

The Mongolian People's Vote for Independence

In 1921 the Soviet Union recognized Mongolia's independence. Furthermore, a mutual friendship treaty was signed on November 5, between our two countries which confirmed the freedom and independence of the Mongolian nation. Included among the Soviet Union's acts of assistance was the decisive military support given when the Japanese militarists encroached on our territory. We Mongolians should always remember this.

During the difficult years of World War II and in particular during the years of the Soviet people's Patriotic War, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Soviet government led the army under the slogan "For Total Victory" and stirred up the ideology, energy, and patriotism of the masses. While delivering victory in the tough battle with the enemy, the Soviet Union continued to pay attention to strengthening the defense of Mongolia's independence, assisting its socio-economic development and strengthening the friendship between the peoples of the two countries. In implementing the measures to assist Mongolian independence, the Soviet Seventeenth Army and Soviet military specialists assumed major obligations.

The Soviet government and its foreign affairs organizations paid great attention to the recognition of the independence of the Mongolian state. In February 1945 the government leaders of the Soviet Union, United States, and Great Britain discussed at their conference in Yalta important questions relating to the end of World War II and the government and economy of post-war Germany and other European countries. During these meetings, discussions took place on the Far East, and two or three months following the end of the war in Europe, the Soviet Union did its duty and entered the war against Japan. The Soviet Union proposed a timely solution to the question of recognition of the Mongolian position.

The Soviet Union recognized its duty and declared war on Japan on August 9, 1945, and on the following day, Mongolia also declared war on Japan. Along with some units of the Soviet army, the Mongolian troops dealt a blow to the Kwantung Army and helped to liberate the Chinese nation.

Following the tripartite discussions which led to the declaration of war by the Soviet Union on Japan, talks were held between the Soviet Union and the Chinese Guomindang government. The Prime Minister of the Guomindang government, Sung Hsi-pen, and the foreign minister, Wang Hsi-tze, took part in the discussions. The Soviet government familiarized the Chinese side with the tripartite discussions on safeguarding the independence of Mongolia. The Chinese government responded to this question by agreeing to support Mongolian independence, if the Mongolian people as a whole voted for independence after Japan had been defeated. When the Soviet government invited the Mongolian Prime Minister Marshal Choibalsan to Moscow for an exchange of views, Choibalsan conveyed the thanks of Mongolia's government to the Soviet Union for their thoughtfulness in their discussions with China on the subject of Mongolia.

I, along with some friends, had taken part in the celebrations of the 220th anniversary of the USSR Academy of Sciences. While I was preparing to return home, the Prime Minister of the Mongolian People's Republic, Marshal Choibalsan, sent word through J. Sambuu, our ambassador in Moscow, saying that he wanted to meet me. When I met Choibalsan, he asked me about the anniversary celebrations of the USSR Academy of Sciences and briefly mentioned his own reasons for coming to Moscow. Then he said I could stay and work with him in Moscow. When Choibalsan had concluded his discussions with the Soviet government, a reception was held one evening at which I too was present. The Soviet side included I. V Stalin, V. M Molotov, A. Ya. Vishinskii, and others. On our side Ambassador Sambuu and myself accompanied Choibalsan.

Stalin was talking to Choibalsan before the start of the reception, and turning to him asked jokingly what might happen if a Chinese delegation headed by Sung Hsi-pen was invited to this reception. Choibalsan understood the literal meaning of these words and said, "No need, not necessary." The Soviet comrades standing next to Stalin smiled and Stalin laughed loudly saying "In that case, let's all go and eat," and invited Choibalsan into the reception room.

During the reception, I interpreted for Stalin and Choibalsan, who discussed things of mutual interest and the especially joyful marking of the historically significant end to World War II. They made a toast to friendship between our two countries. Choibalsan raised his glass several times to toast the leadership of the Soviet Party and government, the great Soviet people, the victorious and heroic Soviet Army, and the leading Soviet comrades who were present at the reception. Each time he made a toast, I interpreted for him.

As the reception drew to a close, Stalin turned to me and made a toast, "To old friends," which I felt was a huge reward. For Stalin to call me an old acquaintance he must have remembered when I interpreted for him at the reception for the Mongolian delegation headed by Choibalsan which had donated gifts at the battle front. The next morning Sambuu and I accompanied Choibalsan to a special plane which was leaving for Ulaanbaatar.

The foreign ministers of the Soviet Union and China exchanged communiques in accordance with the climate of the discussions being carried out between the Soviet and Chinese governments on the one hand and the Soviet and Mongolian governments on the other. As mentioned above, the Chinese side said, "If the whole Mongolian people vote for independence, our country will accept this after Japan has surrendered in the war." Since Japanese military power had been hard hit by the Soviet Red Army, and the position of the allied forces and the Chinese army had been judged by the Japanese to be too powerful to fight against, the Japanese government and the senior Japanese military command signaled their surrender on September 2, 1945.

With the Japanese surrender came the end of World War II. Thanks to the even more important changes in international relations and the situation in the Far East which assisted peace, there would soon be freedom from social oppression.

The above-mentioned meetings in the Crimea and the meetings between the Soviet and Chinese governments considered an agreement on the question of the recognition of Mongolian independence. The Presidium of the Baga Khural passed a resolution on October 20, 1945 to conduct a nation-wide plebiscite on the nation's independence.

The preparatory work of the plebiscite was carried out in under a month during

which the Party, government, and public organizations were required to work enormously hard. A Central Public Commission was established to carry out the work. This was headed by Bumtsend, the chairman of the Presidium of the Baga Khural. Tsedenbal, General Secretary of the Central Committee, Secretary Ch. Sürenjav, Central Committee secretary D. Damba, and myself took part as deputies on this commission.

There was a large amount of material connected with the plebiscite, including topics for discussion, which were prepared and printed in Ulaanbaatar and then distributed to other districts. The preparatory work involved over 13,000 meetings held throughout the country in which many thousands of herdsmen, workers, and intellectuals participated. Thousands of letters and telegrams arrived from workers addressed to the Central Commission. The Party and government rallied around, and voting was carried out for the sake of national independence, which clearly everyone was ready to defend.

All men and women who had the right to vote were able to take part in the plebiscite. Each deputy of the Central Commission was responsible for organizing the plebiscite in two aimags. Tsedenbal, General Secretary of the Central Committee, was responsible for Uvs and Khovd aimags. I was responsible for Övörkhangaï and Bayankhongor aimags, where I spent nearly a month. I set off with all the propaganda and information material prepared by the Central Committee and the ballot papers prepared by the Central Commission for the plebiscite.

I conducted seminars in each of the two aimag centers on issues concerning the plebiscite. Also taking part in the seminars were the aimag Party committee, the aimag administration, leading people in the official organizations of the aimag center, those in positions of responsibility, and the leaders of the sum administration. During the seminars for the plebiscite I explained the details of the resolutions and directives originating from the Central Committee and the Central Commission. The working plan for the propaganda program was explained in detail to the households, sums, districts, and official organizations. Subjects for discussion and publicity posters were handed over to responsible individuals.

The process of informing people involved going into each household and discussing and agreeing on the details of the time and place of the voting. The ballot papers for the plebiscite were received from the districts, sums, and households and were counted before noon on October 20. The task was to work out how to report the results to the Central Commission, as there were no telephone communications between the sums, no transport to convey the information, a shortage of people who were qualified to count the ballot papers and other even greater difficulties.

In order to achieve these aims, each district needed to organize the conveyance of the information by örtöö horse-relay. This involved putting the ballot papers in special bags which were strapped to saddles and carried over distances of five to ten kilometers at the fastest gallop possible, when a transfer would then be made to another fresh, saddled horse and the riders would ride as fast as possible to the next örtöö station. Information would be sent by the above method from the districts to the sum centers using temporary örtöö stopping points.

To ensure that all information was sent by motor transport from the sum centers to the aimag centers, all local trucks and passenger vehicles were requisitioned for this work. However, because there were not enough cars in the aimag centers, trucks and passenger cars traveling from Ulaanbaatar to the provinces were also requisitioned for the day. To count the ballot papers, the accountants in the districts, sum, and aimag centers

were mobilized to sit down and count the ballots with the help of their abacuses. For those who were sick, elderly, or otherwise unable to attend to vote, people were specially sent out to them on horseback. Their votes were collected and those who could not write indicated their choice with a thumb-print.

This work, which was demonstrated in seminars, was organized by all sum centers, official places, schools, and households. In order to check and recheck whether this work had been done correctly and commendably or not, the sum leadership traveled around on horseback. When I myself went around the various sums and households of the aimags by passenger car to catch any shortcomings, all the people in charge were informed immediately, where possible by telephone, or else by horse-relay.

On October 20, 1945 the national flag was flown everywhere in Mongolia. Old men and women, and all other adults gathered at 6 am in the appropriate places to cast their votes. People worked to achieve a result by 12 noon in the local districts and by 8 p.m. in the aimag centers. In order to produce a result on the plebiscite in these two aimags, many accountants using abacuses repeatedly checked the preceding results.

The first results had barely reached one hundred per cent when the chief of the aimag communication office came running up to me in a panic, saying that Bumtsend, the chairman of the Central Commission, was on the telephone demanding the results. In order to give these advance results, I myself went to the communication building and shouted down the telephone, "Is anyone there? Can you hear me?" until my voice became hoarse. At 9 p.m. I gave the news to the people in charge at the Ministry of Communications, and by midnight the final confirmed result was reported by telephone to the Central Commission. I set off at night to personally deliver the draft documents from the two aimags.

I left Bayankhongor with the final result and all the confirmatory documents which had been checked and rechecked by many inspectors and were now verified. I passed through Övörkhangai, from whose authorities I took the results and documents, and headed for Ulaanbaatar. The worn smooth tires of the car were punctured several times, which continually delayed us, but we finally arrived and handed over all our materials to the apparatus of the Central Commission.

I signed the document [showing the ballot result] and telephoned Bumtsend at home to inform him about it. Since we believed that the people's plebiscite had been successfully conducted, I had already discussed a plan with the aimag leadership to erect an independence flag pole in the aimag center. This pole was made of several beams connected together, and had been freshly repainted. The total number of voters was displayed in blue and red paint, which were the colors of the national flag. A meeting was held beside it, and many people made speeches there. I. Lamjav, the chairman of the Party committee in Bayankhongor aimag, D. Peljee, the head of the administration, and D. Damdin, the Party chairman in Övörkhangai aimag, were in office at that time. As well as being able to work in a responsible, persistent, and organized way, I was proud to think that the masses had a special enthusiasm for political activities.

Around 12 midnight on the twentieth, the joyful news was announced across the nation. The plebiscite was one hundred per cent complete. The official representative of the Guomindang government, the Deputy Interior Minister, Li Feng-hsien, headed the Chinese group which had come to inspect the voting. They arrived in Ulaanbaatar and visited some places in the city. They realized that the Mongolian people were united in their desire for independence, and returned back home. A Mongolian government dele-

gation headed by Ch. Sürenjav delivered the results of the plebiscite to the Guomindang government. The Guomindang government became aware of this news in early 1946 and agreed to Mongolian independence. Diplomatic relations between the two countries were established on December 13, 1946.

I took a special interest in localities in Bayankhongor and Övörkhangaï aimags, which were noteworthy for their historical figures, and other memorable things. The talented local people demonstrated that they could do amazing things when constructing monasteries, as seen in the remains of the old Galuut Khüree monastery in Bayankhongor aimag center and to the west of it, the Nomon Khaan monastery in Mandal sum, where there were beautiful stone carvings and wooden objects.

For example, two large stone lions had been cast aside at the Nomon Khaan monastery, considered as being of no use. A truck belonging to the Ministry of Transport was passing through there once and took the lions to Ulaanbaatar. They were positioned at the entrance to the main building of the state university where they can still be seen today.

There is some evidence that the two lions were carved in 1880 by a commoner who lived in a sum to the south-west of Bayankhongor aimag center. When we were traveling through there I sent my companion, L. Dugersüren, to that particular household to speak with the sculptor's wife, who confirmed the details and showed him the steel-tipped chisel that her husband had used. Dugersüren made a note of the man's name and patronymic.

After the lions had been installed at the entrance to the university, I wanted to preserve some memory of that herdsman by writing a short article in the newspaper. Dugersüren reassured me that the information about him was somewhere at home and promised to bring it. Sadly, it turned out that he was unable to remember where he had put it.

I learned about memorable historical events from some interesting people I came across in Ulaanbaatar at that time, as well as from the old-timers I had met in the countryside. This knowledge proved to be most useful to me later on. I recorded the social backgrounds and fighting methods of each group of nearly one hundred Partisans who had taken part in the People's Revolution of 1921. I published most of this in *Mongolia in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, which became a useful reference book for writers. I listened to what these people had to say with my research clearly in mind.

From what I had noted down, I gained clear information about pre-Revolutionary Mongolian society and politics, the conditions in the country at the time, relations between the feudal and commoner classes, the trade conducted by Chinese shops in Mongolia, the temples and monasteries, the lifestyle and activities of lamas, and in particular the lives of the official serfs and serf families, the livelihood of the herdsmen, official feudal obligations, the People's Revolutionary Movement, and the main areas in which the above mentioned People's Revolutionary Movement partisans had been active.

The information I discovered about the period before and during the People's Revolution turned out to be most useful. In everyday contacts I listened to people and discussed things while also being confronted with the historical facts behind them. The people who were being drawn into the country's growing political movement were intellectually mature enough to carry on the people's struggle. Although it was clear from the speech of those straightforward, honest and determined people that they were uneducated, there were quite a few people with natural intelligence and talent. Some people

who were working as servants for the feudalists or doing official work for the feudal lords and lamas prior to the revolution also personally took part in Party and government work and in the political campaigns of the early years of the revolution. The information from these participants proved to be very useful for understanding and verifying the material I was studying.

Another event which occurred at that time were the joint resolutions no. 31 and no. 27, respectively passed by the Council of Ministers and the Party Central Committee on May 18, 1945, which stated that all publications and official documents were, from January 1, 1946 onward, to be printed in the new [Cyrillic] alphabet.

As the Soviet Patriotic War came to an end, the supply of a wide range of necessary goods for the ordinary people could be satisfied, and expenditure on the national economy and culture was increased. The national capital, Ulaanbaatar, was adorned by the planting of trees, and subbotniks and other appropriate community work was started. I myself, as rector of the State University, and B. Jargalsaikhan, who was head of the Institute of Science, were appointed to hold joint discussions in Moscow with the USSR Academy of Sciences at the end of 1945 and the beginning of 1946. During that time we learned about the work of several institutes allied to the USSR Academy of Sciences.

It was decided during these discussions that the academy's corresponding member, S. K. Kizelev, would lead an archeological research team to our country. Professor P. V. Pogrel'skii, whose field was agriculture and economics, headed a group to study problems of fodder and pasture, and Academician M. I. Lavrenko and Prof. A. A. Yunatov were also included in the expedition. Prof. I. Efremov was to lead a paleontology expedition about which discussions were in progress.

The agreements were signed after the results of these talks were reported to the respective governments. As our government had agreed to the basis of these discussions, the subsequent agreements were soon signed by both the Academy of Sciences and our Institute of Science. Soviet research teams arrived in our country to carry out the work. There was a shortage of local specialists in these areas, and so the above teams both began to carry out their important work and helped to train local personnel.

While we were in Moscow, we began to make preparations for the establishment of our own Academy of Sciences. We obtained advice about this from the Soviet Academy of Sciences. We met with Academician I. Bardin to discuss the establishment of the future academy. In order to establish an Academy of Sciences we required three things: highly trained cadres, a good laboratory base, and a vigilant attitude from the leadership. These things did not yet exist in our country. Bardin said, "Well, my friends, you should begin by tackling the first two areas, and then you may be able to establish an academy." That turned out to be important and positive advice for the organization of scientific work.

The Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Assistance and other agreements on joint economic and cultural cooperation were signed between Mongolia and the Soviet Union in February 1946. At that time, the Soviet people were recovering from the serious wounds inflicted on them during the Patriotic War. They faced the huge and ubiquitous task of reviving their national economy and expanding the heroic labor force.

Prime Minister Choibalsan was appointed head of the Mongolian government delegation which signed the Treaty of 1946. The delegation also included Tsedenbal, who was General Secretary of the MPRP Central Committee, myself as secretary of the Party Central Committee and rector of the state university, First Deputy Prime Minister

Luvsan, who was sent to Moscow to conduct trade talks, and J. Sambuu the Mongolian ambassador to the Soviet Union.

The Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Assistance and the talks which covered economic and cultural matters led the Soviet Union to offer great assistance in power generation, mining, building, and other sectors of industry in addition to the development of agriculture, farming, culture, science, education, and health care. This assistance resulted in the construction of large projects, one of which was the Trans-Mongolian Railway. Thanks to Soviet aid, industrial production in 1960 was 5.4 times as great as in 1940. During this period there was a considerable growth in agriculture, and by 1959 socialist industrial relations were established in this sector.

During the discussions, I took part in a meeting with I. V. Stalin. At the end of the reception Stalin raised his glass and made a toast "To Shirendev, the Russian language professor who has been interpreting for us!" This was reported in the Soviet press at that time and my Soviet friends said jokingly, "Because Stalin called you 'professor' you had better do your academic work well and become a scholar!" I took that to heart and treated my academic work seriously, eventually becoming a candidate scholar and later on obtaining my doctorate.

The treaty of 1946 strengthened all aspects of joint cooperation and friendship between the Soviet Union and Mongolia. Fraternal relations were also established and developed with the newly democratized nations. Later on, in 1961, our country became a member of the United Nations and was therefore recognized by the international community.

On April 17, 1946 a meeting of the Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party passed a resolution about political and educational work in the nation. At this meeting of the MPRP Central Committee, it was noted that during the twenty-five years of independence, there had been a great increase in political awareness among the working population. While commending the degree of literacy and general education among the population and this great increase in work activity, some shortcomings which were detrimental to the further cultural advancement of the labor force were emphasized. The statistics showing the lack of success in teaching of the new alphabet to adults was an example cited for criticism. This resolution was passed with the aim of rectifying the deficiencies in politics, education, and increasing knowledge of the new alphabet.

The first subbotnik intended to make the capital city look more attractive was organized on June 15, 1946, and was attended by leading figures. In the same year, a resolution was passed to protect state and public property and property owned by collectives.

On August 13, 1946 the 51st Resolution of the Council of Ministers stated that Mongolia would try to join the United Nations, and that the Mongolian government had appointed its sovereign representative Tsedenbal to be its delegate to the United Nations.

On April 5 1946 a gathering was held in the main square in Ulaanbaatar for the ceremonial unveiling of the Sükhbaatar monument. On May 3, 1946 a gathering of workers was held in Sükhbaatar square during which G. K. Zhukov and R. Ya. Malinovskii were made honorary citizens of Ulaanbaatar and presented with certificates. When Marshal R. Ya. Malinovskii came on a visit to the Mongolian State University, he donated some classroom equipment and planted a commemorative tree.

The social sciences faculty of the state university was opened in 1947. The Party

Central Committee discussed the situation of literature and the arts and passed a resolution concerning these areas. In 1945, 1946, and 1947 I published several articles in books and in the press about the role of the Party in doctrine, propaganda, culture, education, and the arts. At a meeting of Ulaanbaatar intellectuals held on January 17, 1948, there was a discussion about fulfilling the task of developing the nation's economy and culture, as laid down in the First Five-Year Plan following the conclusions of the 11th MPRP Ikh Khural.

At the meeting, I presented a report on my assignment entitled, "The Results of the Eleventh Party Congress and the Duties of Intellectuals." Included in this report were the tasks of the rural intellectuals, and the tasks of intellectuals in the areas of technology, trade, health care, and in the education of the masses. Ways to direct the duties of intellectuals in science, art, and literature were clarified and focused upon.

Valuable contributions to the development of the arts were made by Ts. Tsegmid, a leading talented artist of our stage, who played the cruel Chinese warlord Hsiu Shu-chang and various Mongolian feudal lords, N. Tsegmid, who played the Bogd Khan, D. Tserendulam, who played the Bogd's wife, D. Bat-Ochir, who played greedy Chinese traders, J. Luvsanjav, who portrayed lamas in real-life situations, E. Sharavdoo and Ch. Dolgorüren, who skillfully played Mongolian women, and the famous people's singers, J. Dorjdagva and D. Ichinkhorloo.

Others who began to be well-known at that time included the actors O. Renchinorov, the singers Tsogzolmaa and A. Zagdsüren, and the poets E. Oyuun, S. Genden, and L. Vangan. Circus arts were developed by the composers J. Radnaabazar and L. Natsag and the clown D. Danzan. The personal artistic achievements of the talented people's artists J. Man'badar and Y. Yadamsüren, and the contemporary merited personalities G. Odon, L. Gavaa, D. Choidog, O. Tsevegjav, and the musical composers B. Damdinsüren, S. Gonchigsumlaa, L. Mördorj, Ch. Chuluun and others, made a great contribution to the developing arts.

In 1948, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the death of Sükhbaatar, several places in the country were named after him. These included the State Publishing House, the capital's Number 2 Middle School, the Fifth District, the electricity generating station, and the spa at Khujirt.

After taking classes in Russian, Soviet, Ancient Greek, Roman, and European literature at the teacher training college in Irkutsk, I became interested in literature and wanted to meet our own writers. I read the plays "Ayuush" by D. Sengee and "Zam" by Ch. Oidov, and when I gave the authors my opinions they accepted them gratefully and asked me to re-read the revisions they had written. I met with Ch. Chimed, D. Sengee, and Ch. Lkhamsüren on several occasions.

In 1948, at the First Congress of Mongolian Writers, Ch. Lodoidamba, B. Baldoo and I produced a joint report on the situation in Mongolian literature. The report included the aims of the period in question and the classification and listing of different types of literature. It turned out, however, that I was not to present this report at the Writers' Congress. It was presented by L. Dügersüren, a departmental head in the Party Central Committee. I will discuss my dismissal from my position later in this book.

The Fifth Congress of Mongolian Trade Unions elected me a member of the plenum of the Central Council of the Trade Unions. I was also elected a member of the Party Central Committee. At the plenum, I was elected candidate member and secretary of the Politburo.

While I was doing these jobs, on March 24, 1948, the Politburo of the Central Committee held a meeting to discuss Kh. Choibalsan's report on me. After my dismissal as secretary of the Central Committee, I remained a candidate member of the Politburo and continued to work as rector of the state university.

In the above resolution I was criticized for an unfounded attack on the Soviet specialist and government adviser S. P. Volozhaninov. While attending a meeting of the academic council of the Mongolian State University, B. Rinchen had made an attack on the Soviet specialist, which I allowed to pass without comment. It was pointed out that I was starting to deviate from the Party line regarding the nation's foreign policy. Apparently, when I carried out the decisions made by the Party's Tenth Congress on propaganda work, I did so with a hopeless lack of enthusiasm, and gave priority only to education. Ch. Sürenjav, a member of the Party Central Committee Politburo said I was attacking the Central Committee. In this way I was hit by an ocean wave.

Although I wanted to ask my experienced friends for help, some of them had been careful to join in blaming me. Many others were cautious and afraid of getting involved. For example, when discussing the deficiencies in trade and agriculture, some of the leading people who were responsible for these areas repeatedly blamed the difficulties on poor propaganda. Although I might have been responsible for the shortcomings of the propaganda, this was not the reason for the lack of increase in livestock numbers, nor for the difficult climatic conditions at the time.

The resolution actually had an adverse effect on this matter. For example, the official policy on the state procurement of basic agricultural products was carried out from 1941 onwards. When considering the number of livestock available at that time, the procurement of wool, meat, and milk by the state at extremely low prices impaired labor initiatives in the economy, and also hindered the growth in livestock numbers.

At receptions, I sometimes took part in heated discussions about my work which was not being properly appraised. Considering what I was being blamed for, it appeared that my name was being linked to mistakes which had been made by others. The things I had said in error were at that time in fact true. Choibalsan's adviser Volozhaninov was disgusted when he heard about the matter. "There are things which you and I disagree on," he said. "That's obvious from everything that has happened," I replied.

As far as Sürenjav was concerned, he had been dismissed from his position as Second Secretary of the Party Central Committee. While he was working as First Deputy Prime Minister with responsibility for agriculture, he had stated that the main shortcomings in agriculture were due to the poor quality of Central Committee propaganda, to which I replied, "You have tried to cover up the deficiencies in the work which you are directly responsible for by putting most of the blame on the Central Committee." All of this reached Choibalsan's ears through different channels. Choibalsan was appalled by it and, without making his own involvement known, passed a Politburo resolution. This resolution also mentioned, among other things, that rules were not being followed when cadres were being assigned to their posts.

Apparently I had been paying attention to attracting, as far as possible, highly literate, trained people into the field of work I was in charge of, along with those who were related to certain accused workers. For example, B. Rinchen, L. Dendev and Ts. Dorj were appointed respectively as professors of Mongolian, Manchu, and Tibetan at the university. I considered that the rebuke came from the Party, and while carefully improving my work I kept an ear open for signs of my impending arrest.

Later, the accusers seemed to realize the validity of my position. I had not yet been dismissed from my position as a candidate member of the Politburo of the Party Central Committee when, in 1952, during the first elections of the Ikh Khural, I was elected one of its deputies. When the composition of the government was being decided at that congress, Choibalsan called me over and told me that the following day the Ikh Khural would confirm that I would be appointed Minister of Education while still working as rector of the state university.

As my eternal worship of Choibalsan had weakened a little, I told him directly, "The job at the Ministry is a lot worse. Will my move to that position provide another excuse to blame me even more?" Choibalsan's face darkened and he fell silent. Then he told me angrily to come and see him at a certain time the following day.

I spent the day deep in thought about my inevitable arrest the next day. In the morning, without a word to my wife, I put on some quite warm clothing and went to Choibalsan's office at the appointed time. Choibalsan was in a pleasant mood that day and said, "You were wrong to speak so impertinently yesterday. I know you have a quick temper, but I still think you should not say such things. In a few minutes' time the Ikh Khural will commence and we could appoint you Minister of People's Education." (Choibalsan always used to say "that could be done," "this could be done" and other similar expressions.)

During this conversation I was determined to raise several issues. These were that the decent teachers who had been forced into the army should be returned to their teaching posts, that teacher-training in the higher and middle schools should be extended, and that teachers' salaries should be raised as an incentive for them. Choibalsan said, "You should start work. After you have learned about the work done in schools, think up some questions." "All right Marshal, I will do my best in this work," I replied, and I was duly appointed Minister of Education.

After Choibalsan's death in 1953, I was appointed as the Prime Minister's deputy in charge of culture, and in 1954 I became First Deputy Prime Minister. At the Twelfth Congress of the MPRP, held in December 1954, I was elected a member of the Party Central Committee. At its plenum I was elected a full member of the Central Committee and Politburo. When I was elected First Deputy Prime Minister, the government advisor S. P. Volozhaninov, who had earlier argued with me, actually expressed his gratitude, or so I heard later. When the Mongolian-Soviet Friendship Society was established in 1951, I was elected its president.

During the years from 1944 to 1957, I had been secretary of the Party Central Committee for four years, candidate and full member of the Politburo of the Party Central Committee for three years, was elected a member of the Central Committee on eight occasions, and was member of the State Baga Khural. Up to 1981 I had been elected a deputy of the Ikh Khural on ten different occasions.

I had been working on laying the foundations of a state university for nine years. The resolutions of the Tenth [Party] Congress were carried out in our country. The rural economy was transformed to meet the requirements of the Second World War, and further measures were taken to develop the culture and education of the masses.

One of the most important measures taken during this difficult period was the establishment of the Mongolian State University. In the beginning, the university had about ninety students and a small number of lecturers, who were housed in a small two-story building, now the Yugoslav embassy.

On September 1, 1944 the Politburo of the MPRP passed its 85th and 56th resolutions which appointed me as the first rector of the state university. No rector had previously been appointed. The academic departments were directed by the Soviet Buryat teacher N. Ivanov with N. Chimeddamba as director of finances.

When I took up my post as rector of the state university, my orientation in the job was based on what I had learned during my years of study at a Soviet college. When I reflected on my years of study in Irkutsk, I realized I had only a rough grasp of student work and no knowledge of how to lead and manage teachers and workers. I could only appreciate things from the other side [i.e. from a student's point of view].

Nevertheless, I started work in our first institute of higher education, and while supervising certain problems which arose from the first year's activities, I improved the students' knowledge of Russian and I strove to undertake specialist courses. I also mastered the basics of Marxist-Leninism, and met with the students for talks on questions relating to student morals and to inquire about which areas of their studies they found interesting. In conjunction with the university's Party and Youth League organizations, [faculty] deans, course directors and class leaders, we planned and carried out many aspects of university work.

When organizing that work, as the students were living in far away corners of the city and even in gers, the way the students conducted themselves in public was adapted to suit the situation at the time. The university employed teachers from the Soviet Union such as S. I. Khromov, S. I. Abakumov,¹ L. S. Kashtanov, I. B. Veitsman, G. I. Krylov, A. G. Bannikov, V. N. Klyueva, V. I. Garin, A. A. Yunatov, E. M. Murzaev, S. N. Anfilogov, and others. When I began to organize the working of the university, I was supported and advised by Soviet specialists. The people who helped me to lead the organization of all the university work, including the teaching of courses, were friends of mine who had gained experience during their many years of teaching in various university departments in Moscow, Kiev, and Voronezh.

In addition to teaching the courses required by the university administration, the lecturers also passed on their own values to the students, and gave talks on student education and lifestyle. The students were also familiarized with new research in each lecturer's own individual field of academic work. Much academic research work was carried out among these students. Writers and leading industrial workers were invited to the university to give the students talks about their particular careers.

The work was mainly carried out among the students by the first Mongolian lecturers, in particular Sh. Luvsanvandan and B. Rinchen, who taught grammar, Ts. Damdinsüren, who taught literature, and I myself, who taught world history.

We had all learned the Russian language well and mastered teaching methods from the Soviet lecturers. Furthermore, we used these skills when teaching in the universities and middle schools and paid attention to turning out highly-trained cadres. The progress and conclusion of the Soviet Patriotic War and the international situation occupied an important place in the teaching. Ch. Natsag, an honest, straightforward character, was an outstanding organizer and became a much-respected senior figure in the education of the people. His name should have a place in the history of the university for his great and unending work to improve its resources. Particularly noteworthy was his role

¹ The philologist Sergei Ivanovich Abakumov (1890-1949) spent most of his career teaching Russian in Kazan.

in the construction of the first main building, and the satisfactory provision of the best possible standard of accommodation for teachers and students.

In addition to these activities, which were being conducted among the students, the university administration was left to sort out problems such as determining the type of course in each faculty, the time allocated to it, the writing of course syllabi in Russian and Mongolian, the preparation and distribution to the best of our ability of text books, reference materials and visual aids, which were valuable resources for the lecturers and students in each course, and the basic problem of implementing the correct timetable for the classes.

When this work was being carried out, the deputy rectors of the university, S. I. Khromov, S. M. Popov, D. T. Kokorev, and I. K. Kuz'min, instilled the university with their own experience, and offered great assistance in the training of Mongolian teachers. Those who should be mentioned as having made a great contribution to the further development of the university from around 1950 included D. Tsevegmid, the deputy rector in charge of university courses, the physics lecturers N. Sodnom and D. Batsuur² who were among the first graduates, the mathematics lecturers S. Dashiimaa and L. Shagdar, the senior veterinarian Ts. Toivgoo, the chemist D. Dashjamts, the linguist T. Pagva, the economist Ch. Sereeter, the agricultural specialists P. Shinjee and D. Gonchig, and other associates of mine who should be noted for their individual contributions to the further development of the university.

It was even more important to try to retain those graduates who had studied well by making them lecturers. However, it was not easy to overcome the difficulty posed by the leading organizations, ministries, and departments, which fought over the good graduates.

Whenever I myself went to Moscow, I would go along to the Soviet Committee on Higher Education and meet with its chairman, S. Kaftanov, his deputy and the heads of departments. I used to bring back text books, reference materials and visual aids on certain important course subjects. I also met with Professor I. S. Galkin, the principal of Moscow University, and I became personally acquainted with a faculty similar to the one at our own university, and its departmental work.

As for the university faculties which we had but they did not, I became acquainted with the departmental work of the faculties of the Moscow colleges of medicine, veterinary science, agriculture, and teacher training, from which I also obtained text books and reference materials for our university library. Afterwards, I met with S. I. Vavilov,² who had become rector of Moscow State University, and I obtained some advice and books from him. His younger brother, N. I. Vavilov was a famous biologist who was wrongly purged during the Stalinist era. Later, I met with the former on two occasions after he had become President of the Soviet Academy of Sciences.

With the help of the Soviet teachers who were working in our university, the text books which I had brought back were adapted and improved to suit the prevailing conditions in our country. Furthermore, we obtained ideas from related ministries and departments, had the academic advisers discuss them, and then obtained ratification from the Ministry of Education. The social sciences course was, however, ratified by either the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee or by the advisers of the Secretaries of

² Sergei Ivanovich Vavilov (1891-1951) was world-famous for his many contributions to our knowledge of physics.

the Central Committee.

The MPRP Central Committee and the government paid great attention to Mongolia's first university, and leading figures personally took part in the final examinations, university meetings, and at the fifth and tenth anniversaries of the founding of the university. Their most important speeches had become significant for the activities of the university.

While I was working with the many professional lecturers, it was clear from the beginning that they all had the required knowledge which, as time went by, was also demanded of me. Therefore, I had to read the specialist textbooks and simplified reference materials on medicine, veterinary medicine, animal husbandry, zootechnology, farming, and other areas. This proved useful in my further university work. I also attended lectures in those subjects.

Within six months, I sat for the national examinations, which to some extent strengthened my understanding of these subjects.

At a special ceremony on January 4, 1946, the first foundation stone of the building of the state university was laid by Choibalsan and others. We marked our entry into the new university building with a ceremony on November 3 1946, which I opened with a speech.

As the Red Army fought increasingly hard to free the Motherland and the oppressed peoples of Europe from Hitler's yoke, the old universities, libraries, and museums of Europe were saved from destruction. At a time when many thousands of the best people in research, art, and culture have been rescued from Hitler's hell, we too have come to have a university.

I ended my remarks by observing that we were now in that university's building.

Choibalsan gave a speech at the first graduation ceremony of the university, held on June 29, 1946. On September 27, I read a report at a meeting which was held concerning the 1947-1948 academic year. By that time, the number of students at the university had reached 800. Of the forty-seven students who gained higher professional diplomas at the second graduation in 1947, there were seventeen zootechnicians, sixteen teachers and fourteen senior medical doctors. Despite the initially small number of university graduates, their practical ability clearly showed that they were of a high academic standard.

The tenth anniversary of the state university was held on October 24, 1952, in the National Theater building. The leading figures in our country took part in it. As university rector, I reported that there were 276 different courses across all the faculties of the university. We had 1200 students in thirty-two departments. At the seventh graduation ceremony, there were 513 graduates, including eighty-six physicians, thirty technicians, eighty-eight mathematics/physics teachers, fifty-four history teachers, and thirty-six economists, all of whose names were published in the press. Many colleges were established following the founding of our first college [university].

On October 10, 1946, a resolution of the MPRP Central Committee and Council of Ministers brought about the establishment of a commission to write the history of the MPR. I was asked to lead this commission. Soviet Mongolists and a group of our historians took part in this work, which was first published in Russian in 1954 and later published in Mongolian. The Presidium of the USSR Academy of Sciences held an open conference in connection with the publication in Moscow of the first volume of the his-

tory that year. The conference was chaired by the president of the USSR Academy of Sciences, Academician N. A. Nesmeyanov. Leading scholars of the Academy of Sciences took part, along with many directors and specialists of its subordinate institutes of history.

During the writing of the text, I initially acted as chairman of the organizing committee for our side, and later became editor-in-chief of the project. The editor-in-chief on the Soviet side was Academician B. D. Grekov.³ The editing of the work for the Soviets was done by Ye. M. Zhukov who gave a short report and answered questions put to him by the Presidium of the USSR Academy of Sciences. I then made a speech on behalf of the Mongolian editorial committee. [In this speech I mentioned that] Volume one of the *History of the MPR* was the first product of the collaboration between the scholars of the two countries. Soviet academicians and corresponding members took part in the work. References in Mongolian, Russian, and other languages were gathered and studied from a specialist viewpoint. This summary of Mongolian history from ancient times up to the present day was regarded as a significant piece of academic research. I expressed my gratitude to the energetic Mongolian scholars and their helpful Soviet friends for writing the work.

In addition, the Soviet and Mongolian scholars who together wrote many detailed volumes of the history and other works, proposed ideas for other projects. At that time, our historians who were afraid of some kind of coercion, were deficient in the requirements, practice, and organization needed for independently-minded writing. However unsatisfactory the work was at the beginning, it became the new center piece of our historiography, and undoubtedly was of help later on when mistakes in it were corrected and other histories were written.

When writing the details of Mongolian history, we considered that it was important to pay close attention to supplementary texts in Mongolian, Russian, and Chinese. We exchanged ideas with our Soviet colleagues, and in order to allow the participation of other historians in this work, we decided to approach the Chinese. They too were interested in taking part in this work, and we were informed later that the historians Wang Tushien and Hang Chu-ling had been appointed.

A delegation led by Ch. Sürenjav took part in the fifth anniversary of the founding of the Republic of Czechoslovakia. The two of us set off for Prague on April 26, 1950. On our arrival we were received by Rudolf Slánský, chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and by Prime Minister Antonín Zápotocký. They expressed their thanks to the MPRP and the Mongolian government and her people for sending the delegation, and gave their good wishes for success and prosperity. Afterwards, we were received by the chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and Kliment Gottwald, the president of Czechoslovakia, with whom we had some close discussions.

They were interested in Mongolia and asked us about the nation's economic and cultural development. Furthermore, after Bogumir Shmeral, the leader of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, had attended our Party's Ninth Congress on behalf of the Comintern, he had told them some very interesting things about Mongolia, which they mentioned in quite some detail. He talked in particular about the establishment of the

³ Boris Dmitrievich Grekov (1882-1953) became a member of the USSR Academy of Sciences in 1935 and wrote many works on Russian history, including one on the fall of the Golden Horde.

Czechoslovak Republic and the aggressive policies of imperialist countries, and pointed out the significance of the coalescence of the Soviet-led world union of socialist countries. He obviously had the qualities to become a famous figure in the world Communist movement.

On behalf of the MPRP Central Committee, the government, and Prime Minister Choibalsan, Sürenjav offered greetings and good wishes to the friendly people of Czechoslovakia, the government, leaders of the Party Central Committee, and to the executive member of the Comintern, Kliment Gottwald. Sürenjav had brought some gifts in the form of Mongolian deel and hats for K. Gottwald, A. Zápotocký, and several other Czechoslovak leaders. After they had dressed up in these clothes, we had our picture taken together. I translated what Sürenjav had said into Russian for the benefit of Zápotocký and the others.

During the anniversary celebrations, as rector of our university I met with the Czechoslovak Minister of Education and the president of the Academy of Sciences, Professor Zdenek Nedelyi, and the Minister of Information and Culture, Vaclav Kopetski. They explained in detail the work of their academy and this ministry of which they were the leaders. I also visited the Karl University of Prague, and in addition to learning about its work, I attended a graduation ceremony there which was based on the medieval traditions of a European university. I wrote two articles entitled "Czechoslovakia on the Road to Socialism" and "The Rise of the New Culture in Czechoslovakia."

In March 1951 I went as a representative to the Second Regular Conference of the Labor Party of Hungary, where I met the secretary of the Central Committee, Mátiás Rákosi, as well as other leading figures. I conveyed greetings from the MPRP Central Committee to the Central Committee of the Hungarian Communist Party, and to the government and the people.

Rákosi had been in Siberia during the Civil war, and in 1920-1921 spent some time near Ar Khiagt. He talked about the situation in Mongolia during that period in a very knowledgeable way. The leader of the English Communist Party, Harry Pollitt, and others were among the delegates at the Hungarian Labor Party Conference. We met with them at the Margitsiget Hotel, where we were staying. During free intervals at the conference they asked us about Mongolia and talked to us about their Party. I wrote an article on the Second Conference of the Hungarian Labor Party entitled "My Visit to Hungary" which was printed in *Ünen*.