in Poland and Galicia, and the Ottoman Empire on the Caucasian Front. According to Semënov's autobiography, in Persia Ungern and himself participated in the formation of voluntary military detachments from the indigenous Assyrian population. At the same time Semënov tried to organize an ethnic Buryat regiment out of volunteers from the Baikal region (Haptaev 1954, 1:465–466; Semënov 2002, 75–76). Ungern's and Semënov's experiences in the multiethnic Transbaikal Cossack Host and mixed origin contributed to their performance when dealing with non-Russians.

2.2 Religious communities and places of worship

In the early twentieth century none of the ethnic and legal groups in the region belonged to a single religious community. Most Buryat Cossacks, for instance, were Buddhist (Cybikov 1981, 2:164), but Buddhism as such was not the only religion practiced by the Buryats. Shamanism and Orthodox Christianity were also widespread. Although there was some correlation between the religious (Figure 2.2) (Pereselenčeskoe upravlenie 1914b) and ethnic (Figure 1.5) spaces in the interpretation of the Settler Administration, the inconsistency between the two maps suggested that religion was practiced in the areas with no population. The objective of the authors was again reflected on the map, which had to show how broad the spread of Orthodox Christianity in the Baikal region was and thereby stimulate Russian settlement. Although the map suggested a clear-cut division between Shamanism in the Irkutsk Province and Buddhism in the Transbaikal Region, there were polygons representing mixture of religious groups, which was not the case for ethnographic maps.

Mapping the region's spiritual spaces based on textual sources resulted in a much more complex picture. Since faith cannot be depicted in a cartographic form, shared religious practices were considered the constituent interactions of the spaces.

Shamanism was an extremely heterogeneous phenomenon. Spiritual practices and sacred sites differed from group to group and even from family to family. Practically all major natural objects were considered sacred by different groups,

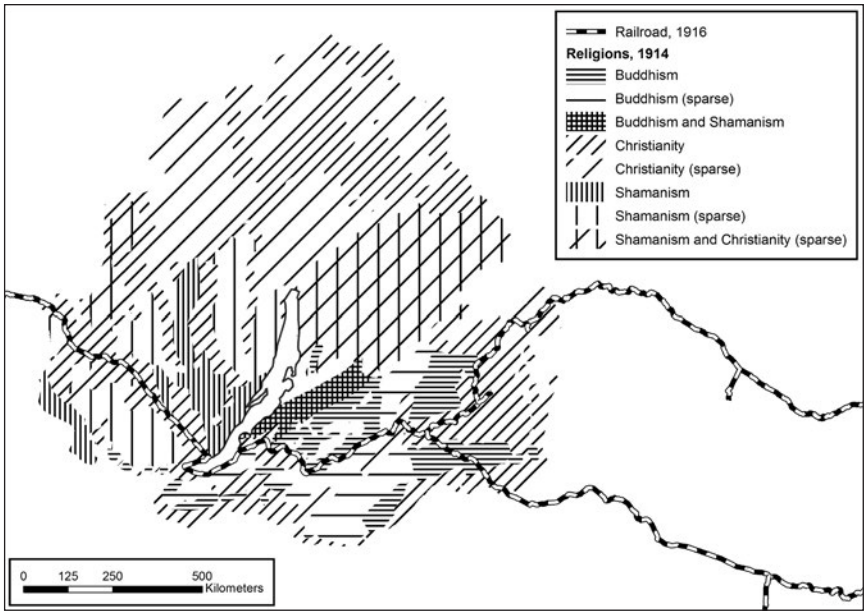

Figure 2.2 Religious spaces in the Baikal region in 1914.

with the Sacred Sea Baikal (Semënov 2002, 91) enjoying widespread devotion. It was therefore impossible to locate all of the sacred places of the Baikal region (Abaeva and Žukovskaâ 2004). Besides, the available data allowed for locating only several sacred places of Evenk Shamanism (Belikov 1994, 38). The returns of the 1897 census had little to say about the number of Shamanists, since the Evenks and Tofas were formally considered to be Orthodox Christians (Buraeva 2005, 155).

There is an apparent correlation between the distribution of Shamanist sacred places and Buddhist datsans (university monasteries) and dugans (smaller temples) in the Baikal region (Figure 2.3) (Burnarkomzem 1924; Galdanova *et al.* 1983). Similar to other geographical contexts, Buddhism in the Baikal region incorporated local deities, religious practices, and related sites (Gerasimova 1957, 136). The Bukha-noyon Sacred Mountain in the Irkut River valley, for instance, was a place of worship for Shamanist, Buddhist, and even Christian Buryats (Buraeva 2005, 152) and thereby was an interface between the geographical, ethnic, and relevant religious spaces. Featuring a system of education and Tibetan medicine, the space constituted by the Buddhist temples, monasteries, texts, lamas, and practices was not only religious, but also educational and medical.

Tibetan Buddhism of the Gelug Tradition was not confined to Transbaikalia, as the map (Figure 2.2) suggested. Buddhism began to spread in the Baikal

region in the middle of the seventeenth century, practically at the same time with Orthodox Christianity, and its space had been expanding until the early twentieth century. The extension of the shared Buddhist space to Mongolia and Tibet was seen as a threat by the Tsarist government. In order to limit the transboundary movements between the Qing and Russian empires it established the position of the head of the Buddhists in the Baikal region soon after the Treaty of Kyakhta had been signed. Since the 1820s the Imperial government had been working on further measures of control over Buddhism among the Russian subjects (Gerasimova 1957, 23–27). In 1853 it issued the Regulations on Lamaist Clergy in Eastern Siberia which restricted construction of new datsans, limited the number of lamas, and regulated their subordination to the Russian authorities (Vaškevič 1885, 127–137). The regulations consolidated Eastern Siberian Buddhism under the leadership of Pandito Hambo Lama and institutionalized it as an autonomous religious community subordinated to the Russian Empire. By the early twentieth century the number of lamas in the Baikal region had surpassed the limitations reaching ten thousand people (Cyrempilov 2013; Gerasimova 1957, 42, 63).

Mongolian and Tibetan lamas frequently visited the Baikal region, whereas many Buryats went on pilgrimage or to study to the monasteries abroad. There was a regular exchange in religious texts printed in the Baikal region, Mongolia, Tibet, and other Buddhist regions (GARF 200–1–478, 183).

After the 1853 restrictions were lessened in 1905 the institutionalized space of Buddhism extended from the Transbaikal Region to the Irkutsk Province (see the foundation dates on Figure 2.3) and even to the empire's capital, where the

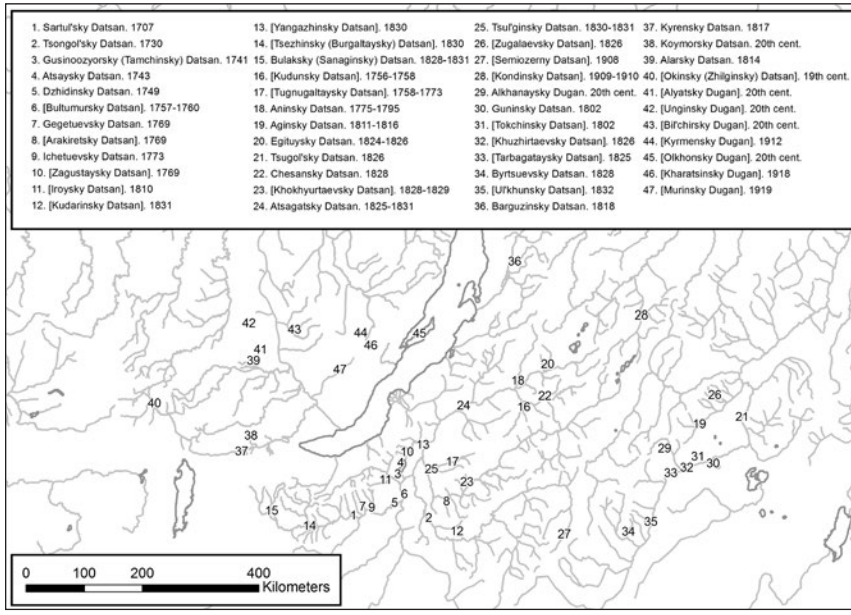

Figure 2.3 Buddhist places of worship in the Baikal region in the early twentieth century.

first Buddhist temple in a European city was opened in 1915 (Andreev 2004, 75). The First Russian Revolution was not the only reason for the liberalization of policies towards Buddhism in Russia. After the defeat in the Russo-Japanese War the Tsarist foreign policy shifted from the Far East towards the western regions of the Qing Empire and the transboundary religious and superethnic connections of Russian subjects with Mongolia and Tibet were seen as important factors (Andreev 2006; Ulymžiev and Cècègma 1999). Agvan Doržiev and other Buryat intellectuals participated both in the relations with Tibet and Mongolia and spread Buddhism across Russia (Snelling 1993). In 1907, for instance, Doržiev was allowed to open a Tibetan and Mongolian publishing house at the Atsagatsky Datsan (GARB 643–1–7, 215). The interest in Buddhism among European and Russian intellectual circles, both scientific and esoteric, also played a role (Bevir 1994; Gerasimova 1957, 133).

The space of Buddhism in the Baikal region was not homogeneous and there were rivalries between different monasteries and lamas (Galdanova *et al.* 1983). In the early twentieth century a new religious space formed around the ideas of a dissident Buddhist monk Lubsan Samdan Cydenov. According to his disciples, Cydenov developed the idea to reform Buddhism after Dzhayag Lama from the Kumbum Monastery in Tibet visited the eastern Baikal region and discussed the future of religion there with the abbot of the Chesansky Datsan, Cydenov, and two other lamas. Cydenov criticized the existing religious establishments for lack of piety and ignorance saying that the institution of datsan was the Samsara. Soon after Dzhayag Lama had left, Cydenov quit the Kudunsky Datsan and together with his disciples settled in the woodland area called Soorkhoy (Suarkhe). A report put together by regional officers of the State Political Directorate in 1923 narrated a different history of the movement stating that a conflict between Cydenov and another lama over the abbacy of the Kudunsky Datsan was the major reason behind the dissidence, which became known as the Balagad movement (Dandaron 2006, 261–262, 264, 482–483; RGASPI 272–1–239, 6–7).

Cydenov's influence among other lamas and clan nobility was considerable already in the 1890s, which made Hambo Lama Čojnzon-Doržo Iroltuev include him into the official Buryat delegation invited to the coronation of Tsar Nicholas II in 1896. According to some sources, the interest of Saint Petersburg scholars in Buddhism also contributed to the decision to invite him (Cyrempilov 2007, 65).

Despite the interest in Buddhism, Orthodox Christianity remained the state religion of the Russian Empire, and in the 1900s the legal inequalities between Buddhists and Orthodox Christians were in place. In February 1905, a group of Buryat Buddhist, including Bazar Baradijn and Žamcarano, wrote a letter to the Russian Prime Minister Sergej Vitte requesting to lift the restrictions on Buddhist education at schools; abolish the mandatory Baptism when entering lay educational institutions; allow conversion from Christianity and Shamanism to Buddhism; lessen the restrictions on Buddhist literature, utensils, ingredients, and medications of Tibetan medicine imported from the Qing territory; annul the

temporary "administrative-missionary" regulations which excluded the Buddhists of the Irkutsk Province from Pandito Hambo Lama's jurisdiction. They appealed to the global academic discourse on Buddhism and urged to abandon derogatory remarks and interpretations of this religion in Russian textbooks as Paganism and idolatry. Interestingly, the Buryat Buddhists supported the ideas of civilization and cultural development and expressed a derogatory opinion of Shamanists, stating that their conversion to Buddhism would be an "indisputable progress" (GARB 1–1–1287, 38–40).

If judged by the spread of institutions (Bolonev 2004; Denisov 1908; Gusejnova 2004; Irkutskij gubernskij 1914; 1916; Kalinina 2000; Zabajkal'skij oblastnoj 1912; Zabajkal'skij oblastnoj 1914; Zenkova 2003) and population statistics (65.9 percent of the total population in the Transbaikal Region and 83.3 percent in the Irkutsk Province in 1897) (Trojnickij 1904a, 74:vii; 1904b, 75:xi), Orthodox Christianity was the most widely practiced religion in the Baikal region. During the mass settlement in the early twentieth century the number of churches increased (Pereselenčeskoe upravlenie 1914d). The missionaries were in fierce opposition to the liberal religious policies and the conversions of Christian Buryats to Buddhism (GARB 340–1–62, 5–5 rev., 20–20 rev.)

Besides the baptized Buryats, Evenks, Yakuts, and Tofas, many of whom were only nominally Christian, the number of Orthodox Christians in the population statistics also included the so-called coreligionists (edinovercy), the Old Believers who recognized the official Russian Orthodox Church. Many Old Believers, the Orthodox Christians who protested against the reforms of Patriarch Nikon in the seventeenth century and left the official organization, remained in opposition. Their largest group in the Baikal region was the so-called Semeiskie, the descendants of the Old Believers who fled to modern Belarus and then were forcibly resettled to Transbaikalia in the eighteenth century. The Semeiskie differed from other groups of Russian population not only in religion, but also in language and culture. The Semeiskie formed a distinct ethno-religious group, with its social boundaries articulated both from inside and outside. At the same time there was no intragroup unity because the Semeiskie resettled to the Baikal region from many different places and at different times and sought to maintain their distinction by limiting external contacts. The Old Believers formed several subgroups based on the role of priests, whereas individual communities differed in language, traditions, oral histories, and so on (Bolonev 2004; Ûmsunova 2005; Zenkova 2003).

The textual sources also made it possible to locate some of the Jewish, Islamic, and non-Orthodox Christian (Catholic, Lutheran, Baptist, and Adventist) places of worship and communities (Bobkova 2006; Emel'ânov 2002; Irkutskij gubernskij 1914; 1916; Perinov 2010; Rabinovič 1999; Zabajkal'skij oblastnoj 1912; 1914; Želnovakova 2010) which further diversified spiritual spaces of the Baikal region. It is important to note that the located places by no means represented all existing religious groups. In 1912 in Verkhneudinsk alone, besides the listed groups, there were members of the Armenian Apostolic Church, Confucians, and adherents of "unknown" religions (GARB 121–1–542,

22 rev.) Besides, the statistical sources did not contain any information on Atheism.

Shared religious identity facilitated interethnic marriages. There were also many syncretic religious practices and ideas on the intersection between the named denominations, especially between Shamanism, Buddhism, and Christianity (Buraeva 2005, 174, 153, 161). Superstition was common. The Russian hunters of the Irkutsk Province, for instance, sprinkled vodka to the ground before hunting in order to bring luck. This custom was borrowed from the Buryats who sacrificed vodka to the Master of the Land. Vodka became a ritual substance among the Buryats after it had been introduced by the Russians. Cossacks made offerings to mountain spirits; some Russians were afraid of shamans' graves and made offerings there; some Russians in the Irkutsk Province often kept a "copper Buryat idol with four arms" next to the icons; sometimes shamans were invited to help in different life situations. The settlers who moved to Siberia introduced superstition common for European Russia (Kir'âkov 1902, 327, 328).

Once again, transculturality in the Baikal region, now in the form of religious diversity and numerous intersections between the spiritual spaces, was perceived as a problem by contemporary authors who noted that the communication with adherents of a different faith (inovercy) made Russians in Siberia indifferent to their own religion. The source of indifference towards Christianity was also seen in the lack of churches and schools. The space of communication affected the spaces of the Orthodox Christianity and European education (in its Russian form): the Committee of the Siberian Railway, a temporary government body, established both schools and churches along the railroad. The administration of the railway opened and maintained schools not only in Siberia, but also in Manchuria (Kir'âkov 1902, 327, 330–336).

2.3 Other spaces and categories

In the 1910s the number of schools in Siberia was still insufficient for granting universal access to education. In 1910 literacy rates in the Irkutsk Province (22 percent of men and 7 percent of women) and the Transbaikal Region (6 percent of men and 2 percent of women) remained low. By 1917 there were no institutions for higher education in the Baikal region. Schools also served as instruments of Russification and religious propaganda. School teacher Vampilon was fired in 1907 after he refused to place an icon in the classroom. Moreover, he was said to use Buryat too much (Čimitdoržiev and Mihajlov 1999, 3:21).

Education formed an identity of lay intellectuals or intelligentsia. Most of the people who received Russian education and read Russian fiction, academic and political literature viewed themselves as members of this group. Although they had much to share with their Russian counterparts, the Buryat intellectuals formed a separate subcategory which after 1917 was articulated both from outside and inside the group (GARB 278–1–20, 186 rev.; GARB 476–1–74, 139; GARB 485–1–4, 34; GARF 200–1–478, 37 rev., 183, 186; GARF 1318–1–52, 11; GARF 1318–1–269, 120 rev.).

As the literacy rates demonstrated, women had much worse access to education. Buryat women were almost completely illiterate (Serebrennikov 1925, 40). Gender relations in the Baikal region of the early twentieth century were generally asymmetric with women occupying an inferior position (GARB 278–1–118, 3 rev.) Women were excluded from administration and government at all levels.

All regional economies were differentiated based on gender, which is not surprising, as labor division based on sex "appears to have been universal throughout human history" (Hartmann 1976, 137). The differentiation was more pronounced among the herders, hunters, and fishermen. Men were responsible for the subsistence of the family, whereas women were supposed to take care of the household, make clothes, and process raw materials (Belikov 1994, 28, 38, 40; Buraeva 2005, 97, 99, 123; Serebrennikov 1925, 152). Farming was more flexible and the participation of women was greater. Trade was beneficial for women, since they did not have to produce all clothes and utensils themselves (GARB 476–1–72, 25 rev.)

The institutionalized religions were all asymmetric in gender terms: women were excluded from the system of Buddhist education, could not become priests in the numerous denominations of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. Shamanism was more inclusive since women could become shamans and healers. Interestingly, the role of a traditional healer among the Semeiskie was almost exclusively played by women who transmitted the oral knowledge from generation to generation. The healing itself resembled shamanic curative practices in their use of charms, herbs, and mysterious manipulations (Bolonev 2004, 169).

Indigenous non-Christian groups had the custom of bride price. The inability or unwillingness to pay the bride price sometimes made men adopt Christianity in order to marry Russian women. Indigenous women sometimes ran away from the violence of the matchmakers and husbands, returned to their parents and lovers or went to the monasteries, where they were baptized and married to Russian peasants (Buraeva 2005, 185; Fedorov 1925, 30). According to some sources, family relations were less asymmetric among Russian and indigenous Christians. Husbands' willfulness and brutality were uncommon and in some cases women could voice their protests against their husband's will (Buraeva 2005, 195–196). This was not the case for the Semeiskie, as in their communities women were severely punished for wrong-doings unlike men (Bolonev 2004, 264).

Age asymmetries also followed the patterns of patriarchy. Due to availability of both European and Buddhist education, young men had the opportunity to raise their social status. Russian men had better opportunities to enter a European educational facility, whereas Buryats could enter a university monastery. Young indigenous women were excluded from Buddhist education and did not have equal opportunities in the European system. Gender and age asymmetries were less acute in the western Baikal region where girls had a better access to education. It was only the Irkutsk Province which featured visible indigenous female political actors by the late 1910s, with Mariâ Sah'ânova being the most prominent one.

There is no indication that gender and age identities formed coherent groups on regional scale before 1917. These identities were nevertheless addressed by some political forces, including the Socialist Revolutionary Party and the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (both the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks) which had prominent female members, such as Mariâ Spiridonova who was a prisoner at the Nerchinsk Katorga, Ekaterina Breško-Breškovskaâ who spent several years in exile in the Baikal region, and Aleksandra Kollontaj. Through the international networks Russian socialist parties were connected to such important figures of the global women's movement as Clara Zetkin and Rosa Luxemburg.

Although before 1917 the number of people with a pronounced class and political identity was small (Batuev 1992, 6), the attention devoted by the left-oriented parties to civil rights of marginalized groups made them popular among intellectuals in the Baikal region, especially in the urban centers. The political exiles who participated in regional social life and often engaged in educational activities also played a role. Rinčino, Sah'ânova, Mihej Erbanov, Matvej Amagaev, and some other Buryat intellectuals joined illegal political organizations at a young age. Some of them received primary education from exiles (Čimitdoržiev and Mihajlov 1999). Rinčino participated in illegal activities under the Social Democrat Boris Šumâckij in the Baikal region (Nimaev 1994, 10; Šumâckij 2008, 4–5).

In Tomsk Rinčino met Grigorij Potanin and distanced himself from Marxist ideas joining the heterogeneous intellectual movement of the Siberian Regionalists (oblastniki) (Nimaev 1994, 10). The Regionalists articulated a regional Siberian identity, drew parallels between Siberia as a colony and the former British colonies in North America, and called for broad autonomy for the region. Although they paid a lot of attention to the position of the Siberian indigenous peoples in the political and economic structures of the Russian Empire (Âdrincev 1891), they did not have a clearly articulated idea about their place in the possible Siberian autonomy (Damešek *et al.* 2007, 302–335; Remnëv 1997; 2004).

In his writings of that period Rinčino sharply criticized Social Democrats for their anti-autonomous slogans, expressed global anticolonial sentiments, and advocated humanity's solidarity. He also analyzed the location of Siberia in the global economic and communication spaces. Rinčino advocated the commercial operation of the Northern Sea Route which would result in Siberia's integration into the Pacific trade, especially after the Panama Canal had been built, and its broader economic autonomy from European Russia. According to Rinčino, class identity was unimportant in the context of asymmetries between parent states and colonies, since both bourgeoisie and proletariat of the former benefited from colonial exploitation of the latter's population. At the same time he welcomed "rational settlement" which had to substitute the violent policies of the Settler Administration. Rinčino accused the presumably "civilized America" of being savage and pointed at lynch law and extermination of the natives, noted the aggressiveness of Japan and China, comparing them to Prussia, and regretted the artificial division of Mongolia into the Inner and Outer parts (Nimaev 1994, 14–34).

Siberian regional identity was supplemented by Irkutsk and Transbaikal subregional and local identities produced by the places where people lived. Each subregion, city, and village formed a relational space. The subregional division of the Buryats into Irkutsk and Transbaikal (or western and eastern) was frequently articulated. The major differences included exposure to Russian or Mongolian literacy, Orthodox Christian (and Shamanist) or Buddhist religion, and exercise of crop farming or livestock herding respectively. Differences were also drawn between the mainly sedentary and semi-nomadic western and nomadic eastern Buryats (Gerasimova 1957, 22; Serebrennikov 1925, 20, 56, 79). As it was shown above, there was no clear distinction in each of these spaces, the boundaries imagined in them did not correspond to each other and there were intersections and entanglements in each of them (multilingualism; syncretic religious practices and conversions; mixed occupations and changes in economy).

There were subethnic ethno-territorial and clan identities among the indigenous population of the Baikal region. For the Evenks the latter were more important than ethnicity, which in the written sources was mainly articulated from outside the group. Clan identities originated from both kinship relations and the legacy of the Tsarist system of administration which institutionalized clans as units in the system of tribute payment (Vysočajše utveržděnnyj 1830). The migrations caused by land problems led to mixing of clans and devaluation of clan identity among some Buryats (Bogdanov 1926, 167).

Most of the Buryat ethno-territorial subethnic identities, Khori, Aga, Selenga, Tunka, Barguzin, Oka, Kudara, Alar, and others (Abaeva and Žukovskaâ 2004, 52–53), were also institutionalized by the administrative unification of several clans under Steppe Dumas (Haptaev 1964, 224). The administrative reform which abolished the Steppe Dumas was not welcome by some not only because of the mixed Russian-Buryat divisions, but also because of the intermixture of clans and ethno-territorial subgroups. In 1906 two noble Buryats appealed to the Russian Government asking to reestablish "the clan system of administration" which originated "from the life of the Buryats themselves" and "corresponded completely to their life, custom, and economic demands." The authors indicated that the eleven clans of the Khori Buryats considered each other "blood kins" and since "great antiquity" comprised "one society" headed by "one administration," whereas after the administrative reform of 1901 the clans became fragmented and clashes between members of different clans occurred (GARB 278–1–2, 8–11 rev.)

The presence and manifestations of an overarching Russian identity, the sense of belonging to the Russian Empire, was questionable. On the one hand, there were many shared experiences related to the state and the ascription of a Russian identity to the subjects of the empire abroad. On the other hand, the subjects did not have equal rights and sometimes were openly hostile towards each other. The invitation of the Buryat delegation to the coronation of Nicholas II proved to be an interesting case in this regard. Nicholas II and previous Russian rulers were regarded by some Buddhists of the empire as the manifestation of White Tara and thereby incorporated into the Buddhist sacred space. At the same time

Cydenov did not bow before the Tsar during his audience with the Buryat delegation explaining that an ordained Buddhist monk should not bow to the Christian Tsar and that Iroltuev, by doing so, violated the Vinaya and brought disgrace upon the delegation. The scandal with the Russian authorities was settled down after the clan leader of the Khori Buryats explained that Cydenov did not bow because he had been too astonished by the patriotic feelings and happiness when meeting the Tsar (Cyrempilov 2007, 65, 71).

The beginning of the Great War further deepened the distinctions between the Russians and the indigenous non-Russians in the empire, since the latter, except for the indigenous Cossacks, were free from the military conscription. The indigenous population still participated in the war effort through formally voluntary donations. In 1916 the Tsarist Government introduced the mobilization of the natives for labor at the rear of the Russian army. Students, monks, and officials of all levels were exempt from the mobilization. In the Irkutsk Military Region over 20,000 Buryats and Evenks were mobilized. Most of them were sent to the northern and northwestern parts of European Russia where they inter alia had to dig trenches, build roads, and transport goods. The living and working conditions were extreme. Many people fell ill and some died. Both the donation campaign and the mobilization were supported by Buddhist monks under Pandito Hambo Lama Daši-Doržo Itigèlov and indigenous intellectuals (Haptaev 1964, 466, 470–473).

2.4 Transboundary entanglements and Outer Mongolia's autonomy

The ethnic and religious connections between the Buryats and Mongols laid the foundation for a superethnic Mongol identity articulated in the designation "Buryat-Mongols." The transboundary entanglements between the population of the Russian Empire and the subjects of the Qing attracted the attention of the Tsarist Government already in the eighteenth century when Catherine the Great questioned Damba-Darža Zaâev, a Mongol and the first officially recognized leader of the Russian Buddhists, about Tibet (Andreev 2006, 47; Gerasimova 1957, 24).

Major interest in the Qing outlying districts emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century and soon, in 1861, a Russian consulate in Urga was established. In 1869–1870 a possibility to send a Buryat agent to collect information about Tibet was discussed in academic and military circles. The policies intensified at the end of the nineteenth century when the political space of the Russian Empire embraced the Central Asian khanates and the so-called Great Game, the rivalry with the British Empire in Asia, shifted to East Asia. In 1893 a Buryat official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a well-known doctor of Tibetan medicine Pëtr Badmaev submitted a plan of annexing Mongolia, Tibet, and China to the Russian Empire to Tsar Alexander III. The Buryat traders and pilgrims were to play the main role in propagating for Russia and against the Qing. They had to ignite an anti-Qing insurrection and persuade the Mongols, Chinese,

and Tibetans to join the Russian Empire. The prestige of the Russian Tsar in Asia and trade were supposed to be the main factors contributing to their success. The Tsar and Sergej Vitte, then Minister of Finance, supported the plan and Badmaev received funding from the Treasury which was used for establishing a trade company and commencing with commercial and propaganda activities in the Baikal region, Mongolia, and China proper. In 1895 he sent a small group of Buryat agents to Lhasa. Two of them met with Doržiev, who was quite influential at the court of the 13th Dalai Lama (Andreev 2006, 67, 70–72; Samten and Tsyrempilov 2012, 13).

Although in his work Russia and China Badmaev used the term "Mongol-Buryats" when discussing the history of the Golden Horde, he did not articulate a unifying superethnic identity and referred to them as "these peoples." Quite the contrary, he tended to avoid even ethnic identity and stated that the indigenous peoples of Siberia "consider themselves Russian, despite the clear appearance of a non-Russian-Slavic descent." He then criticized "pseudo-patriots," who did not understand "the assimilative importance" of the Russian population and under the "influence of Europe" raised the "question of nationalities" (Badmaev 2011, 24, 34–35). Badmaev also supported the spread of Orthodox Christianity among the indigenous population of his home Baikal region. He sponsored education of talented Buryat children, but one of the mandatory conditions to continue the studies in Saint Petersburg was to adopt Christianity. Some students, including Cyden-Eši Cydypov and Žamcarano, refused and could not continue their education in Badmaev's gymnasium (Bazarov 2002, 6; Ulymžiev and Cècègma 1999, 19). Badmaev's steps towards homogenization of ethnic and religious spaces of the Baikal region alienated many Buryat intellectuals from him. In 1917, Sampilon called the surname Badmaev infamous (GARB 483–1–7, 38–39).

The ethnic and religious entanglements were interpreted in a different way by Doržiev who was entrusted by the 13th Dalai Lama to establish the relations with the Tsar and, thanks to Èsper Uhtomskij who was close to Nicholas II, began his diplomatic activities in the late 1890s (Andreev 2006, 77–80; Schimmelpenninck van der Oye 2001). Unlike Badmaev, Doržiev used the Russian foreign political interests in his efforts to support ethnic and religious rights of the Buryats and Kalmyks (a Mongolic-speaking ethnic group in European Russia).

In 1899 the Russian Geographical Society commissioned Gombožab Cybikov, a Buryat graduate of the Saint Petersburg University, to collect information about Tibet. Since Cybikov travelled disguised as a pilgrim, the Russian Geographical Society equipped Ovše Norzunov, a Kalmyk courier of Doržiev who also traveled to Lhasa, with a camera. In 1900–1901 Cybikov spent a year and a half in Lhasa and collected much invaluable information about Tibet and its capital. Cybikov and Norzunov became the first photographers of Lhasa (Andreev 2006; Cybikov 1981; 1991).

Buryats also got involved in the Russian activities in Manchuria. Cydypov, for instance, worked as an interpreter in Mukden before the end of the Russo-Japanese War and after the Russian defeat and retreat stayed in Harbin working

for a Chinese newspaper published by the Chinese Eastern Railway Administration (Bazarov 2002, 6).

The failure of the Russian Far Eastern policies epitomized by the defeat in the Russo-Japanese War (Schimmelpenninck van der Oye 2001) made the western parts of the Qing Empire the main objective for spreading and consolidating the political and economic spaces of the Russian Empire in East Asia. In 1905–1907, Baradijn, commissioned by the Russian Committee on Research of Central and East Asia under the Russian Academy of Sciences to accompany Dalai Lama on his return to Tibet from Urga (where he fled during the British invasion of 1903–1904), traveled through Mongolia and Tibet and stayed several months at the Labrang Tashikhyil Monastery (Baradin 2002).

During the Xinhai Revolution in the Qing Empire (1911–1912) Mongolia declared independence by establishing a theocratic monarchy under the Eight Jebtsundamba Khutuktu or Bogd Gegen (Bogd gègèèn) who took the title of Bogd Khan. The secession of Mongolia was not recognized by the Republic of China, but it was backed by the Russian Imperial government which used the opportunity to strengthen its positions on the Chinese territory. On October 21, 1912, an agreement between Russia and Mongolia (without China's participation) was signed in Urga. According to the Russian text, the Russian Empire recognized Mongolia's autonomy and granted it protection from China. The agreement did not specify the place of Mongolia in the post-Qing governance structure and did not address the differences between Outer, Inner, and Hulunbuir Mongolia in the former empire (Koz'menko and Adamov 1952, 410–411).

The overall situation in international politics and the recent war experience, however, prevented Russia from provoking an opened confrontation with China. On October 23, 1913, in a bilateral declaration signed in Beijing (now without Mongolia) Russia recognized China's suzerainty over Outer Mongolia, whereas China recognized Outer Mongolia's autonomy and agreed not to send its troops there (Koz'menko and Adamov 1952, 418–420). Hence, the new text specified that only a part of Mongolia acquired special status and unequivocally defined it as part of post-imperial China.

On May 25, 1915, after long negotiations a trilateral agreement was finally signed in Kyakhta (then a trade settlement next to Troitskosavsk) which confirmed the 1912 and 1913 documents. Outer Mongolia was granted autonomy while remaining part of the Chinese territory. It had the right for self-government and could enter into trade and industrial agreements with other countries, but was not allowed to sign treaties on political and territorial matters. The agreement also reaffirmed the boundary between Inner and Outer Mongolia, a division based on the proximity to the Qing dynasty in administrative terms (Batsajhan 2002). The treaty introduced a new power structure interpreted by a European term "autonomy" implying self-government of a particular region within another state (Autonomy 2010).

After entering modern philosophical discourse, the term autonomy was understood as independence of an individual within society (Schneewind 1992). After the American Revolutionary War (1775–1783) and the French Revolution

(1789–1799) legitimized the ideas of national and democratic self-determination, the term autonomy acquired a collective notion. In the context of the spread of nationalism, autonomy became an alternative to full independence of different groups within empires. In the Russian Empire, Little Russia, Bessarabia, the Baltic provinces, Finland, and the Kingdom of Poland enjoyed practically autonomous status at certain periods. This status was seen as an interim phase on the way to their Russification in legal and linguistic terms and full incorporation into the state (Hripačenko 2012, 124).

In foreign policy, the Imperial Government relied on the opposite view on autonomy and used it as an instrument of disintegration; in the nineteenth century it was used in the Balkans. Even though it was William Gladstone, then leader of the opposition in the British parliament, who called for the autonomy of Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria in 1876 (Gladstone 1876), the named territories received such status after the military success of the Russian Empire in the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877–1878. Despite some limitations to the initial plan which were introduced at the Congress of Berlin (1878) the autonomy of Bulgaria was widely perceived as a major step towards its independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1908 (Tokay 2001). It was this secessionist notion of autonomy which was introduced by the Russian Empire to Mongolia in 1912–1915. The British attempted to impose the same notion upon the Republic of China in Tibet. The Simla Accord (1914) divided Tibet into outer and inner parts. The latter would remain under the direct jurisdiction of China, whereas the former would enjoy self-government under Chinese suzerainty. China rejected the treaty which was nevertheless signed by the Tibetan and British plenipotentiaries (Alexandrowicz-Alexander 1954).

The status of Barga or Hulunbuir Mongolia (GARF 200–1–406, 1) was another subject of negotiations between Tsarist Russia and the Chinese Republic. The region was not included in Mongolia and belonged to the Heilongjiang Province of Manchuria under the Qing Dynasty. Shortly after the Xinhai Revolution, Barga declared its independence and, owing to support provided by Dmitrij Horvat and other Russian officials, defended it. In the Kyakhta agreement of 1915, however, Hulunbuir was explicitly excluded from autonomous Outer Mongolia. A Russian–Chinese agreement finalized in late October 1915 placed Barga under direct control of the Chinese central government leaving it some autonomous rights and enabling Russian influence there (Lattimore 1930, 321; Tang 1969, 406; Williams 1916, 800).

The Russian Empire failed to establish direct protectorate over Mongolia, but it nevertheless significantly increased its presence there via advisors to Bogd Gegen's government and diplomatic agents. In Tannu Uryankhai, a part of Outer Mongolia on non-Russian and pre-1911 Russian maps, the Tsarist government managed to institutionalize its presence. In 1914, it was officially proclaimed a Russian protectorate (Habarov 2008, 1:31).

After the Xinhai Revolution of 1911, the number of Russian subjects working on the former Qing territory increased. Cydypov had participated in the anti-Chinese movements in Inner Mongolia and Barga (Hulunbuir) already

since 1909. Cokto Badmažapov participated in the negotiations with Inner Mongolian insurgent. Cydypov, as a Russian representative, participated in the negotiations on the status of Barga (Bazarov 2002, 7–11). Semënov, who had been stationed in Urga since October 1911 with the Cossack regiment guarding the Russian Consulate, participated in the events related to the 1911 Revolution in Outer Mongolia. He commanded the detachment sent by the Russian consul to protect the Chinese amban from the crowd, but disobeyed his orders and disarmed the Chinese garrison. According to Semënov, the military command supported his initiative, but the Russian Consul insisted that he leave Urga in forty-eight hours (Semënov 2002, 18–21). In 1913 Roman von Ungern-Sternberg pleaded to be sent to Mongolia. After a refusal from the command he retired and traveled there as a private person seeking to join one of the commanders of Mongolian forces at Khovd and fight the Chinese. Russian officials, however, prevented him from participating in the conflict and he had to join the Verkhneudinsk Cossack Regiment as an out-of-staff officer. After the Russo-Chinese agreement was signed in late 1913, Ungern returned to his home in modern Estonia (Ûzefovič 2010). In 1911, Žamcarano was appointed councilor to the Russian Consulate in Urga and became advisor to Bogd Khan's government (Ulymžiev and Cècègma 1999, 35); Badmažapov worked as an interpreter when a delegation of the Mongolian government visited Saint Petersburg in 1913. In 1914 he was employed by the Russian financial advisor to Bogd Khan's government and in 1915–1917 was part of the Mongolian expedition purchasing meat for the Russian army (Čimitdoržiev and Mihajlov 2009, 1:70–71); in 1915–1916, Rinčino conducted economic and other research in Outer Mongolia (Nimaev 1994, 10–11).

The Baikal region proved to be a zone of complex spatial entanglements. Regional population belonged to numerous ethnic, religious, political, legal, and other groups, none of which had clear boundaries. No boundary or division imagined and institutionalized in one of the many relational spaces which overlapped in the region was relevant for all or even some other spaces; in most cases no clear boundary could at all have been drawn in any of the transcultural spaces intersecting in the Baikal region.

The transculturality of the region proved to be a source of both benefits and challenges for the empire. The empire's contradictory approach to transculturality, that is the fear of heterogeneity and the desire to utilize transboundary entanglements, embodied in the figure of Badmaev who attempted to use the religious and superethnic connections between the people of the Baikal region and the Qing Empire while fostering conversion of the Buryats to Christianity. Such people as Ungern and Semënov gained unique experiences at the borderland which they could then use for the benefit of the empire in other regions of Eurasia. The Mongol origin and Buddhist religion of people like Rinčino, Žamcarano, Badmažapov, Doržiev, Cybikov, and others helped them become a connector between the Russian Empire and the former Qing territories. They actively participated in supplying the empire with valid information and spreading Russian influence in Asia.

At the same time, reginal politicians were not silent servants of the empire and actively protested during the Revolution of 1905–1907 against the attempts to turn Russia into a homogeneous nation-state and contributed to the establishment of the Mongol autonomy. They opposed legal inequality and Russification and criticized complex land-use patterns which were seen as a threat to indigenous economies.

The transculturaluty of the Baikal region provided the participants of power relations with various interpretations of and approaches to governance and enabled them to develop ideas about post-imperial settlement on the former Qing and Romanov territory. The imperial policies in North Asia made the Buryat nationalists aquainted with the notion of autonomy, whereas the imperial politics exposed them to socialist and Siberian Regionalist takes on autonomy and decentralization.

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3 The Buryat national autonomy, 1917–1918

3.1 Indigenous activism after the February Revolution

The spread of nationalist ideologies across the globe was one of the major trends during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (Bayly 2004). Incorporation of anti-imperial sentiments into nationalist discourses made them popular in both colonial centers and colonies. The new political mythologies, doctrines, and programs which developed at the crossings between the global nationalist trend and local discourses did not necessarily aim at decolonization and independence. Many groups which articulated their unity in national terms fought discrimination, demanded broader representation within existing power structures, and defended their native languages and other forms of cultural expression (Osterhammel 2010, 584). These claims were often formulated in liberal terms. The Buryat national movement, which consolidated during the Russian Revolution of 1905–1907, followed the moderate anticolonial nationalist pattern (Bazarov and Žabaeva 2008, 48–50; Montgomery 2011). Another major discursive trend during the period centered on the notion of social justice which appealed to national and international class identities (Eley 2002). The Great War catalyzed both discourses which intersected and were used for social mobilization within the warring states and beyond (Nation 1989). Social revolutions and anti-imperial national movements, fostered by military defeats, brought the Russian, Austro-Hungarian, German, and Ottoman empires to their collapse.

The revolution, which began in late February 1917 in Petrograd, resulted in the abdication of Tsar Nicolas II and the end of the Russian Empire. The February Revolution was the outcome of a broad social movement without pronounced planning or leadership. The confluence of liberal and socialist discourses gave the revolution the support of many people, but at the same time led to the emergence of alternative power centers, the Russian Provisional Government and the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, which had different perspectives on further changes in the former empire. The program of major social and political reforms eliminating ethnic, estate, and gender asymmetries developed by the Provisional Government, together with the decision to convene the Constituent Assembly through universal, direct, and equal elections by secret ballot enjoyed popular support. The ideas of freedom, equality, and justice gave

rise to widespread revolutionary euphoria and fostered activism across the former empire. Various meetings, congresses, and councils articulated occupational (workers, peasants, and soldiers), ethnic, and estate (Cossacks) identities. Amnesty brought many former prisoners, exiles, and emigrants back to political interactions. At the same time, the continuation of the war and collapse of stable economic and administrative structures resulted in aggravation of power struggle and violence (Figes and Kolonitskii 1999; Trockij 1990; Wade 2000). The February Revolution nurtured anticolonial nationalist sentiments in Finland, Poland, Ukraine, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and other regions of the former empire.

The February events in Petrograd evoked almost immediate response among the population of the Baikal region. On March 6, 1917, a group of Buryat intellectuals gathered for a private meeting in Chita. Welcoming the new Russian government, the meeting decided to convene an all-Buryat national[1] congress in order to prepare for the elections to the All-Russian Constituent Assembly and protect Buryat "national interests" for which an organizing committee under Mihail Bogdanov was formed. Èlbek-Dorži Rinčino was among the elected members of the committee. The meeting resolved to ask Cyben Žamcarano, Bazar Baradijn, and Gombožab Cybikov to join the committee and invited "Irkutsk Buryat intellectuals" to establish a special organizing committee in the Irkutsk Province. Bogdanov was elected temporary representative of the Buryat people in the newly formed Chita revolutionary government (the Committee of Public Safety) in which a place for such a representative was requested. The Organizing Committee decided to appeal to the Buryats in Buryat and Russian (GARB 483–1–48, 7–8).

The Buryat intellectuals supported one of the key slogans of the February Revolution, the need to convene the Constituent Assembly. The concept was borrowed from the French Revolution of 1789–1799 during which the Assemblée constituante was formed to draft a new constitution of France. The name of the regional revolutionary government appealed to the more controversial Comité de salut public, the body which was established to protect the republic from external and internal enemies and became closely associated with the Reign of Terror (1793–1794). The two institutions provided discursive connection between the Russian Revolution, the Baikal region, and the main revolutionary myth of Europe (Hobsbawm 1996; Osterhammel 2010).

On March 10, 1917, another private meeting of the "Buryat-Mongol public figures" chaired by Bogdanov resolved to strive for national autonomy for the Transbaikal and Irkutsk Buryats. The autonomy was to be headed by a parliament[2] which would issue legislation on civil, land-use, education, healthcare, and religious issues. The meeting resolved to welcome Agvan Doržiev as a member of the organizing committee. The previous Hambo Lama Čojnzon-Doržo Iroltuev and the current Hambo Lama Daši-Doržo Itigèlov were invited to join the committee as honorary members and to give their blessing for the "fruitful activities of the committee for the benefit of the people." The establishment of local, district, and datsan committees for "the organization of the masses and popular opinion" was regarded as desirable. The Buryats were directed to send

to the congress one delegate from each thousand adults of both sexes, one from administrative divisions with populations less than one thousand, and one from each datsan (GARB 483–1–48, 32–33).

The idea of national self-government which was prominent during the Revolution of 1905–1907 (Bazarov 2011, 3:15–16; Montgomery 2011) returned to discussions among Buryat intellectuals. They used the term autonomy which was first introduced into the regional context by the Siberian Regionalists and in 1912–1915 was employed by the Russian imperial authorities for legitimizing disintegration of the former Qing Empire. In their quest for autonomy the Buryat politicians, some of whom had experience in autonomous Outer Mongolia, went beyond the limited Steppe Duma and rural zemstvo self-government (Emmons and Vucinich 1982). They joined the discussion on decentralization, federalism, and autonomy which by then had become prominent in liberal and socialist discourses. In this discussion they were close to those socialists who understood autonomy as the implementation of the right to national self-determination (Hripačenko 2012).

Despite some shortcomings in procedures, the Chita group demonstrated its adherence to democratic principles of decision-making, aimed at the inclusion of both lay and religious Buryat intellectuals, and sought popular participation. The concepts they used in the early stages (national autonomy, benefit of the people, and mobilization of the masses) derived from the globally circulating socialist and liberal nationalist discourses which intersected in the February Revolution (Hickey 1996; Wade 2000).

The use of the word "sejm" for parliament indicated a discursive connection between the Buryat national movement and the Polish national movement which, on the one hand, was exemplary for ethnic minorities in the Russian Empire and, on the other hand, had a durable connection to the intellectual spaces of the Baikal region via the Polish political exiles. The word "sejm" appealed to the experience of two national autonomies within the Russian Empire. The term referred to the parliaments of the Kingdom of Poland, which had its own constitution and legislative body (Sejm) between its incorporation into the Russian Empire after the Congress of Vienna in 1815 and the abrogation of the constitution after the November Uprising (1830–1831) in 1832 (Strakhovsky 1941), and the Grand Duchy of Finland, where a legislative assembly (Porvoon maapäivät) was convened in 1808–1809. Despite the short history of Polish self-government in the Russian Empire and the fact that the Finnish diet did not convene in 1809–1863, the two autonomies and their respective parliaments played a major role in the history of constitutionalism and parliamentarianism in Eastern Europe and Eurasia. The Finnish diet was reformed into a modern parliament (it continued to be referred to as sejm in Russian) after Nicholas II conceded to the revolutionaries and established the State Duma of the Russian Empire in 1905. During the first elections to the Finnish parliament in 1906 Finnish women became the first in Europe to enjoy the right to vote (Kirby 1975; Korppi-Tommola 1990).

Conflicts between political groupings accompanied the February Revolution. The participation of the masses, which some liberals opposed, was a pivotal

issue (Figes and Kolonitskii 1999). Ideological differences and the absence of a unanimously recognized authority resulted in the establishment of multiple political structures: the Provisional Government and its commissars, the local and regional committees of public safety and public organizations, and the soviets (councils) of deputies. In the Baikal region the soviets and committees were established in most urban centers in early March. The Verkhneudinsk Soviet chaired by a member of the Bolshevik faction of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (RSDLP) Vasilij Serov recognized the Verkhneudinsk Committee of Public Organizations (Haptaev 1964, 142–143) mitigating thereby the split between alternative centers of authority.

The Chita group expressed its loyalty to the Provisional Government, but its position was challenged after a different group of "representatives of the Transbaikal and Irkutsk Buryats, as well as the Astrakhan and Stavropol Kalmyks" gathered in Petrograd on March 9, 1917. The Petrograd group recognized the Provisional Government and established the Provisional Organizing Buryat-Kalmyk Committee which was supposed to conduct relations with the Provisional Government, the Petrograd Soviet, and all other "central governmental and public agencies and individuals"; to create local Buryat and Kalmyk public organizations which would substitute the Tsarist administration; to consolidate the new order "on the foundations of national cultural self-determination"; to establish a people's militia instead of police; to inform the Kalmyks and Buryats about the new order in Russia implementing the "great slogans of freedom and equality"; and to prepare for the Constituent Assembly. The Petrograd group proclaimed itself the "central body for all matters" relating to the Buryats and Kalmyks. The committee was chaired by Nikolaj Hanhasaev and included several Buryat and Kalmyk intellectuals who lived in Petrograd; Doržiev and Baradijn were among them. Unlike the Chita committee, it included a female member, a student of Lesgaft's Courses S. Hangalova (GARB 483–1–48, 9).

The committee in Chita established contact with the Petrograd committee on March 19, 1917. Offering cooperation, the Chita group mentioned its own legitimation by a meeting which took place in Chita on March 12, 1917, and involved some sixty "representatives of the Transbaikal Buryats and Tunguses" under the chairmanship of Pandito Hambo Lama (GARB 483–1–8, 17). The Chita group appealed to the Buryat and Evenk ethnic, Buddhist religious, and, via the use of the term "Buryat-Mongol," Mongol superethnic identity.

The Petrograd group responded in a month. Hanhasaev wrote that the Petrograd committee had to be reinforced by "prominent public figures" from the Baikal region (Batuev 1994, 15). The Petrograd committee also published a proclamation to the Buryats. Its authors referred to the transregional issue of "peripheries" (okrainy) of the Russian Empire, pointed at the "liberation of Finland," "restoration of Poland," the use of "native language" in Ukraine, self-determination discussions in Lithuania and the Caucasus, and regretted the absence of claims coming from Siberia. The concepts it appealed to were different from those used by the Chita group and resembled the Siberian Regionalist ideas of "self-determination of the population of Russia" in accordance with

economic and ethnic features of particular regions. Participation of Buryats and Kalmyks was to be limited to collecting ideas and wishes about self-government which then would be passed to the representatives of Siberia in the Constituent Assembly. The proclamation offered to convene a congress of the Irkutsk and Transbaikal Buryats for discussing the agenda of the Petrograd committee and electing members to it. The committee's legitimacy was not mentioned, but it was meant to be the central body representing the interests of the Buryats and Kalmyks who would appeal to the Provisional Government the same way other ethnic groups of Russia did (GARB 483–1–8, 1–5).

There was a discrepancy between the appeals to Siberian regional identity and to the Mongolic superethnic identity of the Buryats and Kalmyks because the Kalmyks lived in European Russia. Besides, the notions of economic and ethnic self-determination contradicted each other. The Petrograd committee made no appeals to the Buddhist religious identity, despite the participation of Buddhist monks. The concepts used by the committee (self-determination, freedom, and equality) conformed to the liberal discourse, whereas popular participation was confined to mere consultations.

The relations between the Buryats and Evenks and between the Irkutsk and Transbaikal Buryats were important in the Baikal region. For the residents of the capital the cooperation between the Buryats and Kalmyks united around the Petrograd Datsan was more relevant. Its remoteness from regional interactions made the Petrograd group no competitor to its Chita counterpart in the Siberian-Mongolian borderland. After the Buryat emigrants in Mongolia offered their cooperation to the Chita committee it became a transboundary authority (GARB 483–1–48, 31).

The primacy of the Chita group was reaffirmed by close contacts with the newly established local Buryat committees, which supported it financially and circulated its minutes in Mongolian and Russian. The group entered into a bond with the Chita section of the Socialist Revolutionary Party (SRs) which promised to support Buryat national claims in the Constituent Assembly (GARB 483–1–8, 15–16). Many Buryat intellectuals, including Bogdanov, Rinčino, and Žamcarano, joined the SRs, the largest political group in the former Russian Empire in the months to come (Melancon 1990, 244).

It was neither Chita nor Petrograd, but Irkutsk where the first revolutionary congress of the Buryat population assembled in early April 1917. The congress articulated ethnic and subethnic Buryat identities and suggested constructing boundaries in economic and land-use spaces. Accusing the Tsarist government of Russification and artificial increase in strip holding of the Buryat, new settler, and old settler lands, the congress resolved that all lands in de facto Buryat use prior to land management had to be returned to them (Batuev 1994, 11, 13–14).

The discussions of future governance continued locally. On April 15, 1917, a meeting of Aga Buryats gave instructions to its delegates to the Transbaikal regional congress of Cossacks, peasants, and aliens in Chita:

> Due to the great extent of the space of Russia and the diversity of its population, consisting of a variety of national, cultural historical, lifestyle, and

> geographical large and small groups, and due to the impossibility and harm of a centralized administration of the country, it is appropriate and fair to establish a federative democratic republic on the principle of autonomy, ensuring the right for the minority's self-determination by the fundamental laws of the state. … Siberia (Eastern and Western with the Kyrgyz [Kazakh]) requires a broad autonomy with a legislative parliament and the right to an independent budget. Autonomous Siberia should be in charge of immigration and emigration within its territorial boundaries. Siberia should have the right to vote on the matter of local customs and tariffs. The same principle of autonomy for individual regions and ethnic groups should form the basis of the Siberian administration and minority rights should be protected. Strict control of the people should be established in the field of diplomatic and military policies of the country. A general referendum should be established for resolving the issues of critical state importance.
>
> (GARB 483–1–48, 314)

The ideas of the Siberian Regionalists were specified for the Baikal region and supplemented with nationalist claims. The Buryat population was supposed to form a separate national electoral district and receive at least three places at the All-Russian Constituent Assembly. The meeting accented the central role of the rural population (the Cossacks, peasants, and aliens) in the country's economic life and advocated its political demands. The Aga Buryat delegates were to insist on convening a Siberian regional congress and a congress of Siberian aliens. Similarly to the interpretations used by the Petrograd committee, the latter was supposed to include the Kalmyks. Sharing the views of the Chita group, the meeting instructed its delegates to demand national autonomy for the Buryats "in the fields of internal legislation, court, administration, public health, veterinary, schooling, public order, spiritual, and material culture." In the space of land use the demands resembled those of the Irkutsk congress. The lands taken from the Buryats had to be returned to them and managed by their national self-government bodies, whereas the Tsarist system of administration and land management had to be abolished immediately (GARB 483–1–48, 314).

3.2 The National Autonomy of the Mongol-Buryats

On April 23–25, 1917, the Buryat intellectuals who participated in the Chita, Petrograd, and Irkutsk meetings assembled in Chita for the first All-Buryat Congress. Baradijn was unanimously elected chairman. Bogdanov became "honorary chairman." Bogdanov presented the project of "the National Autonomy of the Mongol-Buryats" which was designed by the Chita group. It was adopted with minor changes. According to the project, the Buryats of the Irkutsk Province and the Transbaikal Region united into a single national autonomy and participated in the settlement of matters related to the Russian state via the elections to the Constituent Assembly, the country's legislative bodies, and bodies of regional autonomy and self-government. Taking part in the work of the "supreme bodies

of local estate-free self-government" equally with other ethnic groups, the Buryats had the right to form independent national self-government agencies on site (GARF 1701–1–16, 18a–18a rev., 26–27).

The notions of territorial and exterritorial autonomy (GARF 1701–1–16, 19), which were articulated at the congress, were borrowed from the European socialist discourse. The concept of autonomy in the Russian socialist discourse can be traced back to Mihail Bakunin who called for a new form of political organization that would abandon authoritarianism and violence. Individuals were to unite into communes; communes would make provinces; provinces would form nations; and nations would join to make the United States of Europe, and later the world. All entities retained the right to join and secede from larger entities. The SRs tried to combine Bakunin's scheme and national self-determination. In its 1906 program the party proposed to grant autonomy to regions and communities within a democratic republic and to rely on federal principles when regulating relations between different nations. Socialist parties of the non-Russian peoples favored the idea of national territorial autonomies. The Jewish Socialist Workers Party, however, did not view territorial autonomies as suitable for geographically divided national groups. Relying on the principle of exterritorial autonomy or "personal autonomy" developed by the Austromarxists Otto Bauer and Karl Renner, Jewish socialists suggested institutionalizing nations as non-territorial unions (Bakunin 1972; Bauer 1907; Renner 2005; Hripačenko 2012, 105–106, 110–112, 114).

Unlike their Austrian counterparts, Russian Marxists opposed the idea of exterritorial autonomy. The RSDLP included the right to local and regional self-government and the right to self-determination for all nations into its program in 1903. The latter was later clarified by Vladimir Lenin as the right of nations to secede and form independent states (Hripačenko 2012, 109–110; Lenin 1969a; Stalin 1946). Iosif Stalin claimed that unlike self-determination cultural national autonomy did not give nations full rights, "contradicted the way of their development," and was "inapplicable for the future socialist society." Those nations which decided not to secede would be granted regional autonomy. Such autonomy would not have to be nationally exclusive, since its purpose was not to strengthen, but to destroy boundaries between national groups and give way to boundary construction between classes. According to Stalin, ethnic minorities within autonomous regions would be oppressed by majorities only if the old regime persisted. Full democratization, the right to use native language, the right to have national schools, and the freedom of religion, he argued, would solve the national question in Russia (Stalin 1946).

The National Autonomy of the Mongol-Buryats, hence, conformed to the notions used by the SRs and socialist nationalist parties of the former Russian Empire and contradicted the ideas of Russian Marxists. The project designed by Bogdanov and adopted by the first All-Buryat Congress featured a four-level structure. Somons (rural communities), which were the basic units of self-government, united into khoshuns (small rural districts). Khoshuns united into aymaks (districts) which formed the Buryat Autonomy. The supreme body of the

Autonomy "uniting all parts of the Buryat people into a single whole" was the parliament, the Buryat National Duma (Burâtskaâ nacional'naâ duma) elected by direct and equal vote by secret ballot by all Buryats with no criminal convictions of both sexes from the age of eighteen. The parliament had the right to issue legislation based on common law and customs of the Buryats in the fields which were within the jurisdiction of the self-government bodies in the 1822 charter (Vysočajše Utverždennyj 1830). All corporal punishments were abolished, while all sentences were to be passed by jury. The parliament was granted the right to collect taxes from the Buryat population. The decision about the seat of the Buryat National Duma and therefore the center of the autonomy was postponed until the Buryat National Constituent Assembly. The latter also had to decide on the national emblem of the Buryat Autonomy. The adopted project was ruled provisional until the delimitation of the Buryat national territory, which had to be insisted on at the All-Russian Constituent Assembly (GARF 1701–1–16, 18a–19, 26–27 rev.)

The idea to convene the Buryat National Constituent Assembly appealed to both the February Revolution of 1917 and the French Revolution of 1789–1799. By stating the need for a separate constituent assembly the participants of the congress defined the Buryats as a nation. The use of the term aymak for the ethnoterritorial divisions of the Buryat population provided a discursive connection to several regions of the former Russian and Qing empires where it had been institutionalized before (Lhamsuren 2006). The terms khoshun and somon were also borrowed from the political space of the former Qing Empire. The use of the terms with military connotations was criticized by Lubsan Samdan Cydenov and his disciples who feared militarization of the Buryats (Očiržapov n.d., 2).

The Buryat State Forum (Burâad ulasaj šuulgan) was the approved name of the parliament in Buryat (GARF 1701–1–16, 18). The absence of the term "state" from the Russian translation rendered by the Buryat intellectuals themselves may be seen as a tactical move and the discrepancy between Buryat and Russian terms. The use of the word "duma" was a clear reference to the recent experience of Russian parliamentarianism, the State Duma of the Russian Empire which appeared during the first Russian Revolution.

According to the project, the Buryat National Duma elected a permanent executive body, the Buryat National Committee, consisting of five members accountable to the parliament. The duma itself convened at least once a year. Bogdanov also presented the project of a temporary executive self-government body, the Provisional Buryat National Committee (Vremennyj Burâtskij nacional'nyj komitet, Burnackom). Burnackom was designed to make the Buryat population ready for the establishment of regional and local rural zemstvo self-government (Emmons and Vucinich 1982), which had been implemented in European Russia, but was still pending in Siberia, and to organize elections to the All-Russian Constituent Assembly and the next All-Buryat Congress. Burnackom was to be elected at the congress and include one representative from each of the aymaks. Burnackom received the funds and materials of the Chita organizing committee and was expected to begin publishing in Buryat. Although

Chita remained the seat of Burnackom, its status of the center of the Buryat Autonomy was challenged. Delegates resolved to convene future congresses in Verkhneudinsk and then on "Buryat territory" in the "geographical center of Buryatia" where a special hall was to be built (GARF 1701–1–16, 19–20, 30).

The project of the Buryat Autonomy adopted by the first All-Buryat Congress drew heavily on the Buryat identity in ethno-national sense and excluded other ethnic groups. In a telegram sent by the congress to the leaders of the Russian Provisional Government the "Buryat people inhabiting the Transbaikal Region and the Irkutsk Province" were defined as a "distinct group in a national, cultural economic, and legal sense." The congress petitioned the Provisional Government for three representatives of the Buryat population at the All-Russian Constituent Assembly (GARF 1701–1–16, 25), articulating thereby adherence to the Russian state. The transboundary entanglements with the Mongols were reaffirmed by using the terms "Buryat," "Buryat-Mongol," and "Mongol-Buryat" interchangeably and institutionalizing connections in the communication space. Cyden-Eši Cydypov was invited to become editor of the Mongolian version of the magazine published by Burnackom and the Transbaikal Cooperative Society (Badlaeva 2006, 226–230; GARF 1701–1–16, 23 rev.).

The Buryat Autonomy disregarded estate identities and was supposed to include the Buryat Cossacks. The division into aymaks did not repeat the previous division into the Steppe Dumas. The main principle behind the new division was the distance between khoshuns in the geographical space. Although "clan and tribal groupings" were supposed to be abandoned, some names of the aymaks (Aga, Barguzin, Ekhirit-Bulagat, Selenga, and Khori) repeated the names of the abolished Steppe Dumas and appealed to the ethno-territorial grouping of the Buryats (GARF 200–1–478, 187–187 rev.) The eleven khoshuns of the Khori Aymak were named after the eleven Khori clans (Očiržapov n.d., 2).

Even though the Buryats were defined as a single nation, the subregional Transbaikal and Irkutsk identities remained. On April 25, 1917, only the members from the four aymaks of the Transbaikal Region were elected to Burnackom. Rinčino, representing the Barguzin Aymak, was elected chairman the same day. Bogdanov became one of the four probationary members (kandidat). The matter was that the Irkutsk Buryats had their own national committee which was requested to delegate its representatives to Burnackom by the congress (GARB 483–1–67, 1–1 rev.; GARF 1701–1–16, 22–22 rev.)

The Irkutsk organization, which inter alia included Mihej Erbanov and Mariâ Trubačeeva as of May 23, 1917, was interchangeably referred to as the Irkutsk Department of Burnackom (GARB 483–1–55, 33), the Irkutsk Buryat Committee (GARB 483–1–6, 25), or the Irkutsk Buryat National Committee (Batuev 1994, 49). The Irkutsk and Chita organizations exchanged opinions (GARB 483–1–6, 25–26). The second All-Buryat Congress, which took place at the Gusinoozyorsky Datsan on June 10–16, 1917, resolved that the two committees were to strengthen coordination of their activities through the exchange of decisions, minutes, and other correspondence (Batuev 1994, 54).

The initial project of autonomy had nothing to say about spiritual spaces, but religious groupings were discussed at the two congresses. The first congress decided to contact Pandito Hambo Lama about the inclusion of clergy in Burnackom (GARF 1701–1–16, 18a–30). The second congress convened at Pandito Hambo Lama's residence and featured major discussions on reforming Buddhism. Rinčino, Žamcarano, Bogdanov, Doržiev, and others viewed Buddhism as a major unifying factor of the Buryat nation, an ideology which could be understood by the people. At the same time the second congress adopted instructions which claimed that religion was a personal matter, urged that freedom of worship had to be guaranteed by the fundamental laws of the state and advocated compulsory secular schooling for all children which would have the right to continue religious education after the fourth year. The democratic principles of decision-making were applied to religious institutions. The numbers of clerics and their financial support were to be decided by general meetings of religious communities through universal, equal, and direct vote by secret ballot. Pandito Hambo Lama himself was to be elected the same way by all the Buddhists of Eastern Siberia (Bazarov and Žabaeva 2008, 95–96; Gerasimova 1964, 17).

In spite of the instructions, the Buryat national movement cannot be considered entirely secular. Apart from the participation of the clergy in decision-making, the Buryat self-government bodies assisted in the spread of Buddhism across the Baikal region (GARB 483–1–55, 13–14). Furthermore, between 1919 and 1922 various Buryat agencies used a right-facing swastika as their emblem on official documents (GARB 305–1–11, 5; GARB 305–1–9, 7; GARB 485–1–21, 29; GARF 1701–1–16, 44; GARF 1701–1–64, 2; RGASPI 372–1–127, 37).

The project of autonomy foregrounded the necessity to defend the Buryat language. Linguistic and intellectual spaces had to be protected from Russification. The first congress adopted the plan of the nationalization of Buryat schools which was proposed by Cybikov and Baradijn. The Buryat language was made the primary language of education. Russian, as the state language, remained mandatory. A further resolution proposed by Žamcarano and adopted by the congress named the mandatory subjects to be taught in Buryat schools from the 1917–1918 school year: Mongol-Buryat Language, History of the Buryats and Mongols, History of Mongolian Literature, and Buryat Studies. The congress elected the Education Council to implement the project. Cybikov, Baârto Vampilon, Žamcarano, and Baradijn were among the elected members. Together with publishing activities, bilingual schooling secured the position of the Buryats in the spaces of Russian and Mongolian written communication. National healthcare was to be strengthened by inviting the European-educated Buryat doctors, including Sanžimitab Cybiktarov, to work in the autonomy (Batuev 1994, 22; GARF 1701–1–16, 20 rev.–23 rev.).

The macroregional Siberian identity was also articulated at the first All-Buryat National Congress. Although the congress pointed at the undeveloped state of the Siberian autonomist project, it ruled that Burnackom engaged with the matter and stayed in touch with the Siberian Regionalists. Daši Sampilon was authorized to represent the Buryat Autonomy at their organizations. He was

also named representative to the congresses of Autonomists-Federalists and Aliens and to the Buryat-Kalmyk committee in Petrograd which welcomed the congress by telegram (GARF 1701–1–16, 23 rev.–24). The congress thereby articulated the superethnic Buryat-Kalmyk and alien identities and supported the participation of regional actors in larger political spaces.

3.3 Implementing the Buryat Autonomy

The Buryat Autonomy did not have clear boundaries. The decisions on territorial and exterritorial autonomy and boundaries were to be made by the Buryat and All-Russian constituent assemblies. Aymak, khoshun, and somon self-government bodies were established without preliminary permission from the Provisional Government. The administrative space of the autonomy exhibited the same striped patterns as the space of land use (Figure 2.1) and applied only to the Buryat and partly to the Evenk populations, whereas the Russians living amidst alien lands were excluded and administered by neighboring district (uezd) and small rural district (volost') self-government bodies. The territorial and administrative entanglements between aymaks and districts were seen as a major problem by the provisional Russian authorities and hampered the recognition of the Buryat Autonomy (GARF 200–1–478, 187 rev.–188). By June 13, 1917, somons, khoshuns, and aymaks were recognized only by several regional and local agencies in the Transbaikal Region (GARB 483–1–8, 63–67).

The regional congress of eastern Siberia which united local self-government bodies in late July 1917 refused to sanction the autonomy. The congress recognized aymaks only as cultural organizations responsible for education, though somons and khoshuns were granted the status of rural communities and small rural districts in economic and administrative terms. Some delegates urged that settlers should not be responsible for the misdoings of the old government. Others asserted that the establishment of Buryat agencies, which attempted to draw strict boundaries between different groups of regional population, did not solve the existing problems, but in fact stirred interethnic tensions and conflicts (Batuev 1994, 40–43). It was proposed that Russians and non-Russians participated in the same zemstvo units in the Baikal region like elsewhere.

Burnackom nevertheless insisted that bilingual and polyethnic self-government units would be inefficient due to numerous intergroup conflicts. The second All-Buryat Congress resolved to introduce ethnically exclusive zemstvo among the Buryats. Khoshuns were defined as the basic zemstvo units consisting of villages (ulus) populated only by Buryats. The Christian indigenous groups, which did not speak Buryat or Evenk, were included in khoshuns at their will. Aymaks were defined as the zemstvo units of district level. The third All-Buryat Congress which convened on October 8–15, 1917, in Verkhneudinsk reaffirmed the idea of ethnically homogenous aymak self-government as the basis for a future national autonomy. The project of the Buryat Autonomy, as proclaimed at the first congress, was set aside. The congress resolved to secure recognition for zemstvo within the existing aymaks and adopted the Statute on the Provisional

Bodies for Governing National Cultural Matters of the Buryat-Mongols and Tunguses of the Transbaikal Region and the Irkutsk Province, a comprehensive document which elaborated provisional post-imperial governance (Batuev 1994, 55, 76–77; Bazarov and Žabaeva 2008, 93–94, 96–97).

According to the statute, before a national parliament (sejm) was formed, the supreme revolutionary bodies for governing cultural and national affairs of the "Mongol-Buryats and Tunguses" and "representing the will of the whole people" were the All-National Congresses, National Council, and Central National Committee. These bodies extended their authority over the named ethnic groups. Their task was to "organize and unite popular masses on the basis of the all-national interests and the principles of broad revolutionary democracy"; to ensure "national cultural, legal, and economic revival of the people"; to govern the named spheres; to prepare materials on national autonomy of the Mongol-Buryats and Tunguses for the All-Russian Constituent Assembly; to convoke the National Constituent Assembly; and to represent and to defend national and other interests of the people in local and central public agencies. All decisions of the national government bodies "on the matters of cultural national life of the Mongol-Buryats" were mandatory for both individuals and organizations (GARB 483–1–1, 1–6).

Although no separation of powers was introduced explicitly, the All-National Congresses composed of local delegates (one for each 1,500 people and one for each smaller khoshun) were nominally the supreme institution with broad financial and supervisory functions. They had the right to collect taxes from the population and purchase real assets into the Buryat "national property." The Central National Committee of no less than seven members was the "central executive body of the nation" to be elected by the congresses. It had the right to form administrative, educational, land, judicial, statistical, and other departments. The committee was the representative of the Buryat people and the congresses. Controlling the Buryat emigration, it could enter relations with the authorities of the destination countries having thereby transboundary functions. All issues were to be submitted to the congresses via the Central National Committee (GARB 483–1–1, 1–6).

The statute made Chita the seat of the committee and practically recognized it as the center of the Buryat national movement. For the Buryats of the Irkutsk Province the Irkutsk Department of the Central National Committee was to be elected by provincial national congresses. Although the department was autonomous in making decisions related exclusively to the Irkutsk Buryats, it was subordinate to the Central National Committee. Irkutsk was denied the central role in the national movement (GARB 483–1–1, 1–6).

The National Council was elected by the All-National Congresses and consisted of thirteen representatives from seven aymaks: Aga, Angara-Murin, Barguzin, Ekhirit-Bulagat, Selenga, Tunka, and Khori (Figure 3.1) (GARB 483–1–1, 1–6; Mautone 2003; USNA M917–10, 30–33). The council had the same responsibilities as the committee, but did not work permanently and was convened either by the committee or by one fourth of its own members. When it was impossible to convene a congress, the council and the committee could

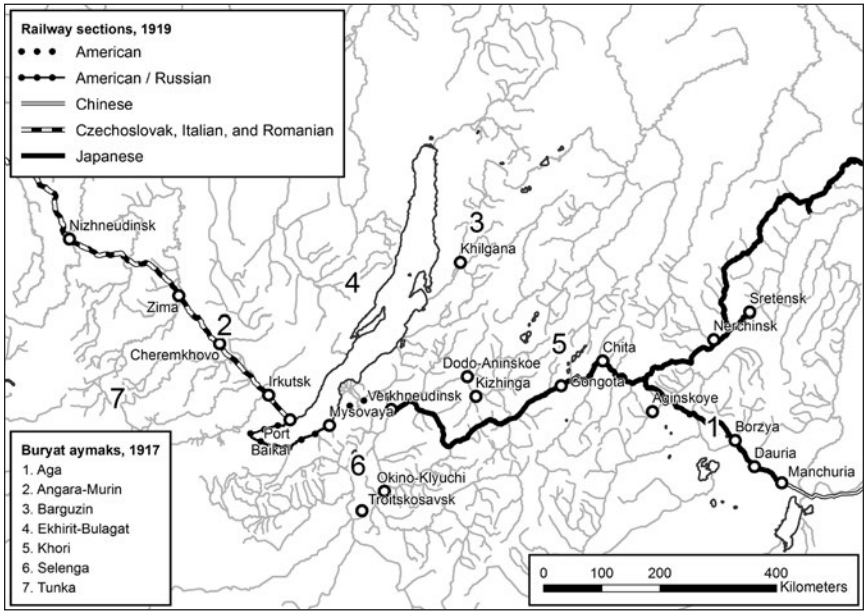

Figure 3.1 The Buryat aymaks and the international regime.

jointly make decisions in the competence of the former. The last body of the national level was the Control Commission which was elected by the all-national and provincial congresses and controlled the finances of the Central National Committee and its Irkutsk Department. The Central National Committee, the National Council, and the Control Commission, together with seven representatives of the aymaks were given the right to deciding vote at the congresses (GARB 483–1–1, 1–6).

The permanent system of government for the future autonomy was to be developed by the National Constituent Assembly. The assembly itself was to be convoked through universal, direct, and equal elections by secret ballot. The somons, khoshuns, and aymaks were also to be governed by elected bodies (GARB 483–1–1, 1–6).

The document united global liberal, nationalist, and socialist discourses and reaffirmed the connections to Mongolia. The people or the nation to be governed by the statute now included not only the Buryats, but also Evenks. Religious matters were completely omitted. Despite the duality concerning the committee and the council and the broad authority given to the executive body, the statute offered a solid and intelligible governance structure based on collective decision-making and democratic principles (Halperin 1993).

The questions of how this and other regulations were implemented and how broad popular participation was remain. Although the youth was included into

decision-making, gender representation was unequal. Trubačeeva was the only woman who was frequently mentioned in relation to self-government (Batuev 1994). The discrepancy between literacy rates of men and women certainly played a role, but patriarchal structures retained their importance. In 1926 indigenous women were still denied the right to vote in some Siberian communities (Leonov 1929).

For the Buryats and Evenks of the Baikal region the tensions in the land-use (Figure 2.1) and economic spaces (Figure 1.4) were pressing. The position of the Buryat and Evenk farmers and herders had not improved after the February Revolution. Furthermore, the land-use conflicts between different groups of population escalated. Seizures of lands belonging to the indigenous population began already in spring 1917 and became frequent throughout the summer. In its appeal to the Transbaikal Regional Committee of Public Safety, Burnackom claimed to have received numerous complaints from Buryat and Evenk communities who were subject to "oppression and terror" practiced by neighboring settlers. The source of the conflict was said to be the reluctance of the new "settlers from Russia" to fence their fields which was customary for the "aliens, peasants, and Cossacks of the Transbaikal region." The settlers drove Buryat cattle to their unfenced lands and then demanded payment. The land-use tensions were further aggravated by the "anarchy," "absence of solid revolutionary government," and connivance of local non-Buryat agencies. The interethnic tensions resulting from the Tsarist land-use policies worsened and there were rumors of possible Buryat pogroms. Deserters and soldiers coming back from the Great War became instigators and leaders of land seizures assuring that once other local soldiers returned home they would "put an end to the Buryats." The conciliatory line pursued by the Buryat and Evenk self-government bodies which rendered material help to the families of soldiers and neighboring peasants proved ineffective. Land concessions stimulated further claims. The Buryat politicians appealed to central and regional governments for ensuring safety and property rights (GARB 483–1–9, 166–167; GARB 483–1–48, 61–65; GARB 483–1–67, 15–18).

While the unrecognized Buryat agencies attempted to reach higher authorities, many Buryats opted for emigration to Mongolia. Emigration, which increased tremendously in 1917, was supported by some non-regional actors: in May 1917 a Tibetan lama incited the population of the Khori Aymak to exodus. Burnackom and other elected Buryat agencies did not welcome emigration which undermined regional Buryat economy and assumed measures against it. In August 1917 a special bureau under Burnackom for fostering the return of emigrants was formed (GARB 483–1–9, 166–167; GARB 483–1–48, 61–65; GARB 483–1–67, 10–10 rev.)

The Provisional Government, regional and local authorities (both the committees and the soviets) were unable to cope with communal violence and crime. In order to safeguard self-government and ensure public safety, Buryat agencies established militia (sagdaa)[3] in somons, khoshuns, and aymaks. The second All-Buryat Congress resolved to invite instructors, request arms from the Transbaikal regional commissar, and entrust Cokto Badmažapov with leading the

organization of public safety in the aymaks. It also supported conciliatory measures and encouraged helping Russian peasants, buying the "liberty bonds" of the Provisional Government, and collecting donations "for the consolidation of the new order." Legal assistance was to be provided to the victims of land seizures and crime (GARB 483–1–7, 16–24; GARB 483–1–8, 68).

The interpretation of the Buryat nation in ethnic and religious terms, together with the rejection of clan and estate identities, gave rise to opposition. Some Buryat Cossacks accented their estate identity (Cybikov 1981, 2:160) and protested against the aymak self-government at the Buryat Cossack Gathering in July 1917. The gathering chaired by Cybiktarov nevertheless voted to join the Selenga Aymak (Haptaev 1964, 178). The Buryat-speaking Evenk Cossacks (the "Buddhist nomads") also joined. Although many Cossacks did not interpret this decision as leaving their estate, a group headed by Dondok Abiduev refused to accept the ethno-religious boundary construction after the gathering (GARB 483–1–2, 51–53; GARF 1701–1–16, 5–6).

The Cossack estate was in fact abolished in late April 1917 in Chita by a resolution of the first congress of the Transbaikal Cossacks. The many Cossacks returning from the front (including Grigorij Semënov), however, initiated its revision at the second congress of the Transbaikal Cossacks which convened in Chita in August 1917. The same congress also discussed the issue of the Buryat Cossacks. The session chaired by Sergej Taskin resolved that zemstvo in the Transbaikal Region had to be uniform. The separation of Buryats from the Transbaikal Cossacks and their unification with other Buryats was deemed illegal and inadmissible before the end of the war and the convocation of the Constituent Assembly. An alternative resolution recognizing the right to self-determination and allowing Buryat Cossacks to join the Selenga Aymak was rejected. According to Semënov, the issue could be resolved in favor of the Buryats if there was no danger to the very existence of the estate (Semënov 2002, 92–98). Although the estate was reestablished, the conflict between ethnic and estate identities continued.

Further opposition to the new Buryat agencies came from Hanhasaev. In May 1917 he appealed to Prime Minister Georgij L'vov in Petrograd claiming that the Buryats would be satisfied with the limited administrative self-government of the Steppe Dumas. This appeal was supported neither by L'vov nor by the Buryat organizations in the Baikal region, although it found some backing among the former Steppe Duma elites and lamas, especially in the Khori Aymak. Burnackom protested against the actions of the unrepresentative and "illegitimate" Petrograd committee and terminated all relations with it. Unwilling to admit his defeat, Hanhasaev soon returned to the Baikal region and organized opposition to the aymak authorities there. According to some contemporaries, Hanhasaev utilized inter-clan tensions in his activities (GARB 483–1–6, 25–26; GARB 483–1–8, 47; GARB 483–1–8, 63–67; GARB 483–1–67, 12–13 rev.; GARF 6996–1–479, 1–2; GARF 1701–1–60, 1–2; Očiržapov n.d., 2–3). Some Orthodox Buryat villagers whose settlements were included in khoshuns without their consent were willing to leave them (GARB 305–1–6, 50; GARF 1701–1–16, 66–66 rev.).

Even though Buryat self-government bodies reaffirmed their loyalty to the Provisional Government and defined the Buryats as "one of the numerous peoples populating Russia," recognition was pending. Burnackom's cooperation with the SRs ceased despite direct relations with such prominent members as Mariâ Spiridonova and donations to the party. When the elections to the Constituent Assembly approached in late 1917, it turned out that the SRs were not determined to defend minority rights. The Buryat SR candidates, including Žamcarano and Rinčino, could not get a decent place on the election list. The negotiations on alliance reached a deadlock (GARB 483–1–2, 137–138; GARB 483–1–8, 63–67; GARB 483–1–48, 61–65; GARB 483–1–67, 6–7, 15–18; Protasov 1997).

3.4 Buryat self-government under competing authorities

Burnackom's break with the SRs did not lead to immediate cooperation with the Bolsheviks. The October Revolution of 1917 was criticized as an illegitimate coup (GARB 483–1–49, 5–8). Furthermore, in October 1917 the negotiations between Burnackom and Russian authorities on Buryat zemstvo were drawing towards a compromise solution (GARB 483–1–7, 46–50; GARB 483–1–52, 51). Discussions with regional authorities continued after the fall of the Provisional Government. On November 2–3, 1917, the Transbaikal Regional Committee on the Introduction of Zemstvo voted for the immediate establishment of Aga, Khori, and Selenga aymak zemstvo, though it refused to include ethnically mixed Cossack communities in khoshuns. Furthermore, the committee did not approve the participation of the Kudara Buryats of the Selenga mouth in the Selenga Aymak Zemstvo. They were said to share occupational (fishing and hunting) interests with the non-Buryat population of Baikalia, the western part of the Transbaikal Region loosely united around Verkhneudinsk which gradually manifested itself as a rival to Chita (GARB 483–1–7, 74–78).

The recognition of the Buryat zemstvo in the Irkutsk Province was pending. On November 1, 1917, a provincial Buryat congress resolved to establish zemstvo without the permission of regional authorities. It also resolved that the Buryats had to take their initial lands back from the Treasury and the Settler Administration. Burnackom expressed its protest to the Irkutsk Department, deeming such "separate actions" inadmissible and threatening the solidarity of the Buryat nation. It urged that land-use issues had to be treated with great caution. Burnackom declared that the Buryats did not aim at "occupying as much land as possible." "Such aspirations" would "inevitably lead to a split" among the workmen by aggravating relations with neighboring "working Russian peasants" who were no less "avid for land." Following the decisions of the All-Buryat congresses and reaching understanding with "revolutionary democratic authorities and democratic organizations" was the only way to solve land-use problems (GARB 483–1–7, 94–97; Girčenko 1927, 31).

The decision of the Irkutsk congress reflected the different location of the Irkutsk and Transbaikal Buryats in land-use spaces. Land shortages and conflicts

were more relevant for the western Buryats due to the spread of sedentary crop farming among them and higher dynamics of settler colonization in the Irkutsk Province. The fourth All-Buryat Congress, which convened in Verkhneudinsk in late November–early December 1917, supported the resolution of the Irkutsk congress. On December 8–11, 1917, the Irkutsk Department, then chaired by Sampilon, established zemstvo in three aymaks (Angara, Ekhirit-Bulagat, and Tunka) and notified the provincial zemstvo commission about this decision (GARB 483–1–52, 44, 52). The Irkutsk provincial zemstvo commission recognized the aymaks on January 25, 1918, on condition that khoshuns retained the right to leave aymaks and that Russian communities could join aymaks only with the consent of the provincial zemstvo assembly (GARB 483–1–52, 12). By late January 1918 six out of seven Buryat aymaks had been recognized as zemstvo self-government bodies.

This success was devaluated by the Bolshevik anti-zemstvo campaign. Since the Council of People's Commissars (Sovnarkom) did not receive a similar degree of recognition to that of the Provisional Government, the state level of authority collapsed. The unified albeit heterogeneous administrative space of the Russian Empire split into several intersecting spaces. The establishment of Soviet rule in the Baikal region was accompanied by intense fighting and raging crime (Mawdsley 2007, 3–4; Narskij 2001).

The first organized anti-Bolshevik revolt in Siberia was led by then Cossack Captain (esaul) Grigorij Semënov who returned to his home Baikal region from the front via Petrograd earlier that year to form voluntary detachments of Buryats and Mongols for the Russian Army similar to those of Assyrians in Persia (Semënov 2002, 74–86, 97–98). Semënov continued to form the detachments after the October Revolution, but now also accepted Russians. The first armed clashes with regional authorities took place in November 1917. In early December 1917 Semënov attempted to take control of Verkhneudinsk and Chita, but failed. Seizing some money in Chita, Semënov moved to Dauria where Lieutenant Colonel (vojskovoj staršina) Roman von Ungern-Sternberg and other Cossacks joined him. Semënov ordered to continue recruitment and left for Manchuria where he aspired to gain support of General Dmitrij Horvat. Regional soviets started forming the Red Guard (Hromov 1983, 534; Maksakov *et al.* 1926, 54; Semënov 2002, 99–109).

The same month major street battles between supporters of the Bolsheviks under Boris Šumâckij and their opponents under officers of the Russian Army were fought in Irkutsk. Having received reinforcements led by Sergej Lazo and others, the Bolsheviks suppressed the opposition by early January 1918. The death toll was second only to the fighting in Moscow (Maksakov *et al.* 1926, 52–53; Novikov 2001; Hromov 1983, 316).

The "civil fratricidal war" was condemned by the Siberian Regionalists who manifested themselves as an organized group at the Extraordinary All-Siberian Congress which assembled on December 6, 1917, in Tomsk. Claiming to have united "all Siberian peoples" and "representatives of the labor revolutionary democracy," the congress appealed to the peoples of Siberia, peasants, soldiers,

workers, and Cossacks to establish order locally by combining municipal and zemstvo self-government. It acknowledged the collapse of the state and declared a provisional "All-Siberian socialist" government. The main objective of the new government consisting of the Siberian Regional Duma and the Siberian Regional Council was to convene the All-Siberian Constituent Assembly. Despite strong autonomous claims, the congress recognized the All-Russian Constituent Assembly as the only legitimate state authority and urged the people of "Great Siberia" from the Urals to the Pacific to fight all those who violated the "will of the people." The All-Russian Constituent Assembly was entrusted with the task of achieving "democratic peace" and forming the "Great Russian Federative Republic." Autonomous Siberia was to become the core of state consolidation (GARB 483–1–10, 6, 8, 24).

The Tomsk initiative was acknowledged by the Chita People's Council which united Mensheviks, Bolsheviks, and SRs at the second Transbaikal congress of rural population on December 22, 1917. The council supported political reconciliation among the socialists and recognized both the new Siberian duma and Sovnarkom (Maksakov *et al.* 1926, 54). The new Siberian government contacted Burnackom promising to defend the interests of the peoples of Siberia and foster peaceful interethnic coexistence in Autonomous Siberia to become federative in the future (GARB 483–1–10, 24).

The All-Russian Constituent Assembly convened on January 5, 1918. Burnackom managed to have two delegates, Bogdanov and Vampilon, elected from its own list. Bogdanov joined the SR faction, the largest political group at the assembly, despite the conflict. Taskin was elected from the Transbaikal Cossacks. Other delegates from the Baikal region were mainly SRs, with several delegates from the Irkutsk Province having been elected jointly with the All-Russian Peasants' Union (Batuev 1994, 94–95; Čimitdoržiev and Mihajlov 1999, 3:22; Očiržapov n.d., 3; Protasov 1997, 138, 171, 258). Four institutionalized groups (the SRs, peasants, Buryats, and Cossacks) represented the people of the Baikal region.

Burnackom's success in the democratic power struggle did not last. Since most elected deputies were unwilling to recognize the October Revolution and supported participation in the Great War, the Bolsheviks were hostile towards the assembly. After the session chaired by Viktor Černov refused to recognize Sovnarkom, the Bolsheviks and later the leftwing SRs staged a walkout. The remaining delegates promulgated several clauses of an agrarian law which abolished private land ownership, urged the warring states to commence peace negotiations, and declared creation of the Russian Democratic Federative Republic. The session continued overnight, but early next day it was violently disbanded by the Bolsheviks. This event was perceived by many as the end of the democratic developments of the February Revolution (Protasov 1994).

The People's Council in Chita was disbanded on February 15, 1918, by the Bolshevik-oriented Cossacks who had returned from the front. On February 21, 1918, the first Assembly of Zemstvo Deputies of the Irkutsk Province gathered in the provincial center. The deputies urged that people should unite around zemstvo, defend the Constituent Assembly, and struggle against Soviet rule. The

next day the Bolsheviks, who organized the second All-Siberian Congress of Soviets in Irkutsk on February 16–26, 1918, disbanded the assembly. In March a congress of working people in Verkhneudinsk abolished zemstvo in Baikalia. Although it recognized the right of the Buryats to establish khoshuns as independent economic units, the organization of zemstvo was ruled as not needed, leaving economic and political authority to soviets (Bazarov 2011, 3:422; Girčenko 1927, 36; Maksakov *et al.* 1926, 58–60).

Burnackom (then the Central National Committee in line with the statute) refrained from making contact with Sovnarkom despite the recognition of the right to national self-determination in the Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia (Običkin *et al.* 1957). Relations had to be established after the Bolsheviks formed and violently defended the new regional government, the Central Executive Committee of Siberian Soviets (Centrosibir') under the presidency of Šumâckij (Haptaev 1964, 195–216; Maksakov *et al.* 1926, 59).

Despite Burnackom's reluctance, the Bolsheviks did find some support among the Buryats, mainly in urban centers. On March 10, 1918, the Irkutsk Department of Burnackom and the Buryat representatives in the provincial zemstvo discussed whether they should recognize the Soviet government. Some suggested recognizing Sovnarkom and reorganizing the Buryat self-government bodies into autonomous soviets of Buryat peasant deputies. Others followed the directives of Burnackom and agreed to recognize the Soviet government if the existing national self-government agencies were kept intact. The latter approach was supported by a majority of four to three. Those who voted against condemned Burnackom's evasive position and decided to leave the Irkutsk Department (GARB 483–1–55, 30–32).

This incident uncovered a new dissension among the Buryats. Buryat Bolsheviks (Mariâ Sah'ânova, Erbanov, and others) and leftwing SRs (Nikolaj Mahočkeev and others) placed their political identity above ethnic categorizations. Although they were a minority in self-government bodies, they managed to inform the population about their position through demarches. In late April 1918 Matvej Amagaev, then chairman of the Ekhirit-Bulagat Aymak Court, departed from a provincial Buryat congress after it refused to adopt a pro-Soviet resolution. The Buryat Bolshevik group, institutionalized in 1918 as the Buryat Section of the Irkutsk Provincial Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) or RCP(b) under the leadership of Mariâ Sah'ânova (Batuev 1994, 129; Bazarov and Žabaeva 2008, 123), enabled more indigenous women to participate in political life than any previously formed Buryat organizations.

In order to counteract the political split an attempt was made to institutionalize Buryat intellectuals as a group. On March 17, 1918, "a private meeting of Buryat public figures" featuring Rinčino, Bogdanov, Bogdanov's wife Elizaveta, Žamcarano, and others created the Union of the Buryat Intellectuals. The organization was supposed to consolidate them on common political grounds and regulate their activities (GARB 483–1–18, 25).

The initiative did not end the split which was broadened by a series of publications in the regional Bolshevik newspaper *Vlast' truda*. Following the campaign of

intensifying class struggle, one of them called for abolishing "kulak" (rich peasant) and "merchant" zemstvo and forming Buryat soviets. On April 21, 1918, the *Vlast' truda* published an article by Sah'ânova in which she opposed any national divisions and insisted on immediate class solidarity. In another article published in May she questioned the homogeneity of the Buryat nation and reaffirmed the view that the interests of the working poor were uniform disregarding any linguistic or ethnic differences. The working Buryats were called to boycott the nationalist self-government and form mixed soviets of workers', peasants', and Buryat deputies (Batuev 1994, 105–106, 114, 120–122, 127–128). Sah'ânova was among the minority which was ready to give up ethnic, religious, clan, and other identities for the sake of class solidarity. According to a report prepared by the Irkutsk Zemstvo Administration in December 1918, there were hardly any Bolsheviks among the whole Buryat population. Only one soviet of Buryat deputies with a population of no more than 500 people was created in 1917–1918 (GARB 483–1–52, 74–75).

Several Buryat groups left aymaks to join larger non-ethnic Soviet structures. Some people in Dogoy formed an independent community with direct submission to the Soviet authorities. They explained this decision by class considerations saying that the Buryat national organizations did not represent the interests of the Buryat workmen. The people of Borgoy left the Selenga Aymak and joined the Troitskosavsk District in the summer of 1918 claiming that rich self-government elites could not protect the interests of the poor and ensure social justice (Batuev 1994, 125, 137; Očiržapov n.d., 6). Many people across the former empire articulated their identity of the poor through violent confiscations of material values. Supporting the infamous slogan "steal the stolen" (Lenin 1969b, 269), the Bolsheviks practically sanctioned criminal activities. Burnackom received numerous complaints about armed gangs which deprived Buryats of their property through "confiscations" and "requisitions" without providing any documents (GARB 483–1–43, 1).

Some opponents of Buryat self-government used the campaign against nationalism in order to reaffirm their non-ethnic identity claims. Many Cossacks returning from the front were strong supporters of the new regime since the very opportunity to go home was given to them by the Soviet government which withdrew from the Great War and signed the peace Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with the Central Powers on March 3, 1918. Some veterans joined Abiduev, reported khoshun and aymak supporters to the Verkhneudinsk soviet and Centrosibir' as anti-Bolsheviks and counterrevolutionaries, and declared their direct submission to the Soviets. Although the Bolsheviks abolished estates, they welcomed the Cossack opposition to the Buryat national movement. Hanhasaev and his supporters also appealed to the Soviets (Batuev 1994, 104–105, 117; GARB 483–1–32, 57, 59; GARB 483–1–44, 133; Nimaev 1994, 162).

The largest violent anti-aymak movement among the Buryat population during 1917–1918 was led by neither Abiduev nor Hanhasaev. In the spring of 1918 some three thousand Buryats, mainly from Khilgana, left the Barguzin Aymak and joined the Barguzin District. Although under the influence of veterans they called themselves Bolsheviks, they later explained that they wanted to

avoid new taxes. This incident was a serious challenge to both the aymak and Burnackom. In the summer of 1918 the deputies of the Barguzin Aymak openly condemned Burnackom for its reluctance to act during the conflict (GARB 305–1–37, 360; GARB 305–1–38, 9; GARB 483–1–3, 78; Očiržapov n.d., 6). Despite these and other incidents, Burnackom had some achievements in regional politics. At the third congress of rural deputies of the Transbaikal Region which took place in Chita in late March–early April 1918 Burnackom managed to rally support for a resolution which recognized the right of the Buryats to self-determination and approved their administrative, economic, and cultural bodies of national self-government (Girčenko 1927, 38).

During the congress a meeting of its delegates with Burnackom resolved to grant the latter supreme authority over "all national life of the Buryats" since convening a national congress was deemed "impossible." Burnackom was authorized to confiscate property of "wealthy Buryats" for public benefit. Žamcarano was elected to the regional executive committee, whereas Rinčino replaced him as chairman of Burnackom. New members were elected instead of those who left the organization under the Bolshevik regime. The meeting resolved to rename Buryat agencies dropping the word "zemstvo" (GARB 483–1–18, 27–29).

Burnackom continued its tactics of political maneuvering. It now recognized the Soviet government as "de facto existing," but at the same time opposed creation of soviets among the Buryats. It used the acquired extraordinary authority to promulgate five laws called "novels." In Novel 1 the territory of the Buryats was proclaimed an autonomous unit under Burnackom. Novel 2 appealed to the interests of the "working masses" and reformed the Buryat self-government bodies. Novel 3 regulated courts and legal procedures in the self-governing units. Crimes against public property and communication lines fell within the jurisdiction of the Buryat national court. Novels 4 and 5 regulated administrative and educational agencies. Burnackom also introduced progressive income tax and transferred the lands of the Buryats to collective ownership (Bazarov and Žabaeva 2008, 126–131; GARB 483–1–18, 27–29, 31–32; GARB 483–1–28, 4).

Meanwhile, the disintegration of administrative structures continued. In June 1918, Verkhneudinsk hosted the congress of the soviets of Baikalia which reconsidered the approval given to the Buryat self-government agencies in Chita. It resolved that aymaks should not participate in land management and that the right to self-determination should cover only cultural matters. It also resolved to separate Baikalia from the Transbaikal Region and form the Baikal Province. This decision was to be sent to Sovnarkom for approval, to Centrosibir' for support, and to Chita for information. The new province was to include the Barguzin, Selenga, and Troitskosavsk Districts entirely and most of the Verkhneudinsk District. In the new province the Buryat population was promised only the right to cultural self-determination (Haptaev 1964, 310–311).

In the Irkutsk Province the Soviet authorities were unwilling to recognize aymaks and khoshuns as administrative bodies. The Irkutsk provincial executive committee refused to have any Buryat representatives stating that the Buryats

were not a political party. It suggested forming a Buryat commissariat under the guidance of Sah'ânova instead. Mahočkeev was soon appointed Commissar of Buryat Affairs (Batuev 1994, 127; GARB 483–1–60, 9).

In a proclamation issued in June 1918 the Irkutsk Department of Burnackom under Sampilon called the Buryats to participate in provincial politics and send such delegates to the Provincial Congress of Workers', Peasants', Buryat, and Red Guard Deputies who would be capable of reconciling the "best national aspirations" with the democratic and revolutionary interests of the Soviet state. The proclamation united Bolshevik and nationalist ideas. The kulaks and their likes were accused of continuing their "shameful doings," but these doings were described as further "Russification" and deprivation of Buryat "individuality" started by the officials of the Tsar, "the missionaries of the Antichrist" (Batuev 1994, 132). The proclamation was an apparent response to Sah'ânova and other Bolsheviks.

In the eastern Transbaikal Region which remained under full control of Chita the status of Buryat self-government continued to improve. Even though Centrosibir' did not welcome the moderate socialist orientation of Burnackom (Bazarov and Žabaeva 2008, 131), the Transbaikal regional executive committee reaffirmed the decisions of the spring congress of rural deputies. On July 3, 1918, after hearing a report by its Commissar of National Affairs Žamcarano, it adopted a resolution in which the modified Buryat-Mongol self-government bodies in somons (villages), khoshuns (small rural districts), and aymaks (districts), together with Burnackom, were recognized as official agencies of the Soviet government acting autonomously on the territory of the Buryat-Mongols. Burnackom and the Land-Use Department of the executive committee were to work out a plan of eliminating the stripped holding between Russian and Buryat-Mongol population. The boundaries and the forms of the Buryat-Mongol autonomy were to be decided by the constituent Congress of the Buryat-Mongol Soviet Deputies and a special conciliatory commission consisting of representatives from the congress and the regional executive committee. The project worked out by the commission would be submitted to the central Soviet government (GARB 483–1–28, 4). Similar to the situation with zemstvo, this achievement did not last. In July–August 1918, the Soviets were deposed in the Baikal region.

By late 1918 the situation in the Baikal region had changed tremendously. Using nationalist, liberal, and socialist discourses, several groups of regional intellectuals started social mobilization and in a year and half managed to institutionalize ethnic, land-use, religious, educational, and other claims of the indigenous population. The Buryat politicians who were associated with Burnackom transformed from colonial subjects to active participants of power relations claiming to represent the Buryat nation. Indigenous activism embodied in April 1917 in the Buryat Autonomy. Unable to defend the project in larger political spaces, Buryat politicians opted for a system of Buryat self-government bodies uniting the Russian zemstvo structure with indigenous and transboundary ideas. They managed to create a durable power structure and suggest boundaries in several relational spaces, though the objectives in land-use and economic spaces

had not been achieved. Their successes in power relations and legal struggle were devalued by the increasing violence. The confluence of the Great War, the October Revolution, and the Russian Civil War into one multilayered transcultural conflict resulted in elimination of the unified political space of the former Russian Empire and led to the dissolution of the state.

Notes

1 The Russian term "nacional'nyj" which was used by the actors could be rendered in English as both ethnic and national. In the context of the Buryat national movement the translation "national" proved to be more applicable.
2 The actors used the Polish term "sejm."
3 The Buryats were not the only ones to establish national armed units after the February Revolution (Suny 1993, 33).

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4 Power struggle in a stateless context, 1918–1919

4.1 Transcultural violence and formation of Buryat armed forces

The attack on the All-Russian Constituent Assembly, the only legitimate authority embodying democratic aspirations of many people in the former Russian Empire (Protasov 1997), in January 1918 stimulated anti-Bolshevik social mobilization. Harbin soon became one of its centers. General Dmitrij Horvat, Prince Nikolaj Kudašev, Admiral Aleksandr Kolčak, and others united around the Chinese Eastern Railway administration (Maksakov *et al.* 1926, 57; Smele 2006).

The desire to withdraw from the Great War articulated by Sovnarkom on October 26, 1917 (Običkin *et al.* 1957), caused major concerns among Russia's Allies since it implied the collapse of the Eastern Front, release of POWs, and possible access of the Central Powers to the economic resources of Russia. Direct intervention followed in late 1917–early 1918 when the first American and Japanese warships called at Vladivostok. Contemporaneously, anti-Bolshevik groups started receiving financial and military assistance from foreign governments. In January 1918, Grigorij Semënov sent an envoy to Japan and soon his forces, the Independent Manchuria Detachment (Osobyj Man'čžurskij otrâd), received arms and funding (Popov and Konstantinov 1925, 105–108). The Russian Civil War became part of the Great War.

With Japanese, French, and later British support Semënov could act independently. At the western end of the CER his detachment "requisitioned" everything he desired despite the protests of Horvat. A similar armed group under Cossack Captain Ivan Kalmykov formed at the eastern end of the CER. There were several other independent squads under Russian officers in the CER Zone (Bisher 2005; Popov and Konstantinov 1925, 108–113).

Semënov's forces included many Mongols who sought to disentangle the former Qing Empire. In 1916 participants of an anti-Chinese revolt in Inner Mongolia were driven north. A large group of Khorchin Mongols under Prince Fussenge fled to Hulunbuir where they had a conflict with Barga Mongols under Prince Gui Fu over pastures. Semënov claimed to have settled the conflict and attracted both Khorchins under Fussenge and Barguts under Gui Fu and his son

Ling Sheng to his detachments. The activities of the Buryat-Mongol regiment along the line from Manchuria to Hailar disturbed the Chinese authorities. Appealing to a treaty reached with the CER administration, they demanded that Semënov disband his Mongolian detachments and leave the CER Zone. The conflict was settled after the Japanese military advisor to Semënov Kuroki Chikayoshi (黒木親慶) arrived at Manchuria (Semënov 2002, 132–135, 166–167).

On January 26, 1918, the Tomsk soviet disbanded the Siberian Regional Duma. Several deputies avoided arrest and declared the formation of a Provisional Siberian Government under the SR Pëtr Derber. Èlbek-Dorži Rinčino was appointed minister of education. Although the new government never assembled in a body, it challenged Soviet rule and established connections to the anti-Bolshevik underground in the Baikal region and Manchuria. In February 1918 Derber's government moved to Harbin, but cooperation between the Siberian socialists and the Harbin conservatives stalled. Horvat rejected the very idea of having a Russian government in China (Maksakov *et al.* 1926, 57–58; Novikov 2001; Popov and Konstantinov 1925, 114–115).

Rinčino's appointment manifested further advancement of Buryat politicians. He remained, however, in the Baikal region as the members of Burnackom tried to keep the Buryats out of the armed conflict. Burnackom dissociated itself from the "political struggle" in the "Russian democracy," claiming that the Buryat nation participated only in legal interactions. In January 1918, the Irkutsk Department of Burnackom nevertheless appealed to the Soviet government through Mahočkeev asking to supply the Buryat population with arms. The Irkutsk executive committee agreed to contribute to self-defense on an equal footing with the rest of the population. It did not oppose the formation of an aymak militia, but requested to collect other weapons (Batuev 1994, 96; GARB 483–1–55, 21, 25–26; GARB 483–1–60, 9).

In the Khori Aymak rumors spread that peasants feared the armament of the Buryats and prepared to attack first. Aymak authorities cautioned against setting "one ethnic group against the other" and claimed that the Buryats planned no aggression. On January 27, 1918, Burnackom resolved to convene the National Council due to the "danger of a civil war" and discuss organization of a self-defense squad (GARB 483–1–18, 17).

The same month Semënov's forces launched an offensive on Chita and captured Olovyannaya. Fearing clashes on "the Buryat territories," Burnackom ordered to avoid contacts with Semënov's recruiters. The Irkutsk Department of Burnackom under Daši Sampilon continued anti-war agitation. In a February 1918 proclamation to all "citizens-Buryats" and their self-government agencies it warned that the "general chaos" threatened the achievements of Russia's peoples liberated by the February Revolution. Although Burnackom did not openly oppose the Bolsheviks, it supported the slogans expressed in Tomsk inducing to stop the war and create coalitional governments. It acknowledged the collapse of the Russian state which disintegrated into many independent "small states" becoming easy prey to "capitalism" and Russia's "aggressive

neighbors." Revolutionary Russia, the "stronghold of world democracy and international socialism" and the "only friend of small oppressed peoples similar to the Buryats" had to be saved. The key to salvation lay in forming and strengthening self-government bodies and local participation (GARB 483–1–26, 41; GARB 483–1–53, 9; Hromov 1983, 534; Maksakov *et al.* 1926, 56).

Although in late February–early March 1918 the forces under Sergej Lazo managed to hurl Semënov back to Manchuria (Hromov 1983, 534; Maksakov *et al.* 1926, 58–60), the situation remained heated. Sanctioned requisitions and crime under Bolshevik slogans continued. In February 1918 a group of armed people calling itself Commission for Delivering Horses for Military Purposes came from Olovyannaya to the vicinity of the Tsugolsky Datsan demanding some 500 horses. They arrested a Buryat official and threatened the people of the Aga Aymak with massacre after Semënov was defeated. Similar cases occurred in the Irkutsk Province where people who were thought to be Red Guardsmen engaged in armed robberies. Violence and crime fueled emigration to Mongolia. Appealing to the Soviet authorities, Burnackom noted that the Buryats did not assist Semënov and warned about the possible alienation of the Buryats from the Soviet government. According to Burnackom, mass emigration to Mongolia challenged the unity of the nation and could lead to an economic collapse in the Baikal region and international complications with Mongolia and China. Burnackom promised to break off its conciliatory policy if the very existence of the Buryats as a nation was at stake (GARB 483–1–44, 18–19; GARB 483–1–55, 30–32).

About the same time the anti-aymak Buryat Cossacks resorted to violence. A group of Cossacks threatened to shoot aymak supporters and destroy the Yangazhinsky Datsan. Another group of eighty Cossacks under Dondok Abiduev attacked the Selenga Aymak authorities at the Gusinoozyorsky Datsan. Seeking for Sanžimitab Cybiktarov, Cokto Badmažapov, and other Buryat politicians, they whipped, scolded, and threatened zemstvo deputies and militiamen, robbed the administration, and arrested three people. Two more khoshun administrations were attacked (GARB 483–1–32, 7, 34).

The congress of working people in Verkhneudinsk resolved to take measures against "hooliganism of a handful of Cossacks." Vasilij Serov reaffirmed that Soviet rule granted the freedom of religion and opposed destruction of datsans, that corporal punishments and pogroms were illegal, and that the Cossack command did not authorize the attacks. During interrogations in Verkhneudinsk a participant in the attacks explained that veterans were used by Abiduev, who had falsely accused khoshuns of misdoings. Abiduev had in fact been elected to the Buryat administration, but was later dismissed for poor service. The delegates of the Selenga Aymak Congress voiced their support for the aymak leaders Cybiktarov and Radnažab Bimbaev and invited Hambo Lama Namžil Lajdapov to assist in appeasing the population. Hambo Lama responded with a message asking to keep calm for the benefit of the people (GARB 483–1–3, 8–11; GARB 483–1–32, 7, 31, 57).

Land seizures, robberies, Cossack unrests, and other violent incidents were a major concern for Burnackom. Unmasking its defenselessness, they undermined

its potential in power relations. During the meeting between Burnackom and Transbaikal rural deputies in the spring of 1918 a decision to form a "national Red Guard" was made. Burnackom also passed on a resolution on conscription among the Buryats adopted by the regional congress of rural population to the aymak assemblies for discussion (GARB 483–1–18, 27–29).

Burnackom favored the formation of armed forces despite protests among the Buryats. The Selenga Aymak Congress chaired by Bimbaev approved the conscription on the condition that the Red Guard was renamed the Aymak National Squad (družina), refusing to articulate the Soviet Red Guard identity. On April 29, 1918, the suggestion was reaffirmed in a joint session of Burnackom and aymak representatives. Although those at the meeting decided to organize an armed force in cooperation with the Soviets, they revoked the decision of the third regional congress of rural deputies on the conscription of the Buryats leaving them the right to form voluntary squads. Rinčino formed such squad in Chita in April 1918. The organization called Ulaan Tug included some twenty people. The name can be translated as the "Red Bunchuk." Bunchuk, a piece of horse hair attached to a spear, was a symbol of power among the Mongolian khans. Hence, the name provided a discursive connection to Mongolia. Ulaan Tug was designed to fight counterrevolution and foster land and tax reforms uniting the "laborers of the steppe" (Batuev 1994, 126; GARB 483–1–3, 10–11, 15; GARB 483–1–18, 27–29; GARB 483–1–23, 1–2; Očiržapov n.d., 4).

Earlier the same month Semënov launched another offensive and took Borzya. As soon as his forces arrived at the Aga Aymak, Ulaan Tug gave up its weapons and was soon disbanded. In order to stop Semënov's forces the Red Guard blew up the bridge across the Onon and retreated to Adrianovka. Unable to continue the attack because of the rupture, Semënov remained in Borzya where in May 1918 he, Sergej Taskin, and another Cossack proclaimed the Provisional Government of the Transbaikal Region. In late May–June 1918, Semënov was driven back to Manchuria (GARB 483–1–18, 37–38; Hromov 1983, 534; Maksakov *et al.* 1926, 63).

The new offensive found much response among the Buryats in the vicinity of the so-called Semënov Front. People in the Aga Aymak expected Semënov to take the rule and become a "real" authority unlike the Soviet government. The Cossack opponents of the autonomy were saying that the Cossack estate and monarchy would soon be reestablished (Batuev 1994, 125; GARB 483–1–3, 21).

Semënov was especially successful in rallying support among the Buryat emigrants. On June 13, 1918, 221 emigrant representatives from the Aga, Khori, and Selenga aymaks met with a representative of the Independent Manchurian Detachment. The emigrants blamed the "Bolshevik robbers" for the disturbance of peaceful life and the necessity to leave home for Barga and Khalkha. They recognized Semënov's government which promised to lead the region to peaceful civil construction and economic prosperity and guaranteed the reestablishment of national, public, and zemstvo bodies created by the Provisional Government, stigmatized all those who supported Soviet rule in any way as "traitors of the homeland" who had no place in the future life of the Buryat

people, and practically disavowed Burnackom stating that there was no authority among the Buryats both in the Baikal region and abroad. The emigrants appealed to Semënov's government, asking to create a Buryat National Department for the Buryats in Barga, Khalkha, and later in the Baikal region. Further appeals concerned the establishment of a Buryat territorial autonomy, creation of temporary administrative and judicial bodies based on common law and regulations of the Transbaikal government, and armament of the population. The meeting ended with expressing gratitude to the administration of Hulunbuir for shelter and electing the Buryat National Department (GARB 483–1–18, 59).

The Buryat self-government bodies on the Soviet side of the front were ineffective against violence. The Aga Aymak authorities could do nothing to protect the Buryats from peasants who claimed they were Bolsheviks. Villagers from Duldurga, for instance, took cattle from the people of the Taptanay Somon making them flee. Peasants from Balzino and Darasun robbed the people of Khoyto-Aga threatening them with murder in case of flight. Alenguy was attacked by an armed group which robbed the Buryats and raped Buryat women. The attackers called themselves Bolsheviks and left handwritten notes stating that the Buryats had voluntarily given cattle to them (GARB 483–1–43, 1).

On May 29, 1918, Burnackom resolved that since the people could guarantee their own safety only by self-organization it was the time for it to cast away the "idiocy of pacifism" and protect the "sacred right to national self-determination" in arms. Admitting that the Buryat "working masses" were widely non-violent due to their "historical past" and "religious consciousness," Burnackom ordered partial mobilization of three ages in the Transbaikal aymaks. Seven hundred people were to be conscripted from the Selenga (250 people), Aga (200), Khori (200), and Barguzin (50) aymaks to cavalry detachments called Ulaan Sagdaa ("Red Militia"). In Russian the symbolic connection to socialism was dropped, since the official translation rendered the detachments as the National Guard. Officials, cooperative employees, coachmen, students and lamas at the monasteries, and teachers at secular schools were exempted from military service. Ulaan Sagdaa was subordinate to Burnackom and only in the most urgent cases could it follow the orders of the regional authorities. Funding was nevertheless supposed to come from the Soviets. Burnackom requested three cavalry officers from the regional war commissariat to take up the command. Twenty-eight Buryat Cossacks were invited to become paid instructors. Rinčino stepped down as Burnackom's chairman to lead Ulaan Sagda. The Aga detachment was entrusted with "secret tasks" due to its proximity to the Semënov Front (GARB 483–1–18, 37–38).

The idea of conscription proved unpopular among the Buryats. The Khori Aymak Congress voted the initiative down in June 1918. Cydenov and his disciples continued their criticism of Burnackom for its military initiatives. The conscription strengthened anti-aymak opposition across the Baikal region bringing the Khori, Dogoy, Khilgana, Abiduev, and Hanhasaev anti-aymak groups in contact (Očiržapov n.d. 5–6).

4.2 The confluence of the Great War and the Russian Civil War

The elimination of the Eastern Front raised major concerns among Russia's former Allies due to the transfer of German troops to the Western Front and expected repatriation of German, Austrian, Hungarian, Turkish, and Bulgarian POWs (Nachtigal 2008; Trani 1976). The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk threatened those former soldiers of the Central Powers who turned against their empires. The largest group united some 45,000 Czechs and Slovaks who were organized into military detachments under the Czechoslovak National Council, which advocated Czechoslovakia's independence, and French command. In February 1918 the French government decided to send the Czechoslovak troops to Vladivostok by rail and then by sea to France (Maksakov *et al.* 1926, 60–61; Saldugeev 2005).

For a quick evacuation the integrity of the Siberian railway communication space was important. The destruction of the bridge in the Baikal region proved its vulnerability. Besides, the German and Austro-Hungarian prisoners in Siberia were seen as capable of occupying the railway. These concerns gave cause to landing of Japanese troops in Vladivostok on April 5, 1918. As a response, on April 9 the Bolsheviks stated that the Czechoslovaks had to disarm completely. In order to dispel fears about any danger to the Trans-Siberian Railway Sovnarkom allowed American and British officers to inspect the line (Maksakov *et al.* 1926, 62).

The American experts of the Russian Railway Service Corps (RRSC) were supposed to serve as advisors on different sections of the Trans-Siberian Railway (USNA M917–1, 119). The oncoming movement of POWs complicated the Czechoslovak evacuation. On May 14–17, 1918, a conflict involving Austro-Hungarian prisoners in Chelyabinsk resulted in hostilities between the Czechoslovaks and the Bolsheviks. On May 25, 1918, Lev Trockij ordered that soviets from Penza to Omsk disarmed the Czechoslovaks immediately. The Czechoslovaks did not comply and turned against the Soviets (USNA M917–1, 716; Saldugeev 2005).

According to Soviet sources, the revolt was not spontaneous. In April 1918 the Harbin conservative group discussed the organization of anti-Bolshevik armed struggle with the representatives of the Allies in Beijing. The same month the plan to use the Czechoslovaks against the Bolsheviks and reestablish the Eastern Front was discussed at the French mission in Moscow. The Czechoslovaks were to spread along the Trans-Siberian Railway and coordinate their activities with local anti-Bolshevik organizations (Maksakov *et al.* 1926, 63).

In the Baikal region the Bolsheviks attempted to stop the forces led by Radola Gajda by blowing up a tunnel at the Circum-Baikal Railway and shelling them from the two ferries, the Baikal and the Angara, equipped with field pieces. The RRSC had cleared the tunnel by mid-August. After the group under Gajda joined Semënov on the Onon on September 2, 1918, anti-Bolshevik forces established control over the railway from the Urals to Vladivostok via the CER (USNA

M917–1, 352, 726, 745, 747, 787; USNA M917–11, 47–111). The Czechoslovaks in Siberia were soon supported by American, Japanese, British, French, Canadian, and Chinese armed forces. Additional squads were formed from the POWs of Italian, Serbian, Polish, and Romanian origin. The Soviet government in Siberia was deposed on September 19, 1918, when the Allies occupied the Amur Railway. The conscription to Ulaan Sagdaa remained unrealized (Isitt 2010; Mautone 2003; Očiržapov n.d. 6; USNA M917–1, 3, 338, 379, 755).

According to the statement made by the Department of State to the press on August 5, 1918, aiding the "Czechoslovaks against the armed Austrian and German prisoners" who were "attacking them" was the main reason for the American intervention. Further objectives included steadying "any efforts at self-government or self-defense in which the Russians themselves" might "be willing to accept assistance" and guarding the "military stores" in ports which might "subsequently be needed by Russian forces." The United States and Japan were said to be "the only powers" which were then "in a position to act in Siberia in sufficient force to accomplish" such objects. At the request of the American government, the Japanese government consented to send a few thousand men to Vladivostok for joint operations. The main principles behind the American intervention were formulated as non-interference with the "political sovereignty of Russia," non-intervention in its internal affairs, and non-impairment of its territorial integrity. The plans and principles were communicated to the governments of Great Britain, France, and Italy, which assented to them in principle (USNA M917–1, 121–122).

The Japanese government reaffirmed the principle of non-interference in a proclamation to the Russian people signed by commander of the 7th Division of the Imperial Japanese Army General Fujii Kōtsuchi (藤井幸槌) on August 8, 1918. The proclamation used different language. Referring to the edict of their "most humane and most clement Emperor," the Japanese Army claimed to aim at restoring "order and peace" and liberating Russia "from the slough of suffering and the chains of slavery caused by the attack of the Austro-German war-prisoners and the Red Guard." It called itself "a true savior of Russian people" and threatened all those who would "put obstacles" in the way of its "sacred destination" with the "strongest measures" and persecution "without difference of nationality." Advising the Russian people "not to be disturbed by the influence of dangerous ideas," the Japanese Army took a clear anti-Bolshevik stance (USNA M917–1, 201). The German Empire was indeed Japan's main enemy in the Great War, since the Japanese government aimed at acquiring its concessions in China, but its economic goals in the Siberian intervention went beyond fostering German defeat (Barnhart 1987).

According to Captain Laurence B. Packard of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF), the Czechoslovak armies never needed rescue. Packard formulated the main political reasons for the American intervention as the demonstration of the "readiness to stand by Russia" and friendliness for the new Czechoslovak state "in anticipation of recognition" (USNA M917–1, 669, 671; USNA M917–10, 44, 51–52). It was therefore not only the Russian and Qing,

but also Austro-Hungarian Empire which was being disentangled in Siberia. Czechoslovak operations in Russia had great importance for the consolidation of their national identity and independence claims. The Czechoslovak National Council gained international recognition as a de facto belligerent government and proclaimed Czechoslovakia's independence in the fall of 1918 (USNA M917–1, 344–345, 470, 689, 757–758).

The number of various national, ethnic, and other groups fighting in Siberia by the fall of 1918 was tremendous making the confluent conflict transcultural. The Japanese Army included Koreans. Some American soldiers were born in the Russian Empire and other countries. The Red Army was an international organization by definition. Apart from the largest ethnic groups of the former empire, it included many POWs, mainly Hungarians, Germans, and Austrians. Four thousand POWs from Chita and 1,300 from Verkhneudinsk joined the Bolsheviks. Some Czech and Slovak deserters sided with the Bolsheviks calling themselves "social revolutionists," internationalists, and communists. Koreans joined the Bolsheviks due to both internationalist and nationalist considerations expecting the formation of the Eastern Red Army which would liberate their homeland from the Japanese. Chinese also joined the Red Army (Batuev 1994, 168; USNA M917–1, 66, 73, 201, 313, 703, 710, 719, 724, 767).

Semënov's forces were polyethnic as well. Apart from Russians, Mongols, and Buryats the Independent Manchurian Detachment included many Chinese, Koreans, Japanese, Tatars (Bashkirs), and Serbs. The Serbs, also former Austro-Hungarian soldiers, joined Semënov when passing through Manchuria on their way from the Eastern to the Western Front. The battalion of 600 Japanese "volunteers" was created on Kuroki's initiative. The units were, however, as ethnically homogenous as possible and command was conducted in native languages. Semënov used interethnic antagonisms between the Chinese and Mongols, Russians and Tatars (Bashkirs) to stimulate competition between their units in battle (Semënov 2002, 148–149, 166–168, 184–185, 360; USNA M917–1, 661).

4.3 The international regime of the Trans-Siberian Railway

By the fall of 1918 zemstvo and municipal governments resumed nominal authority across Siberia, but much control was exercised by the Czechoslovak National Council and commanders. The Czechoslovaks were a mobile authority. Many were moving along the Trans-Siberian Railway and lived in railroad cars. The Allied warships USS *Brooklyn*, HMS *Suffolk*, *Asahi* (朝日), *Iwami* (石見), and *Hai Yung* (海容) provided for the international control of Vladivostok and naval communication (USNA M917–1, 352; USNA M917–10, 60–61).

Several new governments claimed the territories of the former Russian Empire. The first such government, the Committee of Members of the Constituent Assembly consisting of moderate socialists, was proclaimed on June 8, 1918, in Samara. The Provisional Siberian Government under Derber still existed, but in late June a conservative Provisional Siberian Government was formed in Omsk under Pëtr Vologodskij. Derber's group refused to recognize the coup and

proclaimed the Provisional Government of Autonomous Siberia in Vladivostok. The forming Siberian Voluntary Army under Pavel Ivanov-Rinov and other officers secured the claims of the Omsk government leaving the Vladivostok group dysfunctional. Its position was further challenged by Horvat who proclaimed himself the Supreme Ruler in the Far East and formed a government, the Business Cabinet, in early July 1918. Taskin was its part. The situation in Siberian politics was further complicated after the Siberian Regional Duma reconvened in Tomsk in August. Even though it provided legitimacy to the Omsk government, the latter suspended its meetings (Maksakov *et al.* 1926, 70–75, 80–81; USNA M917–1, 539, 727, 758).

The fall of the Soviet government in Siberia complicated the position of Burnackom which had been recognized as its part in July 1918. Rinčino withdrew from active political interactions for some time. On August 6, 1918, when the eastern Baikal region was still under Centrosibir', a meeting chaired by Mihail Bogdanov refused to recognize the Burnackom members elected in April 1918 and formed a new temporary Burnackom consisting of those present. This new membership was forwarded to the four Transbaikal aymaks and the Irkutsk National Committee (which refrained from calling itself a department of Burnackom) for consideration. The status of Ulaan Sagdaa and its commander Rinčino was to be clarified. Cyben Žamcarano was one of the two elected representatives of the Transbaikal Buryat-Mongols to the Siberian Regional Duma (GARB 483–1–18, 46).

On August 10–12, 1918, the Irkutsk National Committee and aymak representatives also welcomed the Siberian Regional Duma and the Provisional Siberian Government and elected representatives to the two bodies. The same month the Irkutsk National Committee issued a proclamation to the Buryat people of eastern Siberia. The document called for "recreation of the Russian state from all its former parts keeping freedom and autonomy for each of them." This task was to be fulfilled through cooperation with the Allies and the Siberian Provisional Government created by the Siberian Regional Duma. Since for achieving the goal a strong army was needed, the National Committee urged Buryats to sign up for the Siberian Voluntary Army and to form national detachments for home service: guarding bridges, substituting for city garrisons, and disarming local gangs. The Buryats were urged to fight for their own interests and defend Russia's independence against "strong foreign enemies" (GARB 483–1–7, 1a; GARB 483–1–55, 34–36).

The Omsk government proved to be effective in Siberian politics. By sending troops from Irkutsk, it managed to subdue the resistance of the Yakut Region where a group of SRs had proclaimed independence. It rallied support of the Kazakh nationalists and Siberian Regionalists. Lieutenant Colonel Anatolij Pepelâev who led the anti-Bolshevik group in Tomsk recognized Vologodskij's government and threatened to use force against Horvat in case he did not submit. Semënov "took the oath of allegiance" to the Omsk government and was appointed Commander of the Siberian cavalry corps in early September 1918. In October 1918 Gajda appointed him commander of Russian troops east of the Onon (Maksakov *et al.* 1926, 73–76, 85; USNA M917–1, 356–357, 663).

The Allied operations east of Baikal put Japanese troops in a strategic position there. First, the nominal supreme Allied command under Japanese General Ōtani Kikuzō (大谷喜久蔵) managed to convince the Allies of the enemy's excessive numbers and for that cause brought in much more troops than it was agreed upon. Some 72,400 Japanese troops were sent into Manchuria and Siberia, whereas the United States committed a total of 10,000 people under General William S. Graves. Second, the Japanese rushed operations before the arrival of other troops in order to secure strategic centers between the Pacific Ocean and Lake Baikal. Third, through their support for several independent Russian armed groups, including those under Semënov and Kalmykov, the Japanese avoided any reconstruction of the Russian army in the Far East and ensured that no strong Russian central authority was created (USNA M917–1, 118; USNA M917–10, 23–24, 62, 72, 110, 152).

According to the American command, Japanese troops carried out a far-reaching plan of both military and economic penetration into Siberia securing control of the CER and "mineral, agricultural, fishing, industrial and commercial enterprise east of Lake Baikal." The discrepancy between the Japanese declarations of non-interference and actions was accounted for by the political struggle in Japan between the liberal civil group under Prime Minister Hara Takashi (原敬) and the expansionist military elite in the conditions of no "real parliamentary responsibility of the Japanese Government." Unlike the Japanese, other Allies supported the idea of a centralized anti-Bolshevik Russian authority. Apart from the political objective of reopening the Eastern Front, the Allies had commercial interests aspiring to "bring economic relief to the Russian people, introducing commodities of which they were destitute" and "to aid, if possible, in restoring Siberian railroad transportation," as formulated by the US ambassador to Japan Roland S. Morris. The potential of commercial relations with anti-Bolshevik forces increased greatly after they captured most of the imperial Russian gold reserves with a value of around 651 million gold rubles in August 1918 (Carley 1976; Kolz 1976; Smele 1994; USNA M917–1, 151, 540–541; USNA M917–10, 44, 60, 66–76, 136, 152, 432, 449–451; Woodward 1974).

Both the American (27th and 31st Infantry Division from the Philippine Islands) and Japanese (7th Infantry Division from Korea) troops provided connections to Japanese and American colonialism. Many Japanese soldiers and officers, including Ōtani, participated in the Russo-Japanese War. In the fall of 1918 the American presence was limited to the Far East and had little effect on the plans of the Japanese military in the eastern Baikal region. After the hostilities seized in eastern Siberia the Czechoslovaks moved west of Lake Baikal, whereas the French and British detachments only passed through the region. With the 3rd Division under General Ōba Jirō (大庭二郎) stationed in Transbaikalia, the 12th Division under Ōtani controlling the Amur Railway, and the 7th Division under Fujii operating in northern Manchuria, the towns and major communication lines of the eastern Baikal region were under the control of Japanese troops. By February 1919 the three divisions had 25,600 soldiers (Duus 1995; Hara 1989; Novikov 2007; USNA M917–1, 151, 249–250; USNA M917–10, 22, 102; Williams 1980).

The Japanese military became notorious for its conduct in Siberia. Americans accused the Japanese troops of "boorish violence and arrogance" in occupied towns and villages. The Czechoslovak staff accused them of encouraging Bolshevism. Through Semënov and Kalmykov, the Japanese military managed to keep the American engineers away. When dealing with local Russian authorities, they resorted to bribery and trickery (USNA M917–1, 64, 249–250, 552; USNA M917–10, 10, 17, 23–24, 152, 154).

The emerging US-Japanese rivalry contributed to the divergence in positions. In his attempts to counterbalance the Japanese military, Graves recommended to the War Department in late September that "the troops be put in battalion posts at various towns between Vladivostok and Omsk" in order to "extend the sphere of influence of the United States and help the Russian people." The War Department ordered that no troops be sent west of Baikal and suggested moving the AEF headquarters to Harbin. Ōtani opposed the initiative claiming that there was no accommodation for more foreign troops in the city. In December 1918 Graves had only seventy-five people there. The CER was under full control of the Japanese, but American and Japanese representatives continued negotiations about sending American troops to the area between Chita and Baikal (USNA M917–1, 40–41, 43–44, 249–250, 558, 560).

Semënov made an attempt to cooperate with the AEF, but without much success. In regional politics he was more efficient. With Semënov controlling the only significant Buryat armed group, the Buryat-Mongol regiment, the Buryat National Department under the Independent Manchuria Detachment was merged with Burnackom to form a new Burnackom under Sampilon's presidency on September 19, 1918. Bogdanov and several other Buryat intellectuals gave up their positions to "save money." Bogdanov remained active in regional zemstvo. On September 29, 1918, he chaired a meeting of the Extraordinary Zemstvo Assembly of the Transbaikal Region which resolved to annul all land seizures and other land-use decisions of all Soviet organizations and reconstruct the boundaries in the space of land use which had existed before 1917. Land management was to be carried out by the Constituent Assembly and local mixed commissions. The meeting demanded reimbursement of injured persons by the violators appealing to the instructions issued by the Provisional Siberian Government in July 1918, called for stopping settlement before land management was finished, and suggested to give the functions of the Settler Administration to zemstvo (GARB 483–1–18, 58; GARB 483–1–24, 1–3; USNA M917–1, 551, 661).

Zemstvo authorities proved unable to make any difference, while the Omsk government was unwilling to do anything about the land-use issues. On September 21, 1918, Vologodskij told Morris that the land-use conflicts were "acute west of the Urals" and hardly existed "in Siberia proper" and that the Omsk government "would not be embarrassed by dealing with a problem foreign to itself." Vologodskij noted that there were no land estates in Siberia and that "land was relatively abundant," welcomed the colonization under the former Russian government, and expressed the desire of the Omsk government to "continue to promote this colonization." Land-use conflicts in the Baikal region were not

mentioned. In his interview with Morris on September 24, 1918, Semënov only raised issues related to the Buryat emigrants with whom he had closer relations (GARB 483–1–24, 29–30; USNA M917–1, 537, 542).

With the Japanese military presence increasing in eastern Siberia, western Siberia was still under the control of Czechoslovak troops and French command which planned consultations between the Samara and Omsk governments, the Provisional Regional Government of the Urals, and possibly the Orenburg Cossacks. The socialist Samara and conservative Omsk governments agreed to organize a conference in Ufa, then under the Orenburg Cossacks. The Ufa conference was held on September 8–23, 1918, and was accompanied by victories of the Red Army in European Russia. The defeats and casualties of the Czechoslovaks (some 10,000 people with 2,000 killed) weakened the positions of liberals and socialists. The Omsk government built the core of the Provisional All-Russian Government proclaimed on September 23. Omsk remained its seat. The government proved to be short-lived. With the support of General Alfred Knox, the head of the British military mission, Pepelâev, and Gajda, the government was disbanded on November 18, 1918. Its War and Navy Minister Admiral Kolčak was proclaimed the Supreme Ruler of Russia (Connaughton 1990; Maksakov *et al.* 1926, 76, 84–88, 93, 98–99; Smele 2006; USNA M917–1, 755–789).

The armistice with Germany which had been signed several days before changed the situation in the global political space, since the main proclaimed objective of the intervention became irrelevant. The Japanese military continued its policy and did not welcome the creation of a unified Russian authority. The Czechoslovaks opposed the very idea of dictatorship, but the French command prevented them from interference. With Czechoslovakia having become independent, the presence of its forces in Siberia and especially at the anti-Bolshevik Ural Front found little understanding among the soldiers. The Omsk coup further contributed to their determination to withdraw from fighting as soon as the Russian anti-Bolshevik troops being formed through compulsory mobilization were ready. In early 1919 the Czechoslovaks left the Ural Front, but remained in control of the railway between Omsk and Irkutsk. They also aspired to guard the section from Chita to Khabarovsk, but could not reach an understanding with the Allies (USNA M917–1, 321, 767, 789).

The end of the Great War made Siberia an important arena of political struggle between the Allies in the context of the Paris Peace Conference. After the Czechoslovaks' positions weakened, the French government found other ways to influence the situation. On December 13, 1918, Prime Minister George Clemenceau of France and Prime Minister David Lloyd George of Great Britain authorized generals Maurice Janin and Knox to take up high command of the anti-Bolshevik armies. According to Graves, General Knox was in fact already in control of Kolčak's actions. Winston Churchill even claimed at the House of Commons that the Kolčak government had been organized by the British for their own purposes (USNA M917–10, 445, 447).

With the Central Powers defeated, the Bolsheviks remained the only enemy. Fighting them, however, contradicted the initial proclamations of the Allied

governments and meant a direct intervention into Russian political affairs. The British government did not officially recognize the Kolčak government, but at the same time it took a pronounced anti-Bolshevik stance. As the War Office communicated to Knox in May 1919:

> Bolshevik Government has committed great crimes against Allied subject which have made it impossible to recognize it even if it were a civilized Government.… Next item in our policy is to prevent forcible eruptions of Bolshevism into Allied lands, consequently we are organizing all the forces of the Allied countries bordering Russia: from the Baltic to the Black Sea and supplying all these countries with necessary equipment to set up barriers against Bolshevik invasion.
>
> (USNA M917–1, 653)

The supplies provided to the Kolčak government by the Allies, their support of Poland in the Polish-Soviet War which began in February 1919, and the large number of foreign troops consolidated the position of the anti-Bolshevik forces in Siberia. The Omsk coup, however, split them. Together with the disbandment of the Siberian Regional Duma it alienated left-oriented politicians. The SRs resolved to stop the armed struggle against the Bolsheviks and focus on the elimination of the Kolčak regime joining Mariâ Sah'ânova and other surviving Bolsheviks in underground operations across Siberia. The Provisional Government of Autonomous Siberia nevertheless recognized the All-Russian Provisional Government. So did Horvat's Business Cabinet, even though, according to Graves, he wanted to become a dictator himself and used the railway "for political purposes." In exchange for recognition, the Omsk government appointed him Supreme Representative in the Far East. As a monarchist, he favored dictatorship and remained loyal to Kolčak. Unlike Horvat, Semënov refused to recognize Kolčak as the Supreme Ruler and suggested other candidates: Horvat, Aleksandr Dutov, and Anton Denikin. Such actions were supported by the Japanese. In response Kolčak dismissed Semënov and demanded his immediate submission (Čimitdoržiev and Mihajlov 1999, 3:34–35; Maksakov *et al.* 1926, 89–92, 94–95, 101–103; RGVA 40308–1–119, 1 rev.; USNA M917–1, 555–556, 571, 883).

Although it was the Japanese military which controlled most of eastern Siberia and Manchuria, Kolčak's order challenged Semënov's position. Having been recently promoted to colonel by the Provisional Siberian Government, Semënov was of little importance for Russian generals. Semënov's position among the Cossacks was also questionable. In October 1918 Semënov arranged with Kalmykov of the Ussuri Cossacks and Ivan Gamov of the Amur Cossacks creation of the Far Eastern Cossack Union with Semënov becoming Campaign Ataman (pohodnyj ataman). Since Semënov was not the elected Army Ataman (vojskovoj ataman) of the Transbaikal Cossack Host, the new alliance was illegitimate. During the conflict between Semënov and Kolčak most Cossack and non-Cossack generals (Horvat, Dutov, and others) attempted to bring Semënov under submission (Šuldâkov 2009).

Kolčak opted for a violent solution. Japanese commanders warned against British or any other Allied involvement in the affair and promised to prevent Horvat from attacking from the east. Fearing the aggravation of the crisis, Janin and Knox urged Kolčak in early December 1918 to give up his plans, as General Ōba assured that he would not allow any hostilities in Transbaikalia. Following Kolčak's order, troops under Major General Vâčeslav Volkov nevertheless advanced from the Irkutsk Province, but were stopped at Mogzon and disarmed by the Japanese division under General Fujii. The allied troops (British, Romanian, Italian, and Serbian) and the administration of the Transbaikal Cossack Host which could support Volkov refrained from participation. The incident demonstrated that neither Kolčak, nor the Allied high command under Janin and Knox had authority east of Baikal. Negotiations on site proved fruitless. Semënov demanded complete revocation of Kolčak's order (Bisher 2005; RGVA 40308–1–119, 1–2, 5–5 rev., 10; Šuldâkov 2009).

Japanese positions weakened after the representatives of the Allies signed the Railroad Agreement in February 1919. It disentangled the railway communications space of Siberia and regulated foreign presence in the Baikal region. According to the agreement, Czechoslovak, Italian, and Romanian detachments guarded the railway west of Port Baikal. The AEF was responsible for the section between Verkhneudinsk and Port Baikal including the strategic Circum-Baikal Railway. The Japanese guarded both lines east of Verkhneudinsk. Most of the CER was assigned to the Chinese (Figure 3.1). Although the AEF was unable to take action until April 1920 and had to leave the Circum-Baikal Railway to Russian troops retaining the section from Mysovaya to Verkhneudinsk, it became a deterrent for the Japanese and Semënov at least in parts of the region. American engineers were to play a leading role in the Inter-Allied Committee operating the CER and the Trans-Siberian Railway (Mautone 2003; USNA M917–10, 30–33).

The Allies were also in charge of the POWs who were again interned. Japan, USA, France, Italy, and China provided them with an allowance. Some were hired by the AEF to work at the port of Vladivostok. Austrian prisoners from the newly established Czechoslovak state were under Czechoslovak authority (USNA M917–10, 25–27).

New actors contributed to boundary construction in the Baikal region and emergence of numerous contested power structures in place of the former Russian Empire. Siberia turned from a colonial periphery of an empire into a global political space. This political space featured the dissolution of at least three empires (Russian, Austro-Hungarian, and Qing) by nationalist (Buryats, Mongols, Czechoslovaks, Italians, and Serbs) and internationalist (Bolsheviks) groupings. The former were contested by the latter and non-nationalist (Cossacks and Christians) categorizations.

In order to defend Buryat national claims and counteract crime Burnackom opted for creating an organized armed force. Such force had then in fact already been created and successfully used by Semënov who proved more effective in mobilizing Buryats for armed struggle. The absence of a legitimate authority and

raging violence resulted in the complete collapse of the state by the fall of 1918. The numerous national, international, and transnational actors who found themselves in the political space of the Baikal region continued their interactions in a stateless context.

After the Allied troops and the diverse anti-Bolshevik forces managed to overthrow the Bolshevik government and take control of Siberia, the Russian state literally ceased to exist. There was no united government and monopoly for violence. None of the emerging anti-Bolshevik governments was recognized internationally, even though the Allies rendered financial and military support to them. Japan used the opportunity to occupy vast regions east of Lake Baikal. The attempts to control Siberia were made through regional warlords, such as Semënov in the Baikal region. Other Allies tried to counterbalance the efforts of Japan and defend their own interests which lead to the institutionalization of international regime along the Trans-Siberian Railway in February 1919. The communication space became determinative for other spaces. The Baikal region turned into a zone of direct interactions between global and local actors and discourses.

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5 The Mongol Federation and the Buddhist theocracy, 1919–1920

5.1 Regional politicians in international relations

After the collapse of the Soviet government several regional and global actors controlled parts of the Baikal region. In late 1918 Aleksandr Kolčak's Omsk government, which controlled the territory west of the lake, received information that Grigorij Semënov, the warlord east of the lake, was part of a larger Japanese plan in the global political space. According to Russian officers, the Japanese were getting ready for a war with the United States. In order to secure iron ore from eastern Siberia and prevent an attack from China, they plotted an uprising in Mongolia. Semënov was selected to lead the uprising (RGVA 40308–1–119, 1). The situation, however, proved to be much more complex than a Japanese conspiracy. Given that the Japanese government and military had no unified position on the intervention at large (Hara 1989), Semënov and the Mongol uprising could not be part of a coherent foreign policy. Moderate Japanese officials did not support Semënov (GARF 200–1–534, 1–2). The very spread of such information was in fact an important part of Semënov's own policy, which he conducted in the Baikal region and beyond through numerous representatives. According to Major General Takayanagi Yasutarō (高柳保太郎), the Head of the Japanese Military Mission to the Omsk government, the Mongol uprising was in fact Semënov's plans (GARF 200–1–478, 246 rev.; JACAR B03050173500–1–0649, 186).

The relations between Semënov and Burnackom in the fall of 1918 were undoubtedly part of such plans, but it is unlikely that it was Semënov who was their main architect. They corresponded to the strategy formulated in a letter sent by Èlbek-Dorži Rinčino, who went into hiding, to Daši Sampilon. Sharing his considerations on how to protect the interests of the Buryat nation under the new conditions, Rinčino suggested surpassing the ideas of zemstvo and separating domestic and foreign policy of Burnackom. The relations within the Buryat ethnic space were to be part of the former, whereas all relations with the Omsk government, Semënov, the Japanese, the Bolsheviks, and other actors were to form the latter. Burnackom was to claim the right to send its representatives to all internal consultations and even to the international negotiations related to the Far East. In case the new Russian authorities were reluctant to recognize Buryat

self-determination claims, Burnackom was to establish closer contacts with Semënov and the Japanese. Semënov was said to be relevant for the Buryats only because of the Japanese and their plans in Siberia, Manchuria, and Mongolia, and Rinčino advised to establish direct contacts with the latter (Batuev 1994, 165–168).

Rinčino shared the considerations of the "Soviet" Burnackom about larger political spaces in Asia. Manchuria and eastern Mongolia were expected to fall entirely under the Japanese influence; southern, northern, and western Mongolia including the Buryats would form an "independent buffer state," with the Buryats either resettling to Khalkha or moving to the south of the Baikal region. If southern and northern Mongolia failed to unite, then two states were to be formed, with the southern one being under Japanese protectorate. The "Soviet" Burnackom shared the opinion that creation of a Central Asian state on the boundary between China and Siberia conformed to the strategic and political interests of Japan. Rinčino denied the Mongols and other peoples of Central Asia, who were "primitive" and "corrupted by Buddhist clericalism," the ability to create such a state. It was the "most cultural" Buryat nation which was to play the leading role. According to Rinčino, the "significance and prestige" of the Buryats had increased during the revolution to such an extent that they were capable of making international claims. If the suppositions about the Japanese interests corresponded to their actual intentions, they would support the autonomous claims of the Buryats (Batuev 1994, 165–168).

The militarization of the "masses" was deemed the key premise for the success in international relations. Rinčino suggested using Semënov and opted for compulsory creation of the armed force. Rinčino also noted that the Japanese might have a Mongol font needed for publishing activities. He urged Sampilon to ensure preservation of the social and economic reforms undertaken during the Soviet rule which would let the Buryats "keep" a part of the Soviet system just like zemstvo and other bodies were kept after the October Revolution. The agreement with Semënov and the Japanese was to become the Buryat "Treaty of Brest-Litovsk" and, according to Rinčino, the representatives of Siberian Soviets did not oppose such collaboration when he asked them in August 1918 (Batuev 1994, 165–168).

In early October 1918 Burnackom appealed to the Transbaikal regional authorities asking to sanction the Buryat Autonomy, but this issue remained unresolved. In late October, when Semënov initiated conscription among the Cossacks and Russian peasants, Burnackom resolved to draft Buryats of 22–25 years old to service in Sagaan Sagda ("White Militia") for six months independently from the general conscription. The four Transbaikal aymaks were to provide 2,000 horsemen (Očiržapov n.d., 7–8).

The former commander of Ulaan Sagdaa, Rinčino, returned to active political interactions after the fifth National Congress of the Buryat-Mongols of Eastern Siberia, which convened on November 18–December 3, 1918, in Verkhneudinsk, recognized the actions of Burnackom during the Soviet rule as correct and corresponding to the interests of the people and the nation. Burnackom was

given credit for saving the supreme and local self-government bodies from "the dread of inner anarchy and general disintegration" when being violently attacked by the neighboring peasants, Cossacks, and workers. The congress resolved to display the portraits of its former chairmen Cyben Žamcarano, Rinčino, Sampilon, and Mihail Bogdanov in Buryat offices (GARB 305–1–38, 56; GARF 1701–1–16, 2).

The continuity of Burnackom policy was ensured by Sampilon who followed Rinčino's advice. After the vain attempts to find the support of the Omsk government in early November 1918 (GARF 1701–1–16, 3), closer relations with the Japanese were established via Captain Suzue[1] who was present at the November congress. During the congress the Buryats organized a feast in Suzue's honor and apparently gained his favor, since he eagerly transmitted their suggestions for cooperation and supported their appeals. Apart from the urgent problem of acquiring a Mongol font, which had been discussed since 1917, Buryat delegates expressed desire to send students to study in Japan and to organize tourism to Nikkō. The plan related to students was submitted to vice chief of staff in Tokyo by the Japanese staff on site in January 1919. Its objectives were to "enlighten the Mongol people" and to develop friendly attitudes towards Japan among them. It was suggested to send ten students on a scholarship funded by the Japanese government. After a year of Japanese they would engage in three-year professional training. The most prominent students would continue their education. The program was to begin in March 1919. The Buryats also invited three Japanese doctors as medical advisors for one or two years (GARB 483–1–67, 50–51; JACAR B03050173500–1–0649, 168, 202, 210–211; JACAR B03050173600–1–0649, 235). The objective of establishing unmediated relations with the Japanese was hardly achieved though, since Semënov remained the primary contact of the Japanese officers in the Baikal region. Besides, Suzue was said to have poor Mongolian (GARF 200–1–478, 103 rev.)

Although the November congress was organized by Transbaikal and Irkutsk self-government bodies and Hambo Lama, it was sanctioned and supervised by Semënov who was eager to manifest himself in the power relations among the Buryats. The congress promised to support Semënov and reconfigured the Buryat self-government bodies. Burnackom was transformed into the Peoples Duma of the Buryat-Mongols of Eastern Siberia (Burnarduma) under Sampilon's chairmanship. The organization of the Irkutsk Buryats retained the title Irkutsk Buryat National Committee. A further Buryat organization was formed in late December 1918 in Urga. The Urga Buryat Committee chaired by Cokto Badmažapov and co-chaired by Sanžimitab Cybiktarov included emigrant Buryat intellectuals and established close contact with Burnarduma in Chita (GARB 305–1–27, 11; GARB 483–1–27, 1–2; GARB 483–1–55, 41–42; GARF 1701–1–16, 16–17).

The unity of the Buryat national movement was challenged. Despite retaining close contact, the three Buryat bodies appeared to pursue different policies. The Urga Buryat Committee focused on the emigrant interests and the relations with Bogd Khan's government. The Irkutsk organization, with the support of the

provincial zemstvo, continued appealing for recognition to the authorities in Omsk and in the middle of December 1918 sent Baârto Vampilon there for negotiations. It also decided to establish stable connections to other Siberian indigenous organizations which shared the objectives of national revival, "cultural" advancement, and economic improvement. Appealing to the notion of cultural development, the Russian provincial zemstvo administration urged Aleksandr Kolčak's Ministry of Internal Affairs to support the Buryat self-government since the Buryats were "a cultural ethnic group" unlike most other "natives in Siberia." Provincial administration also claimed that the Buryat emigration to Mongolia resulting from communal violence and local disorganization would violate the interests of the Russian state (GARB 483–1–52, 74–75, 77–80; GARB 483–1–55, 41–42).

Contemporaneously, Burnarduma in Chita gradually dissociated itself from the Omsk government. Building up a Buryat-Mongol armed force remained its priority. Since most of the armed and trained Buryats were under Semënov's command, Burnarduma attempted to ensure at least "civil" authority over them. Although Burnarduma was allowed to organize and manage conscription among the Buryats through its Military Department, the forming Buryat forces were merged with other indigenous units into the Independent Alien Cavalry Division commanded by Roman von Ungern-Sternberg. It was stationed in Dauria and was part of Semënov's Independent Eastern Siberian Army. The principles of transcultural management used in the Independent Manchuria Detachment remained. The Russian officers had to learn Mongolian, whereas training was suspended during Christian, Buddhist, and Muslim religious holidays. In late 1918, a Buryat junior officer school was formed in Dauria (GARB 483–1–18, 62; RGVA 39454–1–2, 4, 13, 20 rev., 24, 31 rev., 87, 244).

The conscription did not run smoothly and Burnarduma resorted to repressive measures. The Aga, Barguzin, Selenga, and Khori zemstvo administrations, for instance, were ordered not to issue travel documents to possible conscripts. Burnarduma also claimed exterritorial authority over Buryat emigrants, demanding all those who returned from Mongolia to be sent to Verkhneudinsk or Dauria to the commander of the Buryat-Mongol troops (sagdaa) with horses and saddles. The question of how to support the transboundary claims and attract emigrants remained. In the middle of February 1919 Burnarduma requested the Urga Buryat Committee to order emigrants due for call-up to go to their khoshuns, but apparently had little success. The reluctance of the emigrants to participate in the draft caused problems in the Transbaikal Region. The Aga Aymak administration noted that the required number of conscripts set for the aymak was too high due to the large number of emigrants. The burden of the Aga Aymak in fact increased due to the exemption of the Barguzin Aymak from the conscription in early January 1919 due to "anarchy" (GARB 305–1–14, 1, 2, 5–8; GARB 305–1–17, 5).

The conscription and alliance with Semënov did not help Burnarduma cope with the organized anti-aymak opposition. The anti-aymak Cossacks gained support of the Ataman of the First Department of the Transbaikal Cossack Host

Ivan Tolstihin who hampered ethnic separation of the Cossacks in late December 1918. Tolstihin ordered Cossack communities to decide if they wanted to join the khoshuns, but laid down the condition that those who joined the Buryat zemstvo were to continue their service in the infantry and lose their rights to Cossack land (GARB 305–1–6, 16, 50, 53).

Although in that particular situation Semënov could do little since Major General Tolstihin supported Kolčak (Novikov 2005b), it is questionable whether he would support Buryats instead of Cossacks. Despite the violent reprisal to most supporters of the Bolsheviks (the people of the Dogoy independent community, for instance, were subject to corporal punishments and confiscations), Semënov seemed reluctant to protect the Buryat self-government from the Cossacks who continued the anti-aymak campaign. Those Buryat Cossacks who submitted to the Soviets now accused aymak and khoshun functionaries of Bolshevism. In late September 1918, for instance, a group of armed Cossacks with a mandate for recruitment from Semënov joined the anti-aymak Yangazhin Cossacks in prosecuting two Orongoy Khoshun zemstvo functionaries for Bolshevism. They were arrested and driven on foot to Verkhneudinsk. One was shot on the way, whereas the other, badly beaten, was taken to Verkhneudinsk Prison. The Cossacks promised other khoshun officials the same fate. The Yangazhin Cossacks were said to prepare lists of "provokers" which included khoshun Buryat Cossacks, teachers, deputies, and others. In the Irkutsk Province, Nikolaj Hanhasaev's group continued its activities. Reporting to Burnackom on the arrests, torture, and shootings in the Selenga Aymak, Radnažab Bimbaev, who himself was arrested and released on bail, assured that there had been no Bolshevism among the Buryats. Rinčino apparently denied the Khilgana movement pronounced political ideology when investigating the incident in late 1918, as it could result in 3,000 people from his home Barguzin District falling under reprisal (GARB 305–1–5, 1; GARB 305–1–6, 1–4; GARB 305–1–38, 164–165; GARB 483–1–30, 18; GARB 483–1–44, 133, 146–147).

Most of the Buryat intellectuals who were arrested for their connections to the Bolsheviks were soon released. Semënov's intention to cooperate with the Buryats and the activities of the Buryat politicians, who rejected any accusations of Bolshevism, undoubtedly saved many lives as Semënov's conduct in Transbaikalia had become notorious for its violence already in the fall of 1918. A report prepared by the Intelligence Office of the American Expeditionary Force, for instance, provided information about a mass murder of some three hundred men who included both Bolshevik prisoners from the front and suspects arrested in the area of operations (Očiržapov n.d., 7; USNA M917–1, 232).

5.2 Formation of the Mongol Federation

Establishing good relations with Semënov and the Japanese was certainly important for the far-reaching international plans of Buryat politicians, but future Mongolia's unity demanded involvement of all its parts. In order to gain Bogd Khan's favor the November congress sent him a large monetary gift (JACAR

B03050173500–1–0649, 168). The connections of the Urga Buryat Committee to Outer Mongolia's government were to foster the unity. Semënov's participation in the project was necessary for attracting the groups from Barga and Inner Mongolia with whom he established contact via Fussenge, Ling Sheng, and others. In early January 1919 Burnarduma made another step towards establishing itself as an actor in global politics. A Mining Department for investigating the mineral wealth of Transbaikalia and especially the lands of the Buryat people was organized and Konstantin Tul'činskij was invited to head it (GARB 305–1–17, 3). The region's natural resources were to become the key factor in attracting foreign assistance.

Despite the interest of the Japanese government and military command in the economic spaces of Siberia, their commitment to support the creation of the Mongol state was overestimated. In January 1919 Semënov, Sampilon, Fussenge, and other Buryat and Mongol politicians assembled in Dauria where they discussed the need to convene a larger conference related to their project. Japanese military representatives on site informed their command in Tokyo of the plans to institutionalize Buryat and Mongol self-government (自立) and said nothing of independence. Suzue, who was invited by Fussenge, asked the participants if it was true that the Americans had been granted the right to build a railway from Manchuria to south Mongolia and if regional politicians were using lamas in a political movement. Answering the first question, the Buryat and Mongol politicians noted that the Americans participated in all sorts of activities, but such exact information had not yet reached them. They noted that such a railway of utter importance for Mongolia would best be built by the Japanese. The issue of the Japanese-American rivalry was kept in mind. The desire to send Buryat-Mongol children to Japan was also reaffirmed. Regional politicians attempted to foster Japanese interest in Mongol affairs. Even though they succeeded in persuading Suzue, high command ordered that he remained an observer. It also advised that Semënov did not interfere in Mongol affairs (JACAR B03050173500–1–0649, 207, 210, 212–213).

High-ranking Japanese military in Siberia and Manchuria were cautious. Takayanagi, for instance, warned Foreign Minister Uchida Kōsai (内田康哉) that the decision about supporting the initiative to create a Mongol state would have a tremendous effect on Japan's relations with Russia and China and on the relations between Semënov and Kolčak (JACAR B03050173500–1–0649, 186–187). Neither Japanese high-ranking officers nor diplomatic representatives on site participated in the organization of the constituent congress of an independent Mongol state. The diplomats in fact did not have first-hand access to the information. In February 1919 the foreign ministry received information from Manchuria that a congress, which had been designed in Dauria, was to be convened in Chita. It aimed at the unification of the Mongol people, with the Buryats being the center of such unification. The independence (獨立) of united Mongolia was to be its major topic. If the project failed on the Russian territory its proponents would retreat to Mongolia proper. Japanese Consul General in Mukden Akatsuka Shōsuke (赤塚正助) requested more information from the

foreign minister. The diplomats were wondering if it was Kuroki Chikayoshi, then Lieutenant Colonel, who had instructed Semënov to bring about Mongolia's independence (JACAR B03050173500–1–0649, 189, 191–192).

Akatsuka's concerns were understandable because he was a supporter of General Zhang Zuolin (张作霖), the warlord of Manchuria (McCormack 1977, 64). A few days before the conference, Zhang warned the head of regional Japanese intelligence Kenji Doihara (土肥原賢二) that using Semënov too much would spoil the relations between China and Japan leading to their economic cooperation "end in bubbles." Doihara replied that the Japanese army supported only self-government for the Cossacks and the Buryats and would not allow any independence beyond the scope of the Baikal region. He was again using the term self-government (自治), whereas Zhang spoke of independence (独立). In the same report Doihara noted that Semënov was supposedly using a young Inner Mongolian lama Nejse Gègèn (Niči Tojn Bogdo Mèndèbaâr) in the independence project (JACAR B03050173500–1–0649, 198).

Nejse Gègèn's participation corresponded to the new language used by Buryat politicians. The ethno-national considerations articulated in 1917 and 1918 gradually gave way to alternative interpretations of Buryat identity. Defining the Buryat-Mongols as "a branch of Genghis Khan's Mongolia," Burnarduma articulated a superethnic Mongol identity and appealed to the past experiences of the larger Mongol community. These ideas were supported by other delegates who joined Buryat politicians in Chita on February 25, 1919, for the constituent congress of the unified Mongol state. The congress which was chaired by Nejse Gègèn and co-chaired by Sampilon claimed to have united the "representatives from the whole of Mongolia, Inner, Outer, Hulunbuir, and Buryat," for "discussing state affairs." These representatives resolved that since the previously independent Mongolia had nothing "common in customs and interests" with the Chinese Republic "all people of Mongol descent" formed "a state enjoying full rights." The capital of the new state consisting of four aymaks, Inner, Outer, Hulunbuir, and Buryat, was to be located in "the Hulunbuir city of Hailar." The provisional government formed at the congress consisted of four ministries: Home Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Finance, and War (GARF 200–1–406, 1–1 rev.; GARF 1701–1–16, 3 rev.–4).

Apart from the chairman, co-chairman, and the secretaries (one of whom was Bimbaev), the resolution was passed by two further representatives of Inner Mongolia (including Fussenge), three representatives of Hulunbuir, and four Buryats (including Vampilon, Cyden-Eši Cydypov, and Rinčino) (GARF 200–1–406, 2). Despite the claims made by the congress, it failed to attract any representatives of Bogd Gegen from Outer Mongolia. The largest and then already autonomous "aymak" of the future state refused to participate in the project before it was recognized by the Paris Peace Conference and especially by the United States and Japan (Bazarov and Žabaeva 2008, 146–147). Outer Mongolian elites, owing perhaps to the position of Russian and Chinese advisors to Bogd Khan's government, welcomed neither the possible Japanese protectorate nor the Buryat leadership. The position of Khalkha undermined the potential

success of the project and aroused enmity of other delegates (GARF 200–1–478, 78 rev.–79, 104).

According to the information received from the Urga Buryat Committee in early March 1919, many of the 40,000 Buryat emigrants in Outer Mongolia propagated the idea of unification. The members of the emigrant committee had connections to Bogd Khan's government. Its chairman, Badmažapov, was appointed military instructor and commanded 200–300 trained Mongolian soldiers, which was enough for a coup. Despite broad participation of Buryat politicians and promises to grant the Buryats leading positions in united Mongolia, not all of them favored the idea of unification. Badmažapov did not support the "ill-conceived and thoughtless" initiative in order to sustain friendly relations with Bogd Khan's government. Bogdanov attended only some of the meetings and "behaved evasively." Žamcarano who was elected Minister of Foreign Affairs in his absence neither attended nor wrote to the congress. The project attracted only two out of four Burnackom chairmen who had been recognized as the leaders of the Buryats at the November congress (GARF 200–1–478, 78–79, 103–104 rev., 136).

Semënov attended the constituent congress of the Mongol state. He spoke of the interests of the Russian state which needed the Mongol "buffer" and would easily give up some of its territory. Suzue was also present at the congress, but did not make any far-reaching statements. It was apparently Kuroki who promised that Japan would support the new state. The congress voiced its own support of the independence claims made by the Tibetans, with whom the Mongols had a "religious connection," and by the Manchus, with whom they had a "friendly connection." The provisional Mongol government, which was formed at the congress, headed by Nejse Gègèn, and temporarily seated at Dauria station, was granted the right to invite foreign advisors. Two Japanese and one Russian soon took the positions (Bazarov and Žabaeva 2008, 151; GARF 200–1–406, 1 rev., 8; GARF 200–1–478, 103 rev.–104, 116). According to Suzue, in private the delegates welcomed Japan's sympathies, but were very cautious about any foreigners (JACAR B03050173500–1–0649, 214). Lieutenant Colonel David P. Barrows, the head of the Intelligence Office of the American Expeditionary Forces, became a further international participant of the interactions behind the project after Semënov requested him to transmit two telegrams, to Woodrow Wilson and the Paris Peace Conference (GARF 200–1–478, 48, 224; USNA M917–1, 316, 321).

Apart from composing the telegram asking for international recognition and support, the congress resolved to send a delegation of five people to represent "seven million Mongols" at the Paris Peace Conference. The provisional government under Nejse Gègèn and Gong Norompil composed a declaration to the conference. A copy was to be handed over to the Japanese government by Ling Sheng. The text included the appeal to the past of the Mongols and Genghis Khan ("our Mongol tribe roaming in Asia since the most ancient times formed an independent state with full rights"); illegitimacy of and disorder in the Chinese Republic; the dangers the new Chinese state posed to Buddhism ("all

temples built by our ancestors will be destroyed by them and our religion will be violated by them"); and ethnic inequality both in China and in Russia. Semënov was presented with a noble Mongol title Chin Wang at the congress (GARF 200–1–406, 1 rev.; GARF 200–1–478, 52, 116, 118–120, 144–145) and claimed to have the blood of the old Mongol khans (JACAR B03050173600–1–0649, 234–235).

The declaration could be explicitly attached to the so-called Wilsonian Moment (Manela 2007), as it made the following reference:

> The President of the North American United States, proceeding from the philanthropic feeling of the Almighty, claimed that it would be just to grant all peoples who lost their religion and original rights and were divided from their kind in flesh and blood the right to unite and form a state.
>
> (GARF 200–1–478, 120)

During the Paris Peace Conference, the supporters of united Mongolia shared the hope for recognition with many other nationalist groups, for instance, the Kuban Cossacks, who formed the Kuban People's Republic and sent delegates to the conference, the participants of the March First Movement in Korea, who also sent delegates to Paris, and the Chinese nationalists of the May Fourth Movement, who opposed the actions of their government at the conference (Alston 2006; Schwarcz 1986; Wells 1989). The proponents of united Mongolia, however, supplemented the global discourse of national self-determination with regional religious connotations.

The identities central to the new nation were also outlined in the text. The Mongol superethnic and Buddhist religious identities were the basis for boundary construction in the corresponding spaces, whereas clan identities were to legitimize the new state: the monarch or the president of united Mongolia was to be elected from the largest clan. The election of Nejse Gègèn provisional head of state was legitimized through his authority in Buddhism and belonging to Genghis Khan's lineage. The aymaks of united Mongolia remained under existing authorities which would be gradually changed. The form of government was not yet decided. Some former Qing nobility participated in the project hoping to restore the dynasty (GARF 200–1–478, 120, 121; JACAR B03050173600–1–0649, 234–235).

The exact territory of the Mongol state was also undecided. In the declaration to the Peace Conference, the new state claimed, "on the basis of the words of the President" of the United States, all Mongol territory beyond the Great Wall was to be detached from China. Nothing was said about the territorial concessions to be made by Russia. According to the information received from the Urga Buryat Committee, in its larger version the state would include "Transbaikalia, Khalkha, Uryankhai, Barga, and Inner Mongolia" (Figure I.2). The Russians from Transbaikalia were supposed to be resettled to the Irkutsk Province which would be abandoned by the Buryat population. Likewise, all Chinese were to be evicted from Inner Mongolia. A smaller version of the project implied that the Russians

from southern Transbaikalia (two districts, according to Semënov) moved north exchanging their lands with the Buryats. The Chinese were to be resettled from northern to southern Mongolia, whereas the Mongols would move in the opposite direction (GARF 200–1–478, 78–78 rev., 104, 121–122). The project therefore imposed the boundaries constructed in ethnic and religious spaces on the political and land-use spaces, implying the resettlement of hundreds of thousands of people. According to the information received from the Urga Buryat Committee, the only form the Chinese government fearing Japanese influence would possibly accept was a united Mongolia under the Chinese protectorate without any major resettlements. If the Buryats wanted to join the state, they could resettle to Mongolia proper (GARF 200–1–478, 79 rev.–80).

Despite the appeal to superethnic, religious, and clan identities, Semënov and other actors behind the project had other spaces in mind. The control over economic and communication spaces of united Mongolia was to be exchanged for foreign support. Apart from the construction of a new railway, Semënov promised exclusive trade rights and disposal of mineral resources to the Japanese (GARF 200–1–406, 9; GARF 200–1–478, 78 rev.; RGVA 40308–1–119, 1). Although the Japanese government was very interested in mineral deposits of Transbaikalia and even sent mining engineers to the eastern Baikal region (JACAR B03051345000–1–1341, 462–465; RGASPI 372–1–1210, 92), full-scale support of the new Mongol state was not the intended way of ensuring the space of natural resources.

The protests of the Kolčak government and the refusal of French, British, and American representatives to communicate with the Dauria government (GARF 200–1–406, 3; GARF 200–1–478, 141), together with the global political considerations mentioned above made the Japanese renounce any support for the movement. On March 7, 1919, the Japanese Foreign Ministry articulated its position on the matter. Appealing to the negative experiences of the previous Japanese involvement in different movements after the Xinhai Revolution and breakdowns in Sino-Japanese relations and pointing out at the anti-Japanese sentiments in China, Europe, and America, the Foreign Ministry ordered that all Japanese representatives in the Baikal region exercised restraint and caution. If anyone was detected responding to "provocations" he was to be strictly and immediately stopped from doing so. The Japanese government also halted all relations with the Buryats. The issues of the printing press and the students were to be dealt with only after the situation settled down (JACAR B03050173600–1–0649, 234–235). Kuroki, the most active Japanese participant of the project, was soon recalled home "for explanations" (GARF 200–1–478, 156). Japan was nevertheless reported to train and supply armed detachments in Inner Mongolia organized by Nejse Gègèn (GARF 200–1–406, rev.)

Cooperation with the American government never started. Lieutenant Colonel Barrows did not send any of the telegrams and returned them to Semënov's representative in Vladivostok, although Woodrow Wilson was informed about the project. Neither the messages nor the delegation made it to Paris. In Tokyo, the delegation of five people attempted to acquire travel documents from French,

American, and British missions, but failed (GARF 200–1–406, 10; GARF 200–1–478, 39, 141, 224).

5.3 The Buddhist theocratic state as a non-violent alternative

Although the new Mongol state was eager to start trade and peaceful relations with all other states, Nejse Gègèn promised that the Mongols would "fight a war until the last drop of blood" in order to regain all their "initial lands" in case the Paris Peace Conference could not decide the matter (GARF 200–1–478, 122). According to estimations of the Urga Buryat Committee, the military force behind the Dauria government consisted of some 3,000–4,000 soldiers of the Alien Cavalry Division (GARF 200–1–478, 78 rev.) The increase of this division, which was said to lay the foundation of the future Buryat and Mongol national armies, through the conscription among the Buryat population was seen as a priority by Burnarduma. According to a member of the Urga Buryat Committee, the very participation of the Buryat politicians in the project of united Mongolia was solely determined by the desire to relieve the suffering of the Buryat people in the Civil War by making them capable of defending themselves (GARF 200–1–478, 104 rev.; RGVA 39454–1–2, 25, 31 rev., 52, 53, 54, 72, 84 rev., 96, 97)

The conscription consolidated the opposition to Burnarduma in the Khori Aymak. In November 1918 the Bodonguud Khoshun Assembly in Kizhinga resolved to refuse the conscription. The policies of Burnarduma and Semënov made Lubsan Samdan Cydenov's non-violence teachings increasingly popular. Local people, mainly from the Khori Aymak, continuously sent delegates to him asking to explain the initiative that flew in the face of the religion of the Buddha which was against the taking up of weapons. In January 1919 rumors spread that Lubsan Samdan Cydenov was planning to save the Buryat Buddhists from conscription and that all those who did not want to serve could become his subjects. Whatever the initial reasons for Cydenov's dissidence were, by early 1919 it spread beyond the religious space and developed into a social movement, known as the Balagad, attracting those who were dissatisfied with the policies of Buryat self-government bodies, ranging from ordinary peasants and monks to former clan leaders and Tsarist functionaries (Cyrempilov 2007, 67; Očiržapov n.d., 8–9; RGASPI 372–1–239, 6–8).

The Balagad movement institutionalized on the basis of the Kizhinga Credit Union. The organization featuring many of Cydenov's disciples appealed to their spiritual leader asking to shield the population from conscription and scheduled a larger meeting for February 1919 to take place at Suarkhe (Khaltsagay-Tolgoy) where Cydenov lived in seclusion. The meeting assembled in time, made offerings to Cydenov, and appealed for protection in written form through his closest associate Agvan Silnam (Dorži Badmaev). Through Agvan Silnam, Cydenov gave his consent and transmitted a list of prayers which were necessary for the salvation. Cydenov issued two declarations which proclaimed the creation of the theocratic state under himself assuming the title of Dharmaraja of the Three

Worlds (Sky, Water, and Earth), and religious and civil ruler. The location of his reclusion became the capital under the name Soyampus (Soyempkus, Soyanbus). The theocratic state, unlike others, was ruled and protected by a God who released his subjects from military service and war, while other states existed under the aegis of arms and "trudged in the seas of sin resorting to war." Agvan Silnam transmitted Cydenov's oral instructions on drafting the constitution, organizing local regulations, and convening the Constituent Assembly of the new state. Cydenov's disciples took up the organization and formed a commission of twenty-two people to meet no later than in three days and submit a draft constitution to Cydenov for approval. The commission which consisted of former and contemporary local administrators and lamas of the Chesansky and Kudunsky (Khudunsky, Kizhinginsky) datsans drafted a constitution of thirty-six articles regarding civil administration. All religious regulations were to be written by Cydenov himself (Očiržapov n.d., 9–12).

The draft prepared by the "elected representatives of the people" who became subjects of the "Head of the Theocratic State Lama Dharmaraja Gegen" after leaving the "khoshuns of the Buryats of the Khori Aymak" was dated the fourth day of the fifth month of the first year according to Cydenov's calendar. Civil administration was headed by President and Vice President and consisted of eight ministers (Home Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Justice, of the Court, Trade and Industry, Finance, Agriculture, and Education) and their eight deputies. The resolutions of the Council of Ministers were to be submitted to the President who then, with his opinion, transmitted them to Lama Dharmaraja Gegen for approval. The President needed Dharmaraja's approval for all vital decisions, but managed routine affairs independently (GARB 484–1–3, 6–6 rev.).

The Constituent (State) Assembly consisting of representatives from each 100 people over fifteen (sixteen in Očiržapov) elected the listed officials and the heads of the Balagads (constituent units of the state) for two-year terms to be approved by Lama Dharmaraja Gegen. Minor officials, including safety and order officers, local administrators, and deputies of the State Assembly were elected for one-year terms. The first State Assembly was scheduled for the fourteenth day of the fifth month of the first year. Later assemblies were to be convened by the Council of Ministers on demand. The State Assembly was elected through universal, direct, and equal elections by secret ballot. Local authorities were elected by Balagad assemblies and consisted of the Heads of the Balagads with one to three assistants. Balagad assemblies were considered lawful if two thirds of yurt (ger) owners were present. Balagad courts consisted of chairman and two judges elected by Balagad assemblies for two years. Major cases were tried by the government under the presidency of the Minister of Justice. All officials wore insignia approved by Dharmaraja so that they could be differentiated from "common people." The theocratic state consisted of eleven constituent Balagads and one added by the order of Dharmaraja. The constitution paid attention to clan identity. Appealing to the eleven clans of the Khori Buryats, it ruled that "the population of the Balagads" had to "mention their clan ancestry on all occasions." Cydenov soon approved the draft without changes and affixed a seal

with symbols of the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism to the document (Očiržapov n.d., 12–15; GARB 484–1–3, 6 rev.–7 rev.)

The Rightfully Detached State of the Khudun Valley (see Figure I.3 for a rough outline) soon included around twenty somons with some 13,000 people (Cyrempilov 2007, 67). Most local people, except some lay intellectuals, joined the new state believing that it could save them from conscription and other hardships. All its opponents were expected not only to be banished from the theocratic state by the Balagad court, but also to be punished by divine justice. The theocratic state refused to form an army: it was expected to be guarded by the supernatural force of Dharmaraja who could drain his enemies of all strength and turn them into miserable creatures. These framings ignited loyalty to the theocratic state and devaluated its opponents in the eyes of Cydenov's disciples. Those who deemed the project unrealistic and uncertain were frequently removed from the meetings. The support of the movement by groups of youths who threatened its opponents with violence flared up tensions among local population (Očiržapov n.d., 15–16).

The implementation of the Mongol federative project in Chita did not go unnoticed by the Balagads. They were also aware of the Dauria military school which trained Buryat and Mongol officers. The competing project fostered the organization of the Balagad Constituent Assembly and consolidated Cydenov's supporters. Renewed attempts of Burnarduma and Verkhneudinsk District authorities to organize conscription further increased the number of the Balagads (Očiržapov n.d., 16–17).

In late April (Očiržapov n.d., 17) 1919 102 elected delegates assembled in the vicinity of the sacred Chelsan (Chelsana) Mountain near Kizhinga for the "First Constituent Assembly" of those who became subjects of the "monarch of the theocratic state" Lama "Očir-Dara Rinbuči Darma-Ranzy" (Dorje Chang Rinpoche Dharmaraja). The assembly unanimously elected Agvan Silnam heir to the throne, appointed other high officials, made an offering to the monarch, and institutionalized this practice as an annual autumn holiday (GARB 484–1–3, 11–12 rev.)

The project combined Buddhist and lay notions. On the one hand, Cydenov's title Dharmaraja of the Three Worlds made him a living deity equal, if not superior, to the theocratic rulers of Tibet and Mongolia. At the same time the project did not feature the institution of tulku and the succession to the throne was decided by lay procedures. The state articulated Buddhist religious, clan, Khori subethnic, and Buryat ethnic identities. The framings used in the project came from Tibetan, Mongol, and Indian Buddhist discourses and from contemporary Western political thought. Although Cydenov's personal involvement in the design and implementation of the project remained unclear, he defined the state as theocracy. The concept of Dharmaraja derived from Cydenov's Buddhist scholarship. At the same time he was very interested in Western science, European statehood, and world religions. He interviewed Russian travelers and read books and journals in European languages. His later notes featured extracts from an encyclopedic dictionary and included many European political terms with

special attention to the term theocracy and its definitions (Cyrempilov 2007, 68, 72–73; Tsyrempilov 2008). The name of the capital probably referred to Soyombo, a sacred Buddhist symbol which at the time was used as a manifestation of Mongol identity appearing on the flag of autonomous Mongolia. The use of the term Constituent Assembly drew back to the February Revolution of 1917 and through it to the French Revolution of 1789–1799.

Cydenov's reputation in Buddhist scholarship and spiritual authority made him very effective in relations with the local people, enabling the dissemination of his ideas. Rejection of violence, however, made the state vulnerable to the armed group actors. Before the first session of the government commenced, a telegram sent by Burnarduma was received by the Khori Aymak administration stating that a special detachment set out from Chita. Together with the head of the Verkhneudinsk District it was ordered to liquidate the movement and arrest its leaders. The theocratic government responded to Semënov and Burnarduma demanding not to interfere into its activities, else they would have to face divine retaliation. Semënov's punitive squad was expected to be stopped by the supernatural force of the God who would encircle Soyempkus with magic fortifications. Such promises given by the members of the theocratic government rallied even more supporters. These threats were not realized. In early May 1919 the squad arrived at the session of the theocratic government without any trouble on the way. The head of the Verkhneudinsk District presented the arrest warrant to Cydenov's associates who claimed that Cydenov refused to comply and as the Tsar of Three Worlds would not let any intruders inside his reclusion. The district official repeated his demands now threatening with violence and stating that Cydenov was an impostor since his state was not sanctioned by anyone and that he, as the administrator of the Verkhneudinsk District where the theocratic state was located, had the full right to arrest Cydenov. Cydenov complied and was arrested together with Agvan Silnam and members of the government, interrogated, and later sent to the Verkhneudinsk Prison (Očiržapov n.d., 19–21).

During the interrogation Cydenov explained that the fall of the Russian Empire and formation of new independent states on its former territory caused dissention, enmity, anarchy, warfare, and violence and that Buryat intellectuals attempted to conscript Buryat youths for protecting the national autonomy created on their initiative. Being confident that it was possible to form any state and political organization by revolutionary order, Cydenov decided to proclaim himself ruler of the theocratic state opposing war and supporting peace. Buryat Buddhists were to avoid the autonomy which demanded military service and join the peaceful state under divine protection. Neighboring Russian population which also suffered from warfare and internecine feud was not expected to oppose Cydenov's initiative. Cydenov then claimed that the formation of the state was a delusion. All Buryat Buddhists were suggested not to recognize him as a monarch, but only as a lama contemplator. The supporters of the theocratic state, however, were not eager to admit defeat and remained loyal to Cydenov. Some of them went into hiding. Others suffered lawless actions of the punitive squad which frequently resorted to violence during interrogations and whipped

Cydenov's supporters. Such actions raised animosity among theocrats towards the autonomists and district authorities even had to dismiss the most active violators from militia and bring them to trial (Očiržapov n.d., 21–24).

The opponents of Cydenov's theocracy had to defend their project of united Mongolia. The very location of the provisional government in Dauria, the headquarters of the Buryat-Mongol detachments, demonstrated its readiness to use force. The Mongol federative project attracted international attention. Nikolaj Kudašev compared the superethnic movement, Pan-Mangolism, to major social movements based on political and religious groupings, "Bolshevism" and "Pan-Islamism" in other parts of the former Russian Empire. One could also compare it to Pan-Turkism which manifested itself in post-imperial Central Asia. The Kolčak government attempted to foster international circulation of anti-Buryat propaganda with pejorative racial connotations. A message sent to the American authorities in Vladivostok claimed that united Mongolia would lay the foundation of a "yellow flood on Europe," called the Buryats "the future Prussians of the Far East," and referred to Pëtr Badmaev's negative influence on the Tsar's court. Buryat intellectuals were accused of cooperating with the Bolsheviks. Fears were voiced that the Kazakhs, Kalmyks, and Tibetans were to join the state (GARF 200–1–478, 37–37 rev., 39, 42; Hyman 1997). Without Outer Mongolia, however, united Mongolia was unable to aspire for a larger Asian unification.

In late April 1919 the armed forces backing the Dauria government were reported to prepare to march into Outer Mongolia. Out of some 3,000 men 1,000 were Buryat conscripts. Plans were made to increase the number of the Buryat troops to 3,000 men. The plans to consolidate Mongolia by force raised major concerns of the Kolčak, Chinese, and Outer Mongolian governments. According to the information received from the Urga Buryat Committee, a possible force to defend Outer Mongolia could be composed of Russian and Chinese troops protecting the treaties related to its autonomous status (GARF 200–1–478, 79 rev.) The Chinese government was indeed determined to put up with the "Manchuria and Mongolia" independence movement, but it was not eager to retain the unequal treaties, since the Kolčak government had not been officially recognized. Although Kudašev referred to the Mongol federative project as hopeless, he feared that it could serve a cause for a Chinese occupation of Barga and Outer Mongolia (GARF 200–1–406, 5).

Shortly after the Chita congress Zhang claimed that "Hulunbuir separatism" would soon be suppressed by the Mukden Army sent to Hailar, but protested against any Russian involvement on the territory of the former Qing Empire (JACAR B03050173600–1–0649, 222, 224). Barga was soon occupied and the fear of Chinese violent action prevented most Barguts from active participation in the Mongol federative project. According to the information received in early May 1919, without the representatives of Khalkha and Barga the Dauria government refused to grant Semënov the rights to dispose of the mineral wealth of the Mongol state making him unable to make loans abroad. Meanwhile the Khorchin forces in Dauria discussed plans to occupy Hailar (GARF 200–1–406, 9; GARF 200–1–478, 104 rev.)

The small detachments controlled by Nejse Gègèn could hardly make any difference in Inner Mongolia, although there were reports of violence against Chinese merchants there. Ling Sheng who returned from Beijing in May reported that even the Mongol princes who were sympathetic with the movement refrained from active support, whereas many other princes had official positions in the Chinese government and therefore had no interest in the movement. The Chinese government discussed a military expedition to Outer Mongolia despite financial difficulties. At the same time, Barga's representatives in the Chinese parliament were recognized as Mongols which raised their status. They were still ready to support the movement unofficially (GARF 200–1–478, 160, 167, 170–171, 179, 219 rev.)

The proponents of united Mongolia had to consolidate their positions not only on the former Qing territory, but also in the Baikal region. In the latter half of April 1919 Sampilon, accompanied by a Japanese captain, arrived at the Irkutsk Province and tried to convince Irkutsk Buryats to support the Mongol "buffer state between the great powers of white and yellow race" with boundaries up to the Yenisei (GARF 200–1–478, 177). The idea of a buffer in the global political space was substituted with racial connotations.

It was, however, not the Irkutsk Province, Barga or Inner Mongolia, but Outer Mongolia which was essential for the future of the project. Bogd Khan refused to negotiate with Buryat delegates. In April 1919 a Russian diplomatic agent in Urga Arkadij Orlov informed the Kolčak government that some Mongol princes appealed to the Chinese government for protection and revocation of autonomy. The same month Bogd Khan's diplomats asked Russian and Chinese authorities to disarm Semënov's troops in cooperation. Later Ivan Sukin, who was responsible for the foreign policy in the Kolčak government, however, warned Orlov that Bogd Khan's government should make no appeals to China to take military measures on the Russian territory. Outer Mongolia's government ordered mobilization of their own troops for guarding the boundary with Barga. Russian representatives in Outer Mongolia contributed to the anti-war effort. In May 1919 the Russian Consul in Kyakhta prevented Semënov's agents accompanied by a Mongol Prince from drafting Buryat emigrants (GARF 200–1–478, 142–143, 180, 198).

In the middle of May 1919 the supporters of united Mongolia again assembled in Chita and discussed how to make Outer Mongolia comply. Ling Sheng and Cydypov were part of the delegation sent to Urga to investigate the political conditions there and offer Bogd Khan the position of ruler of united Mongolia if he agreed to participate. The Chita assembly decided to invade Outer Mongolia and attempt to rally support among the people and lay nobility there if Bogd Khan refused. The Dauria government anticipated to split the lay and religious elites. In private discussions the Mongol representatives expressed their distrust towards Semënov whose promises to ensure international support remained unfulfilled. Semënov's assurance that Great Britain and France were going to support the project imparted no confidence and Nejse Gègèn decided to send his own delegation consisting of Rinčino and Norompil to Japan to investigate the

international situation. Semënov, however, ensured that the delegation did not set out. Rinčino had to stay in Hailar (GARF 200–1–406, 8–8 rev., 10–10 rev.; GARF 200–1–478, 78 rev., 155).

5.4 Dissension of the anti-Bolshevik forces and collapse of the Mongol federalist project

By May 1919 Semënov's position in larger political spaces had changed. Vasilij Krupenskij, Kolčak's envoy to Tokyo, reported in the middle of March 1919 that the Japanese government demanded reconciliation between Kolčak and Semënov. Kolčak was ready to revoke his order only if Semënov was removed from the Transbaikal Railway and rejected the initiative of the American members of the Inter-Allied Railway Committee to entrust Semënov with guarding the line. Sending Semënov to the Ural Front could be a possible solution, but the Japanese command shielded Semënov from any strict sanctions calling him "a good patriot" and demanding that he stayed in eastern Siberia. The Kolčak government had to concede. The Extraordinary Committee of Inquiry, which had been sent to the Baikal region to investigate Semënov's demarche earlier that year and had collected much discrediting evidence, was instructed to focus only on his interference with the railroad traffic disregarding his participation in the Mongol federative project. On April 9, 1919, Kolčak informed Pavel Ivanov-Rinov, who then commanded the Amur Military District, that his order was revoked since the Extraordinary Committee had found no signs of "high treason," even though Semënov did interfere with operation of the Transbaikal Railroad in 1918. Kolčak sanctioned voluntary participation of Buryats and Evenks in armed forces (GARF 200–1–405, 85–86, 95, 97, 100–100 rev., 105, 115–115 rev., 124–124 rev.; USNA M917–1, 571).

It still took more than a month for the revocation to come in force. Although the Kolčak government had to comply with the Japanese military "because of the hopelessness of the situation in the Far East," it expected the reconciliation with Semënov to complicate the relations with the Chinese government and assured the latter that it did not support Semënov's "shady Mongol enterprise." Kudašev even suggested that the Japanese government should take responsibility for Semënov's "anti-Chinese actions and political ventures." According to Krupenskij, the Japanese confined to recalling Kuroki and obtaining Semënov's promise not to participate in Mongol agitation. Although Kurosawa Hitoshi (黒沢準), who substituted Kuroki, assured Nejse Gègèn that there was no need to send delegates to the Paris Peace Conference, he promised unofficial support with money and arms to the movement. Kolčak's order was officially revoked on May 25, 1919. On May 27 Semënov recognized Kolčak as the Supreme Ruler stating that he would "continue his disinterested service" with renewed "passion and love to the Motherland." On May 28 he was appointed commander of the 6th Eastern Siberian Independent Corps formed from his independent army. Despite his explanations given in early April 1919 to Kolchak's diplomatic representative in the Far East that he participated in the Pan-Mongol movement for

the sake of Russian state interests in order to prevent the Japanese and American governments from spreading their influence to Mongolia, Semënov was ordered to cease all independent policies. Semënov's assertions that the Kalmyks and Kazakhs did not participate in the project, whereas he himself advised the Tibetans from doing so because of the British danger to them, together with the argument of counteracting the British government which attempted to subdue Mongolia via Tibet also failed to convince the Kolčak government (GARF 200–1–405, 119–119 rev., 134, 153, 160; GARF 200–1–478, 123, 156, 160; Novikov 2005b).

Dissatisfied with Semënov, Burnarduma renewed its attempts to persuade the Omsk government to recognize aymak zemstvo. After the fruitless appeals made in November 1918 and February 1919 a letter signed by Sampilon was sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on May 28, 1919. Sampilon pointed at the international importance of the Buryat issue. The transboundary connections with Mongolia through common ethnicity, "language, literature, and religion" made the policies of the Russian government towards the Buryats determinative for its relations with Mongolia. The anti-aymak actions of Tolstihin and Vâčeslav Volkov could spoil the image of the Kolčak government in Mongolia. Deterioration of relations with the latter was said to have serious consequences in the economic space, as the cities of the Baikal region had grown dependent on Mongolian meat imports. Besides, the long boundary with an unfriendly state would challenge Russian security and foster Chinese immigration to Siberia. The possible emigration of the Buryats would have negative consequences for the Baikal region. Russian farmers could not take their place in the regional economy because the Baikal region was not fully suitable for sedentary agriculture. Supporting autonomous Mongolia and creating a "buffer state" out of all "foreign ethnographical Mongolia" was therefore favorable to Siberia and Russia and this support was at best provided through the Buryats. Sampilon again used racial notions stating that despite racial differences, the Buryat intellectuals were loyal to Russia. Recognizing a Buryat self-government was therefore of interest for the Russian state. Sampilon threatened the Kolčak government with "defensive" Buryat nationalism and urged to avoid the principles of the Tsarist government. After the revolution, dictatorship of the majority was inadvisable and the relations between different ethnic groups were to be based on mutual agreements and not on subordination (GARF 200–1–478, 182–187, 190–191; GARF 1701–1–16, 2, 4 rev.)

The resumed attempts to reach the Omsk government concurred with further failures of the Dauria group. In early June 1919 it was reported that parts of Semënov's indigenous troops had deserted, with many Buryats leaving for Mongolia. Rinčino and other Mongol-Buryat politicians wished to enter into direct relations with the Kolčak government which Semënov had been impeding. The Kolčak government could not tolerate the participation of the Buryats in the Pan-Mongolian movement, but agreed to listen to their opinion on self-government and welcomed their direct appeal to Omsk. According to Sukin, controlling the Buryat national movement would facilitate the liquidation of Semënov's Mongol

plan (GARF 200–1–405, 160–161; GARF 200–1–478, 208). The Omsk Ministry of Foreign Affairs therefore did not share Sampilon's opinion on the Mongol "buffer state."

The same month Semënov released Cydenov and all his associates from the Verkhneudinsk Prison after about a month in detention. Cydenov's release rallied thousands who welcomed their leader with offerings and worship. Cydenov explained to his disciples that the campaign against the theocratic state and his arrest had been initiated by the Buryat intellectuals, but now he and his ministers were released as erroneously arrested because his proclamation as Dharmaraja was legitimized through undeniable religious dogma and did not involve violent actions. This explanation ceased most hesitation among his supporters and even brought new devotees. Cydenov continued his activities without any problems. On July 11, 1919, the Khori Aymak Zemstvo Assembly appealed to Burnarduma asking to release all conscripts for the haymaking and harvesting time. Cydenov's return undoubtedly fostered the anti-war sentiments in the Khori Aymak and in early August 1919 he and other officials of the theocratic state were again arrested by Semënov's order (Očiržapov n.d., 24–25).

In view of the anticipated conflict with Bogd Gegen and continuing hostilities at the Ural Front Semënov opposed any anti-conscription actions. The plans to invade Outer Mongolia continued to worry the Chinese government, which in late June 1919 assumed measures to organize joint action of the three Manchurian provinces against the "rebels" of Inner and Outer Mongolia. In early July 1919 Kudašev reported to Omsk that some 1,000 Buryats and Khorchins were expected to advance to Urga and asked to influence Semënov, else a war with China could start. Later that month Orlov reaffirmed the need to disarm Khorchins and move them to Qiqihar. If Semënov allowed their advance to Mongolia, it would legitimize the Chinese intervention which had already begun, since the staff and vanguard of a Chinese brigade had already arrived at Urga. The Khorchins were also a major source of fears for the Barguts who attempted to have peaceful relations with the Chinese government. Despite Semënov's proclaimed submission to Kolčak, reports from Harbin indicated that he continued his independent policies having secret agents in Urga, Beijing (Ungern), and Harbin (Pavel Malinovskij). Malinovskij held negotiations with Chinese military which according to Kolčak's diplomats indicated that Semënov attempted to connect the Mongol federative project with Zhang's ambitions to rule Manchuria. Kudašev pointed to the Kolčak government that the trust in Semënov was ungrounded, since he continued to follow Japanese advice which could result in all Siberia east of Baikal falling under Japanese control. The fact that Kolčak recognized Semënov as the de facto ruler in the Far East was not favored by other Allies due to his negative image both in Siberia and abroad. Kudašev warned that while foreigners reported about "crying abuses" in Siberia, "sanctioning the worst manifestations of authority" could make all Allies except Japan turn away from Siberia and direct all assistance to the anti-Bolsheviks in European Russia (GARF 200–1–405, 164, 176, 177, 178, 180–181; GARF 200–1–406, 11 rev.; GARF 200–1–478, 127, 212).

Indeed, the AEF officers were critical of Semënov's violent regime. The people in the vicinity of Semënov's troops were terrorized. Expressing one's opinion regarding Semënov and his officers could easily lead to death (USNA M917–1, 157, 232, 320–321, 326). The population of the Baikal region did not receive such maltreatment resignedly. The guerilla movement active in the Baikal region since August 1918 was fostered by Semënov's misconduct (Vasilevskij 2000, 137). On an American map which depicted the division of the railway into sectors some areas close to the line were shown as under the control of the Bolsheviks. In the Baikal region the guerrillas, who had diverse political inclinations, attacked Japanese soldiers and wrecked trains (USNA M917–1, 252–256, 900; USNA M917–10, 319).

After the Treaty of Versailles ended the state of war between the Allies and Germany on June 28, 1919, the main objectives of the intervention to Siberia became irrelevant. On June 23, 1919, even before the treaty had been signed, the US Senate requested Wilson to provide information about the reasons for sending American soldiers and maintaining them in Siberia. Responding on July 22, 1919, Wilson repeated the initially proclaimed objectives. The net result of the intervention was said to be the successful reunion of the separated Czechoslovak troops and substantial elimination in eastern Siberia of the active efforts of enemy POWs (USNA M917–1, 118–119). Wilson stressed the importance of guarding the Trans-Siberian Railway since its operation was indispensable for ensuring American commercial interests in Siberia (USNA M917–1, 120).

Despite the reaffirmed goal of aiding the Russian people in "self-government and self-defense" proclaimed by Wilson, the Allied governments were reluctant to recognize any Russian government and allow its participation in the Paris Peace Conference. The Allies nevertheless continued to aid the Kolčak government and devalued the diplomatic achievements of the Bolsheviks in the Treaty of Versailles. Germany acknowledged and agreed to respect "as permanent and inalienable the independence of all the territories which were part of the former Russian Empire on August 1, 1914." Moreover, it accepted the abrogation of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty and of "all other treaties, conventions, and agreements entered into by her with the Maximalist Government in Russia" (The Versailles Treaty 2013).

The negotiations between Bogd Gegen and the proponents of united Mongolia failed. On August 7, 1919, the Urga congress of princes unanimously refused to join the unified state and expressed its determination to defend Outer Mongolia in arms. Around 2,000 Outer Mongolian troops were mobilized and moved to the border with Barga. The decision of the congress resulted in riots in those parts of Outer Mongolia, where the ideas if unity were popular (GARF 200–1–405, 183; GARF 200–1–478, 243, 248, 258 rev.)

The planned military operation against Outer Mongolia was endangered by dissidence inside the armed forces in Dauria. In the summer of 1919 hostilities on the Ural Front intensified and Semënov ordered Mongol-Buryat troops to move westwards to fight the Bolsheviks without the consent of Burnarduma. Buryat politicians protested and Semënov agreed to return them partly due to

further trouble, now with the Khorchins. Fussenge, dissatisfied with the decisions to make Nejse Gègèn commander and to move the troops to Verkhneudinsk without his consent, claimed that he was going to fight only against the Chinese and would now leave for Mongolia. Ungern's and Nejse Gègèn's attempts to persuade him to comply ended in vain and Ungern decided to eliminate Fussenge. On September 3, 1919, Fussenge and his Khorchin detachments were accused of conspiracy and ordered to disarm. Their refusal resulted in bloodshed. Some 200 people, including Fussenge, were killed; some 150 escaped to Mongolia with arms (Bazarov 2002, 30–31; GARF 200–1–406, 12; GARF 200–1–478, 263).

In early September 1919 Kudašev reported that Zhang had information of a Buryat vanguard marching to Urga, whereas Malinovskij arrived at Mukden to prepare the expedition. Semënov sent another agent to Japan to negotiate its assistance in Transbaikalia in exchange for mining concessions there in case the Kolčak government failed. About the same time Cydypov was reported to have approached Chinese authorities through Japanese military asking them to assist the Buryats from the Irkutsk Province in resettling to Uryankhai and the Buryats from the Transbaikal Region in moving to eastern Mongolia, but did not find support (GARF 200–1–405, 187, 189; GARF 200–1–478, 260).

In Mukden, Semënov asked Zhang to recognize him as a Mongol prince and a vassal of China promising to protect Chinese interests. During a four-hour meeting on September 8, 1919, Semënov offered guarding the CER, proclaiming independence of Siberia, organizing a draft in Outer Mongolia and northern Manchuria, and starting joint actions against the Bolsheviks. He also assured Zhang that he had not participated in the Mongol federative project. About the same time the Japanese Consul informed Zhang that the Japanese government was ready to recognize him as an "independent lord" in eastern Mongolia and southern Manchuria and Semënov in the same position in Outer Mongolia if they supported each other. Zhang responded favorably only to the last offer made by Semënov and informed Beijing about the negotiations. The Chinese government called Semënov's offers absurd. Having failed in attracting Chinese support, Semënov attempted to procure additional funding from the Omsk government (GARF 200–1–405, 199–200, 203, 294–294 rev.; GARF 200–1–478, 264, 265 rev., 266–267 rev.) The same month he again released Cydenov and his associates. On his return, Cydenov received his disciples consoling them that the conscription was carried out against the law and that its initiator, Burnarduma, had no influence on the supreme authority, since they could not even manage to have their autonomy recognized (Očiržapov n.d., 25).

In late September–early October, 1919, some 1,400 troops with six field pieces were reported to be moving towards Outer Mongolia. On October 1 Nejse Gègèn asked Bogd Khan to join the movement supported by Japan and Russia, but Orlov reassured the Outer Mongolian government that Russia supported nothing (GARF 200–1–478, 273, 278–279, 281–282). The Chinese government used the intended campaign as a cause for denouncing the treaties related to Outer Mongolia's autonomy and occupying the region. In October 1919 the

Chinese Republican troops under the command of Xu Shuzheng (徐樹錚) secured control over the region. On November 17, 1919, the government of Outer Mongolia withdrew its declaration of autonomy becoming a Chinese province (Ewing 1980).

The Kolčak government could do nothing about the violation of the treaties. In September–October 1919 the Red Army defeated its forces in Western Siberia. On November 12, 1919, a conference of Siberian zemstvo and municipal self-government bodies established an anti-Kolčak government in Irkutsk, the Political Centre consisting mainly of SRs and Mensheviks, which remained underground for some time. On November 14 Omsk was taken by the Red Army, but the Kolčak government had moved to Irkutsk several days before (Novikov 2005a, 178). On November 17, 1919, the SRs and Czechoslovaks under Gajda rioted in Vladivostok. Gajda's coup failed, but Sergej Rozanov, the commander in the Amur region, allowed him to leave the city. Semënov also felt free to continue his independent activities in the Baikal region. In November–December 1919, his troops requisitioned Danish and American property in Sretensk and Chinese goods in the whole region. Besides, Semënov forbade any Chinese to enter Transbaikalia (GARF 200–1–405, 225; Novikov 2005a, 57, 95).

In late October–early November 1919, the sixth All-Buryat Congress assembled in Chita. The main items on the agenda were the entry of the Buryats into the Cossack union and reorganization of national self-government into Cossack self-government. The congress attracted more than 300 delegates, including Hambo Lama Guro Cyrempilov. Semënov, Nejse Gègèn, and Suzue advocated the need to attract the Buryats to military service, but the issue of reorganizing self-government bodies the Cossack way was left open. Concerning the participation of the Buryats in reestablishing order in Russia, the congress resolved that they should form an independent national host with milder conditions to ensure smooth introduction of military service to the Buryats, but since the present congress could not sanction the formation of the host without special credentials, it was decided to call another all-Buryat congress in no less than two months and no more than four months for deciding the issue. The resolution gave Semënov, the Campaign Ataman of the Far Eastern Cossack Army, 2,000 horsemen for a six-month service for helping the "revival of the Motherland and reestablishing its might" and established the Buryat Military Administration under Burnarduma for organizing mobilization and supplies. The congress appealed to Semënov asking to demobilize the Buryats already in service and to renew the activities of the Dauria military school. The congress created a special military commission for working out new conscription (Očiržapov n.d., 25–28).

The two independence projects, united Mongolia and the theocratic state, were not addressed explicitly, but were discussed in private. Some delegates were puzzled by the inconsistency between creating the Mongol federative state and the slogans of reviving the Russian Motherland used in the resolution. Some somons of the Khori Aymak considered themselves to be part of the theocratic state and did not send their delegates to the congress. Moreover, they sent local

resolutions to the congress and Ataman Semënov claiming that the communities which formed the theocratic state in order to avoid conscription would never follow any demands to join the armed forces. As a response Semënov sent his representative to the Khori Aymak to investigate the situation and arrest theocrats. Cydenov, Agvan Silnam, and others were arrested and taken to Chita (Očiržapov n.d., 28).

The failure to bring the Buryats under submission and turn them all into Cossacks further deteriorated the relations between Semënov and Buryat politicians. The atrocities of Semënov's regime, the expectations of Kolčak's fall, and the rumors about possible withdrawal of the Japanese made the position of Burnarduma cooperating with Semënov shaky. Its members heard that Semënov and Sergej Taskin voiced distrust to the Buryat population and secretly ordered Rinčino's arrest. In early December 1919 Semënov's associates arrested Bogdanov. Burnarduma remonstrated before Semënov, but the latter claimed to know nothing on the matter. He then stated that Bogdanov was exiled to the Maritime region via Manchuria and even supported this version with a telegram allegedly received from Bogdanov. It soon became evident that the exile was a hoax and Bogdanov had by then been murdered by Semënov's associates. This was confirmed by Ungern who agreed to help Burnarduma. Ungern warned of the danger to Rinčino. Rinčino and Vampilon left Chita and hid in the Egituysky Datsan (Bazarov 2002, 37–40).

About the same time Semënov again released Cydenov and his associates from the Chita prison. Agvan Silnam died of typhus on the way back home. The body of the dead heir was turned into an object of religious devotion. The three brief arrests prevented the theocratic state from functioning as planned, but did not stop the Balagad movement (Cyrempilov 2007; Očiržapov n.d., 28–29).

In the latter half of December 1919 anti-Kolčak uprisings organized by the SRs began across Siberia. On December 21, 1919, such an uprising started in Cheremkhovo; on December 24 it was supported in Irkutsk. The Czechoslovaks stationed there proclaimed their neutrality (Novikov 2005a, 178–179). In view of inevitable defeat Kolčak stepped down from his office on January 4, 1920, in Nizhneudinsk. Anton Denikin was appointed successor as the Supreme Ruler of Russia, whereas the "supreme commander of the armed forces of the Far East and the Irkutsk Military District Lieutenant General Ataman Semënov" was granted "supreme military and civil authority over the territory of the Russian Eastern Periphery" (Rossijskaâ vostočnaâ okraina) with the right to create bodies of state power until Denikin would be able to consolidate the whole country (GARF 200–1–405, 229).

The rebels formed the People's Revolutionary Army under the SR Nikolaj Kalašnikov and engaged in fighting with the remaining supporters of Kolčak. On January 5, 1920, the Political Center took control of Irkutsk and formed the Provisional Council of Siberian People's Administration which proclaimed itself the authority from Irkutsk to Krasnoyarsk and was supposed to organize elections to the Siberian People's Assembly. On January 15, 1920, the Czechoslovaks allowed the arrest of Kolčak in Irkutsk. On January 21, 1920, the Political Center

transferred authority to the Bolshevik Irkutsk Military Revolutionary Committee. The People's Revolutionary Army was turned into the Eastern Siberian Soviet Army. Kolčak was executed on February 7, 1920. The White forces which attempted to save Kolčak retreated eastwards to Transbaikalia (Novikov 2005a, 179–180, 186–201).

In his final report on operations, Graves accused Kolčak's representatives in the Far East of "most cruel and inhuman practices toward the people." The Cossack troops went into villages, took whatever they chose, robbed and killed inhabitants who dared to protest against their actions. According to Graves, the treatment of the people by Kolčak's representatives resulted in the downfall of his government. The majority of the "Russian army officer class had in mind a reestablishment of the old condition which existed during the time of the Tsar." The views of the AEF were supported by the Canadian and Italian officers. The Canadians were said to bitterly oppose "the disregard of the rights of the people by the Russian Army officer class, and the cruel and unjust treatment of the workmen and peasants by the Cossack troops acting under the orders of Cossack Atamans and governmental officials." The commander of the Italian troops at Krasnoyarsk "was very bitter in his criticism of the conduct of Russian military officers representing Kolčak" who "made no conscientious effort to pacify the people, but spent their time in carousing" (USNA M917–10, 432, 441–442, 447, 449).

Despite popular discontent, the Japanese military continued to support the principal Russian officials in the Far East, Semënov, Ivanov-Rinov, Rozanov, and Ivan Kalmykov, even after the fall of the Kolčak government. Through their Russian allies the Japanese controlled the press and "no Russian or civilian citizen of any other nation dared to try to send news of conditions in Siberia out of Siberia." The developments there were threatening. Graves mentioned placards calling for violence against the Jewish population of the Far East. In the Baikal region the death toll was extreme. The AEF concluded that "Semënov and his followers had killed forty thousand people" in Transbaikalia. Semënov's men machine-gunned women and children; people were killed from armored trains and tortured in villages. The cases of gruesome violence were documented by Japanese, French, and American representatives (USNA M917–10, 451, 456, 463).

The advance of the Red Army and the fall of the Kolčak government made the withdrawal of the Allies from Siberia only a matter of time. The AEF was not planning to fight the Bolsheviks. During a conference with their representatives held near Vladivostok on January 12, 1920, the Bolsheviks advised the AEF to leave immediately, since they were going to cripple the railway in order to prevent the Japanese from reinforcing their already large force in the interior and cutting off the supplies for the Kolčak government. The group of Bolsheviks, of whom ten were American deserters, claimed in reply to a direct question that "they felt very kindly towards the Americans and the Chinese," but were very bitter in their remarks about the Japanese, Kolčak, Semënov, Kalmykov, Rozanov, and others (USNA M917–1, 281–282).

In the Baikal region there was a violent clash between the AEF and Semënov's forces in January 1920. On January 30 the American railway guard terminated the receipt of orders and concentrated in Vladivostok preparatory to evacuation (USNA M917–10, 436). The same month the Mongols from Semënov's detachments stationed near the Gusinoozyorsky Datsan overthrew Russian officers and proceeded towards Kyakhta. They did not enter Kyakhta and in February 1920 the Chinese forces from Maimaicheng offered Nejse Gègèn and Norompil negotiations on surrender promising full amnesty, rewards, and permission to return home. In Maimaicheng Nejse Gègèn and Norompil were arrested together with other leaders of the troops and soon shot without trial. The troops partly surrendered and partly deserted (Bazarov 2002, 40–41).

After the incident a secret meeting of the remaining Burnarduma members Cydypov and Sampilon, in contact with Rinčino and Vampilon, resolved to disband the body because of Bogdanov's murder. After Sampilon left for the Aga Aymak the resolution was circulated. Taskin and Semënov were furious and sent around a telegram claiming that the traitor Sampilon had escaped and stolen money. Cydypov, pretending to know nothing about the plans, visited Semënov and after a brief discussion about the failure of the Mongol federative project left for Harbin (Bazarov 2002, 41–42).

It remains unclear when exactly the Buryat politicians left Chita. The order to Ungern's forces dated April 19, 1920, claimed that:

> The Buryat national leaders, the chairman of the Buryat People's Duma Vampilon[2] and the elected representative of the people Rinčino, having received around three million rubles from the government, fled from Chita during the night of March 21–22, 1920. Rinčino fled to the upper Ingoda where he engaged in forming a Bolshevik detachment and speculations.
>
> (RGVA 39454–1–7, 110–111)

However that may be, by early 1920 the Kolčak government, the Dauria government, and Burnarduma collapsed. The eastern Baikal region was now ruled by Semënov's Government of the Russian Eastern Periphery; the western Baikal region became part of the Russian Socialist Soviet Federative Republic; Inner, Outer, and Hulunbuir Mongolia were made an integral part of the Chinese Republic.

Having received support from the Japanese military and trying to use its interests in the global political space in the context of the emerging rivalry with the USA, Semënov felt capable of making international claims. These claims followed the plans of the Buryat politicians featuring the creation of a new sovereign state, which would include parts of the former Russian and Qing empires populated by Mongols. The proponents of the project attempted to utilize Mongol superethnic, Buddhist religious, and clan identities. The project appealed to Wilson's ideas of self-determination, which were reinterpreted for the local context, to Genghis Khan, and the common past.

Though the authors of the project managed to attract representatives from the Baikal region, Inner Mongolia, and Barga, they failed in gaining broad international support. Japan agreed to assist only unofficially, whereas the delegation of the new state was unable to make it to the Paris Peace Conference. What is more, the Dauria government under Nejse Gègèn failed to find understanding of Outer Mongolia's government under Bogd Gegen.

Unable to succeed in transboundary power relations, Semënov, Burnarduma and the Dauria government opted for a violent solution. Some Buryats by then had already served in Semënov's polyethnic army under Ungern's command, but their participation was expected to increase through conscription. Local people opposed the continuation of the war and the conscription. The opposition was especially strong in the Khori Aymak where it consolidated around the figure of Cydenov. Cydenov's group soon made its own international and, perhaps, transcendental claims organizing the theocratic monarchy under the Tsar of Three Worlds. Relying on Indian, Tibetan, and Mongol Buddhist and contemporary European political ideas, the group drafted a constitution and created a government. Since the new state had abandoned violence it was unable to defend itself against the proponents of united Mongolia. Even though the new state failed, the Balagad religious and political movement with Cydenov in the lead succeeded and outlived Semënov's regime, the Dauria government, and Burnarduma.

The planned military operation against Bogd Khan's government did not take place due to the major shifts in regional and global political spaces. On the one hand, Semënov reconciled with the Kolčak government and had to at least conceal his independent policies; on the other hand, the Treaty of Versailles ended the Great War and made the initially proclaimed objectives of the Allied intervention and hence the presence of the foreign troops in Siberia irrelevant. The danger of the invasion from the Baikal region was nevertheless used by the Chinese Republican military as a cause for occupying Outer Mongolia and revoking its autonomy. The Russian state which was its sponsor was virtually non-existent, at least in Siberia, and therefore unable to defend the bilateral and trilateral treaties on Mongolia.

In the absence of the state raging violence and lawlessness became the everyday reality of the people in the Baikal region and the rest of Siberia. The failures of the independent and semi-independent regional authorities, the defeats of the White Guard on the Ural Front, and the subsequent advance of the Red Army, together with the efforts of guerillas brought the Kolčak government to a collapse.

Notes

1 Suzue (鈴江), whose first name is not featured in the sources, was a Japanese officer dispatched to the Baikal region and responsible for communication in Mongolian.
2 The authors of the text apparently confused either the names or positions of Vampilon and Sampilon.

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GARB 305–1–17, 3 (Minutes of the meeting of the People's Duma, January 3, 1919).

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GARB 305–1–38, 56 (Resolution on the reports by the Central National Committee and its Irkutsk Department, November 1918).

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6 The new independent states, 1920–1921

6.1 The Far Eastern buffer and Buryat politicians

After the collapse of the Omsk government the predominantly socialist Political Center established control over the western Baikal region, while Grigorij Semënov and the Japanese forces claimed the territory east of the lake. The Political Center advocated the idea of creating a democratic "buffer" state. The new state was expected to keep the right to private property and form a non-Soviet government. Regional Bolsheviks under the member of the Irkutsk Provincial Committee of the RCP(b) Aleksandr Krasnoŝëkov supported the idea of a buffer state. Krasnoŝëkov joined the delegation of the Political Center in the negotiations with the command of the Soviet Fifth Army in January 1920 in Tomsk where they tried to convince the Bolsheviks to stop the advance in order to avoid a conflict with the Japanese troops, which unlike other expeditionary forces were not planning to evacuate and were delaying Czechoslovak withdrawal from the Baikal region (Novikov 2005, 187–188; USNA M917–10, 464).

On January 20, 1920, the Chairman of the Siberian Revolutionary Committee (Sibrevkom), the provisional Soviet government of Siberia, and a member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Fifth Army Ivan Smirnov informed Vladimir Lenin and Lev Trockij about the idea to create a buffer state and attract American support in countering Japanese influence in the Far East and offered to consider the territory between Zima and Vladivostok as the new buffer state. The plan was to inform the Czechoslovak and Japanese troops about the new state, but at the same time to continue the advance on Chita so that the boundary of the new buffer state would be moved east of Baikal. In mid-February 1920 Trockij supported the plan and on March 4, 1920, the Central Committee of the RCP(b) resolved that Baikal was to be the eastern boundary of the advance of the Fifth Army. The question of the territory of the buffer state on the whole was left open (Fuks 1998).

The Bolsheviks enjoyed moderate influence east of Baikal, but socialist ideas remained popular. In late January 1920 Rozanov's regime in Vladivostok was overthrown and substituted by the Maritime Regional Zemstvo Administration. The new government was recognized by all socialist parties (including the Bolsheviks), whereas the Allies avoided intervening in the uprising. In February–March 1920

Semënov was overthrown in Baikalia. On March 3, 1920 the Siberian Bureau of the Central Committee of the RCP(b) (Sibbûro) formed the Far Eastern Bureau of the RCP(b) (Dal'bûro) which included Krasnoŝëkov, Sergej Lazo, Pëtr Nikiforov, and other Bolsheviks. On March 5, 1920 the Provisional Zemstvo Government was created in Verkhneudinsk. The new government organized elections to the Congress of Toilers of Western Transbaikalia (Baikalia) (Novikov 2005, 212).

In the middle of March 1920 Vladimir Vilenskij from Sibrevkom arrived at Vladivostok with the directives to create the buffer state in the Far East. There was, however, no unity on the matter among the Bolsheviks on site: Lazo opposed the creation of a democratic buffer and advocated immediate introduction of the Soviet government east of Baikal. Sibbûro and the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the RCP(b) (Politbûro) in Moscow made the opponents of the buffer state comply appealing to the international situation. The need to avoid a war between Soviet Russia and Japan and the attempts to foster withdrawal of the Japanese troops were said to be the main reasons for creating a buffer state (Trigub 2006, 44).

In order to defend their interests before the new authorities, Buryat representatives from the Selenga, Barguzin, and Khori Aymaks assembled for a conference on March 16, 1920. At the conference a new body of national self-government designed to convene a Buryat congress which would proclaim autonomy of the Buryats, the Provisional All-Buryat People's Revolutionary Committee (Vremennyj obŝeburâtskij narodno-revolûcionnyj komitet, Burnarrevkom), was created. Rinčino became its chairman. New local self-government bodies, revolutionary committees, were created in aymaks and khoshuns (Bazarov 2011, 40–41).

The political division between Buryat politicians which manifested itself after the October Revolution remained relevant. The Buryat Section of the Irkutsk Provincial Committee of the RCP(b), which was established in November 1919 for spreading the ideas of the Bolsheviks among the Buryats, again claimed that the aspirations of the "petty bourgeois nationalist Buryat intellectuals" to nationalize schools and "revive and develop the Buryat culture" were doomed and that the Buryat "working and exploited masses" in the Irkutsk Province needed no national autonomy in any form to defend their "real" interests (Haptaev 1959, 2:154).

Although many Bolsheviks supported the very idea of a buffer state, there was regional struggle for leadership in the new state. In late March 1920 Sibrevkom indicated that all Far Eastern governments were to coordinate their activities with and follow the example of the buffer government which was being formed in Verkhneudinsk where on March 28, 1920, socialist politicians joined the delegates from guerrillas and peasants for the Congress of Toilers of Baikalia. The role of Baikalia as the center of the future state was challenged by the Maritime Region. The Irkutsk Province was also a possible center, but the advance of the Fifth Army of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army which took positions along the Selenga in the eastern Baikal region left it outside the future state. Sibbûro in Omsk resolved that the creation of the formally "independent" Far Eastern Republic was to be realized from two centers, Verkhneudinsk and Vladivostok. These centers could neither organize communication with each

other due to Semënov's forces and the Japanese troops in eastern Transbaikalia nor maintain stable communication with Omsk. In Vladivostok, for instance, information was received through Americans who were interested in Japanese withdrawal from Siberia. Vilenskij, who was also the Soviet representative for evacuating the Czechoslovak troops, was entrusted with the task of implementing the resolution of Sibbûro. On March 29, 1920, Dal'bûro resolved to abstain from Sovietizing the Maritime Region and offered the zemstvo administration to unite all Far Eastern regions under its rule. The Maritime Regional Zemstvo Administration claimed the Maritime, Amur, Sakhalin, and Kamchatka regions turning itself into the Provisional Government of the Far East working in close contact with Dal'bûro. In June 1920, a parliament, the People's Assembly of the Far East, was elected. Socialists formed the majority there (Bazarov 2011, 40; Fuks 1998; Trigub 2006, 46–47, 53–54).

The need to reconcile all socialist forces and rally the support of the peasants who were tired of war undoubtedly played a role when the decisions about the future buffer state were made by the Bolsheviks. The need to avoid conflict with the Japanese did not contradict the peasants' desire to end the war. In early April 1920 Lenin ordered the Fifth Army to stop any hostilities against the Japanese when they requested the permission to advance to Chita (Malyševa and Poznanskij 1996, 48).

On April 6, 1920, the Congress of Toilers of Western Transbaikalia (Baikalia) in Verkhneudinsk proclaimed the creation of the Far Eastern Republic. The Provisional Government of the FER under the chairmanship of Krasnoŝëkov and the People's Revolutionary Army of the FER were created. On Smirnov's advice the Central Committee de facto recognized the narrow strip along Lake Baikal as the territory of the FER. De jure recognition of the new government was, however, pending until May 14, 1920. According to Krasnoŝëkov, the Deputy People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs Lev Karahan halted recognition (Malyševa and Poznanskij 1996, 65–66, 77–79; Varnavskij *et al.* 2003).

In May 1920, the conference of Dal'bûro, Sibrevkom, Revolutionary Military Council of the Fifth Army, and the commander of the People's Revolutionary Army questioned the directives of Moscow and claimed that the buffer had already achieved its objectives and demanded immediate Sovietization. On May 28, 1920, Smirnov warned the head of the Irkutsk government and representative of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs (NKID) Âkov Ânson, Dal'bûro in Verkhneudinsk, and Vilenskij in Vladivostok that inner antagonisms would lead to the creation of a different buffer state in the Ussuri territory under the Japanese protectorate. During the expected negotiations with the Japanese, the Bolsheviks were to insist on the state unity of the western Baikal region and the Amur-Ussuri territory and underline the connection between the FER and Soviet Russia (Malyševa and Poznanskij 1996, 79–80).

In early April 1920, Rinčino as Burnarrevkom's chairman wrote a letter to Sibrevkom's mission for foreign affairs in which he attempted to include the matters related to the Buryat population into the discussion:

> Considering that the control of Soviet Russia over the Circum-Baikal Railway, Lake Baikal, the transition of the Transbaikal Railway under its authority by concession, general sympathy of the popular masses, and organization of the army of the buffer state on Soviet principles ensure military-strategic and political interests of Russia, I earnestly request the mission to consider the interests of the Buryat-Mongol people when delimiting the boundaries of the buffer state and not to draw this boundary across the territory of the Transbaikal Region according to the existing project of delimitation, because according to this project part of the Selenga Aymak remains in the buffer state and part in Soviet Russia, and thereby the small Buryat-Mongol [people] is divided into three parts without any serious reasons: the Irkutsk Province, the Baikal district which goes to Soviet Russia, and the buffer state.
>
> Hence, my concrete request is to include the whole Transbaikal Region to Soviet Russia and if this appears impossible to draw the boundary along the line delimiting the Irkutsk Province and the Transbaikal Region, naturally, keeping the abovementioned rights and guarantees of Soviet Russia.
>
> (RGASPI 495–152–6, 1–1 rev.)

Although by May 1920 Rinčino had considerably strengthened his positions in the Soviet political space working in the Asian Bureau under the Siberian Mission of NKID in Irkutsk (Bazarov and Žabaeva 2008, 182), this request was not honored. Rinčino, then already working in Irkutsk, and the new chairman of Burnarrevkom Pëtr Dambinov continued to appeal to the Soviet government on the matter of boundary. In one such appeal transmitted to Rinčino via Dambinov in early May 1920 the Selenga Aymak Revolutionary Committee indicated that due to the creation of the buffer state the Buryats of the Irkutsk Province and the Selenga Aymak were left without the influence of the national body and solicited for the creation of an "all-national body for both provinces." If the request was rejected the revolutionary committee "strongly insisted" that the Verkhneudinsk Burnarrevkom spread its authority over the Selenga Aymak which remained outside the buffer state (RGASPI 495–152–6, 2).

The Buryat population pinned its hopes on Burnarrevkom for protection from communal violence, which increased greatly after the warfare intensified in late 1919. Cases of extreme violence committed by peasants who sometimes called themselves guerrillas were reported in the spring of 1920. The population of the Chikoy Khoshun of the Selenga Aymak which became part of the buffer state was "terrorized by neighboring peasants" who robbed them and executed sixty-nine people in the Atsa Somon without any investigation or trial. The Selenga Aymak Revolutionary Committee protested against communal violence and appealed to the revolutionary government of the buffer state for protection of the Buryats, investigation and prosecution of the offenders, and compensations and care for orphans. It also pled to make the Chikoy Khoshun part of the Selenga Aymak (RGASPI 495–152–6, 2 rev.)

In 1922 the newly organized Buryat-Mongol Committee in Urga investigated the Atsa massacre. According to the investigation, the "Red Russians" arrived in

1919 and, accusing the Buryats of cooperation with the White Guard, murdered seventy-six men and robbed the remaining people of belongings and livestock. The examination of the bodies soon after the mass murder showed that the people had been badly tortured with many stripped; their limbs, noses, ears, and even genitals cut off; and eyes poked out. Land seizures, robberies, and murders committed in the zones of military operations could be seen as communal violence because many groups of offenders belonged to the Semeiskie who used the anarchy to resolve their long-lasting land-use conflicts with the Buryat population. At the same time, many actual soldiers of the Red Army and guerrillas eagerly engaged in robberies for personal gain. The same investigation showed that violence and crime committed by the Red Army and guerrillas in the Chikoy Khoshun was massive in scale. Soon after most people of the Atsa Somon migrated to Mongolia, forty-three of those who remained, mainly the men, women, and children who could not migrate due to illness or no family, were said to have been burnt alive (Nacagdorž 2010, 133–137, 140).

Although Burnarrevkom was recognized by the government of the FER, it had no funds to function and appealed to Soviet Russia for a credit. In order to gain its support, Burnarrevkom accepted three Bolsheviks from the Irkutsk Buryat Section as its members (RGASPI 495–152–6, 3–3 rev.) The participation of Buryat Bolsheviks in the newly established Buryat self-government bodies was used by Rinčino as a further argument for reviewing the boundary between Soviet Russia and the FER. On May 8, 1920, Rinčino wrote to the Irkutsk provincial government stating that the "indeterminacy of the boundaries" between the two countries left the 75,000 people living in the Selenga Aymak of the Transbaikal Region in deep crisis due to the absence of both directions and funds. Rinčino then appealed to the important military-strategic location of the Selenga Aymak between Verkhneudinsk, Troitskosavsk, and Tunka (the valley of the Irkut), and on the "military and trade routes" to Mongolia urging that it could become a zone of warfare or an important rear base in case the enemy attacked from the "Mongol and Chinese boundary" and therefore could not be left in the existing chaotic state due to the interests of "revolutionary Russia on the Mongol and Chinese boundary." Rinčino opposed the creation of the Selenga Revolutionary Committee which had been established by peasants in Baikalia, who demanded the abolition of the Selenga Aymak and claimed their authority over the Buryats. Rinčino warned that the "encroachments on the freedom of national self-determination of working Buryats and Mongols" contradicted the interests of domestic and foreign policy of Soviet Russia in view of the possible conflict with the "Asian reaction" represented by Japan and northern China which demanded unity of the "working groups and peoples of the Russian Far East and Siberia before this mortal danger" (RGASPI 495–152–6, 5–5 rev.).

On May 23–June 3, 1920, representatives of the Selenga, Barguzin, and Khori Aymaks assembled in Verkhneudinsk for the Buryat Congress. The congress institutionalized Burnarrevkom as a permanent national authority under the name Buryat-Mongol People's Revolutionary Committee (Burât-Mongol'skij narodno-revolûcionnyj komitet) and resolved to keep aymaks and

khoshuns as administrative divisions. The congress claimed that there was no class struggle among the Buryats, who were mainly workmen of middle and poor income, and expressed the determination of the Buryats to defend and develop national self-government, schooling, and court. The congress supported the idea of unification of eastern and western Buryats into a single autonomous unit and appealed to Sovnarkom to join the Irkutsk Province to the FER. The representatives at the congress underlined the role played by the Buryat revolutionary committees on site in assisting the army and providing security (Bazarov 2011, 41).

6.2 Struggle for regional leadership

The Buryat Congress heard accounts of the warfare and related deprivations of property from different parts of the eastern Baikal region since late 1919. The representative of the Orongoy Khoshun of the Selenga Aymak reported that the White Guard detachments had robbed several somons taking horses, "wagons, sleighs, harness, food, forage, fur coats, fur boots, all sorts of things." At the same time, a guerrilla detachment mobilized horses demanding "hay, oats, meat, fur coats, fur boots," weapons, and so on. These demands were fulfilled, but some mobilized horses were not returned. The White Guardsmen which retreated from Irkutsk via Verkhneudinsk also robbed the Buryat population along the way. The guerrillas who headed to the Chita front demanded several thousand carts with horses and carters. After being provided, they took the carts to the very front, with some carters being killed in battle or unable to return. The situation worsened with the arrival of many thousands of new troops of Soviet Russia, which demanded all available hay, fifteen head of livestock from each 100, and purchased provisions by "fixed prices" (GARB 484–1–13, 41–41 rev.)

The representatives of the Chikoy Khoshun reported that the warring parties took many horses since December 1919. Soldiers robbed Buryat villages taking cows and horses "under pretense of searches for weapons and state property." The Buryats near Okino-Klyuchi experienced robberies every night and were in panic. Soldiers requisitioned 10 percent from all grain in the Kudara and Altsagan Somons without considering the number of eaters. They also referred to the Atsa massacre claiming that since the very beginning of the anti-Kolčak and anti-Semënov uprising guerrillas had arrested, murdered, and robbed Buryats suspected of counterrevolution or hiding weapons based on personal censure. The detainees were held in dark cold premises without clothes. The representatives reported that the people of the Chikoy Khoshun provided the Baikal steamship line with firewood without any compensation. In fear of the guerrillas many Buryats migrated to Mongolia, with their remaining belongings having been taken away by peasants (GARB 484–1–13, 45–46).

In the Khori Aymak supporters of Cydenov opposed the idea of keeping the existing Buryat self-government bodies and accused Buryat nationalists of counterrevolution. With their election to somon and khoshun revolutionary committees, some Balagads stirred up local youths against autonomists and engaged in

arrests, confiscations, and beatings of the latter. Several people were killed. The government of the FER investigated the situation and in late May 1920 arrested eighteen Balagads including Cydenov himself. The Balagad members of the Buryat self-government bodies were substituted with autonomists. In June and July 1920 groups of Balagads again engaged in violence against their nationalist opponents. The government of the FER engaged in investigations through the Extraordinary Government Commission. In order to resolve the conflict local people and lamas, the chairman of Burnarrevkom Dambinov, and the members of the Extraordinary Government Commission assembled for a conference in the Chesansky Datsan. The conference refrained from passing a resolution on Cydenov. On July 28, 1920, a joint commission of the FER army and government ordered to continue investigation. On August 8, 1920, the Khori Aymak Revolutionary Committee reported to the FER government on "terrorist actions" of several Balagads who were arrested later that month (Očiržapov n.d., 31–34).

In June 1920 the Red Army managed to turn the tide in the Polish-Soviet War. In order to retain the advantage and avoid a new front in Siberia, the Bolshevik negotiators with Japan were instructed to conceal the connection between the FER and the Soviet government. On June 9, 1920, Karahan informed Smirnov that Ânson was to lead the Communist propaganda in the Far East from Irkutsk, so that the Japanese would have no cause to attack the FER (Malyševa and Poznanskij 1996, 87).

The same month Boris Šumâckij became chairman of Dal'bûro. Meanwhile the regional competition between Verkhneudinsk and Vladivostok continued. The Amur Region, where a Soviet government had been formed, recognized Verkhneudinsk. Semënov attempted to use the contradictions between Verkhneudinsk and Vladivostok and tried to consolidate his positions in the political space of the Baikal region by negotiating with the opposition to the Bolsheviks. On June 26, 1920, Semënov transformed the Regional People's Conference, which had assembled in Chita on June 6, into the Regional People's Assembly giving it some civil authority in the Russian Eastern Periphery. Semënov then entered into negotiations with the representatives of the Maritime government. The negotiations began at Manchuria Station after the Japanese military command published the declaration of evacuation from the Baikal region on July 3, 1920. Due to this fact Semënov was unable to reach an agreement with the Maritime government (Semënov 2002, 96–97, 107–108; Vasilevskij 2000, 114–115).

On July 15, 1920, the delegations of the FER under Krasnoŝëkov and the Japanese Expeditionary Corps under Yui Mitsue (由比光衛) finalized an agreement on evacuation from the Baikal region and the end of hostilities between the FER, guerrillas, and Japan at Gongota Station. The Gongota Agreement created a neutral zone free from warring parties west of Chita. Semënov's appeal to Prince Hirohito (裕仁) for delaying the withdrawal did not affect the decision which was encouraged by the heavy Japanese casualties in the clashes with guerilla bands (by April 1920 some 2,300 soldiers were killed). The evacuation began on July 25, 1920, and finished in the latter half of October 1920 (Novikov 2005, 227; Vasilevskij 2000, 115–116).

According to the Brief Points on the Far Eastern Republic approved by Politbûro on August 13, 1920, the Central Committee of the RCP(b) guided the policies of the FER through Dal'bûro of three members. Dal'bûro was not subordinate to Sibbûro, but only coordinated its activities with the latter. The People's Revolutionary Army was under the control of the FER only formally and had to be seen as one of the Soviet armies under the command in Moscow. Krasnoŝëkov was to chair Dal'bûro instead of Šumâckij. Dal'bûro itself was made part of the Central Committee of the RCP(b) similar to Sibbûro (RGASPI 17–3–102, 4–4 rev.)

The design of the FER adopted by Politbûro was very close to Krasnoŝëkov's suggestions, according to which the new state east of Baikal was to include all Transbaikalia, Amur, Maritime, Kamchatka, and Sakhalin regions, as well as the CER Zone. Officially the FER was to become a fully independent state based on democratic principles, but in practice its home and foreign affairs were to fall under the full control of the Bolshevik Party. The FER was therefore designed as a provisional diplomatic entity for ending the intervention, breaking the diplomatic blockade, and creating the basis for illegal propaganda of the Comintern in East Asia, especially in China and Korea. Georgij Čičerin, People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs, supported Krasnoŝëkov's suggestions, but laid out more global political specifics. He underlined the need to establish relations with the USA and China, but claimed that for strategic purposes the capital of the FER was to be located far from the Pacific, for instance, in Chita. After the international situation changed, the FER was to become a federative part of the RSFSR. The government of the FER was supposed to investigate the situation in East Asia, consult with NKID, and submit all possible treaties there for approval. The creation of the FER was supposed to broaden the scope of the Comintern to Japan and Indochina. Besides, it was to foster the relations between the RSFSR and China. The objectives laid out by Čičerin were therefore both international and transnational. On the one hand, the FER was supposed to aid Soviet Russia as a sovereign state in bilateral relations with other countries. On the other hand, it was to aid the transnational political organization, the Comintern, in spreading its influence to East Asia (Fuks 1998).

The inner confrontation, however, has not ended with the adoption of the points. On August 16, 1920, after hearing Vilenskij's report, Sibbûro proclaimed Vladivostok the capital of the buffer state (Malyševa and Poznanskij 1996, 116–120). Omsk opposed the decision of Politbûro and attempted to change it. People's Revolutionary Army remained under the command of the Siberian Bolsheviks. Krasnoŝëkov's competitor Šumâckij signed a secret border treaty on behalf of the FER with Lev Karahan who represented the RSFSR (Fuks 1998).

Semënov again attempted to use the competition among the Bolsheviks. On August 24, 1920, in Khadabulak a delegation of the Maritime People's Assembly and Semënov signed an agreement which united the Transbaikal Region and the Maritime Region under the Provisional Government of the Far East. The People's Assembly, however, refused to ratify the agreement. On September 2,

1920, the Regional People's Conference resumed its work in Transbaikalia, but already on September 8, 1920, Semënov disbanded it convening the Provisional Eastern Transbaikal People's Assembly. Later that month negotiations about uniting all regional governments of the Far East were held in Gongota and Verkhneudinsk. The Chita government was represented there by three people, including Gombožab Cybikov. About the same time, however, the Congress of Toilers of Eastern Transbaikalia convened in Nerchinsk. The congress recognized the FER and elected the Regional People's Revolutionary Committee under Bolshevik leadership (Novikov 2005, 225, 230–231).

The same month the forces under Ungern's command (the Asiatic Cavalry Division which was reorganized into a guerilla band on August 7, 1920) were reported to have moved towards Outer Mongolia without official authorization from Semënov. On September 29, 1920, they were excluded from Semënov's Far Eastern Army. In Outer Mongolia Ungern's forces (some 2,400 people, of whom about 400 were Russian) were again named the Asiatic Cavalry Division. According to some sources, Ungern followed Semënov's orders when he moved to Outer Mongolia, which was to become a base for a future attack on the Bolshevik forces. Semënov himself was preparing to evacuate from the Baikal region to the Maritime region (Vasilevskij 2000, 163).

Despite Semënov's appeals, the Japanese government withdrew from Chita on October 15, 1920. On October 22, 1920, the People's Revolutionary Army of the Far Eastern Republic, which had been advancing under the guise of independent guerrillas, captured the city and Semënov's Far Eastern Army and Cossack forces evacuated to the Maritime region. On October 25, 1920, the government of the FER moved to Chita. In the following days the Provisional Eastern Transbaikal People's Assembly held joint sessions with the Regional People's Revolutionary Committee. On November 3, 1920, the former organization disbanded itself (Novikov 2005, 227, 234; Vasilevskij 2000, 163).

Due to the danger that a pro-Japanese anti-Bolshevik buffer state could be formed in the Maritime region, the Vladivostok government was denied the role of the center of the future state in favor of the Baikalia government. The conference held in Chita on October 28–November 11, 1920, united the Transbaikal, Amur, and Maritime regions (including Chukotka and Kamchatka) into the Far Eastern Republic with the capital in Chita. A central government of the FER under Krasnoŝëkov was elected, whereas all other governments east of the Baikal became self-government bodies. On December 11, 1920, the People's Assembly of the Far East recognized the authority of the FER in the Maritime region (Novikov 2005, 236; Trigub 2006, 54).

After their defeat near Matsiyevskaya the remaining White Guard withdrew from the Baikal region to China on November 21, 1920. On January 6, 1921, the delegation of the Maritime People's Assembly negotiated with Zhang Zuolin disarmament of the White Guard in the CER Zone. Even though Verkhneudinsk lost its status as the capital of the FER to larger Chita, its role as a regional political center was still recognized. On November 22, 1920, the government of the

FER divided the Transbaikal Region into the Baikal and Transbaikal regions. The Baikal Region with the capital in Verkhneudinsk included Barguzin, Verkhneudinsk, and Troitskosavsk Districts, as well as the part of the former Selenga District which was in the FER (Il'inyh 2013).

The formation of the FER redefined the Selenga River. Being a major transportation line, it used to connect parts of the Baikal region in the communication space, but now it became the new international boundary (Figure 6.1) (GARF 1318–1–52, 33–33a, 139; Hromov 1983, 15; The Edinburgh Geographical Institute 1922). These boundaries which were drawn in the political space were imposed on other spaces. Demarcation of the boundary on site proved to be a problem. Some 20,000 people living on the right bank of the river in the vicinity of its mouth were supposed to join the FER. Their elected representatives, however, claimed in February 1921 that they remained under the authorities of the RSFSR. With fishing being the dominant occupation in the area, exchange with crop farmers in Verkhneudinsk, Chita, and other trade centers of Transbaikalia was indispensable to their wellbeing, as the Irkutsk Province had insufficient grain supplies. Besides, the area was located on the way between Barguzin and Verkhneudinsk. If it remained in the RSFSR it would create a rupture in the communication and administrative spaces of the FER, as traveling between the two cities would require crossing the international boundary. The people demanded the de facto inclusion of the area into the FER along with the border treaty (GARB 278–1–2, 13–13 rev.)

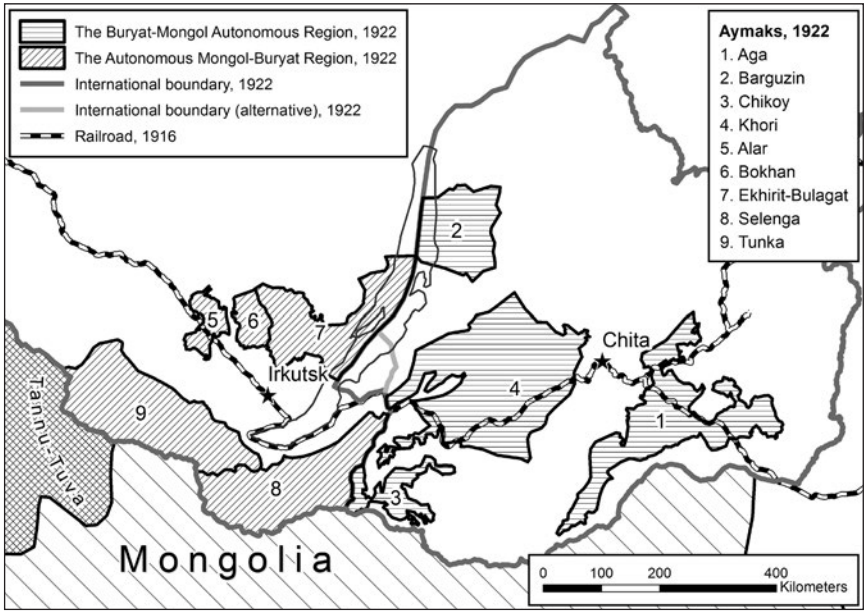

Figure 6.1 Independent states and autonomies in the Baikal region, 1922.

6.3 Exporting revolution to East Asia

With the establishment of the Section of the Eastern Peoples (Sekvostnar) under Sibbûro which substituted the Asian Bureau in late July 1920, Irkutsk was reaffirmed as a center of the Bolshevik transnational and transcultural planning for Asia. Sekvostnar, which was chaired by Naum Burtman and co-chaired by Filipp Gapon, was interested in Buryat politicians literate in Mongolian but refused to take control of the Buryat Section of the Irkutsk party organization. Sekvostnar was reluctant to recognize the affairs in the Baikal region as part of its foreign-policy agenda. The creation of the Mongol-Tibetan Department of Sekvostnar under Sergej Borisov (with the other three departments being Korean, Chinese, and Japanese) manifested the two regions of the former Qing Empire as a priority for the activities of the Bolsheviks in East Asia (RGASPI 495–154–7, 1–2, 16–16 rev., 34).

Sovnarkom in fact already addressed Bogd Khan's government in March 1918 and in July 1919. In the latter appeal Mongolia was rendered as an independent country, which had the right to unmediated foreign relations without the participation of either Russia or China (Dolgih and Cèrèndorž 1975, 469). The renewed interest of the Bolsheviks in Mongolia reflected, however, their transnational rather than international aspirations and related to the increasing activities of the Comintern in Asia.

After the Constituent Congress of the Comintern held on March 2–6, 1919, in Moscow, Soviet republics were proclaimed in Hungary, Bavaria, and Slovakia, but none survived until the Second Congress which convened on July 19–August 7, 1920, in Petrograd and Moscow. These failures, together with the suppression of the Spartacist Uprising and death of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg in January 1919 in Germany, made the immediate future of the World Revolution in Europe bleak (Gerwarth 2008; Toma 1958).

Addressing the Second Congress Vladimir Lenin, nevertheless, claimed that the global bourgeois system experienced a "deep revolutionary crisis" and that it was up to revolutionary parties to take advantage of this crisis for the victory of the revolution. He also stated that the Great War and the Treaty of Versailles brought further inequalities globally, with the population of the oppressed colonial and semi-colonial countries reaching one and a quarter billion. In his speeches at the Second Congress, Lenin especially noted the disadvantageous position of the "oppressed nations" (Slezkine 1994) in Asia pointing at India, China, Turkey, and Persia (Lenin 1981a, 241; 1981b, 218, 227). Soon after the congress, on September 1–8, 1920, Baku hosted the so-called First Congress of the Peoples of the East which united prominent Bolsheviks and several hundred representatives from the "oppressed nations," Turkey, Armenia, Persia, Georgia, China, India, and others. The congress reaffirmed the Comintern's determination to continue the anti-imperial struggle in colonies and manifested Asia as a priority for revolutionaries (White 1974).

At the Second Congress of the Comintern Lenin connected the global anti-imperial struggle with the continuation of "the practical work of the Russian

Communists in the colonies" of the former Russian Empire (Lenin 1981a, 244). An explicit connection between the Baikal region and neighboring regions of the former Qing Empire was drawn in October 1920 during the visit of a Mongolian delegation accompanied by Rinčino to Moscow.

The initial delegation consisted of seven representatives of the Mongolian People's Party (Mongol Ardyn Nam, MPP)[1] who arrived at the Baikal region in July–August 1920 on Bogd Khan's approval with the objective to seek help against the military dictatorship of Xu Shuzheng. The Mongolian People's Party was created after two illegal political groups formed in the summer of 1919 under Solijn Danzan and Dogsomyn Bodoo merged into a loose political organization earlier in 1920. In Verkhneudinsk, the delegation was received by Rinčino who introduced them to Šumâckij, then chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Far Eastern Republic and secretary of the Dal'bûro. Cyben Žamcarano also participated in the negotiations. The delegation proceeded to Irkutsk where it arrived on August 15, 1920, and was received by Gapon. On August 20, 1920, a constitutional meeting of the Board of the Mongol-Tibetan Department was held together with Bodoo and Horloogijn Čojbalsan. Rinčino was elected its chairman; Borisov became responsible for information and communication; Damdiny Sùhbaatar and Čojbalsan joined the propaganda subdepartment; Žamcarano proceeded to Urga for establishing communication (Bazarov and Žabaeva 2008, 176–177, 183–186).

Gapon immediately reported to Karahan and Ânson about the negotiations with the Mongolian delegation which united various groupings from clergy to merchants seeking reestablishment of Mongolian autonomy and Russian support in anti-Chinese struggle (RGASPI 325–2–51, 3). The MPP appealed to Sovnarkom for mediation during negotiations with China, a loan and, if necessary, 24,000 cavalry troops. The delegation then split in three parts, with Danzan, Dar'žavyn Losol, and Dambyn Čagdaržav accompanied by Rinčino proceeding to Omsk and Moscow. Due to a disagreement Losol soon returned to Irkutsk (Bazarov and Žabaeva 2008, 186–187).

In Omsk the remaining delegates were received by Ivan Smirnov. Rinčino used the opportunity to pass three of his articles to Sibrevkom, including The Alien Issue and the Objectives of Soviet Construction in Siberia in which he explicitly connected the indigenous peoples' problems in Siberia with the "revolutionary movement in Asia." In this text completed in March 1920, Rinčino underlined the entanglements ("religious, economic, and cultural connection"; "common language, morals, and customs"; "identical economic systems and shared script and literature") between the peoples of southern Siberia and neighboring groups beyond international boundaries. Providing the example of the Buryat-Mongols and Evenks of Transbaikalia and the neighboring "foreign Khalkha-Mongols and Oirat-Mongols" whose territories lay along the most important military and economic routes to Central Asia, he claimed that "all events and ideological political and religious movements on one side" of the border immediately reflected on its other side (Nimaev 1994, 74–89).

Rinčino appealed to the Tsarist successful experience of trying to "turn the southern Siberian aliens, in particular the Buryat-Mongols, into a tool of its policy in Central Asia" and noted that the Soviet government paid little attention to its international relations and ignored the indigenous peoples of Siberia in 1918 causing their mass migration abroad and spoiling its own reputation there. In order to counteract Japan which attempted to unite the peoples of Asia for its imperialist interests under the Pan-Asian idea, the Soviet government had to consider the situation of the Siberian indigenous peoples who did not "remain deaf to the Pan-Asian propaganda of Japan." Since the victory of revolutionary Russia over the "world reaction" and "the collapse of the capitalist system" depended on the "explosion of the revolutionary fire on world scale," it was utterly important to ignite the "revolutionary storm in Central Asia and the Far East" because the liberation of Asian colonies would undermine the material resources of the imperialist enemies, result in "their complete economic and political bankruptcy," and lead to revolutions in Asia, America, and even Japan (Nimaev 1994, 85–86).

Hence, the pressing objective of revolutionary Russia in Asia was to "establish connection to and win the trust and moral authority among the broad working popular masses of the peoples of Asia" which was further complicated by the "racial antipathy of the masses to the 'barbarians and rapists' Europeans" and its own past and present mistakes. These complications could be overcome with the resolution of the indigenous peoples' problems and with the assistance of revolutionary indigenous intellectuals who could and had to be "used in Asia as a living and active revolutionary force." The cultural and educational development of indigenous Siberians, together with revolutionary propaganda among them, would create the needed loyal revolutionary cadre of "ideological fighters" who would "immediately infiltrate abroad and cause respective results" (Nimaev 1994, 86–87).

The practical steps for solving "the alien question" remained in line with the aspirations for democratic self-government and included convening a Siberian indigenous congress in Irkutsk; exempting the management of indigenous lands from the competence of provincial and regional authorities and transferring them to the indigenous peoples under supervision of the central government; recognizing district indigenous self-government bodies as "provisional bodies of administration in cultural national affairs"; increasing funding for cultural, educational, and medical undertakings of indigenous self-government bodies; supporting the organization and convention of all-national congresses; creating a mission of the Siberian indigenous peoples under the All-Russian Central Executive Committee (VCIK); declaring amnesty to all indigenous persons who were "drawn by the reactionary government of Kolčak" into anti-Soviet actions if the "highest revolutionary authorities of respective" indigenous groups guaranteed their loyalty; and taking "immediate and resolute measures for protecting personal and property security" of the Siberian indigenous peoples from the robberies and pogroms by Siberian peasants. In order to mitigate possible conflicts between the interests of the indigenous peoples and peasants, indigenous Siberians, according to Rinčino, were ready to

make concessions in the space of land use, voluntarily giving up surplus lands in view of the interests of the state and all working masses (Nimaev 1994, 87–89).

In his other articles Rinčino further traced the connections between Siberia and Outer Mongolia; between Outer Mongolia and the rest of Mongolia; between Mongolia and Manchuria, Xingjian ("Chinese Turkestan"), and Tibet; between Tibet and India. These connections would enable the spread of the World Revolution and turn the listed regions into successive springboards for the armed struggle of the "workmen of the whole world with the world bourgeoisie." Mongolia was described as crucial for connecting revolutionary Russia to the "great peoples of Asia" who "nourished" the "world oppressors, the world imperialist powers." The only possible approach to the "cultural national and economic liberation of the peoples of Asia" was the propagation of the ideas "of freedom of national self-determination" of Asian peoples and "struggle against the oppression of the foreign and attending indigenous capital and officials" and the implementation of respective slogans by Soviet Russia on its own territory (Bazarov and Žabaeva 2008, 187–191).

The Sibbûro transmitted Rinčino's texts to the Central Committee of the RCP(b) already on September 16, 1920, ahead of the delegation. When the Mongolian delegation was in Moscow, the delegates of the Baku congress, Rinčino, and Agvan Doržiev were received in Politbûro by Lenin. The meeting discussed the issue of national self-determination, including the matters related to the Buryats and Mongols. According to Rinčino, it was at this meeting when it was decided to establish Buryat autonomy and provide the Mongols with Soviet aid (RGASPI 17–84–122, 1–2). The delegation itself was well-received in Moscow by Georgij Čičerin, Karahan, and other prominent Bolsheviks. The Soviet government promised military and financial support, propaganda via the Mongol-Tibetan Department, mediation in the relations with China, and assistance in fighting the White Guard (Bazarov and Žabaeva 2008, 191–192).

The mission proved to be a success for both Outer Mongolians and Buryats. On October 14, 1920, Politbûro passed a resolution on the "objectives of the RCP in the areas populated by Eastern peoples." "Having discussed reports and messages made at the conference of Politbûro of the Central Committee with the delegates of the Congress of the Peoples of the East, Politbûro" resolved that the "establishment of autonomy" was necessary "for those eastern nationalities which still had no autonomous institutions, for the Kalmyks and the Buryat-Mongols in the first place" (RGASPI 17–3–115, 2). Winning the support of the Mongolic-speaking indigenous peoples of Soviet Russia became a priority.

The fact that the FER was designed to implement the objectives of Soviet foreign policy and to foster transnational activities of the Comintern, together with the peculiar inner political situation, made the eastern Baikal region the space of implementation of the plans worked out in Moscow. Burnarrevkom, which moved to Chita after the government of the FER, demanded that it was recognized as the central body for all Buryats of the Far East and that the aymaks were given the status of districts. In November 1920 Burnarrevkom suggested creating a regional autonomy, with aymaks, khoshuns, and somons being

national administrative units on site, under a special Ministry of Indigenous Affairs (Ministerstvo tuzemnyh del). In December 1920 the initiative was supported by representatives of aymaks and khoshuns of the Transbaikal Region who assembled in Chita. Later the same month Burnarrevkom started publishing the newspaper *Golos burât-mongola* which propagated the idea of Buryat autonomy. The nominal independence of the FER and the relative autonomy of regional authorities, however, halted the Politbûro resolution and it was only on January 17, 1921, that the government of the FER recognized the revolutionary committees in aymaks, khoshuns, and somons as bodies of national self-government subject to public funding. Regional autonomy and administrative authority of Burnarrevkom in the aymaks were yet to be established. Burnarrevkom's functions were recognized in the cultural sphere and in relation to the preparations for the Constituent Assembly of the Far East which was planned to be convened in Chita (Bazarov 2011, 43).

The decision of the FER was preceded by restructuration of transnational bodies. On January 15, 1921, Sekvostnar was transformed into the Far Eastern Secretariat of the Executive Committee of the Comintern (Dal'nevostočnyj sekretariat Ispolnitel'nogo komiteta Kommunističeskogo internacionala) and became the center of all Bolshevik revolutionary activities in East Asia. Šumâckij was appointed authorized representative of the Comintern's Executive Committee in the Far East (Murgaev 2005).

The creation of the Far Eastern Secretariat in Irkutsk fostered the discussion of the new transnational policy in the Baikal region by the Buryat Section of the RCP(b) on January 29, 1921. The Buryat Bolsheviks, who continuously opposed the idea of national autonomy for the Buryats, had to work out a new course which implied the creation of Buryat autonomy in the RSFSR (Varnavskij *et al.* 2003). Regional authorities, however, were reluctant to resolve the matter. The October resolution was discussed on February 2, 1921. Since there were no specific directives from the People's Commissariats of Nationalities and Foreign Affairs on the Buryat autonomy in the western Baikal region, the Irkutsk Bolsheviks resolved that the matter had to be first examined by Sibbûro (Bazarov 2011, 42).

6.4 Independence of Mongolia, the Russian Far East, and Tannu-Tuva

The Comintern was not the only actor which included Mongolia into its transboundary claims. In October 1920 the Asiatic Cavalry Division approached Urga. Rumors spread in the Baikal region that Ungern sacked the city. On October 31, 1920, the leaders of the Fifth Army and Sekvostnar Boris Pozern and Burtman sent a telegram from Irkutsk to Lenin, Čičerin, and Smirnov claiming that Ungern's objective was to make Mongolia independent from China under Japanese protectorate. Provincial Chinese authorities were said to appeal to the FER suggesting to bring troops of the FER or the RSFSR into Mongolia for a joint operation against the White Guard. Even though Ungern's forces

expressed their commitment to reestablish autonomy of Outer Mongolia, princes and lamas were cautious fearing possible clashes with Soviet Russia. Pozern and Burtman warned Lenin that lack of participation would lead to the establishment of Japanese protectorate over Mongolia and formation of a new White Guard base creating a front from Manchuria to Turkestan and cutting the Soviets from "the whole East" (Kuz'min 2004, 81–82). Smirnov opposed military struggle against the White Guard on Mongolian territory. In his opinion communicated to Lenin he urged that siding with China in Mongolia could cause a clash with Japan and suggested that for the time being both the FER and RSFSR should refrain from active participation (Malyševa and Poznanskij 1996, 152).

In late November 1920, the Mongol-Tibetan Department received a comprehensive report on the situation in Mongolia. Ungern was successful in occupying part of the region, but the capital was still under the Chinese authorities who used the intervention as a cause for arresting many prominent Mongols, organizing terror, and establishing military dictatorship. In Urga, arrests, searches, and kidnappings among Mongols, Buryats, and Russians became a daily practice. There were cases of pogroms in Buddhist temples. Žamcarano joined Sùhbaatar and Čojbalsan in consultations on necessary consolidation of all "circles of Mongolia." They decided that under current circumstances the Mongols had to aspire for provincial autonomy within the Chinese Republic which would withdraw its troops, but appoint a governor-general. Soviet Russia and the FER needed to support Mongolia in negotiations with local and central Chinese authorities against Xu Shuzheng who was then in Japan. It was suggested that clashes be provoked between the White Guard and Chinese. These measures were to be accompanied by pro-Soviet agitation among Mongolian lamas and princes. People from the Tatar and Bashkir autonomies could join the Buryat-Mongols in agitation and demoralization of Ungern's forces promising the Tatars, Bashkirs, and Buryats in the ranks full amnesty if they left him. The contradictions between the soldiers of the old regular Chinese army and the new troops under Xu, between military and trade circles could be used for demoralizing the Chinese, for which people knowing the language were needed. Mongolian guerilla bands could be formed in the Gobi Desert for breaking the communication with Kalgan and Beijing. Foreign press in the Far East was to be influenced in favor of Mongolia through unmasking the "arbitrary rule and violence" of the Chinese authorities (Malyševa and Poznanskij 1996, 168–172).

Another telegram sent by Gapon to Karahan and Smirnov in late November 1920 warned that if Ungern took Urga and fortified his positions in Mongolia, he would block the influence of Soviet Russia in Asia. In late January–early February 1921 Ungern's polyethnic force did take Urga. Ungern was treated as a liberator. During a meeting with Mongolian princes and lamas, he voiced his aim to reestablish three monarchies in Asia, Russian, Mongolian, and Manchurian (Qing). Bogd Khan's government was formally reestablished on February 21, 1921, but it now had to share authority with Ungern's armed forces which controlled most of Outer Mongolia by the spring 1921. Ungern and commanders of the Asiatic Cavalry Division were presented with Chin Wang titles and honorable

posts. Bogd Khan ordered to follow Ungern's commands on Mongolian territory (Kuz'min 2004, 85–86, 90–92; RGVA 39454–1–9, 91a–92; Ûzefovič 2010).

Ungern's regime in Outer Mongolia resembled that of Semënov in Transbaikalia: political opponents were persecuted without trial. Sanžimitab Cybiktarov was killed in Urga by Ungern's associates. The Chinese and Jews were massacred. One of the first orders issued by Ungern in Urga on February 12, 1921 allowed persecution of any Jews who did not have notes from Ungern. Ungern ordered the mobilization of the Buryats and Evenks living in Mongolia. The order stated that "parents and relatives of deserters and those who did not obey the order would be executed with confiscation of property." The situation was further aggravated by the retreating Chinese troops which massacred Russian and Mongolian population (Kuz'min 2004, 92–93, 111–112, 379–381; RGVA 185–1–172, 64–64 rev.; RGVA 39454–1–9, 11, 71–71 rev.).

Having occupied Outer Mongolia, Ungern attempted to attract as many allies as possible by sending numerous letters to leaders of various political groups ranging from the Kazakh nationalists and Mongolian lamas to the White Guardsmen and Chinese generals. In these letters he outlined his project of a future Pan-Asian federation, the Middle Mongolian Realm (see Figure I.4 for a rough outline), which would counter the global spread of European ideas, namely socialism and liberalism, and defend pan-Asian goals practically becoming a reincarnation of Genghis Khan's Empire up to the Caspian Sea. Viewing Outer Mongolia as the core of the Middle Mongolian Realm, Ungern expected the Kazakhs, Kalmyks, and Tibetans to join the new state. He claimed that "the light and salvation" could come only from "the Orient" and not from the Europeans who were "spoiled in the very root up to even the young generation, up to maidens" (RGVA 39454–1–9, 16–17, 25–26, 29–30, 84–85 rev., 104–107). In his criticism of Europe, Ungern was close to the Eurasianist movement (Bassin 2003; Bassin *et al.* 2015), but far less sophisticated in argumentation.

The project of reestablishing monarchies globally had to begin with Asia since it was "impossible to think about reestablishing tsars of Europe because of the spoiled European science" and the peoples which had gone "mad under the ideas of socialism." The objective of the Middle Mongolian Realm was to unite all peoples of the "Mongol root" in a very broad sense from Kalmyks in European Russia to Tibetans being kindred to Mongols through race and Buddhism. Although Buddhism was to become the core of the new state's "Asian" identity, several predominantly Muslim groups (Tatars, Bashkirs, and even Afghans) were included. Ungern aspired to end the split between the Buddhists and Muslims (Kuz'min 2004, 145–146, 205, 207, 362, 569; RGVA 39454–1–9, 29–30, 104–107).

The issue of religious duality was a personal one for Ungern. He was said to have become a Buddhist, but at the same time he never abandoned Lutheran Protestant Christianity. It appears that having a religion was more important for him than any particular confession, though in one of the letters he called socialism "Bolshevik religion." Ungern's religious views may be interpreted as a form of religious syncretism, which developed as part of a global albeit heterogeneous

search for new spirituality. Ungern was prone to mysticism and relied on fortune tellers when planning his actions (Bevir 1994; RGVA 39454–1–9, 27–28; Sunderland 2014; Ûzefovič 2010).

Ungern attempted to reach Kazakh, Tibetan, Manchu, and other nationalists, together with those who wanted to reestablish the Qing. It was in fact the "Manchu Khan" who was seen to be the most likely ruler of the Middle Mongolian Realm. In his letters to Chinese generals, Ungern underlined that he opposed Mongolia's secession from China and even suggested that Zhang could become the leader of the movement. He explained that his actions were directed not against the Chinese, but against revolutionaries who had to be eliminated disregarding their national affiliation. He called revolutionaries "nothing but evil spirits in human form" who "destroyed tsars" and then stirred up "brother against brother, son against father bringing only evil to human life." The massacre of Jewish merchants was interpreted as a benefit for the Chinese trade (RGVA 39454–1–9, 16–17, 25–26, 29–30).

In his letters to Buddhist religious leaders and Mongolian princes, Ungern advocated restoration of the Qing explaining that "the peoples of Asia had formed the Middle Kingdom" a long time ago and that "its peoples were best suited together." The alliance of "autonomous states," of "Tibet, Xinjiang, Khalkha, Inner Mongolia, Barga, Manchuria, Shandong" was expected to counterbalance the Chinese in the reestablished empire. He again reaffirmed his commitment to fight revolutionaries, "the champions of evil," including the Chinese revolutionaries under the "Bolshevik" Sun Yat-sen (孫逸仙), for the "truth and goodness" for the "benefit of humanity and light from the Orient" which would soon "glimmer over the rotten Occident and shine over the whole world." In his letters to princes he articulated an identity of "aristocrats" whose only idea and purpose was to reinstall tsars (RGVA 39454–1–9, 18–19, 45–48, 82–83, 97a–98, 104–107).

Analysis of archival materials showed that Ungern had no Japanese support (Kuz'min *et al.* 2009). He also did not coordinate his actions with Semënov, although they had some communication and Semënov promised that Ireland, the USA, and Mexico would recognize independent Mongolia. Ungern criticized Japan, stating that "decomposition" had already started among its "troops and people" and accused Semënov of "abandoning him." Ungern's pan-Asian project found little understanding among the diverse groups he sought to unite, even though some of their leaders supported particular ideas, such as strengthening the Buddhist religion (RGVA 39454–1–9, 23, 29–30, 40, 63–63 rev., 82–83).

Ungern's activities certainly helped the Bolshevik decision-makers with the question of how to export revolution to Mongolia without provoking a war between Soviet Russia and China. On February 19, 1921, the Chinese High Commissioner in Outer Mongolia Chen Yi (陳毅) who had participated in earlier negotiations over its status appealed to Gapon for Soviet military assistance on the Chinese territory within 26.6 km from the international boundary. On February 27, 1921, Gapon responded that the Red Army could not guard the boundary between the FER and the Chinese Republic due to the treaty with the former and suggested to address the government of the FER (Kuz'min 2004, 95–97).

The Bolsheviks placed their hopes on Mongol revolutionaries. In early 1921 Šumâckij reported on the tasks of the Comintern's Executive Committee in Mongolia. They included organizational strengthening of the MPP, which was expected to take control of Mongolia, proclaim its independence, and start the fight against the remaining White Guardsmen and Mongolian princes, and mobilization of all Mongol cadre of the former Russian Empire. On February 25, 1921, Smirnov and Šumâckij informed Čičerin that they decided to provide military aid to the MPP which would proclaim "genuine independence of Mongolia" and made corresponding orders (Malyševa and Poznanskij 1996, 204–205; Murgaev 2005).

The MPP was formally institutionalized on March 1–3, 1921, at a meeting in Troitskosavsk in the house of the representative of NKID. The meeting which was later proclaimed the First Constituent Congress of the MPP united twenty-six people including Žamcarano, his wife Badmažav, and three other Buryats. The meeting elected Danzan and Losol to the Central Committee and adopted a program composed by Žamcarano, Rinčino, and others. The program included appeals to Mongol superethnic identity claiming that "all Mongol tribes" would unite into one state in the future. Sùhbaatar was appointed commander of the Mongolian armed forces and guerrillas. On March 11, 1921, the Central Committee requested the Comintern to recognize the MPP as "a sympathizing party" which was soon done. On March 13 the Provisional People's Government of Mongolia under Čagdaržav was formed in Troitskosavsk. Rinčino was appointed its representative in Soviet Russia (Bazarov and Žabaeva 2008, 203–207).

NKID favored a possible expedition against Ungern in Mongolia up to Urga itself, but opposed the participation of the FER due to the implicit anti-Japanese objectives of the operation. Smirnov and Šumâckij considered that in view of the establishment of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Government the expedition to Urga was ill-timed and that it would be better to attract Ungern closer to the international boundary, defeat him there, and let the Mongols pursue him. On March 18, 1921, the troops under Sùhbaatar took Maimaicheng which became the capital of the Mongolian Revolution after the Central Committee of the MPP and the new government moved there (Bazarov and Žabaeva 2008, 208; Malyševa and Poznanskij 1996, 210). According to Smirnov and Šumâckij, the new independent federative Mongol state would include Tannu Uryankhai. Uryankhai was expected to become the instrument of Soviet influence and could secede if "the international situation" developed unfavorably for the Bolsheviks. Smirnov and Šumâckij claimed that no formal recognition of Mongolia was needed (Malyševa and Poznanskij 1996, 208–209).

The same month Bogd Khan's government issued a note to Sovnarkom. Referring to the "compassion the government of Great Russia felt towards autonomous states" and to the support it provided to "self-determination of peoples," it suggested that "the Russian troops hostile to the Russian Government" should not hamper friendly relations between Russia and Mongolia and invited Soviet representatives to Urga for signing treaties. Soon after the first note was sent, Bogd Khan's government found out about the formation of the Mongolian

People's Government in the Baikal region and drafted another note. The note contained regrets that the Mongols "within Russia and along the boundary" were subject to propagation of ideas which were "absolutely unusual for the Mongol people" and would "bring only harm and create enmity" among the Mongols. The People's Government was called "pseudo government" created by mad Mongols who "forgot the religion" and became enemies of the Mongol people (RGVA 39454–1–9, 37–39, 41–42). On March 28, 1921, Bogd Khan's Ministry of Home Affairs issued a circular against the Provisional People's Government. It claimed that the actions of the MPP would lead to destruction of state, religion, and nation of Mongolia which made it "kind of an ally" to the Chinese Republic (Kuz'min *et al.* 2009, 155–156).

The response to the first note composed by Karahan claimed that no relations with any Mongol organizations in Urga could be established while the White Guard was represented in them. Sovnarkom welcomed the future liberation of the Mongol people, but stated that the "true aims of the counterrevolutionaries which surrounded the Urga Mongol organization" were "absolutely contrary" to the aims of the Soviet government and advised to get rid of the White Guard (Kuz'min 2004, 106).

Bogd Khan's government attempted to reach the Chinese government. In a note composed in early March 1921, it acknowledged the "sovereignty of Great China," claimed that military operations against the forces under the Manchurian general Guo Songling (郭松龄) were not an attempt to secede from China, and deemed presence of Russian and any other troops in Mongolia undesirable. Besides, Bogd Gegen communicated with Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama supporting Tibetan self-government (Kuz'min 2004, 114; RGVA 39454–1–9, 34–36).

Ungern's success in Outer Mongolia and his plans to invade the Baikal region caused major resentment in the FER. Apart from being an international danger, he posed an internal threat. The situation in the Transbaikal Region was described as critical. "Kulak reactionary" and "Old Believer peasant" population of Baikalia formed the Peasant Union which was expected to win the elections to the Constituent Assembly and attempted to establish connections to the "reactionary Buryat-Mongol elements." Peasant riots were reported in the Troitskosavsk area (Kuz'min 2004, 111–112; RGVA 39454–1–9, 25–26).

Even though foreign-policy and military argumentation for creation of the FER prevails in literature (Bazarov 2011, 40), the internal political situation in eastern Siberia was also unfavorable for the immediate establishment of Soviet government. The secret service of the FER reported in November 1920 that many villagers in the Baikal region, even those who were not against the revolutionary authorities, were hostile towards the Bolsheviks. The people of Navaya Bryan, for instance, considered them "Antichrists." The Hungarians from the detachments which struggled against desertion were especially hated, since there were around 200 deserters in the village. A peasant informant who had traveled from the Chikoy area reported that most of the people along the way were against the Bolsheviks and claimed that in case of mobilization the population

would riot. At the same time there were many armed deserters who attacked and robbed the Buryats. The Semeiskie were reported to be especially hostile towards the Bolsheviks. Orthodox priests refused to perform religious rites for all those who sympathized with the RCP(b), whereas Old Believer priests propagated the idea of a monarchist revolt. In December 1920 a priest in the Verkhneudinsk cathedral criticized the existing government and claimed that everyone had forgotten God and His holy church. The decline of faith among the Russian people was said to be "bad and criminal." In Kuytun villagers opposed vaccination because of the local priest's agitation. According to the report, the priest was interested in the material gains for the funeral services which brought him large incomes of flour and eggs during smallpox epidemics (RGASPI 372–1–33, 9–10 rev., 71–72).

Some lamas were said to support Semënov and campaign against the FER and the Bolsheviks. In September 1920 one of the datsans hosted a meeting which resolved to appeal to Semënov. The secret service estimated that the majority of the Buryat population opposed the FER. Some Buryats favored Semënov's rule. At the same time the secret service was unable to tell precisely what was discussed among the Buryats due to the poor knowledge of their language. The Balagad opposition diminished after October 1920 and in February 1921 most of them, except Lubsan Samdan Cydenov and two other leaders, were released from custody (RGASPI 372–1–33, 33; Očiržapov n.d., 34–35).

In order to minimize public discontent the Bolsheviks allowed democratic development of the FER. The Bolsheviks did not gain a majority of the votes at the elections to the Constituent Assembly, with peasant representatives winning the elections, but many of them were disguised Communists (Muhačev 2003, 394). During the Constituent Assembly, which opened on February 12, 1921, the secret service reported that some people were expecting Ungern to attack the FER. The Cossacks of the borderland viewed him as their savior. Rumors spread that he took Troitskosavsk and that Japan planned to fight against Soviet Russia. In their proclamation to the people of Russia Ungern's forces used different notions if compared to Ungern's letters, appealing mainly to the Bolshevik threat to material wellbeing and urging that "no state would trade with Soviet Russia." Many peasants had their hopes with the Constituent Assembly expecting "comforts and different freedoms from it; naturally each group" understood "freedom their own way" (RGVA 185–1–174, 32–55 rev.; RGVA 39454–1–9, 48–48 rev.)

By the middle of March 1921 Ungern's positions had considerably weakened among the Mongols who were terrified with his violent regime. All Jews and most Russians in Urga were killed. The MPP became increasingly popular. Even Bogd Khan was seen as a possible ally against Ungern whose forces without the Mongols included only some 2,100 people (Kuz'min 2004, 151–152, 174).

On April 27, 1921, the Constituent Assembly of the Far East adopted the Fundamental Law (Constitution) of the Far Eastern Republic. The FER was institutionalized as a sovereign democratic state in which the supreme authority belonged to the people. The parliament, People's Assembly elected through universal, equal, and direct vote by secret ballot, became the supreme body of the

new state. The Government of the FER was the supreme body between the sessions of the People's Assembly. A further executive body, the Council of Ministers, was established. The constitution granted the citizens of the FER political rights and freedoms. All citizens irrespective of their gender, occupation, ethnicity, religion, and political affiliation were proclaimed equal before the law. The constitution revoked social estates which meant that the Cossacks as a legal group ceased to exist in the Baikal region. Church was separated from the state. A multi-party system was established. Although private property for land, mineral wealth, forests, and water, as well as large industrial facilities was abolished, private property for means of production and private trade was allowed. The Constitutional Assembly proclaimed itself the First People's Assembly of the FER and elected the Government of the FER under the presidency of Krasnoŝëkov. The Council of Ministers was created later under the chairmanship of Nikiforov (Osnovnoj zakon 1921; Vasilevskij 2013).

The constitution of the FER granted all indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities on the territory of the republic the right to self-determination. It proclaimed Autonomy of the Buryat-Mongol Nationality (narodnost'). The territory populated by the Buryat-Mongol people (narod) was singled out as the Buryat-Mongol Autonomous Region (BMAR). Within its boundaries, to be determined by later legislation, the regional population was autonomous in the "sphere of court organization, administrative economic, and cultural national life." The parliament, Regional Assembly of Deputies, could issue regional legislation within its competence and formed the executive body, Regional Administration, which implemented regional and state laws and regulations within the autonomous region (Osnovnoj zakon 1921, 26–27). After four years of political struggle Buryat autonomy was finally established. An important role in establishing the autonomy was played by Šumâckij who held negotiations with the government of the FER on the matter during the Constituent Assembly (RGASPI 495–152–8, 11).

Satisfying both agrarian socialist and nationalist aspirations of the population was a way to mitigate the "external" danger to the FER posed by Ungern. On May 21, 1921, Ungern published an order to "all Russian detachments" in Siberia, officially beginning his northern expedition. The order appealed to the Russian Empire which was weakened by the "revolutionary storm from the Occident" and destroyed by liberal intellectuals in 1905 and 1917. The Bolsheviks were described as enemies of cultural diversity who had finished the destruction of Russia. The only way to rebuild Russia was to submit to the Tsar, the "lawful master of the Russian land," Emperor Mihail Aleksandrovič.[2] Claiming to be under Semënov's command, Ungern mentioned his success in liberating Mongolia from "Chinese Revolutionaries Bolsheviks" and claimed that Semënov would attack from the Ussuri region in June 1921. The order then listed the plan of attack, most of which concentrated on the Baikal region (Kuz'min 2004, 169–173).

Ungern's advance instigated a new wave of violence. One of Ungern's Buryat detachments arrived at the Atsa Somon and killed several people for cooperation with the Bolsheviks. The soldiers which attacked Ungern's men also killed and

robbed Buryats (Nacagdorž 2010, 133–134). Local officials stimulated Buryat pogroms. The chairman of the Troitskosavsk District People's Revolutionary Committee claimed in Okino-Klyuchi on June 15, 1921, that Radnažab Bimbaev provoked collaboration with Ungern. This statement was a signal to anti-Buryat violence in the Chikoy Aymak. Bimbaev was arrested by Okino-Klyuchi guerillas in Troitskosavsk, taken to Okino-Klyuchi, tortured, and killed in the woods. His guilt was later disproved, since he had provided valuable information on Ungern's movements to the military authorities of the FER. In Novodesyatnikovo three partisans escorting six Buryats shot them on the way. Another group of partisans surrounded Tsakir, robbed the people there, and arrested nine of them. Two were murdered immediately, whereas other seven were taken to the woods to be shot and sabered. Dozens of Buryat civilians including many intellectuals and officials were murdered in the Chikoy Aymak in 1921. Much livestock and other property was stolen (GARB 476–1–72, 50–50 rev.)

In June 1921 the Fifth Army of the RSFSR, the People's Revolutionary Army of the FER, and the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Army defeated Ungern's detachments in the Baikal region and continued their advance on Urga. In early July 1921 the joined forces were welcomed in Urga. On June 9–11, 1921, the old government transmitted authority in Outer Mongolia to the People's Revolutionary Government under Bodoo. Bogd Khan remained constitutional monarch. On July 12, 1921, the new government appealed to Sovnarkom asking that Soviet troops remain in Outer Mongolia until the "common enemy" was defeated. General Lieutenant von Ungern-Sternberg was captured in August 1921 after his remaining troops rioted. On September 16, 1921, after interrogations and trial in Novonikolaevsk, Ungern was executed (Kuz'min 2004, 175–263). Prominent Soviet diplomats acknowledged that Ungern's conduct in Mongolia gave way to its alliance with the Bolsheviks (Kuz'min 2004, 264).

The operations against Ungern brought Soviet military to Tannu Uryankhai. The representative of Sibrevkom there, Innokentij Saf'ânov, however, opposed the idea of making Uryankhai part of Mongolia and supported regional self-determination aspirations. On June 16, 1921, Sibbûro resolved that Tuvan self-determination was part of Mongolia's liberation, but left the territorial issue open. During a meeting with Mongolian representatives on July 1, 1921, Čičerin denounced Soviet claims to Uryankhai, but did not support the idea of uniting Tuva and Mongolia explicitly. Saf'ânov's opposition irritated his political opponents and on August 11, 1921, he was recalled by the Far Eastern Secretariat as soon as a new representative of NKID arrived there. On Šumâckij's initiative Saf'ânov was released from the Revolutionary Military Council of the Fifth Army. Saf'ânov nevertheless reaffirmed his support for Tuvan nationalists. On August 13, 1921, the All-Tuvan Constituent Congress assembled in Sug-Bazhy under the presidency of Moŋguš Buân-Badyrgy, a Tuvan politician, and on August 14, 1921, proclaimed independence of the Tannu-Tuva Republic. Khem-Beldyr, former Belotsarsk, became the capital of the new state (Mollerov 2005, 118–124).

By late August 1921 the Baikal region became a borderland of five different states: the RSFSR, the FER, Mongolia, Tannu-Tuva, and the Chinese Republic

(Figure 6.1). The three new states were associated with the Bolsheviks and the Comintern. Mongolia and Tannu-Tuva manifested the first success in exporting revolution to Asia, even though the independence of the latter was not planned by the Comintern.

In order to avoid a war with Japan, the Soviet government agreed to the idea of forming a formally independent state in eastern Siberia. The concept of a Far Eastern "buffer" had been circulating in regional discourse for some time. It was used by Rinčino in relation to the independent Mongolian state, but in the interpretation of the SRs and later the Bolsheviks it was to become a political buffer. Such a buffer, the Far Eastern Republic, was formed in late 1920 as a result of global power relations in the Baikal region. Despite the appeals of Buryat politicians, the new international boundary divided the Baikal region making the Buryat-Mongols citizens of two different states. By early 1921, the institution of state was recreated.

The participation of the RCP(b) and the Comintern in the interactions in the Baikal region and Outer Mongolia indicated their interest in the two regions which could become the Asian outposts of the World Revolution. The connection drawn between the continuing changes in the former Russian Empire and the global anti-colonial sentiments watered down the boundary between domestic and foreign policy, between the international politics in which the Soviet state participated and the transnational politics featuring the Comintern as a global political party.

The Bolsheviks were not the only ones who attempted to sponsor a pan-Asian unification. Ungern's advance to Urga epitomized the project of united Mongolia. The armed forces behind the Dauria government finally made it to Outer Mongolia. Ungern inherited the armed force of united Mongolia and attempted to reintroduce the project in its largest form ever discussed or rumored. Ungern's plan proved inferior to the Bolshevik efforts to revolutionize Mongolia. With the support of the Soviet and FER troops the MPP managed to establish control over Outer Mongolia.

Another new state, the Far Eastern Republic, manifested itself as a test site for the socialist ideas promoted between the February and October Revolutions. The new republic which was legitimized through the Constitutional Assembly and run by socialists met the interests of the peasant majority which favored the revolution, but was hostile towards the Bolsheviks. Besides, it granted the Buryat population of the eastern Baikal region autonomy in 1921.

Notes

1 They were Solijn Danzan (1885–1924), Dogsomyn Bodoo (1895–1922), Dansranbilègijn Dogsom (1884–1941), Dar'žavyn Losol (1890–1940), Dambyn Čagdaržav (1880–1922), Horloogijn Čojbalsan (1895–1952), and Damdiny Sùhbaatar (1893–1923).
2 Mihail Aleksandrovič Romanov, the younger brother of Nicholas II, was killed in 1918.

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7 The Buryat autonomy in transcultural governance, 1921–1924

7.1 The Buryat-Mongol autonomous regions

The two states separated by the Selenga River and Lake Baikal, the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic and the Far Eastern Republic, had considerable differences in their political systems. The RSFSR was a centralized state ruled by a top-down system of soviets and executive (revolutionary) committees controlled by the Bolsheviks. Even though in the FER the government had wide authority between sessions of the parliament, multi-party system and political freedoms made the buffer state more democratic. In the economic space, the two states drew closer together after the New Economic Policy substituted War Communism in the RSFSR in March 1921. The restoration of the market and reintroduction of tax in money was caused by major peasant disturbances which spread from the summer of 1920, unrests among industrial workers from early 1921, and a major anti-Soviet uprising in Kronstadt in March 1921. With all major banking institutions, large industry, and land remaining in public property, the system became known as "state capitalism" (Davies *et al.* 1993, 8–9). The Constituent Assembly introduced a similar system in the FER.

Burnarrevkom changed its name and regional focus turning into a body of the Far Eastern Buryats. In late April 1921 the Central Committee of the Buryat-Mongols of Eastern Siberia (Central'nyj komitet burât-mongolov Vostočnoj Sibiri, Burceka) was created as a provisional cultural all-national body representing "common interests of the working Buryat-Mongols of the RSFSR and the FER" before the corresponding governments. On May 1, 1921, it was approved by Sibrevkom. The new transboundary authority, supported by the Far Eastern Secretariat and Boris Šumâckij, included two Comintern employees Cyben Žamcarano and Èlbek-Dorži Rinčino joined by Mihej Erbanov, a member of the RCP(b), the head of the Land-Use Department of the Irkutsk Provincial Executive Committee, and a cartographer by training. Matvej Amagaev became one of the two probationary members. The objectives of the new body were to "serve the cultural national needs" and guide "political upbringing of the masses." It was supposed to develop a project of Buryat-Mongol autonomy and implement it by convening an all-Buryat workmen congress (GARF 1318–4–1, 5; RGASPI 495–152–8, 33–34). Rinčino and Žamcarano moved to Mongolia in the latter

half of the year. Erbanov became chairman of Burceka making it closely associated with the Bolsheviks (GARF 1318–4–1, 8).

On April 27, 1921, the very same day the new transboundary body requested approval of Sibrevkom and planned to contact the Buryat population of the FER, the Buryat deputies at the Constituent Assembly of the Far East (Gombožab Cybikov, Baârto Vampilon, Pëtr Dambinov, and twelve others) proclaimed themselves the Buryat-Mongol Congress, formed the provisional administration of the BMAR (Vremennoe Upravlenie Burât-mongol'skoj avtonomnoj oblasti, Burmonavtoupr) instead of Burnarrevkom, and set the elections to the Buryat-Mongol People's National Assembly on July 1, 1921. The new administration was headed by Dambinov (GARB 278–1–2, 4–5, 31 rev.)

Addressing the Buryat-Mongol population in a proclamation, the Buryat Congress defined the "full autonomy" granted to the Buryat-Mongol nationality (narodnost') by the constitution of the FER as the right to absolutely self-reliant and independent existence in the sphere of organizing court and in the administrative economic and cultural national life. It acknowledged that this right was won by "severe tests accompanied with floods of blood and enormous moral and material losses," but the sacrifices were compensated by the "brilliant successes of the achieved victory." The Buryat-Mongol people (narod) gained the opportunity to "live independently and develop the natural way which was determined by historical and everyday conditions." Its destiny was now in the hands of the people and it was up to "its organized mind" if it became "free and independent" or again fell "under domination of a different people" (GARB 278–1–2, 31).

Burceka did not give up its claims on both states, but the geographic region in its name, eastern Siberia, gradually became associated with the territory west of Baikal. Burceka became the representative of the Irkutsk Buryats and in the middle of May 1921 it decided to send a delegation of Erbanov, Žamcarano, Mihail Atanov, and Aleksej Ubugunov to Moscow to resolve the issue of separating the Buryats of the RSFSR into an autonomous region (RGASPI 495–152–8, 39).

The authority of both bodies was challenged already in April 1921 when the Balagads renewed their activities. Their strategy changed. Instead of speaking of the theocratic state they now campaigned for leaving the autonomy and uniting with the neighboring Baikal Region under Russian authorities. The latter were said to support the anti-autonomous movement and even to make the Balagads hope that they would release Cydenov from prison. Burmonavtoupr protested before the Ministry of Internal Affairs and demanded to stop the intervention of the Baikal regional authorities into the affairs of the BMAR (GARB 485–1–13, 15–15 rev.).

Further relations between the authorities of the Baikal Region and the BMAR proved tense. Buryat self-government bodies again suffered from the lack of practical recognition despite the constitution. At the same time, the homogeneous ethnically exclusive understanding of the Buryat-Mongol nation inherited from previous Buryat agencies demanded imposition of ethnic boundary on other spaces. The rough outline of the BMAR (Figure 6.1) featured four disconnected aymaks. None had integral territory and excluded all

non-Buryat population. The strip holding and continuing land seizures undertaken by Semeiskie and other peasants made construction of unequivocal boundaries in the space of land use hardly realizable. Apart from that, the government of the FER was reluctant to adopt regulations on the autonomy and its territory (GARB 477–1–26, 41 rev.)

In late May 1921, about the same time when Ungern attacked from Mongolia, an uprising in Vladivostok led to the emergence of a new government, the Provisional Amur Government, in the Russian Far East. The success of the White Guard strengthened the positions of Japan. On August 26, 1921, Japanese representatives began negotiations with the representatives of the FER in Dairen (大连). In exchange for recognition of the FER and evacuation from its territory, Japan demanded major privileges and concessions which the FER was not ready to grant. While awaiting the outcome of the Washington Naval Conference which began on November 12, 1921, without the RSFSR and the FER representatives, the Japanese delegation broke negotiations on December 12, 1921. The Japanese expected the White Guard to advance. On December 22, 1921, the army of the Vladivostok government took Khabarovsk. Semënov's former troops participated in the operations, but he himself was ousted from command and had to leave the territory of the former Russian Empire (Dukes and Brennan 2002; Novikov 2005, 252–253).

In view of the unfavorable international conditions, raging communal violence, and continuing land seizures the government of the FER reverted to the BMAR in late summer. Under the auspices of the Ministry of National Affairs the government granted political amnesty to all Buryats who cooperated with Semënov and Ungern. On August 18, 1921, the government promulgated the Law on Provisional Administration of the Buryat-Mongol Autonomous Region which legalized Burmonavtoupr and defined the Aga, Barguzin, Khori, and Chikoy aymaks consisting of twenty-four khoshuns as the territory under its jurisdiction. Burmonavtoupr was granted the right to resolve issues related to the duties (such as providing carts for public needs) and other "misunderstandings caused by strip holding" in agreement with the corresponding Baikal and Transbaikal regional administrations. It could also administer the supply of land under the republican Ministry of Agriculture. The arguments which could not be settled were to be transmitted to the Minister of National Affairs. The same day the Central Government Land Commission for settling major land-use issues and drawing the boundaries of the BMAR was created. Further extraordinary commissions included the Khori Commission for investigating land seizures in the Khori Aymak; the Aga Commission for addressing complaints from Russian villagers about cattle seizures by Ungern's Buryat associates and for investigating the pogroms by the "guerrillas of the People's Army" which involved the murder of over eighty people and plunder of two datsans; the Chikoy Commission for investigating the pogroms in the Chikoy Aymak done by neighboring peasants claiming to be guerrillas; and the Mongol Commission for fostering remigration of the Buryats to the FER (GARB 278–1–19, 72 rev.–73; GARB 477–1–1, 37–38).

The pogroms and warfare in the Chikoy Aymak hampered the elections to the National Assembly of the BMAR. In the Khori Aymak, the Balagads contributed to their failure. The assembly was nevertheless convened on October 12, 1921. The first National Assembly[1] under Vampilon's presidency worked until November 3, 1921. It elected Amagaev as chairman of the Presidium of Burmonavtoupr, heard a report by the Buryat-Mongol Department of the Ministry of National Affairs on the named commissions, and discussed a report by the Central Government Land Commission (GARB 278–1–19, 58–59 rev., 72–73 rev., 131).

The land commission reported that eliminating strip holding and demarcating boundaries in those areas where land tensions were especially severe (in the Khori Aymak) were the primary objectives. Restoration of pre-1917 land ownership was deemed "hopeless." The territory of the BMAR was to be made of the land in actual use of the Buryats as of 1917, all unsettled settler lots, and public lands. The shortage of arable land among the peasants was claimed to be the main reason for seizures (GARB 278–1–19, 131–133 rev., 136 rev.) The report read:

> When determining the boundaries of the autonomous region and eliminating strip holding, the lack of land among the adjacent Russian population will have to be considered one way or another, and in some cases the Buryat population will have to make some fair concessions of their lands in favor of the Russian population, because without this condition one cannot count on the success in establishing boundaries … [and] settling down land-use relations between the Russian and Buryat-Mongol population. But one has to strive for that by all means, even at the cost of sacrifices and concessions on the part of the Buryat people, and the sooner the land issue is settled, the greater the gain of the Buryat people will be. The actual establishment of the boundary of the Buryat-Mongol Autonomous Region, that is the formal delimitation of its territory from neighboring lands with preparation of legal documents, has to be viewed as the last point of the extensive in volume and serious in substance issue of settling land-use relations between the Buryat-Mongols and Russian population.
>
> (GARB 278–1–19, 133 rev.)

The National Assembly acknowledged that eliminating strip holding was essential since it stimulated further seizures, but refused to acknowledge the lack of arable land among the peasants as the only reason pointing at their "aspiration to exploit" the Buryats. The resolution on the report added the occupational dimension to the discussion claiming that strip holding would make the Buryat people remain livestock breeders forever: "the lack of sufficient arable land" would "set the insuperable obstacle to the evolution of the Buryat-Mongol economy fixing it forever in the contemporary nomadic state." Even if seizures stopped, the strip holding would lead to the legal exploitation of the Buryat lands by the economically stronger Russians ultimately resulting in the loss of identity and extinction

of the Buryat-Mongol people. The National Assembly was ready to make concessions "in favor of the Russian population in need of land" by allotment "along the boundaries of the autonomous lands" disregarding sometimes the interests of particular groups of the population of the BMAR for the benefit of the whole people (GARB 278–1–19, 143–143 rev.)

Šumâckij played an important role in the implementation of self-determination in the western Baikal region. He reported to the Board of the People's Commissariat of Nationalities (Narkomnac) on June 7, 1921, and suggested establishing an autonomous region for the Buryat-Mongol people in the RSFSR. The board supported Šumâckij and resolved to draft a project of the region with the center in Irkutsk to be discussed by a commission of representatives of Sibrevkom, Narkomnac, and other commissariats. Atanov was appointed representative of the Buryat-Mongols before the central government (GARB 477–1–28, 21).

The autonomy in the western Baikal region was discussed at district and aymak congresses of soviets which elected delegates to the Congress of the Buryat-Mongols of the RSFSR. The dispatch of Žamcarano and Rinčino to Mongolia consolidated the positions of Buryat Bolsheviks in both parts of the Baikal region. On July 28, 1921, two of them joined Burmonavtoupr on the Dal'bûro's initiative (Varnavskij *et al.* 2003). About the time when Amagaev was elected chairman of the Buryat organization east of Baikal, the Buryat congress assembled in Irkutsk.

The congress working on October 28–November 5, 1921, proclaimed the Buryat-Mongol Autonomous Region in the RSFSR, discussed its boundaries, and formed the Revolutionary Committee (Burrevkom) under Erbanov's presidency to administer the future autonomy. When discussing the land-use issue, the congress criticized the lack of statistical and economic research and disregard of the economic conditions of the Buryat people during the settlement and land management policies of the Tsarist government which brought about strip holding and aggravation of tensions between the Buryats and peasants. The congress resolved that settlement of the settler lots cut out from the Buryat lands had to be stopped and that the lands which were given to the Cossacks within the previous ten years had to be returned to the Buryats (GARF 1318–1–52, 1–3).

The congress discussed the boundaries of the aymaks which were drafted by a special commission under the Irkutsk Provincial Executive Committee created in the first half of 1921 for dividing the province into districts and aymaks. The construction of boundaries in the western Baikal region relied on principles which were different from those used east of the lake. The commission aimed at "economic sustainability" for future units and at eliminating strip patterns in the administrative space. Creating "solid, cohesive, and rounded" territories, it eliminated "economic and administrative chaos" which "reigned locally." It still attempted to keep some "ethnic homogeneity" making the Buryats at least two thirds of the population in the aymaks. Russians were included in the aymaks and Buryats were to join districts since administrative, land use, and economic structuration allegedly could not be done without an integral territory (GARB 477–1–55, 8–8 rev.) The Buryat-Mongolian autonomy in the RSFSR consisted

of three disconnected parts, but within their boundaries the territory was integral (Figure 6.1).

Boundary construction in the RSFSR followed the principles adopted by VCIK in March 1921. The new administrative division of Russia was to be based on concentration of industry, concentration of industrial crops, economic gravitation of smaller districts, direction and characteristics of communication lines (railways, waterways, and highways), population, and national composition. Industry and economic gravitation were the main principles of boundary construction. "Proletarian industrial centers" and trade centers were to become district capitals. In the regions without industry and communication lines population density was determinative for the boundaries: the higher the density the smaller the territory (GARB 477–1–28, 36, 39 rev.–41 rev., 43).

Boundary construction in the RSFSR did not imply ethnic homogeneity. Explaining the consequences of imposing economic boundaries on other spaces, namely leaving some 18,000 Buryats out of the autonomy and including many Russians into it, Burrevkom claimed that autonomies were created not for "a new national oppression of a new minority by a new majority" but for autonomous economic development of regional units according to natural and economic conditions and peculiarities which emerged historically (GARB 477–1–55, 8). Boundary construction was, therefore, about structuring economic entanglements rather than imposing barriers originating from social categorization. The principle behind the Buryat autonomy in the RSFSR resembled the Siberian Regionalist framings of economic autonomy for particular regions, which were also featured in Iosif Stalin's initial project (Stalin 1946).

In the same explanation Burrevkom noted the homogeneity of the political space claiming that "in the entire Soviet federation, whether in a province or autonomous republic or autonomous region, the workers and peasants led by their ideological vanguard the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks)" were in charge. Hence "the line of conduct of the Soviet government throughout the whole federation" was

> the same and equally directed at reviving the economic life, raising the cultural level of the population, and developing its political consciousness both in a Russian province and in any autonomy being applied to local conditions and local features everywhere.
>
> (GARB 477–1–55, 8)

The so-called principle of "democratic centralism" was to be implemented throughout the whole of the Soviet federation disregarding any regional or ethnic differences. Decision-making in the RSFSR was collegial, but it was democratic only formally and involved dictate of the party and central authorities of state, regional, and provincial levels. The boundaries drafted by the Irkutsk provincial executive body were accepted by the Buryat-Mongol congress with some minor amendments to be approved by central authorities (GARF 1318–1–211, 154–154 rev.; GARF 1318–4–1, 34, 46).

On January 9, 1922, VCIK ordered the creation of the Autonomous Mongol-Buryat Region (AMBR) consisting of five aymaks (Tunka, Ekhirit-Bulagat, Bokhan, Alar, and Selenga) within the boundaries "determined by Sibrevkom and representatives of the Buryat-Mongol people." Until the first congress of soviets, all authority was granted to Burrevkom in Irkutsk. The People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs and Narkomnac were to create a mixed commission to resolve issues during detailed boundary construction. On January 25, 1922, Sibrevkom adopted the boundaries proposed by Erbanov with some alterations. All organizations and companies, excluding food authorities, on the territory of the AMBR were to be transferred to Burrevkom with all equipment, materials, and staff as of January 1, 1922. All delimitation issues were to be resolved by Burrevkom and the Irkutsk Provincial Executive Committee (GARB 477–1–28, 24).

Although the Irkutsk authorities proved to be reluctant in resolving some delimitation issues (transition of the Zabituy coal mines, for instance, dragged on until 1923) (GARF 1318–1–269, 45), the boundaries of the AMBR in administrative, economic, and other spaces were settled much faster than the boundaries of the BMAR. The democratic decision-making in the FER proved to be beneficial for the Russian majority. Most tensions were addressed through the prism of "unfair" division of land between the Russians and Buryats and resolved in favor of the former. Most illegal land seizures were legalized. Vampilon, who was appointed Buryat representative in the FER land commission, reported in July 1922 that the commission acted subjectively and stimulated further land seizures. He equated occupational and ethnic identities claiming that the seizures originated from the "collision of two economic cultures," the intensive peasant farming culture and the "backward Buryat" livestock breeding culture, and suggested stimulating transition of the Buryats to farming. Nikolaj Koz'min, a prominent Siberian Regionalist and Burmonavtoupr's consultant on economic matters, was requested to work out a plan of Buryat resettlement from the lots "cut off from the common Buryat territory" and its edges to the centers of Buryat districts "stopping up those pores through which the non-Buryat economic element" infiltrated "the Buryat centers" (GARB 278–1–174, 80–88 rev.; GARB 477–1–3, 2; GARB 477–1–26, 154 rev–155, 157).

The four specialized commissions in the FER were unable to resolve tensions leaving violators unpunished. In the spring of 1922 the organic law on the BMAR was still pending. The FER government could not reconcile the interests of the Buryat and non-Buryat population and define autonomy making Burmonavtoupr postpone the second session of the National Assembly (GARB 278–1–3, 22–22 rev.; GARB 477–1–26, 41 rev.)

The National Assembly was able to convene only on June 18, 1922, in Dodo-Aninskoe in the Khori Aymak. The resolution which followed Amagaev's report featured many Bolshevik ideas. The peasants were called the ruling class of the FER which influenced the government through taxes and a petty bourgeois class which did not abandon colonial sentiments. The "psychologically persistent great-power chauvinism of parts of the peasant population" influenced the anti-

Buryat policies of local bodies. The absence of a coherent territory was defined as a further problem. The solutions proposed by the resolution included equalization of land use among the Buryats and stimulation of their transition to crop farming (GARB 278–1–118, 2, 19, 20, 22, 32).

A comprehensive report on the BMAR prepared in 1922 was extremely critical towards the "democratic principles" of the FER which did not allow implementation of an administrative territorial autonomy of the Buryats in the eastern Baikal region leaving the BMAR an "exterritorial unit with exclusively Buryat-Mongol population." The lack of territorial integrity, compromise resolution of tensions, and lack of "discipline" hampered the creation of autonomy. Democratic centralism which would violate the constitution of the FER was suggested to be the only solution. The reforms undertaken under Amagaev involved submission of the autonomy to the RCP(b), substitution of several local elected self-government bodies with appointed revolutionary committees, and introduction of compulsory public service for indigenous intellectuals (GARF 1318–1–52, 9).

The failure of the FER in providing autonomy, Bolshevik leadership, and the impossibility of ensuring ethnic homogeneity contributed to the disillusionment of many people in the BMAR with democracy. At the same time, one cannot call Burmonavtoupr's early policies democratic. Imposing ethnic boundaries on all other spaces, Burmonavtoupr began suppressing Khilgana and Balagad opposition before Amagaev arrived from the Irkutsk Province. Both movements were called anti-national. Their participants were denied the right to non-ethnic self-determination and elected self-government bodies in the Khori Aymak were disbanded due to Balagad influence. The Balagad opposition was fostered by the intention to use the Kizhinga valley as the destination for Buryat resettlement which threatened local economic interests and clan identity. The Balagads uniting over 9,000 people also complained about excessive taxation within the autonomy. Besides, Burmonavtoupr engaged in violence under Rinčino's brother Èrdèni. Cydenov was exiled from the Baikal region and supposedly died in 1922. On Hambo Lama's approval, Burmonavtoupr closed the Chesansky Datsan which was the religious center of the Balagads, with Hambo Lama himself claiming before the second session of the National Assembly that there could be "no unlimited freedom, even freedom of faith." The Khilgana group was made to join the autonomy by the FER government; Èrdèni Rinčino telegraphed to the area that their "persistence was pointless" (N. V. Cyrempilov 2007; GARB 278–1–118, 26–27, 29–29 rev.; GARB 477–1–1, 44–45; GARB 477–1–26, 157; RGASPI 372–1–210, 47–47 rev., 50–50 rev.).

On October 21, 1922, the government of the FER finally promulgated the Regulations on Autonomous Administration of the Buryat-Mongol Region. The BMAR was proclaimed an integral part of the FER and was to be governed based on the general legislation of the republic. The bodies of the BMAR were recognized as bodies of state government. The parliament, the Regional Assembly of Deputies, gained broad legislative competence, but became subordinate not only to the FER parliament, but also to the Council of Ministers and the

Government which could revoke regional laws and regulations (GARB 278–1–55, 50–52 rev.; GARB 476–1–74, 103).

The end of struggle for legal recognition was overshadowed by major shifts in larger political spaces. In early 1922, the Bolsheviks consolidated their positions in the FER by substituting Krasnoŝëkov with a more loyal Nikolaj Matveev; Vasilij Blûher became the new War Minister; SRs and Mensheviks were removed from the People's Assembly. The Washington Naval Conference ended on February 6, 1922, unfavorably for Japan. Together with the internal opposition to the intervention it fostered the withdrawal of Japanese troops. The same month the People's Revolutionary Army launched an offensive against the White Guard. On February 12, 1922, it defeated the White Guardsmen near Volochaevka and took Khabarovsk on February 14, 1922 (Novikov 2005, 253; see also Goldstein and Maurer 1994; Hara 1989).

The Japanese had to renew the Dairen Conference in late March 1922 giving up the harshest conditions, but on April 16, 1922, they again broke off the negotiations. In the meantime the Soviet government strengthened its positions in the global political space at the Genoa Conference which convened on April 10–May 19, 1922. The defeat in Volochaevka Battle led to the collapse of the Vladivostok Government. On October 24, 1922, the remaining Japanese troops left Vladivostok and on October 25, 1922, it was taken by the People's Revolutionary Army. On November 14, 1922, the People's Assembly of the FER proclaimed Soviet rule in the Far East and pled for joining the RSFSR. On November 15, 1922, VCIK sanctioned annexation of the FER (Hara 1989; Novikov 2005, 253–254; White 2002). All elected bodies of the BMAR were substituted with appointed Revolutionary Committees under the Revolutionary Committee of the BMAR featuring Amagaev, Filipp Pavlov, Kuz'ma Il'in, and others (GARB 477–1–26, 224–225).

7.2 The Buryat-Mongol Autonomous Republic and its transnational goals

In its resolutions the constituent congress of the AMBR appealed to the "oppressed peoples of the whole world," criticized the "aspirations of the world bourgeoisie," and acknowledged the "strengthening of the revolutionary movement in the whole world and especially among the oppressed peoples of the colonial countries." It claimed that the Soviet government was the only authority "capable of liberating the oppressed nations" and had already successfully united the "fraternal peoples under the leadership of the vanguard of the World Revolution, Russian workers and peasants" under the banner of the Comintern. The congress hailed "the free peoples of the East" and underlined the necessity of cultural national unification with the Buryat-Mongols of the FER (GARF 1318–1–52, 1).

Even though the official name of the AMBR featuring "Mongol-Buryats" as the titular nation was barely used in the official documents, with the autonomous region and its bodies being called Buryat-Mongol or Buryat, Mongol superethnic

identity played an important role. It was addressed at the congress in relation to cultural national self-determination which was to be implemented through expanding the network of Buryat-Mongol schools, preschools, and adult courses, publishing educational literature, training teachers, and convening all-Buryat and all-Mongol congresses on public education. The educational facilities were to provide European education, as well as courses of the Buryat-Mongol language and history (GARF 1318–1–52, 5–6).

The resolution of the first session of the BMAR National Assembly supported the idea of cultural national unification of the Buryat-Mongols. The assembly recognized Burceka as the cultural national body of the Buryat-Mongols and requested it to contact the Central Committee of the MPP for an immediate convention of a conference of Buryat-Mongols and Khalkha-Mongols for resolving the matter of cultural national unification (GARB 278–1–19, 80). Erbanov combined the chairmanship in Burceka and Burrevkom for some time (GARB 278–1–118, 3; GARF 1318–4–1, 37).

In the spring of 1922, Sovnarkom and the Council of Ministers of the FER created the Central Council on Cultural Affairs of the Buryat-Mongols of the RSFSR and FER which was approved by VCIK in July. The same month the Buryat-Mongol Scientific Committee was formed. On June 28–July 2, 1922, Dodo-Aninskoe hosted the Conference on Cultural Affairs of the Buryat-Mongol Autonomous Regions of the RSFSR and FER (GARF 1318–1–52, 143; Varnavskij *et al.* 2003).

After the annexation of the FER, the issue of unification extended beyond the cultural national form initiating debates on a unified Buryat-Mongol autonomy. In the AMBR there were 129,556 Buryats out of the total population of 185,192. The ethnically exclusive BMAR had the population of 114,777. Some 15,000–18,000 Buryats were said to live in Mongolia as emigrants (GARF 1318–1–52, 114 rev.; RGASPI 372–1–210, 24).

In November–December 1922 the Presidium of the Buryat-Mongol Regional Committee of the RCP(b) resolved to support the unification of the two regions and submitted a memorandum to the Central Committee of the RCP(b). It pointed at the failure of creating a national territorial autonomy in the FER and underlined the achievements of the AMBR. The authors of the text signed by Vasilij Trubačeev, Erbanov, and Ubugunov appealed to the transnational importance of the future republic. Granting the Buryat-Mongol people, "the most advanced and cultural part of the Mongol tribes," an autonomy would foster extension of the Soviet government and Communist party to Mongolia and further revolutionize the Far East. They pointed at the role played by the Buryat intellectuals in the current life of Mongolia and claimed that "no large event in the recent history of Outer Mongolia" happened "without the active participation of the representatives of Buryatia." Buryat-Mongol intellectuals, "populist nationalists" and "Buryat Communists," were attributed the ideological leadership over the MPP and practical work in the new Mongolian government. Unification would also support the Buryat-Mongol economy and eliminate ethnic inequalities in "economic and cultural

achievements." Although the memorandum acknowledged the activism of the Transbaikal Buryats, it demanded immediate abrogation of the BMAR and its submission to the AMBR. The first Regional Congress of Soviets of the AMBR which convened on December 6–11, 1922, supported the unification (GARF 1318–1–52, 9–12, 21; Varnavskij *et al.* 2003).

The party, central, and regional authorities did not have a single opinion on possible unification. According to Šumâckij's grandson, the head of Narkomnac Stalin opposed the idea of a unified Buryat-Mongol republic, but Šumâckij managed to push his vision through. As a result of the argument Šumâckij was removed from the Far Eastern affairs and sent to Persia as a diplomatic representative (B. Šumâckij 2008, 6–7).

Despite the position of its head, Narkomnac supported the idea of immediate unification of the two regions shortly after the annexation and formed a special commission. Since early December 1922 Il'â Arhinčeev represented both regions in Narkomnac (GARB 477–1–26, 232, 235). On January 2, 1923, the commission including Gustav Klinger, Georgij Borovinskij, Atanov, Arhinčeev, Erbanov, and other Bolsheviks resolved that unification with one center was necessary and invited representatives of the two regions and other interested parties to work out a project which would consider the economic differences on the two sides of Baikal. The complex land-use relations between the Russian and Buryat population were to be kept in mind when drawing the boundaries and addressed with "maximal caution" (GARF 1318–1–52, 142). Klinger, Grigorij Brojdo, and other Narkomnac officials supported the AMBR in relations with the central government and frequently referred to the transnational role of the Buryat autonomy in both political and economic spaces, pointing at the markets of Outer Mongolia and the former FER and the need to Sovietize both regions (GARF 1318–1–269, 12, 24).

The idea of unification was supported by the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs on January 1, 1923, after hearing a report by Buryat Bolsheviks. NKID claimed that "formation of an autonomous republic" would be a factor of "special cultural, economic, and political influence on the people of the Far East kindred to the Russian Buryats in the sense of strengthening their political sympathies for Soviet Russia and economic relations" (GARF 1318–1–269, 92). On January 10, 1923, high-ranking NKID officials, however, wrote to Brojdo that due to the political and social differences between the two autonomous regions it was too early to unite them into a republic offering to form an autonomous region instead. Despite the need to "influence the people of the Far East," NKID refrained from a final decision on "granting the Buryats a republic" fearing the internal interethnic tensions caused by the land-use issues and "colonial sentiments of the Russian peasants" (GARF 1318–1–52, 143–144).

The December 1922 decisions of the Buryat-Mongol Regional Committee of the RCP(b) were not unanimous. According to Matvej Berman, the unification would best be done in a form of an autonomous region, since the republic would lead to the unnecessary expansion of staff and tax increase. He claimed that the "uncivilized" Buryats would not know the difference anyway. He called the

appeals to the Bashkir and Tatar republics voiced at the meeting unconvincing because the two entities had ethnically homogeneous territories, whereas in Transbaikalia the Buryats were "disseminated among the Russian population." The argument of influence on Mongolia was called unconvincing. Berman opposed direct submission to Moscow claiming that subordination to Siberian regional authorities would be more effective (GARF 1318–1–52, 22–22 rev.)

When reporting to the Central Committee of the RCP(b), Buryat Bolsheviks continued the transnational and international line of argumentation stating that formation of the Buryat-Mongol Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic would be a "demonstration of Soviet principles and a resolution of the national colonial issue" which would impress "the whole Mongol-Tibetan world" and would be beneficial for "strengthening Soviet foreign policy in the Far East and Central Asia," but also referred to inner political aspects claiming that the republic would "neutralize the reactionary nationalist agitation of the Buddhist clergy and kulaks." The form of a republic would also contribute to elimination of interethnic antagonism nourished by land-use tensions (GARF 1318–1–269, 92–92 rev.)

Politbûro supported these considerations, but the Far Eastern Revolutionary Committee (Dal'revkom) and Dal'bûro strongly objected not only the form, but also the very idea of unification. In a telegram to NKID, Dal'revkom claimed that granting the Transbaikal Buryats autonomy would help the "Japanese militarists spread their influence" on the strategic part of the communication space, the Circum-Baikal Railway, through the Buryats. On March 13, 1923, the commission of Dal'bûro including Aleksandr Bujko, Isaak Kacva, Amagaev, Erbanov, Borovinskij, and two other Bolsheviks resolved that "the unification of the Irkutsk and Transbaikal Buryats and creation of an autonomous republic" were "impossible due to the absence of the political motives for a show creation of such republic." The creation of the republic as a "means of strengthening Soviet influence on Tibet" was deemed unconvincing. The unification was objected to due to "administrative inexpediency" and the

> impossibility to unite the Far Eastern population with the population of Siberia under the leadership of Sibrevkom due to the peculiar situation in the Far East and the need to keep the Far Eastern Soviet center subordinate directly to Moscow.

As an alternative to a unified Buryat autonomy Dal'bûro requested Dal'revkom on March 30, 1923, to set up a commission on drafting the project of a non-autonomous Buryat-Mongol province and a commission on resolving land-use issues between the Russian and Buryat population (GARF 1318–1–269, 92–93; RGASPI 372–1–210, 4, 37–38 rev.).

The backing of Politbûro and Narkomnac proved essential for the success of the project suggested by the Buryat Bolsheviks. The transnational argument was used by Narkomnac in mobilizing support. In the spring of 1923 the final decision on the matter was expected. Erbanov and Amagaev were unable to influence the position of Dal'bûro. Furthermore, Amagaev was prevented from going

to Moscow to participate in the final discussions. He was denied the trip even after Brojdo's request. In the first half of May 1923 Amagaev, Pavlov, and Il'in telegraphed Stalin, while Brojdo addressed the Central Committee of the RCP(b). Dal'bûro also got in contact with Narkomnac asking to postpone the discussion of the Buryat autonomy. The Far Eastern opponents of the republic attempted to use the Balagad movement as a demonstration that there was no unity among the Buryats and therefore a republic could not be established (GARF 1318–1–52, 148–150; GARF 1318–1–269, 47; RGASPI 372–1–210, 39–40; RGASPI 372–1–239, 2).

On May 21, 1923, the Organizational Bureau of the Central Committee of the RCP(b) including Feliks Dzeržinskij, Vâčeslav Molotov, Jānis Rudzutaks, Stalin, and Mihail Tomskij discussed the project of uniting the Buryat-Mongol regions of the RSFSR and former FER into one administrative unit which was presented by Stalin. It approved the proposal of Narkomnac and the Buryat-Mongol Regional Committee of the RCP(b) on creating the Buryat-Mongol Republic. On May 24, 1923, the project was approved by Politbûro. On May 30, 1923, the Presidium of VCIK ruled to unite the Buryat-Mongol regions of Siberia and the Far East into the Buryat-Mongol Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic (RGASPI 17–112–451, 2–4, 50–51).

On July 13, 1923, a top-secret message signed by Bujko was sent from Chita to Stalin. Dal'bûro asked if VCIK's resolution was final, and if it considered the opposition of Dal'bûro (RGASPI 17–112–451, 53; RGASPI 372–1–210, 8). The decision was final. On July 21, 1923, Rudzutaks requested Dal'bûro to approve the Revolutionary Committee of the new republic to be chaired by Erbanov and include Amagaev, Trubačeev, Berman, and Baradijn. Il'in was named probationary member (RGASPI 372–1–210, 58). On August 1, 1923, all authority in the BMASSR was transferred to the republican Revolutionary Committee (GARF 1318–1–269, 88). According to the resolution of the Central Committee adopted on August 7, 1923, it did not oppose subordination of the BMASSR to VCIK "along the Soviet line" and to Dal'bûro "along the party line" (RGASPI 372–1–210, 64). On August 31, 1923, Dal'bûro disbanded the party organization of the Baikal Province and established the Buryat-Mongol Bureau of the RCP(b) (RGASPI 372–1–210, 11).

The Regulations on the State Structure of the BMASSR approved by VCIK on September 12, 1923, institutionalized the new republic as a federative part of the RSFSR with the center in Verkhneudinsk. It was governed according to the Constitution of the RSFSR by local soviets of deputies, the Central Executive Committee, and the Council of People's Commissars. The Commissariats of Internal Affairs, Justice, Education, Public Health, Agriculture, Labor, Finance, Industry and Trade, and Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate were set up. Further agencies included the Plenipotentiary of the State Political Directorate of the RSFSR under the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of the republic and the Central Statistical Administration with the rights of a Commissariat. Foreign affairs, foreign trade, and military were governed by higher authorities. Transportation and communication were jointly administered by the republican

and higher authorities. The republican bodies responsible for finances, industry, and trade were subordinate to the corresponding People's Commissariats of the RSFSR. The republican People's Commissariats of Internal Affairs, Justice, Education, Public Health, and Agriculture were autonomous in their actions and subordinate directly to the Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars of the republic and VCIK. The Economic Administration was established under the Council of People's Commissars of the BMASSR. All necessary financial and technical means were provided by the RSFSR and USSR. Russian and Buryat-Mongol enjoyed equal status in the republic (GARB 283–1–3, 1; GARF 1318–1–269, 89–89 rev.).

The Buryat-Mongol Bureau resolved on September 21, 1923, to announce an amnesty to coincide with the first republican congress of soviets. On October 8, 1923, the wide amnesty including those sentenced to death "by the class criterion" was approved by Dal'bûro (RGASPI 372–1–210, 17, 79). At the same time the Balagad opposition to the autonomy was not tolerated. On September 18, 1923, the Buryat-Mongol Bureau resolved that "due to political and tactical considerations" secession of the Balagads from the BMASSR was impossible. All officials were requested to refrain from any support of the Balagad movement. The party organization did not rule out the possibility of including the Balagad leaders in soviet self-government, but resolved to commence with anti-Balagad and anti-theocratic propaganda (RGASPI 372–1–210, 80).

On December 4–9, 1923, the First Congress of Soviets of the BMASSR in Verkhneudinsk finished the formal creation of the new republic and elected its government. Amagaev became chairman of the Executive Committee. Erbanov headed the Council of People's Commissars. Berman became his deputy and People's Commissar of Internal Affairs. Baradijn was appointed People's Commissar of Education and in September 1923 went to European Russia for obtaining the long-awaited Mongol font from the Academy of Sciences for the publishing house of the BMASSR (Bazarov 2011, 3:64–66; GARF 1318–1–269, 130).

7.3 Constructing the boundaries of the Buryat-Mongol Autonomous Republic

Demarcation of the boundary of the BMASSR followed the principles implemented in the AMBR. The failed attempts to construct an ethnically homogeneous territory in the BMAR supported the economic approach. The ideas of mass resettlement were put aside. An integral territory could not be created without including Russian population into aymaks and excluding some distant groups of the Buryat population but the matter had to be dealt "with maximal caution and attention" (GARF 1318–1–52, 10).

The work of Koz'min under Burmonavtoupr was incorporated in the final project. On December 4, 1922, his project of the boundaries of the BMAR was approved by the Revolutionary Committee in principle and sent for detailed analysis locally (GARB 476–1–12, 19 rev.; GARB 477–1–26, 225a). On December

24, 1922, Ubugunov, Trubačeev, and Amagaev in Irkutsk discussed over a direct line with Il'in and Širap Šagdaron in Chita the project of adding further territories to the republic worked out by the Buryat Bolsheviks. After consulting with local representatives, the Chita group did not object inclusion of Troitskosavsk and its suburbs, but suggested to turn it into a special administrative economic unit subordinate directly to the Buryat center. It was also suggested to broaden the strip connecting the Aga Aymak with Mongolia by joining several Cossack communities to it. The most controversial question was related to the Verkhneudinsk District. It remained unclear which Russian population was to be included there. The first option implied the inclusion of the southeastern Bryan, Kunaley, Tarbogatay, Nadeino, Malye Klyuchi, and Desyatnikovo small rural districts with a population of some 30,000 Semeiskie peasants. The Verkhneudinsk district would have 52,000 people then. The second option featured the inclusion of the northwestern Kabansk District with some 45,000 people which would make the population of the Verkhneudinsk District 69,000. The Chita group rejected both options due to the bad relations between the Buryats and Russians. The latter were expected to demonstrate a population increase and change the proportion of the two ethnic groups in the republic in the short term. The Chita group insisted on making Verkhneudinsk the center without forming a Russian district, but joining parts of the Kabansk District to it, which would make the Russian population 30,000. This would provide a wide-enough strip connecting the Selenga and Khori Aymaks and make the Buryats 64 percent of the republic's population. It was suggested to disband the Baikal Province (the region became a province in November 1922) and turn the former Verkhneudinsk District into the Petrovsky Zavod District to join the Transbaikal Province (GARB 477–1–26, 236–236 rev.; Il'inyh 2013).

The suggestions from Chita were incorporated into the project submitted by Amagaev to Stalin in late January 1923. In order to ensure economic basis, the republic was to include the basin of Baikal excluding the strip from Kultuk to the Ekhirit-Bulagat Aymak; the Kabansk District with 45,274 people (4,500 Buryat); the Barguzin District with 13,644 Russians and the taiga areas with 684 Russians and 693 Evenks; the city of Verkhneudinsk with 25,000 people and the neighboring community with a further 2,000; and Troitskosavsk, Kyakhta, and Ust-Kyakhta with 10,000. The project would make the population of the republic 431,390 with 243,053 Buryats and 188,337 or 43 percent non-Buryats. The Semeiskie areas southeast of Verkhneudinsk were to be excluded and made part of the Transbaikal Province, with the Baikal Province being abolished (GARF 1318–1–52, 141).

The project was supposed to be approved by both Siberian and Far Eastern regional centers (GARF 1318–1–52, 11 rev.; RGASPI 372–1–210, 55–56). Dal'bûro commission opposed the inclusion of 43 percent of Russian population in the future republic on March 13, 1923. Bujko claimed that such a share of Russian population was a natural argument against the unification. Besides, there was no exact population statistics. Borovinskij viewed the project as an attempt to eliminate Russian influence on the Buryat-Mongols. He explained the absence

of conflicts in the Irkutsk Province in occupational terms claiming that the common farming culture mitigated interethnic tensions. Kacva supported a unified autonomous region subordinate to the Siberian or Far Eastern center due to the danger to the Circum-Baikal Railway bringing thereby the communication space into discussion. In response Erbanov urged them to abandon the ethnonationalist perspective and discuss the matter in terms of political groupings. The unit would have a Communist majority, which would ensure political leadership. It was not the nationalist principle, but the principle of "state reasonability" which had to be central. The authors of the project claimed that no separatism should be feared since Moscow would "always call to order" (RGASPI 372–1–210, 37–38 rev.)

VCIK united the Alar, Bokhan, Selenga, Tunka, Ekhirit-Bulagat, Aga, Khori, Chikoy, and Barguzin Aymaks and sanctioned creation of a special commission featuring one representative from Sibrevkom, Dal'revkom, the BMAR, and the ABMR under the chairmanship of a Narkomnac representative for drawing the boundaries. The commission was to submit its project no later than August 1, 1923 (GARF 1318–1–269, 91).

On May 30, 1923, Amagaev appealed to the central authorities against the position of the Far Eastern regional center to exclude the Chikoy Aymak. Amagaev claimed that this area was one of the best in terms of soil and climate and would foster Buryat transition to farming. Excluding the Chikoy Aymak would make herding occupational identity principal for the autonomy and leave it without the most "cultural" part of the population. Besides, the Chikoy Aymak was the natural connection between the territory of the AMBR and Mongolia. The republic would be unable to solve its transboundary political tasks without it. Amagaev stated that the republic did not need much territory but only those areas which were essential for economic, administrative, and national organization. Everything which could be excluded was excluded from the project. Without the Chikoy Aymak the Buryat autonomy would make little sense. Verkhneudinsk and Troitskosavsk were needed as urban trade and industrial centers (GARF 1318–1–269, 97–97 rev.).

These considerations were expanded in a comprehensive top secret memorandum submitted by Arhinčeev to the Presidium of VCIK on July 16, 1923. Arhinčeev repeated the political arguments for including the Chikoy Aymak as a connection between the Russian Sovietized Buryat-Mongols and their foreign kinsmen and brothers in faith Mongols and Tibetans. The Chikoy Aymak added 27,105 Buryats and 11,074 Russians ensuring a Buryat majority in the republic. The total population was now estimated as 435,356, with 244,966 or 56.3 percent Buryats. Excluding the aymak would make the Buryat share 53 percent. In view of the economic inequalities this would allow the Russians to dominate the new republic. Arhinčeev also pointed at the importance of the post road connecting Verkhneudinsk with Urga via Kyakhta and Troitskosavsk which was the "life artery" of the neighboring areas and the connection to Mongolia ensuring Soviet cultural expansion there. Interethnic antagonism was fueled by the land-use tensions especially relevant for the Chikoy Aymak where the Russian

national chauvinism flourished. The cases of extreme violence and continuing land seizures were its embodiment. Making the aymak part of the republic would be an effective measure against "village imperialism" of the "Old Believer Transbaikal kulaks" which made many Buryats emigrate to Mongolia (GARF 1318–1–269, 92–95).

The memorandum also supported inclusion of the Baunt Indigenous District for economic reasons. Its extensive fur resources made it into the stumbling block in negotiations with Dal'revkom which claimed that it would be best administered from Chita. Arhinčeev assured that the Orochens inhabiting the district were ethnically kindred to the Buryats. Some Barguzin and Khori Buryats also lived there. Besides, it was part of the Verkhnyaya Angara Taiga District which was populated by the same Orochen, Buryat, and Evenk groups. Buryat politicians suggested uniting the two districts into a special hunting district under Barguzin. This was supposed to protect the "wandering hunting tribes" from the exploitation by "trade usurious capital" characteristic for Siberia. Arhinčeev claimed that this was a sign of Buryat care for these "tribes," whereas Dal'revkom sought to utilize them. The Buryat authorities would protect the "savages" from the Nerchinsk profiteers (GARF 1318–1–269, 95). The use of the derogatory terms implied a hierarchy and justified subordination of the non-Buryat groups. The leaders of the republic were undoubtedly interested in the fur resources. In the AMBR they made up a large share of the total income (GARF 1318–1–269, 16–21 rev.).

Arhinčeev urged that Sibrevkom and Dal'revkom did not consider the foreign-policy aspects and state interests, looked at boundary construction from a regionalist perspective and would submit to the interests of the local peasant majority. He also pointed out that the late establishment of autonomies in the Altai and Yakutia by Sibrevkom led to uprisings and accused the Far Eastern Bolsheviks of "political blindness" and inability to "sober up from the intoxication by the recent buffer democracy" (GARF 1318–1–269, 95 rev.–96).

These arguments were accepted by the central government. On July 17, 1923, Brojdo supported inclusion of both the Chikoy Aymak and Baunt District into the republic before the Presidium of VCIK. Klinger supported Arhinčeev's request to make Serafimov[2] the chairman of VCIK boundary commission on July 31, 1923 (GARF 1318–1–269, 105–106, 111).

The speedy creation of the republic in the summer of 1923 was dictated by the need to create an independent budget for it. No boundaries, however, were to be drawn before the arrival of Serfimov's commission, which also had the authority to divide property between the Transbaikal, Baikal, and Irkutsk Provinces, and the Buryat-Mongol Republic. In the meantime, regional authorities were expected to settle economic and financial issues. The Baikal Provincial Revolutionary Committee was invited to propagate the creation of the BMASSR. On August 18, 1923, the Baikal Provincial Revolutionary Committee and regional party organization approved the transition of the province administration to the Buryat Republic. In October 1923, the province was abolished (Il'inyh 2013; RGASPI 372–1–210, 63, 66–66 rev.). The VCIK commission of

Serafimov, Borovinskij, Pavel Šihanov, Aleksandr Krymov, Erbanov, and Amagaev drew boundaries of separate aymaks and described their composition in detail. Other regional politicians, including Il'in, participated in some meetings of the commission. Most boundaries in the AMBR remained, whereas major alterations were made in the eastern Baikal region (GARB 283–1–2, 28–30 rev.; GARB 283–1–3, 5–6). On August 31, 1923, Dal'bûro approved the boundaries suggested by the commission and presented by Erbanov (RGASPI 372–1–210, 12). On November 22, 1923, the Administrative Commission under the Presidium of VCIK heard Serafimov's report on the boundaries of the BMASSR and approved them (GARF 1318–1–51, 54). In the western Baikal region 18,103 Buryats remained excluded from the republic (GARB 283–1–2, 44).

The Aga, Alar, Barguzin, Bokhan, Verkhneudinsk, Troitskosavsk, Tunka, Khori, and Ekhirit-Bulagat Aymaks composed the BMASSR (Figure 7.1) (Burnarkomzem 1924; Kartoizdatel'stvo 1928a; The Edinburgh Geographical Institute 1922). All aymaks had integral territories, but the republic itself consisted of three uneven parts. The Alar and Aga Aymaks were disconnected from the mainland republic. Most of Baikal became its part, but the suggestion to include its southern bank was rejected. The Circum-Baikal Railway, the strategic part of the communication space, was excluded from the BMASSR. Besides, the outlines of the Khori and Aga Aymaks in the BMAR (Figure 6.1) were changed to exclude the Transbaikal Railway. Some areas which were associated with the former Chikoy Aymak and demonstrated tremendous communal violence, namely the

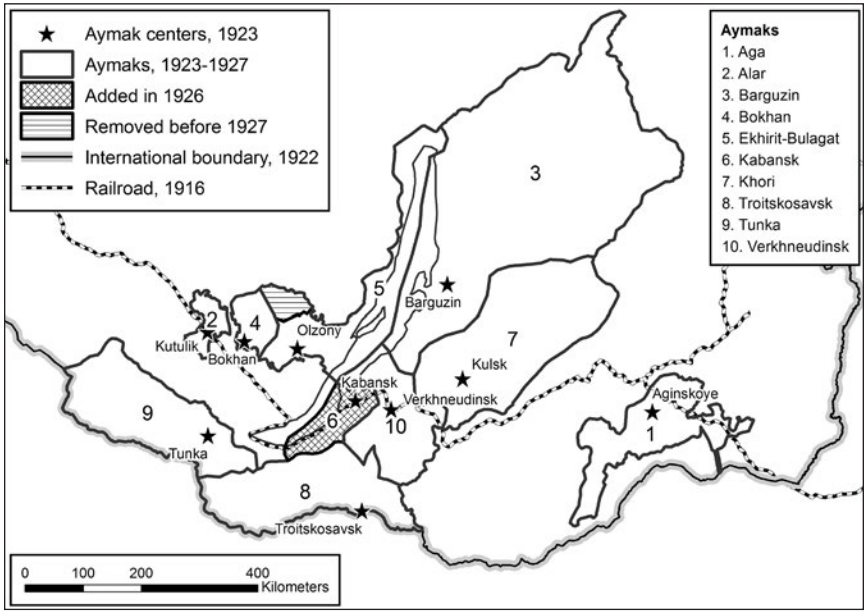

Figure 7.1 The Buryat-Mongol Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic, 1923–1927.

areas in the vicinity of the Atsa River, were also excluded. The strip connecting the Aga Aymak with Mongolia was not broadened and did not include the Torey Lakes.

The boundaries and administrative structure were amended throughout the 1920s through negotiations of interested parties (GARB 283–1–2, 19–21, 35–38 rev.) On December 20, 1926, the Kabansk District and parts of the Irkutsk District were incorporated into the BMASSR. In October 1927 the republic was divided into fifteen aymaks (Bazarov 2011, 3:133).

7.4 Revolutionizing ethnic, religious, age, and gender identities

The Soviet project of restructuring governance in the Baikal region was not confined to creating the BMASSR and drawing its boundary. The relations between the largest ethnic groups were restructured, but the categories themselves had to be redefined. The Bolsheviks attempted to reach and organize as many groups as possible. In the ethnic dimension national Communist sections were created. The Bolsheviks redefined ethnic groups in internationalist terms by fostering interethnic communication. On June 20, 1921, the representatives of the Hungarian, German, Polish, Estonian, Latvian, and Jewish sections assembled in Chita for a RCP(b) conference of ethno-national minorities. Muslims formed a separate group blurring the boundaries between ethnic, national, and religious categories (RGASPI 372–1–1093, 7–8). In September 1921, the FER Ministry of National Affairs convened a Tatar-Bashkir congress (RGASPI 372–1–101, 63). Ethnic groups were often redefined by adding the term "red" to their names. The name of the official newspaper in the AMBR was, for instance, the *Krasnyj burât-mongol* (the Red Buryat-Mongol) (Bazarov 2011, 3:152).

Evenks, Soyots, and other indigenous non-Buryat groups in the Baikal region and beyond were institutionalized as "the small peoples of the North" in 1924 after the Committee for Assistance to the Peoples of the Outlying Districts of the North under VCIK was established (Slezkine 1994). Republican regulations on administering the "small peoples of the North" and a republican committee of the North were also created in the BMASSR (Bobyšev 2001; GARB 283–1–2, 45–47).

Redefining religious categories proved more difficult. On the one hand, on January 23, 1918, Sovnarkom ruled separation of church from state and school. The Bolsheviks engaged in antireligious propaganda. Religious societies were denied the status of legal persons. They could not own any property and engage in charity and education. Only groups of devotees could take care of places of worship (GARF 1318–1–217, 192). On the other hand, the Bolsheviks supported the so-called Renovationism in different congregations (Roslof 2002).

The Buryat Bolsheviks implemented the regulations on separation of church from state. In 1923 datsans were proclaimed urban-type communities. On May 8, 1923, the authorities of the AMBR demanded that all Buddhist organizations registered in two weeks and proclaimed all their property public (RGASPI 372–1–210, 7; RGASPI 372–1–651, 1, 18). Higher authorities, however, halted

anti-Buddhist policies. Buddhism and Islam were the religions which were "oppressed" by the official Orthodox Church in the Russian Empire. Furthermore, they were widely spread among the "oppressed nations" in Asia. Doržiev, who played a very important role in the Comintern and NKID attempts to reach Tibet, used his relations with Čičerin and prominent academics for mitigating anti-Buddhist policies in the Baikal region (Doržiev 2003; Nimaev 1993). The fact that lamas were one of the largest groups in the Baikal region numbering some 10,000 people also made the central government cautions (GARB 476–1–74, 54).

Renovationism was a way to restructure religious categories and adapt them to the new governance structure. In January 1922, Hambo Lama Guro Cyrempilov appealed to the governments of the RSFSR and FER asking permission to call a Buddhist congress for the purpose of working out new rules of religious administration, restructuring monastic life according to Vinaya, improving Tibetan medicine, changing religious student regulations, and abandoning the cult of tulku and fortune tellers. The congress under the leadership of Doržiev and Cyrempilov which assembled on October 15, 1922, in the Atsagatsky Datsan, adopted new administrative documents which substituted the 1853 regulations, and established the Central Spiritual Council for governing the space of Buddhism (Gerasimova 1964, 62–73, 101).

Cyrempilov and Doržiev were, however, unable to gain immediate approval of the Regulations on Administering the Spiritual Affairs of the Buddhists in Siberia and the Charter of Internal Life of the Monks in Buddhist Temples in Siberia worked out at the Renovationist congress. Even though the Soviet Buryat authorities rendered "the Renovationist movement of the Buryat Buddhists" as "exceptionally important" and "objectively positive," the new Buddhist organization was legalized only after Doržiev's appeal to NKID. Despite the lack of unequivocal support, Renovationists became associated with the new governance structure and redefined as a revolutionary religious category. Hambo Lama Cyrempilov was, for instance, sometimes called the Red Hambo (G.-D. Cyrempilov 2013; GARF 1318–1–269, 86).

At the Second All-Buryat Congress of Buddhists which convened in late 1925, conservatives attempted to revoke the Renovationist reforms, but managed only to mitigate some clauses. The split in the Buddhist religious space continued. In 1927, the All-Union Congress of Buddhists (Renovationists) was held in Moscow. It adopted the All-Union Charter and Regulations on the Buddhist Clergy of the USSR which largely repeated the documents worked out in 1922 and 1925 in the Baikal region and institutionalized Renovationist Buddhism as part of the new governance in the Soviet Union (Gerasimova 1964, 106–114, 128–129, 176). Similar attempts to restructure, redefine, and adapt spiritual spaces to Soviet rule were made by Christian Renovationists (Roslof 2002).

The alterations in spiritual spaces of the Baikal regions were closely related to the institutionalization of the young age identity since the Russian Young Communist League (Komsomol) played an important role in antireligious propaganda. The discussions of the ethnic and religious issues were central for

political education under the RCP(b) and Komsomol (RGASPI 372–1–651, 15–16). Rinčino engaged in mobilizing Buryat-Mongol youth already in 1921. He supported local youth organizations and contributed to education efforts (RGASPI 495–152–8, 12, 15, 31–32, 59, 65, 83–83 rev.)

Gender categories were also employed when restructuring spiritual spaces. The secretary of the Muslim Section of the regional party organization in Chita reported in June 1921 that the section propagated among the Muslim population of the Transbaikal Region (in Chita alone there were some 1,500 Muslims), circulated literature from Soviet Russia, and attempted to draw Muslim women into active political interactions (RGASPI 372–1–1093, 2).

Organized attempts to redefine gender asymmetries in class terms (Engels 1972) and foster political emancipation of women began as soon as the republic was formed. In 1923 and 1924, the work was done mainly through conferences in urban centers and did not involve Buryat villagers. A total of 975 women participated in conferences across the republic in 1923. Women attended literacy courses and were accepted for internships. In 1923, twenty-seven women joined the party and twenty-seven joined Komsomol. Seventy-two women, mainly Buryat, were selected for educational programs. Participation in self-government was still very low. In 1923, only thirty-seven women were elected to soviets and forty-two were elected to the Peasant Committees of Societies for Mutual Assistance. In 1924, 399 women, including 210 Buryats, were elected to soviets. Three of them became chairwomen, with one being elected chairwoman of a local executive committee. Other 393 joined peasant committees. Some fifty-six women were elected to courts as peoples' assessors, but only in three aymaks (RGASPI 372–1–1153, 5).

In general the changes had little effect locally and the "connections of the delegates with the masses" were unfeasible. In two aymaks no work was done at all. In 1924, 7,500 female delegates participated in fifty-eight khoshun and aymak conferences, but it was unclear what effect they had among the Buryat women. Some 600 Buryat women participated in the first anniversary of the BMASSR. There was hardly any participation in cooperation and trade unions. Propaganda among the Buryat women was unsystematic. There were some achievements in women's health though. A house of mother and child was organized. A special commission regulated abortion. A sewing workshop was established for fighting unemployment and prostitution. For the latter cause political and show trials were held. Some women were sent to Workers' Faculties in European Russia through Narkomnac (GARF 1318–1–269, 115; RGASPI 372–1–1153, 5–8).

Between 1917 and 1924 the social environment of the Baikal region changed tremendously. Rinčino who visited Transbaikalia in 1924 listed the groups of people he met including Communists, Komsomol members, Buddhist Tikhonites,[3] Living Church supporters,[4] arats,[5] kulaks, and intellectuals. Many of these categories were unknown several years before. The authority locally was built on Komsomol members and Irkutsk Buryats. The latter were described by Rinčino as "completely Russified" because they did not "know their mother

tongue, local customs, and popular psychology." Most of the Komsomol members were "politically illiterate" and did not have any guidance in local and religious affairs. Adults were not covered by party influence which led to the dictatorship of "boys" and widespread complaints. Komsomol was composed of "rabble: steppe lumpens, careerists, tricksters, and different scum." Their treatment of indigenous intellectuals and non-partisan masses was described as tactless and rude, with the method of administrative pressure being implemented universally. Some people were frightened by the State Political Directorate. The attacks on lamas organized mainly by the youth were regarded by Rinčino as mistakes. The Renovationists used similar methods in their struggle against conservatives and underlined that they were supported by the Soviet government. Indeed, they were actively supported by Komsomol members. All together the implementation of the new governance resulted in "inclination towards mass emigration to Mongolia, separatism towards Chita and development of religious fanaticism." The problems were attributed not to the new institutions, but to those who implemented them (RGASPI 495–152–27, 1–3). Rinčino noted that despite the many problems and negative developments "the attitude of the masses towards the Soviet rule and the party [the RCP(b)] in general" had been "the most positive" and that even conservative Buddhists had shared the view that the "principles of the new government" not only had not contradicted, but in fact had been "borrowed from our teacher the All-Perfect Buddha" (RGASPI 495–152–27, 3). A similar situation was reported by Solijn Danzan from the newly independent Mongolia two years before:

> Furthermore, the atheist, non-national and Communist spirit of classical Buddhism combined with the teaching of our party [the Mongolian People's Party] and the Communist party of the whole world [the Communist International] supporting it found a friendly response among the best-educated and therefore most influential circles of our monks.
>
> (RGASPI 495–152–16, 36)

7.5 Institutionalizing transboundary entanglements between Siberia and Mongolia

The Buryat-Mongol Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic was part of a larger governance structure already by its name. Although the new entity was autonomous, it took the unified form of a socialist soviet republic which implied both a political identity and a standardized system of government. The name made the Buryat-Mongols the titular nation. Even though in many contemporary documents they were still called the Buryats, the discursive connection to Mongolia was institutionalized.

In the multilevel Soviet federation the BMASSR was subordinate to the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics formed in late 1922. All three entities demonstrated ideological unity and had a standard system of government. The name of the USSR dropped

ethno-national categories. The new structure could include all nations globally. The belonging of the Buryat nation to the new communality was institutionalized through various all-Union events, such as, for instance, the All-Union Agricultural Exhibition of 1923 where a Buryat department in a the form of a "Buryat summer estate" was built (GARF 1318–1–269, 114). Together with the political and ideological uniformity, the exhibition demonstrated cultural and economic diversity of the Soviet federation.

Institutionalization of diversity within the Soviet state was an important, but not the main objective of the BMASSR. The transnational goal of spreading the World Revolution to Asia remained primary. Rinčino discussed the purposes of the new republic before the two autonomies were established. In early April 1921, he wrote to the Barguzin Aymak congress that soon "the Buryat-Mongol Soviet Republic and the united All-Mongol Communist Party, section of the red Comintern," would be established. Rinčino also expressed his determination to fight for the "immortal ideals of the Communist system with the support of our ulus poor and broad working masses" (RGASPI 495–152–8, 18).

The two autonomous regions continued articulating internationalist ideas. The first session of the National Assembly of the BMAR was opened by the Internationale, the international socialist anthem (GARB 278–1–39, 7). The constituent congress of the AMBR discussed the need of combining national and European cultures and developing the two (GARF 1318–1–52, 4).

Apart from education, the space of medicine was supposed to foster an Asia-Europe fusion by combining European hospitals, first-aid stations, sanitary epidemic commissions, and detachments with indigenous Buryat-Mongol koumiss (fermented mare's milk) clinics and Tibetan medical knowledge (GARF 1318–1–52, 6). The mineral springs of the Baikal region were incorporated into the medical space. A research cabinet for studying Tibetan medicine was organized under the Medical Faculty of the Irkutsk State University in 1922 (GARF 1318–1–269, 10).

The medical space was attributed major political importance. In August 1923, Klinger wrote to the People's Commissar of Public Health Nikolaj Semaško that the Soviet government was interested in Sovietizing the population of the BMASSR due to its connections to Mongolia, Tibet, and other Asian countries and pointed at the medical aspects of the issue:

> The main aspect of the Sovietization of the population of the Buryat Republic is the elimination of extremely strong ideological influence of the Buddhist clergy, lamas, on the masses of Buryat-Mongols. The fact that lamas combine the role of a spiritual leader and a so-called doctor of Tibetan medicine, which is essentially the most efficient conductor of Buddhism and its servants, makes this influence even stronger.
>
> This fact, on the one hand, increases the negative ideological influence of the lamas on the masses and, on the other hand, it makes it extremely difficult to popularize the methods and means of scientific European medicine. The spread of the latter most definitely threatens, on the one hand, the

> material welfare of lamas and, on the other hand, their ideological authority. Hence, for the Buddhist clergy – lamas – you, comrade Semaško, are more dangerous than comrade [Emel'ân] Âroslavskij leading the antireligious propaganda of the RCP(b).
>
> (GARF 1318–1–269, 120)

The European medicine was especially relevant in view of the widespread venereal and lung diseases among the Buryat population. According to Klinger, the efforts to reduce venereal diseases had "enormous political sense," since it were these efforts which discredited lamas as doctors of Tibetan medicine. The Salvarsan (Arsphenamine) inoculation became "objectively and indirectly" an irreplaceable "means of antireligious propaganda among the Buryat-Mongols and a method of popularization" of European medicine and hence "culture in general." Klinger claimed that the Buryats had to be cured since during the revolution they "proved themselves as the revolutionary vanguard among the Eastern Mongol tribes and as carriers and transmitters" of the "revolutionary ideas of our time among the kindred peoples of Central Asia" (GARF 1318–1–269, 120–120 rev.)

The notion that the Buryats connected Asia and Europe in the global cultural network was shared by other government and party agencies. This was supported by Buryat intellectuals, but discussed in more critical terms. In 1920, Burnarrevkom noted that there was hatred to everything Western and European and adoration of everything Eastern and Asian among the Buryats due to the fact that Europeans, especially Slavs, looked down on the people of the Orient. At the same time the Buryat-Mongol nationality (narodnost') "in terms of its geographic location and in the spirit of its worldview" was the nationality which could "incorporate the positive aspects of Western and Eastern cultures, harmonize the Asian East and the European West." The Buryat intellectuals were said to embody this harmony. They were "finely national Oriental, but not narrowly nationalistic." They were "finely Europeanized, but did not kneel before Europe." They valued and were proud of their "Oriental philosophy, poetry, their originality of spirit and life" and they respected and valued the merits of European art and the high development of European technology (GARB 485–1–4, 34).

The idea of cultural compromise was part of Mongolia's incorporation into the new transcultural governance. In its early declaration to the citizens of Mongolia the MPP promised to "destroy only those customs and traditional institutes" which were "absolutely useless" or "did not correspond to the spirit of time" (RGASPI 495–152–8, 10). Reporting from Urga in 1922, Solijn Danzan pointed at the fact that Buddhist monks made up 30 percent of the population in Outer Mongolia. Together with the fact that Mongolia remained a constitutional theocratic monarchy, this made any radical antireligious changes there unfeasible. Attempts were made to reconcile Communist ideas with the "atheist and non-national" classical Buddhism. At the same time the strategy of redefining categories was applied and the split of clergy into conflicting "tops" and

"bottoms" was stimulated. The progressive religious intellectuals were then welcomed to join the Union of the Youth, the party, and the government in their struggle against "feudalists and theocrats" (RGASPI 495–152–16, 40).

Žamcarano, Rinčino, and other Buryat intellectuals participated in reforming Mongolia. They both were part of the MPP (Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party after 1924) elite and participated in the implementation of democratic reforms which included freeing the population from serfdom, lifting exceeded taxes and duties, giving equal rights to all social groups, creating lay schooling, establishing the first scientific organization, abolishing torture, and developing self-government. Rinčino focused on political and military spheres, whereas Žamcarano contributed greatly to science and education. Both intellectuals advocated moderate policies towards Buddhism and Mongolia's cultural heritage; they both envisioned eventual unification of all Mongolic peoples. Such a line was supported by other members of the new Mongolian elite which refrained from ousting Bogd Khan: Mongolia became a republic only after his death in 1924 (Bazarov and Žabaeva 2008, 215–220, 222–226, 240; Ulymžiev and Cècègma 1999, 56).

Most Buryat politicians working in Mongolia shared socialist views, but few were Bolsheviks. A new transnational Communist generation was to be formed through political upbringing of the youth for which the Young Communist International was established in 1919. In the early 1920s, it united Mongol and Buryat young men and women with young people from all over the world. Agapiâ Arhinčeeva represented the Irkutsk Komsomol section. Bobu-Dorži Dašepylov joined as part of the Chita organization (RGASPI 533–8–92, 6, 20, 22).

Another major institution for educating transnational Communist elite was the Communist University of the Toilers of the East established in 1921 under the Comintern. A regional branch of the institution was formed in Irkutsk in 1922. Ho Chi Minh, Deng Xiaoping, and many other future Communist leaders were among the university's graduates. Brojdo headed the institution in 1921–1926. In 1926–1928, Šumâckij was its rector. Rinčino worked as a professor there between 1927 and 1937 (Čimitdoržiev and Mihajlov 2009, 1:78; Filatova 1999).

The implementation of transnational governance was hampered by conventional international boundaries. In April 1922, the FER government appealed to the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Government requesting to lease lands to Buryat emigrants and seasonal nomads (GARB 278–1–20, 39, 62). In January 1923, however, the Communist faction of the Revolutionary Committee of the BMAR opposed the emigration because it undermined both the separation of church from state and tax collection (RGASPI 372–1–651, 12).

The Outer Mongolian authorities also did not have a coherent policy towards the Buryat emigrants. During the meetings of the Russo-Mongolian Commission on Transition of the Buryats from Russian Citizenship to Mongolian Citizenship in July 1923, the representatives of the Mongolian People's Government Ažvagijn Danzan, Cokto Badmažapov, and others delivered a declaration claiming

that the Buryat coreligionists were welcome in Mongolia as transmitters of new economic culture, namely sedentary agriculture and mining, which was underrepresented in Mongolia. Knowing "Western culture and civilization," they were able to contribute to political, economic, and cultural revival of Mongolia. Those Buryats who already lived in Mongolia or would move there in the future were invited to become Mongolian citizens if they desired and if the Soviet government had no objections. The Mongolian government "opened the doors to all other foreign Mongol tribes" which wanted to be naturalized. The representatives of the RSFSR, including Amagaev, claimed that the government of the RSFSR had nothing against naturalization of the current emigrants and requested the Mongolian government to ensure proper conditions for their material and cultural wellbeing, but the issue of later migrations of Russian citizens of "Mongol race" was to be discussed in the future. A special commission was to travel through the emigrant communities informing them about the possibility to get Mongolian citizenship. Naturalization was to be carried out individually. Until 1926, the Buryats in Mongolia were exempted from all state taxes and until 1925 from all state duties. These rules did not apply for traders. The Mongolian People's Government agreed to grant the Buryats self-government, to extradite all those prosecuted by Soviet courts, and to collect arrears based on registration of the Buryats in the RSFSR (GARB 278–1–20, 186–187 rev., 210, 218–219 rev., 229 rev.).

During the same meetings Soviet representatives provided a memorandum claiming that since the middle of 1922 there had been a number of conflicts between the Outer Mongolian government and immigrants from the Russian territory related to leasing land, acquiring Mongolian passports, and dealing with local authorities. The People's Government was said to have oppressed the migrants and evicted several settlements from Mongolia. In view of naturalization of the Buryats the government of the RSFSR hoped that the government of Mongolia would respect the interests of both Russian and Buryat migrants and avoid oppression in the future. The Mongolian representatives promised to inform their government and expressed hope that local misunderstandings would be settled according to mutual interests (GARB 278–1–20, 247 rev., 250–250 rev.)

Relations with Tibet continued through Doržiev who was treated as the official diplomatic representative of Tibet in the RSFSR, though it did not recognize Tibet's independence (RGASPI 495–152–8, 70, 86). Although Tibetan elites hoped that Soviet Russia would counterbalance the British and prayed the "Three Treasures that Red Russia will be a powerful country," in 1924 Soviet representatives, whom Doržiev was apparently planning to accompany, were not allowed to Tibet due to the fear of a new British invasion (Samten and Tsyrempilov 2012, 80, 82–83).

Doržiev provided Dalai Lama with information on the Buryat autonomy. In 1924 Dalai Lama responded: "It is said in your letter that after having banned bad laws established earlier by the Tsar and his ministers, the power of Autonomy has been established in your lands, under which a time of joy and tranquility has

come" (Samten and Tsyrempilov 2012, 84). At the same time the Soviet Union was not treated as a new actor or a transcultural governance structure and remained one of the three powers, with the other two being China and Britain, which could "help or damage Tibet" in its quest for independence (Samten and Tsyrempilov 2012, 86–87).

The level of trust between Doržiev and Dalai Lama remains unclear. Dalai Lama received news about the 1922 Renovationist congress and approved Doržiev's reformist initiatives. He assured his support for the movement, but at the same time mentioned the rumors of Doržiev's support for the Bolshevik antireligious campaign and addressed the problems of legalization of local Buddhist groups. The Bolshevik excesses were said to cause discontent among some Mongol noblemen. Besides, Dalai Lama was skeptical about Doržiev's efforts in constructing new monasteries and temples, since increase of places of worship was insufficient for spreading the Dharma (Samten and Tsyrempilov 2012, 61–63).

For Doržiev and the Tibetan elite Buddhist unity was important. The experience of Ungern's Pan-Asian plan, however, made the Bolsheviks cautions about larger imagined communities. A letter written to Šumâckij in 1921 by a high-ranking Bolshevik stated that Ungern's materials were studied and used providing a good example of the dangers of Pan-Mongolian nationalism. Independent development and political secession of particular ethnicities was the most effective strategy of reaching the masses, whereas large racial and religious unions increased the influence of "bourgeois intellectuals." Small "ethnic units" close to the masses left racial and religious unions no chance (Kuz'min 2004, 189–190). It was the Bolshevik ideology and the Soviet government which could be the only unifying factor. Other categories were to be supplementary and fragmentary.

Rinčino did not abandon the idea of a larger Mongol state. In 1924, he wrote to the Soviet representative in Mongolia asking to transmit his opinion that Uryankhai had to be returned to Mongolia in order to "get whole Mongolia in 5–6 years" to Čičerin (RGASPI 495–152–27, 1). The same year he prepared a secret report for the party in which Mongolia was expected to join the USSR (RGASPI 495–152–27, 7–8). The Buryat-Mongol Republic would provide the necessary ethno-national argumentation for the annexation.

There was, however, no unanimity on the future of Mongolia even among the Buryat representatives sent there by Comintern. Rinčino supported the non-capitalist way towards Communism and opposed private capital. Žamcarano valued the potential of socialist ideas, but called for a rational policy towards private property and class struggle. His views did not contradict the model of a limited market economy, "state capitalism," introduced by the New Economic Policy in the Soviet state. Žamcarano envisioned Mongolia as an independent and neutral state similar to Switzerland (Bazarov and Žabaeva 2008, 235–236; Ulymžiev and Cècègma 1999, 69–73).

The tensions between the proponents and opponents of the capitalist way reached their culmination in 1924 when the former, led by Solijn Danzan, and

the latter, led by Rinčino, engaged in heated polemics at the third congress of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP). The "left" won and Solijn Danzan, accused of corruption, was executed. The victory of the "left" meant further convergence between the USSR and Mongolia. On May 31, 1924, however, Soviet representatives under Karahan negotiated several agreements with China in which Mongolia was recognized as part of the Chinese state. Besides, the Soviet government managed to retain partial control over the CER. Independent Mongolia was practically given up for revolutionizing China and conventional state interests in the communication space. The closer relations between the USSR and China disappointed many Mongols, alienating them from the Russian-born Buryats. Anonymous proclamations against several politicians including Žamcarano and Rinčino circulated in Urga. Meanwhile, the Comintern was unhappy about Rinčino's actions which led to increasing independence of the MPRP. In 1925, Rinčino left Mongolia for the USSR. In 1928, Žamcarano was accused of "right-wing deviations," stepped down from leading positions and left the country in late 1931–early 1932 (Bazarov and Žabaeva 2008, 229, 237–240, 244–245, 255; Elleman 1994; RGASPI 495–152–27, 7; Ulymžiev and Cècègma 1999, 81, 102, 119).

The establishment of diplomatic relations with China excluded the support of Tibetan independence (Samten and Tsyrempilov 2012, 47). This did not contradict the initial plan: just as Uryankhai was expected to be given to Mongolia for winning it, independent Mongolia and Tibet could be sacrificed for the sake of revolutionizing China. Even though the treaty proved to have few practical consequences for Mongolia, which the same year was institutionalized as the Mongolian People's Republic, it showed that conventional foreign policy remained relevant despite transnational relations. Mongolia also engaged in conventional diplomacy. In 1925, it recognized Tuvan independence and established diplomatic relations with it a year later (Alatalu 1992). China and the USSR recognized Mongolia's independence only in the 1940s (Lattimore 1946).

The institutionalization of transboundary entanglements between the Baikal region and the former Qing territories continued throughout the 1920s. The Soviets extensively used the medium of the map for making claims about the reality and for structuring entanglements. In a 1928 atlas Mongolia and Tannu-Tuva were marked as sovereign states. Tibet was separated from China by a dashed line and filled with a different color, though the name of the Chinese Republic was written over it. Both Tuva and Mongolia changed the names of their capitals in the 1920s. Urga became Ulaanbaatar (Red Hero). Khem-Beldyr was renamed Kyzyl (Red). Through color coding both states were redefined as socialist and revolutionary. On Soviet maps the capital of Tuva was rendered in Russian as Krasny (Kartoizdatel'stvo 1928b; 1928c).

A map depicting the peoples of Siberia published in the Soviet Siberian Encyclopedia edited by Šumâckij demonstrated Buryat and Mongol transboundary settlement patterns (B. Z. Šumâckij 1932b). Buryats and Mongols were united into one category spanning across the international boundary. The Turkic-speaking peoples of the Altay and Sayan Mountains and the Tungus were also

shown as transboundary communalities suggesting the irrelevance of international boundaries for the ethnic space. Russians joined the category of European newcomers which underlined the colonial legacy of Siberian settlement patterns. The encyclopedia also featured an extensive article about the Mongolian People's Republic practically including it into Siberia (B. Z. Šumâckij 1932a).

Supplementing the ethnographic map with one of the first official maps of the Buryat Republic made an even more illustrative case (Burnarkomzem 1924). The republic itself occupied less than a half of the map's surface. Apart from the administrative and international boundaries, it featured many datsans, monasteries, and communications in Siberia and Mongolia suggesting transboundary entanglements between the outlined administrative and international areas, appealing to ethnic, religious, and superethnic identities, and suggesting the relevance of other spaces. The old colonial post road north was now marked as a country road. This practically redefined the Baikal region as the point of connection with the South and East instead of the North.

The map (Burnarkomzem 1924) featured paths and when these were overlaid with the sacred sites of the Baikal region (Abaeva and Žukovskaâ 2004), it turned out that they showed ways to reach such sites both within and beyond the republic.[6] The map could be used for transgressing the boundaries in the administrative and political spaces when navigating ethnic and spiritual spaces. Although the boundaries in the ethnic space were important for the boundaries of the BMASSR, the latter also implicitly demarcated the space of natural resources. It was not only the fur which made the Baunt District valuable, but also the extensive gold fields (Pereselenčeskoe upravlenie 1914). The boundary also divided the religious space of the Baikal region into the Buddhist and non-Buddhist parts. All datsans and dugans were either included into the republic or were very close to its boundary. The only exemption was the Semiozerny Datsan which was abandoned by the time of boundary construction.

Despite the fact that the Mongolian Revolution was the only successful pre-Second World War attempt to create a socialist state outside the Soviet Union (Tuva was annexed in 1944) the model of transcultural governance, which was developed and applied in the region, was abandoned. Lenin who sanctioned the model died in 1924. Šumâckij and Rinčino never returned to leading positions in North and East Asia. With Stalin consolidating authority in 1928, the NEP was abolished. Ethnicity gradually became the only one of the abovementioned identities to be relevant for the state, and many people were executed or imprisoned for defending their positions in religious or other spaces. The model of "democratic centralism" proved effective for repression in both the BMASSR and the USSR. All Buddhist monasteries were destroyed in the 1930s. Lamas were murdered. Sacred texts were burned and scattered in the steppes. Žamcarano, Rinčino, Baradijn, Daši Sampilon, Erbanov, Amagaev, Vampilon, Doržiev, Badmažapov, and Cydypov became victims of the purges in the USSR and the MPR in the late 1920s and 1930s. The non-Buryat supporters of the transcultural governance model, including Šumâckij and Klinger, also did not survive the

Great Purge. By the 1930s, the Comintern became an unofficial body of the Soviet government and was ultimately disbanded in 1943 after the Soviet leadership opted for developing the USSR into a conventional sovereign state (Richards 1959).

After four years of struggle Buryat-Mongol autonomous regions were formed east and west of Baikal. Even though the two autonomous regions were very similar in their names, the principles behind their creation were different. The autonomy in the FER aimed at creating an ethnically homogeneous Buryat territorial unit, whereas the Soviet autonomy was designed as an economic territorial unit where the Buryats were a majority. The democratic system of the FER could not accommodate minority interests and the boundaries of the BMAR were never demarcated. The boundaries of the AMBR were drawn by regional and central authorities with the participation of Buryat Bolsheviks. The so-called democratic centralism ensured rapid boundary construction.

After the FER was annexed by the RSFSR, the two autonomies became subject to fierce discussions among the party and government officials. With the support of the People's Commissariats of Nationalities and Foreign Affairs and the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the RCP(b), the Buryat Bolsheviks managed to defend and carry out the project of the Buryat-Mongol Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic despite the opposition of regional elites.

The boundaries of the new entity were constructed based on the principle of economic reasonability. The BMASSR practically became a polyethnic republic within a polyethnic republic. The Buryats were made into the majority in the new entity which was supposed to safeguard them from oppression. At the same time the BMASSR was not sovereign and had only limited autonomy in economic and cultural affairs.

The transnational purpose of the BMASSR was to advertise the Soviet transcultural governance to the people of Asia, namely to the Mongols, Tibetans, Chinese, Koreans, and Japanese. An overarching socialist revolutionary workmen identity was supposed to draw different ethnic groups together. This communality could be also rendered in terms of the oppressed nations and minorities. Even though Soviet internationalism opposed nationalism, it still used ethno-national divisions as basic categories which were supplemented with notions of class.

The Bolsheviks attempted to find allies in numerous relational spaces redefining categories and unmasking power asymmetries. Youth, women, and ethnic minorities could all be interpreted as the "oppressed" in corresponding relations. The Bolsheviks utilized and stimulated splits in various spaces reconfiguring them.

The experience of the failed projects was incorporated into the ultimate boundary construction in the region, as the designers of the BMASSR and the Mongolian People's Republic explicitly and implicitly addressed the Buryat ethnic, Pan-Mongolian superethnic, and Buddhist religious identities. Rinčino, Žamcarano, Baradijn, and other participants of the power relations behind the creation and destruction of the previous projects brought along their personal

experience and previously used notions to the construction of the new entities. Taking the failures into account, the authors placed the emphasis not on the boundaries in particular social spaces, but on the transboundary entanglements: the connection of the Mongolian and Buryat Republics to the global labor movement and the Soviet Union via the Communist International and central government, respectively; the trade and linguistic connection between the two republics; the religious networks binding the two republics with Tibet and other Buddhist regions.

The new transcultural governance was potentially applicable to the whole world because it acknowledged economic and cultural diversity. The political and ideological uniformity of the structure, namely the so-called democratic centralism, proved to be its major weakness. On the one hand, it quickly developed into collegial and then into personal dictatorship. On the other hand, it was inefficient against local abuses. The Bolsheviks had different opinions on the new structure and after its opponents came to prominence, the model was abolished.

Notes

1 The name of the body again connected the Buryat national movement to the French Revolution of 1789–1799.
2 The first name of this Soviet government official and details of his biography could not be located in the available sources. In October 1924 Serafimov headed another commission which regulated land reform in southern Kazakhstan and Kirgizia (Martin 2001, 63–65).
3 The term Tikhonites was used to describe conservative Christians who opposed the Renovationist movement and supported Patriarch Tikhon, the 11th Patriarch of Moscow and of All Russia. Rinčino used it to describe the conservative Buddhists which opposed Renovationism in this religion.
4 The term was used for the Renovationists which supported the organization called Living Church and for the Renovationists in general.
5 The term was used to describe poor peasants in Mongolia.
6 Many sacred sites were also established along travel routes.

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GARB 278–1–3, 22–22 rev. (Report on the activities of the Government Commission on Buryat Affairs, December 8, 1921).

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Conclusion

The Baikal region proved to be a zone of complex spatial entanglements. Its location on the boundary between the Russian and Qing empires, vast mineral resources, the Trans-Siberian Railway, and the telegraph and other communication lines made it into a strategic part of the economic, communications, and political topologies of the Russian Empire and Eurasia. Regional population belonged to numerous ethnic, religious, political, legal, and other groups, none of which had clear boundaries. Russians, peasants, and Orthodox Christians were a majority in corresponding spaces connecting the region to most of the Russian Empire. Buryats, nomadic herders, and Buddhists were also numerous and connected the region to the neighboring areas of the Qing Empire. The Great War brought many prisoners of war to the region, which further diversified its social spaces.

The February Revolution overthrew the Tsarist government, but did not lead to an immediate collapse of pre-revolutionary structures in economic, administrative, communication, ethnic, religious, land-use, and other relational spaces. The transboundary power structures spanning to Mongolia, Manchuria, and Tannu Uryankhai also remained. The revolution increased the participation of regional actors in the political interactions tremendously. The notion of imperial periphery became irrelevant. Indigenous activists suggested restructuring the administrative, ethnic, and economic spaces making the non-Russian people rightful citizens of the future Russian federation. Many people born in the Baikal region joined the struggle for the larger spaces of the former empire.

Buryat intellectuals collectively worked out the project of Buryat Autonomy. Liberal and socialist notions of the February Revolution were supplemented with anticolonial nationalism. The Buryat national movement resembled other anticolonial movements globally, but supplemented lay political ideas with Buddhism which was to remain the dominant ideology of the people. The Buryat-Mongol nation included some Evenks, but excluded all Russians. Although the project was worked out jointly by Irkutsk and Transbaikal Buryats, the leading role in its construction was played by the latter. The supporters of the project sought to divide the ethnic space into Buryat and non-Buryat parts and impose this disentanglement on the spaces of land use and administration. The lands of the Buryats were to be demarcated in the geographical space. At the

same time, the project did not claim larger political spaces, as the new territory was to remain part of the Russian state.

The Buryat Autonomy and the forming Russian republic featured an extremely progressive political structure in liberal democratic terms. The project gave indigenous women the right to vote three years before the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution was passed. Ethnic minorities enjoyed broad political participation which was hardly matched globally. The proponents of the project relied on the concept of autonomy. The ideas borrowed from nationalist, socialist, and liberal discourses appealed to ethnic and ensuing economic and cultural grievances of the indigenous peoples.

Large political groupings, however, proved to be unready to abandon colonial power asymmetries. The Socialist Revolutionaries disproved their commitment to defend minority rights and supported the peasants who were interested in the colonization of the Buryat lands. The new Russian government did not recognize the right of the Buryats to form an autonomous unit. It also failed to abolish estates locally and in the Baikal region some Cossacks became strong opponents of ethnic self-determination.

Although the project of autonomy failed, the spread of zemstvo to Siberia allowed for the institutionalization of Buryat self-government. Besides, two Buryat intellectuals were elected to the Russian Constituent Assembly, the only legitimate authority and the hope of many people in the former empire. The struggle for legal recognition ended successfully. In early 1918, Buryat zemstvo was established in six aymaks. The fall of the Provisional Government proved the strength of zemstvo which remained for several months after the October Revolution.

After the violent disbandment of the Constituent Assembly there was no universally recognized authority in the former Russian Empire anymore. The struggle for the spaces of the former empire became violent. Several governments acknowledged the collapse of the Russian state and claimed the Baikal region. The administrative and economic structures of the Russian Empire disintegrated. The two provinces of the Baikal region split into Russian and Buryat self-government, with the former attempting to form a new province east of the lake.

In 1918, the Buryat ethnic space fell under nominal Soviet rule, but barely any soviets were established among them. Several natives of the Baikal region, such as Boris Šumâckij, Èlbek-Dorži Rinčino, and others, came to prominence in larger political spaces being elected to competing Siberian governments. Irkutsk was recognized as the center of Soviet Siberia. The Bolsheviks brought about a major political split among Buryat intellectuals. Some of them, like Mariâ Sah'ânova, started to appeal to internationalist and anti-nationalist framings and articulate class solidarity. The soviets of the eastern Baikal region nevertheless recognized the Buryat national bodies as part of the Soviet government in the summer of 1918.

The steps of the Soviets on the international arena caused major resentment among Russia's former Allies in the Great War. The peace treaty with the

Central Powers made the Allies support Russian anti-Bolshevik groups. After the Czechoslovak troops under French command overthrew the Soviets along the Trans-Siberian Railway, American, Japanese, and other governments joined the military intervention allegedly for countering the enemy POWs and reopening the Eastern Front. The activities of the Czechoslovaks in Siberia contributed to their effort in dividing the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

In the late 1918, the political space of the Baikal region was split. Its western part was claimed by the Aleksandr Kolčak government, Czechoslovak troops, and French command, whereas its eastern part was under the control of Japanese military and Grigorij Semënov. In early 1919, the international regime was institutionalized and the boundaries in the communication space were imposed onto all other spaces. The international regime, however, controlled only the areas in the vicinity of the railroad line, with guerillas, warlords, and self-government bodies controlling the rest of the region. The Buryat national bodies continued to claim the Buryat ethnic space.

In 1919, the American Expeditionary Force joined the Japanese in guarding the railway in the eastern Baikal region. Siberia and Manchuria became a setting of the emerging global rivalry between the two states. The CER Zone in Manchuria was claimed by Japan, China, and the USA, even though Kolčak and his Russian allies attempted to keep the treaties of the Russian Empire intact.

The Buryats manifested themselves in political struggle also through the indigenous troops under Semënov's command. Buryat politicians opted for pursuing a foreign policy, attempting to turn the central self-government body into an international actor. After establishing relations with Semënov and Japanese representatives, they felt strong enough to make international claims.

The project drafted by Buryat, Hulunbuir, and Inner Mongolian politicians in 1919 and supported by Semënov featured creation of a new sovereign Mongolian state under Japanese protectorate and with strong Buryat leadership. The project articulated Mongol superethnic and Buddhist religious identities and sought to impose ethno-religious divisions on other spaces, including the global political space. The Japanese government was expected to use the project in its attempts to establish control over economic spaces and ensure mineral resources of the Baikal region and Mongolia. With its appeals to the Paris Peace Conference, the proponents of united Mongolia joined the so-called Wilsonian Moment of anticolonial nationalism albeit the latter was redefined in religious terms.

The proponents of the project overestimated Japanese support and failed to consolidate the superethnic Mongol unity. A non-violent alternative project centered on Lubsan Samdan Cydenov emerged in the eastern Baikal region. Its authors sought to construct boundaries in the Buddhist religious space and proclaimed an independent theocratic state making not only international, but also transcendental claims. Cydenov's project combined Western European and Buddhist framings. Its reliance on non-violence offered an alternative to the war. Cydenov proclaimed the ideals which were in the early twentieth century also supported by such prominent figures as Lev Tolstoj and Mahatma Gandhi.

Even though the project was violently suppressed, it demonstrated that there were no unanimously recognized superethnic sentiments even among the Buryats. Besides, it unmasked the lack of unity among the Buddhists. The opposition from the Outer Mongolia's theocratic ruler proved to be a further challenge for united Mongolia. Its proponents opted for a violent solution, but the changes in the larger political spaces prevented the military action. Semënov's reconciliation with Kolčak, the split among the Mongols, and the danger of Chinese military action in Outer Mongolia led the Mongolian federalist project to its end. China destroyed the international power structure established by the treaties with the Russian Empire and reclaimed Mongolia in late 1919.

The international regime collapsed in the Baikal region after the Treaty of Versailles ended the Great War and made the initial purposes of the Allied Intervention irrelevant. Unable to stop the advance of the Red Army without foreign support, the Kolčak government was overthrown in early 1920. The western Baikal region was again incorporated into the Soviet power structures.

The presence of the Japanese troops east of the lake postponed the reestablishment of state there. In order to avoid a war with Japan and to mitigate peasant resentments the Bolsheviks allowed the continuation of the February Revolution developments in the eastern Baikal region where the Far Eastern Republic was created and institutionalized through the Constitutional Assembly of the Far East.

The creation of the democratic buffer state was fostered by Roman von Ungern-Sternberg's success in driving the Chinese troops out from Outer Mongolia. Ungern planned to unite Asia against Europe and reestablish the Russian and Qing empires. The Comintern also strove for uniting Asia, but under the banner of anti-imperialism and Communism. Mongolia was seen as the major target for exporting the revolution. The Bolshevik activities in the Baikal region and Mongolia watered down the difference between home and foreign affairs. Some Buryat intellectuals became part of the Comintern and ensured the connection between ethnic autonomies in the former Russian Empire and the World Revolution.

The decision to grant the Buryats autonomy was made jointly with the decision to help the Mongolian revolutionaries in 1920. In 1921, the Constituent Assembly of the Far East formed the Buryat-Mongol Autonomous Region. Later that year a new government was created in Mongolia under the Mongolian People's Party. Irrespective of the plan worked out by Rinčino, Šumâckij, and other Comintern functionaries, Tannu-Tuva proclaimed its independence. In 1922, the Autonomous Mongol-Buryat Region was created in the RSFSR.

The two Buryat autonomies had the same transnational objectives, but were constructed according to completely different principles. In the eastern Baikal region the initial plan of an ethnically exclusive autonomy was carried out. West of the lake economic regionalism became the basis for boundary construction. The RSFSR and the FER also had considerable differences in political structures. The FER was a parliamentary democracy, whereas the principle of

democratic centralism applied in the RSFSR led to the collegial dictatorship of the Bolsheviks. The dictatorial regime allowed for rapid construction of the boundaries of the AMBR. Minority rights were not a priority for the FER government influenced by the Russian peasant majority and it was reluctant to finalize the Buryat autonomy and delineate its territory. The experience of the Buryats in the FER demonstrated the peril of understanding democracy as dictatorship of majority.

The uncertain international situation and renewed fighting with the White Guard increased Bolshevik influence both in the BMAR and the FER. The failure of Japan at the Washington Naval Conference and its withdrawal from Siberia soon allowed the Bolsheviks to defeat the remaining White Guard and unite the FER and the RSFSR. After fierce party discussions the two Buryat-Mongol regions were merged into an autonomous republic according to the plan suggested by the Buryat Bolsheviks under Mihej Erbanov and Matvej Amagaev. Boundary construction relied on the principles of economic reasonability and territorial integrity. The new entity became a polyethnic state-like formation within the polyethnic Russian federation, itself part of the federative Soviet Union. The final project relied on nationalist, socialist, and even liberal anti-colonial framings which had been articulated in the region since 1917.

Although the new boundaries divided some regional spaces, the new governance structure focused on redefining categories and institutionalizing entanglements. Ethnic, religious, gender, age, and other categories were supplemented with political notions, whereas the BMASSR and the newly independent Mongolia were to become parts of the transnational whole governed by the global political party, the Comintern.

By 1924, the Soviet government reassembled most of the territory of the former Russian Empire. The Bolsheviks did not continue the imperial domestic and foreign policies in the Baikal region and the neighboring regions of the former Qing Empire, nor did they pursue a completely new transnational policy. The new governance structure was a product of interactions among the Bolsheviks and between them and other actors. This conclusion allows for distancing oneself from the unresolved debate on the Soviet federation, since it was not a result of a policy of a particular group. Different groups could play prominent roles in particular parts of the Soviet Union and at different times, the Soviet decision-makers could attempt to use a combination of foreign and transnational policy, but the ultimate structure developed through local and global discursive and power interactions. The extreme dynamics of transculturality in the Baikal region undoubtedly influenced Šumâckij's and Rinčino's worldview and contributed to their attempts to construct a transnational and transcultural governance structure. At the same time, they continued to discuss the region in terms of conventional foreign policy.

The new structure involved both nation-building and empire-building implying the creation of Buryat and Mongol nations, or perhaps a Buryat-Mongol nation, and a Soviet collective of nations. At the same time, it could not be called a conventional imperial project. It was centered not on an ethnic or a national

group, but on an international political group featuring Russians, Georgians, Jews, Latvians, Germans, Buryats, Mongols, and other people for whom their ethno-national identity could be of little importance. The structure was designed to govern transculturality in the post-state world free from exploitation, nations, and empires. The participants of power relations behind the project tried to find a balance between socialism and nationalism.

The USSR was supposed to institutionalize the possible unity. It was inclusive and could potentially span to the whole world pursuing its mission to liberate the global oppressed. The inclusiveness of the project made it attractive for diverse groups of people which did not have to abandon their identities, though the latter could be redefined. Splitting competing groupings into "tops" and "bottoms," "conservatives" and "progressives," "oppressors" and "oppressed" the new governance structure eliminated all major opposition. The disentangling part of the project remained strong. Internationalism and transnationalism both imply division of peoples into nations and only then their unification or transgression of boundaries between them.

The attempts of the early Soviet Union not to disentangle, but to govern transcultural spaces appreciating the entanglements, to find the common ground above cultural networks, and to address the global cultural macro-network in its totality were based on economic determinism and class considerations. The Communist ideas of justice for the poor and oppressed were indeed understood in a variety of cultural contexts, but the political and ideological uniformity proved impracticable, as transculturality offered numerous interpretations of and solutions for injustice. The new structure was abandoned and the USSR very quickly developed into something resembling other sovereign states. Its quick dissolution in the late twentieth century proved that the Soviet Union was primarily a collection of nations, but not a transnational whole.

The experience of the early Soviet Union may be useful when trying to work out transcultural governance structures. The attempts of the United Nations to provide a uniform interpretation of human values and the national essentialism present already in its title hamper the efforts of the organization in governing transculturality and ensuring peace in the highly diverse world. The European Union made economic entanglements the corner-stone of unification, but it also still consists of nations and treats them as basic units. Abandoning methodological nationalism proved extremely beneficial for social sciences and humanities. Perhaps, one day the experience of non-national academia will be used in political practice.

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