

The Baron Ungern Chin's Delusion of Planning to Establish the Great Mongolian State with a Base Outside Mongolia

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Abstract: Roman Feodorovich von Ungern-Sternberg was a White Army commander during the Russian Civil War, leading the 'Asian Cavalry Division' in political and military activities in the Russian Far East and Outer Mongolia. He advocated for the establishment of independent monarchies in regions such as the Russian Far East, Mongolia, Inner Mongolia in China, Northeast China, Xinjiang, Xizang, among others. With the support of Japan, he led the Asian Cavalry Division in multiple attacks against the troops of the Beiyang Government of China. On February 3, 1921, Ungern captured the city of Urga, reinstated Bogd Khan, and declared the reconstruction of the Great Mongolian State. This battle resulted in the loss of military and political control over Outer Mongolia by the Chinese government, significantly impacting the geopolitical landscape. Although research on Ungern and his nation-building attempts still lacks direct and coherent historical records, examining his endeavors helps fill the gap in understanding the influence of the Russian Civil War on China's geopolitical situation.

1. Introduction

In the early 20th century, Baron Ungern Chin harbored an intensely reactionary and conservative determination. Using Outer Mongolia as a base, he conceived the grandiose delusion of establishing a Great Mongolian State ^[1]. His aim was to restore the glory of the Qing Dynasty by revitalizing the Great Mongolian State and incorporating China into his conservative political vision. However, the implementation of this plan was far from smooth, ultimately leading to his failure. This article will delve into Baron Ungern Chin's political ideology, plans, and the challenges he faced in the process of establishing the Great Mongolian State ^[2].

2. The Family History and Personal Growth of Ungern

Roman Fyodorovich von Ungern-Sternberg (Роман Фёдорович фон Унгерн-Штернберг) was born in 1882 into a Baltic landowning family. Despite the family's decline in the 19th century, it still maintained aristocratic ties to Russia and Germany. Ungern's German ancestors split into the German and Livonian lines in the 13th century. In 1653, under the authorization of Emperor Leopold I, three

military officers, including Ungern's ancestors, were elevated in rank by Queen Christina of Sweden, which is the origin of the 'Von' in the Ungern surname ^[3, 4].

Ungern's Russian lineage traced back to Baron Karl Ludvig, who served the Russian Empire during the reign of Tsarina Anna Ivanovna and achieved military distinctions. Due to his unique lineage, Ungern received education in both Russian and German, excelling particularly in Russian and having a good command of English.

During his youth, Ungern received education at the Alexander Imperial Gymnasium. Despite having the opportunity to enter the diplomatic service, driven by his dreams of war and exploration, he chose to join the class of reserve officers trained by the Russian Imperial Marine Corps ^[5].

Ungern possessed a strong martial spirit closely tied to his family background and a sense of ancestral honor. However, in pre-World War I Europe, imperialistic expansion was on the rise, Enlightenment ideas and republicanism were spreading, and the Russian Empire was labeled as reactionary. Ungern lived in a time of tumultuous change, new ideological awareness, and societal awakening.

His family background and conservative feudal education may have influenced his behavior and destiny. However, undoubtedly, given the historical context of the time, Ungern's political aspirations were highly provocative, attracting numerous followers and making him the de facto ruler of Outer Mongolia.

3. Save the world from the revolution as a god or goddess by the Baron who inherited the glory of the past

To delve into Ungern's political vision, it is essential to focus on his issued Military Order No. 15. On May 5, 1921, in this order, he explicitly outlined his political and combat principles for activities in the Siberian region ^[6]. According to Nikolai Mikhailovich Knyazov's "Legendary Baron: Unknown Pages of the Civil War," the order emphasized the need for continuity and determination in the troops' struggle against the Bolsheviks. It highlighted Ungern's concept of placing strict discipline at the forefront of all military actions. This vividly demonstrates Ungern's fervent pursuit of "war glory" and the "bloodline legitimacy" of his family dating back through the ages.

To thoroughly explore Ungern's political ideals, it is crucial to examine the Military Order No. 15 he issued. On May 5, 1921, in this directive, he explicitly articulated his political and strategic guidelines for operations in the Siberian region. According to Nikolai Mikhailovich Knyazov's "Legendary Baron: Unknown Pages of the Civil War," the order underscored the importance of maintaining continuity and determination in the troops' struggle against the Bolsheviks, emphasizing Ungern's concept of placing strict discipline at the forefront of all military actions. This vividly demonstrates Ungern's fervent pursuit of "war glory" and the "bloodline legitimacy" of his family dating back through the ages.

In the Military Order issued on May 5, 1921, Ungern explicitly outlined his political and strategic guidelines for activities in the Siberian region. He emphasized that Russia had originally formed as a national community through the unity of faith and close blood ties among the Rus people. However, the revolution led to the loss of greatness and power. Ungern planned to rebuild Russia, dividing and reshaping the empire's "sacred symbols," supporting Mikhail Alexandrovich Romanov as the "lawful owner of all Russian lands." He also planned to overthrow Chinese rule in Mongolia, restore the rule of Bogd Khan, and use Mongolia as a base against the Soviet Red Army. The White Army would be stationed in border cities between Mongolia and Russia, preparing for a comprehensive attack ^[7].

Ungern's military actions were imbued with ideology, reflecting his political vision for Russia and Northeast Asia. He adhered to the noble lineage and knightly honor of Western medieval traditions, believing that dividing Russia did not conflict with the glory of Imperial Russia, as long as Mikhail

ascended to the throne. Propelling the independence of the "Great Mongolian State" was seen as a means to achieve family honor, asserting that Mongolia should have its independent political entity. In 1919, he married a Manchu princess with the surname Jin, aiming to garner support from forces seeking the restoration of the Qing Dynasty. However, he informed about the divorce through an aide just a year later. Therefore, the political alliance conducted five months before Ungern's capture of Urga played a significant role. This political marriage granted Ungern sufficient legal legitimacy, successfully integrating him into the mythical narrative of Buddhism.

To emphasize the sanctity of monarchy, Ungern successfully persuaded Bogd Khan to declare the restoration of the Great Mongolian State. In the ceremony on February 20, 1920, within a Chinese-style hall, bells rang, flags fluttered, and oil lamps flickered. Through collective efforts, Ungern won the mystical legitimacy bestowed by Buddhism. During the ceremony, believers felt the radiance of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, covered in hadas and adorned with jewelry. After Bogd Khan's coronation, Ungern became the incarnation of Mahakala, donning an unusual headdress. The lamas solemnly guided Ungern, presenting him to the people.

In the ideological realm of politics, Ungern exhibited extremely reactionary and conservative attitudes, holding similarly extreme conservative views in culture and social production. He believed that progress in technology and productivity had brought endless disasters and destruction to the world.

Between 1919 and 1920, General Ungern expressed his innermost thoughts in a conversation with Graham. He thought that modern culture had taken the wrong path, losing its original purpose of serving human happiness. He pointed out that modern culture, in terms of technology and political arrangements, caused many people to lose their social standing and underwent degradation in humanities knowledge. This aligned with the views of writer Fyodorovich, who believed that the rediscovery of knowledge did not bring humanity closer to happiness; instead, it might distance people from happiness^[8].

Ungern believed that European traditional culture had denied its own traditions, and this departure from tradition had grown to an irreversible extent with the development of European great powers. When asked about the happiest era for humanity, he stated that although the late Middle Ages lacked astonishing technology, people were happier, especially during the era of knighthood, which he admired the most. He thought that the technological advancements of the 19th century were detrimental to the happiness of workers, as machines gradually replaced them, leading to dreadful unemployment and the rise of socialist sentiments^[9]. Ungern advocated for the return of European commerce to the guild system, where it could directly focus on individual labor and the collective interests of the entire production chain, achieving equitable distribution of work on a fair basis. Graham was surprised by Ungern's awareness and foresight on social-political issues, considering his views entirely misguided.

It is evident that Baron Ungern's social and political development logic had inherent flaws, essentially representing an inversion of traditional medieval values applied to contemporary society. Despite foreseeing fascist ideologies and advocating for extreme measures to resolve conflicts between modern and traditional cultures, his vision deviated from the influence of modernization. He transposed European culture onto the Asian steppes to heal Europe with traditionalism, revealing a yearning for medieval knightly heroism.

With fervent conservative determination, Ungern planned to rebuild Europe, starting from the primitive East Asian steppe nations, forming a "dual-headed force" to reconstruct Europe. Through war, he intended to lay waste to the "New Europe" and reestablish the medieval "Sacred Europe." In the East, he aimed to restore the Great Mongolian State, revitalize the glory of the Qing Dynasty, support the Qing royal family, and expel Chinese revolutionaries. The restoration of the Great Mongolian State was the central base for his envisioned conservative influence spanning East and

West ^[10].

In a letter dated May 20, 1921, Ungern described the Pan-Asian agenda to the ministers of the Chinese Empire. He focused on East Mongolia, considering it a fortress against communist revolution and Chinese aggression. After consolidating East Mongolia, the plan was to further unify West Mongolia. The joined regions would maintain autonomy, uniting voluntarily in alliance to establish a political core, rallying Mongolian people for military defense against Western revolutionary influences. The next phase aimed to establish a "Unified Mongolian Kingdom" under the slogan of "Asia for Asians," encompassing all Mongolian peoples. He engaged with the Kyrgyz people, emphasizing the responsibility of his subordinates to first restore traditions for Mongols, revive the Qing Dynasty, and save China from Western revolutionary ideas. He mentioned that contacts with Kyrgyz believers might serve as negotiation incentives, necessitating the return of China's Mohammed.

In Ungern's plan, the restored Qing was not a centralized multinational imperial state; instead, it formed several nations with different cultures, revolving around traditional ideologies. The ruling territory of the Qing Dynasty would lose historically inherent territories like Xinjiang and Xizang.

However, Ungern's plan achieved only brief success in some aspects before ultimately failing. After restoring the Great Mongolian State, he attempted authoritarian rule in Outer Mongolia, triggering dissatisfaction among Mongolian nobility who sought intervention and support from the Red Army.

During the Qing Dynasty, the aristocracy of Outer Mongolia had long maintained de facto independence and autonomy. They supported Ungern primarily because he appeared to be a conservative advocate of the traditional European feudal system, aligning with the interests of the old Mongolian nobility. However, once Ungern seized actual ruling power in Outer Mongolia, he failed to fulfill his political promises, adopting an oppressive and overbearing attitude toward the Mongolian nobility.

In essence, Ungern not only displayed a logical inversion in sociological understanding but also exhibited contradictions in political practice. While he admired extreme conservatism, medieval knightly spirit, and the feudal system on one hand, he implemented a highly centralized, personal, and terroristic rule akin to fascism. Consequently, his reversal of policies led to his downfall ^[11].

This period of history must be acknowledged for bringing significant changes to the political landscape of Northeast Asia through Ungern's ruthless and resolute actions and his fervent political ideals. His invasion terminated the Chinese government's actual control over the Outer Mongolian region. Therefore, it can be said that Ungern played a crucial practical role in the independence of Outer Mongolia, profoundly impacting the current political landscape of Northeast Asia and Sino-Russian relations. Based on this, Ungern's political ideals hold historical and unique research value today.

4. Conclusion

Baron Ungern, despite harboring ambitious dreams of establishing the Great Mongolian State, saw his plans ultimately culminate in failure. Following the restoration of the Great Mongolian State, he failed to fulfill his political promises to Outer Mongolia, leading to discontent and internal unrest. The harsh and arbitrary rule of the Mongolian nobility led them to seek intervention from the Red Army, thwarting his plans. Baron Ungern's dream of constructing the Great Mongolian State eventually became a chapter in history. However, the conservative ideology reflected behind it, coupled with the unrealistic political vision, continues to offer profound reflections for historians.

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