

## **My Involvement in the Education of our People**

As mentioned above, after the initial assembly following the first elections of the Ikh Khural, I took my place in the government as Minister of Education. For the first time, delegations from the fraternal democratic nations attended the anniversary celebrations held on July 11, 1951, which was the thirtieth anniversary of the People's Revolution. The leading figures of the time received foreign delegations, and the first major steps were taken by the government to conduct discussions with those countries and strengthen relations with them.

Those who took part included the deputy chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet, M. P. Tarasov, the Bulgarian Minister of Health P. Kolarov (son of V. Kolarov), the Bulgarian ambassador to Moscow and Ulaanbaatar, Stela Blagoeva (daughter of the famous revolutionary Dmitrii Balgovev), the chairman of the Council of Hungarian Trade Unions, Fozher Kharushtyak, the East German deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Anton Ackermann, the deputy Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia, Zdenek Fierlinger, and representatives of other countries. As a member of the Naadam Commission, I familiarized the delegations of these popular democracies with a description of Ulaanbaatar and arranged entertainment for them at a rural household in Songino [just southwest of Ulaanbaatar].

A genuinely high standard of political and propaganda activities was carried out at the thirtieth anniversary of the People's Revolution. The delegations which had arrived from the Soviet Union and other socialist countries sent their congratulations and good wishes on behalf of their Parties, governments, and peoples. This became a sign of friendship and fraternal relations based on the mass proletarian internationalism of the socialist countries.

At that time, the Ministry of Education was primarily involved in teaching reading and writing to the ordinary people, with the aim of raising their general standard of education and political knowledge. It was also in charge of many other different activities, including aimag clubs, "red corners" attached to sums and other official organizations, local cinemas, theaters, literary and art clubs, sporting competitions, and political and scientific lectures and talks.

From 1947 onwards, we had a duty to establish complete literacy among the population and particularly among those people aged sixteen to forty. Reading circles and temporary schools were organized in official buildings and factories in Ulaanbaatar and in aimag centers, sums, and districts where both young people and adults were widely encouraged to participate in reading and writing.

In 1952, literacy was achieved by all thirteen to fifteen-year old children in Dornod aimag, and by 1954 it was thought that the majority of adults in our country were literate.

Around that time, the Ministry of Education was simultaneously in charge of both the people's education and educational enlightenment. After my graduation from

the teacher training college in Irkutsk I gained a grasp of educational theory, and having been in charge of educational work in the MPRP Central Committee, I felt I understood the orientation of work in this ministry. However, after being appointed to perform a higher role in this ministry, starting in, as it were, at the "deep end of life," it became extremely clear that, in the main, my knowledge was grossly inadequate.

The directors of the aimag clubs were brought together in Ulaanbaatar, and a seminar was held on political and general education. After the ministry of education had made further adjustments to their clear job descriptions, they headed back to their local areas. Music and theater groups were revived under the direction of the aimag clubs, and the participation of talented youth and intellectuals was encouraged in these areas.

There was a revival of music and theater groups directed by aimag clubs. Talented young people and intellectuals were extensively encouraged to participate in these groups. With the help of art managers, art committees and theater workers, the standard of plays and concert performances in the aimag clubs was improved. Performers were sent to perform in local areas and were appointed to local music groups to carry out instructional activities. In addition to the aimag centers, mobile cinemas were sent out to the sums and districts. The "red corners" in the sums were turned into propaganda centers where work was carried out to attract those intellectuals working in schools and in the medical and veterinary services.

A start was made in organizing activities such as volley ball, athletic races, chess and draughts, and painting. In addition, lectures were given on health matters, hygiene, and civilized behavior. Propaganda posters were displayed in "red corners" and picture posters were painted and photographic exhibitions organized with help from the Arts Management Committee and the Ministry of Education.

The clubs and "red corners" were not always housed in buildings suitable for all these activities. There was a shortage of musical instruments and films which had been made in Mongolia or translated into Mongolian. We were also confronted by a lack of equipment and cinema technicians even though the MPRP Central Committee and the government had allowed an appropriate amount of expenditure for these things in the estimated state budget.

In 1954, kindergartens were established in Arkhangai, Bulgan, Gobi-Altai, Zavkhan, Töv, Uvs, and Övörkhangai aimags. All this work was carried out by one deputy minister in the Ministry of Education, with help from a few other people.

The most important role of the Ministry of Education was the provision of leadership for primary and middle schools, specialist training schools, and for the state university. I myself had assisted in the administration of the state university, and it was quite feasible to coordinate that work with the work of the Ministry of Education. However, many difficulties were encountered in strengthening the common material base of the technical colleges and related ministries and in the formulation of clear objectives for the careers of the graduates of these colleges.

There was a great shortage of primary and middle school teachers, and the standard of their teaching was inadequate. The teaching methods used by the teachers were unsupervised, and in addition to the very unsatisfactory teaching materials used in the schools, the buildings and accommodations of the middle schools of the aimag towns and the rural primary schools were insufficient as well. The majority of schools held their lessons in felt gers, which was where the pupils were also accommodated.

The private [non-collectivized] herding families had no wish to send their chil-

dren to school for an education. They preferred to keep them at home to herd the animals and do household chores. They resisted any possible enrollment of their children into the schools, and many problems arose when they used various excuses to remove their children from school.

In October 1951 the school year began with the leaders of the aimag education departments and the staff of the Ministry of Education holding a meeting to present a report on improving the educational standard of pupils and the work of teachers. In order to raise the professional standard of the teachers and the educational attainment of pupils, the resources of the famous educationalists were used to a great extent. Education workers taught teachers and students using the theories and wisdom of the famous Soviet and Polish educationalists K. Ushinskii, A. Makarenko,<sup>1</sup> and Jan Amos Kaminskii. In 1952, a teacher training institute was established in Ulaanbaatar and teacher training schools with 60 places each were opened in Dornod and Arkhangai aimags. These provided enough trained cadres to teach the primary schools which opened in 1951.

Of the 115 teachers with further education, seven headed education departments, twelve were head teachers of middle schools, and sixteen contributed greatly to improving the working of the Ten-Year middle schools. All the school programs were re-inspected during the 1951-1952 academic year. Several new directives were produced on school inspection regulations, student committees, parent-teacher associations, and on the problems of teaching and finance in the schools. During this academic year, five different middle school text books and six different primary school books were published. At the same time, the principle key workers in the ministry of education examined all aspects of the work of 249 schools.

The 1952 plan for schools envisaged a 15 per cent increase, and it was planned to double the number of major school buildings. In 1952 there was a forty per cent reduction in the number of pupils who left school prematurely compared with 1951. During 1951, new Ten-Year schools were established in Ömnögobi and Sүkhbaatar aimags and in Ulaanbaatar, in 1952 in Bayankhongor, Dundgobi, and Gobi-Altai, and in 1954 in Arkhangai, Bayan Өlgii, Khövsgöl, and Ulaanbaatar.

Teachers were also sent on both long and short professional training courses. Books and pamphlets were published and the quality of teaching journals was raised to improve their knowledge and teaching methods. These methods reflected the experience of teachers in the Soviet Union and other countries.

As well as having good classroom teachers, it was important to have good text books and source materials to reinforce the lessons taught to the students and to broaden their knowledge. Ensuring a satisfactory supply of text books for the widely established Eight-Year and Ten-Year middle schools in local areas was a brand-new problem which we had to face. With this aim in mind, text books and other publications were printed within the country and at the same time several dozen titles were translated and printed in the Soviet Union.

I met with the USSR Minister of Education and the president of the Academy of Educational Sciences [to discuss such matters]. When we requested that middle school teachers (in particular, Russian language teachers) be invited from the Soviet Union, new

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<sup>1</sup> Anton Semēnovich Makarenko, born in 1888, graduated from the Poltava Teachers' Institute in 1917. From 1920 until 1937 he was engaged in various experimental self-education schemes within labor camps and other organizations under the control of the OGPU and its successor, the NKVD. He died on April 1, 1939.

text books be translated and printed in Mongolian, and these explanatory books for students and hand books for teachers be provided, it was all done in the name of the Ministry of Education.

The teachers who arrived from the Soviet Union in response to our appeal were highly qualified and experienced, and not disheartened by the difficult conditions in the countryside. These people came and applied their efforts to providing our schools with great help and expertise. As we were more determined than ever to educate our pupils on our own, in addition to classes taught by teachers, much attention was paid to the Pioneer and youth organizations and to duties which could be carried out by parents as appropriate.

In resolution 281/75 of the Council of Ministers and the Party Central Committee, which was passed on August 8, 1952, the schools which were educating young children were to begin teaching Marxist-Leninist doctrine. This task was put to the teachers by the People's Education establishments. In order to fulfill this resolution, the People's Ministry of Education sent its ideas on joint cooperation to the aimag Party committees, Party cells, the Presidium of the aimag Baga Khural, and the sum administration. The aim was to raise the standard of learning and the quality of knowledge of the students, to rectify the situation of students being held back a year at school, to provide practical help for hygiene, civilized living, and the development of sports and physical education. To improve the leadership in the schools it was decided to put the following suggestions to the Central Committee and government:

- The director and classroom teachers in ten-year schools are to have not less than two years' working experience, and will be graduates of institutes.
- The director and classroom teachers in seven-year schools are to have not less than two years' working experience, and will be graduates of institutes.
- The teachers in primary schools will have worked for not less than three years and will be appointed after they have completed their training at a teacher-training college (tekhnikum).
- The inertia existing in school teaching practices is to be ended and the assignment of professionally qualified teachers to other non-teaching work is to be halted (and teachers are to be required to teach for not less than four years in any one school).
- The head teacher, school director, classroom teachers and the director of the aimag education department will hold an annual meeting. The teachers in primary and seven-year schools are to hold seminars to improve their teaching skills.
- To satisfy the schools' requirements, the People's Ministry of Education is to increase recruitment to and graduation from the teacher training colleges every year.
- Quality circles are to be organized on a wide scale to improve the knowledge of school pupils.
- Three million tögrög are to be spent every year on rural school buildings and accommodations.
- In order to improve the provision of teaching resources in the gobi, teachers in the gobi are to receive a 5% increase in salary.
- The Council of Ministers will determine the level of salary for the directors and classroom teachers of middle schools.
- Important steps are to be taken at the office of the Presidium of the Ikh Khural to award medals to those energetic, dedicated teachers who have given many years' continuous service in education work.
- Two-story buildings are to be constructed to accommodate ten-year schools in the centers of Gobi-Altai, Zavkhan, Bayan Ölgii, and Bayankhongor aimags, and accommodation for sixty pupils are to be built at seven-year schools at Taishir in Gobi-Altai, Delüün in Bayan Ölgii,

Övörkhangaï aimag center, Guchin Us sum, Delgertsogt in Dundgobi, and Binder in Khentii. Materials for the repair of school buildings sufficient for all aimags in 1952 was supplied during February and March.

When organizing the solutions to the above-mentioned problems in education, much attention was paid to training school inspectors and raising their qualifications and practical ability. An experiment which was carried out at the school in Erdene sum of Töv aimag was given as an example in the article "Baitsaagchnar" [The Inspectors].

The employees of the apparatus of the Ministry of Education and the staff of the rural and urban departments conducted inspections on their own, in pairs, or in groups to assess the state of preparation at the time of the winter and spring examinations. They asked questions about classroom instruction and educational methods, and issued directives on school work.

The first National Conference of Head Teachers was convened in Ulaanbaatar on August 11, 1952. The Minister of People's Education presented a report entitled "Concerning the Aims of Improving Education in Schools." There was ratification of the regulations concerning Pupils' Councils in middle schools and parent-teacher associations in primary, seven-year and ten-year schools. The MPRP Central Committee decided to establish a training course in the 1953/54 school year for Russian-language teachers attached to the National Teachers' Institute.

A resolution of the Council of Ministers on April 30, 1953, allowed teachers to be examined and awarded primary or middle school teaching qualifications. In addition, a decree was issued by the Presidium of the Ikh Khural on May 15, 1953 entitled "Concerning the Awards and Medals of the MPR to be Conferred on Outstanding and Reliable Teachers of Many Years' Standing." The Minister of Education of Mongolia issued the 171st directive on July 27, 1953, which mandated various important measures, including issuing booklets entitled "Instructions on Teaching Methods in Schools" and "Instructions on Teachers' Leadership in the Classroom."

While this work was being carried out, my continual reading of works on new Soviet educational theory, journals, newspapers and texts which demonstrated the most advanced teaching practices, proved to be of great help for educational work at that time. In addition, the Soviet specialists and advisers who were working in our Ministry of Education and some Soviet teachers who were working in the teacher training college, technical colleges and some middle schools, all assisted us greatly with their knowledge and experience. Those teachers of long-standing experience who had clearly demonstrated their improved qualifications also helped our Ministry of Education to achieve its aims. Our Party Central Committee, the Council of Ministers, and local Party, government, and Youth League organizations paid attention to and assisted with the work of the educational organizations.

At that time, there were few people with a middle school education in the country, let alone a higher education. This meant that it was important to send qualified teachers to educate the pupils and other young people and to involve the Youth League and Pioneer organizations on a large scale. As well as teaching pupils during normal lessons and outside school, the teachers, with help from the Youth League and Pioneers, organized sporting competitions in volleyball, football, chess, draughts etc. They were also concerned with those children who displayed talent in art and literature by forming groups for these activities.

They also carried out a significant amount of work in promoting proficiency in household activities such as sewing and livestock herding in addition to organizing the proper utilization of children's free time. Nowadays, the parents of children are all educated and it should be possible for them to carry out educational activities for their children to a greater extent than was done previously.

While I was Minister of Education I had the opportunity to accompany Tsedenbal to the celebrations of the second anniversary of the founding of the German Democratic Republic. Around this time we met with the leader of the German Communist Party, leading figures in the international communist movement, and with Wilhelm Pieck, a member of the executive committee of the Comintern.

In January 1952, Marshal Choibalsan, Prime Minister of Mongolia and member of the Politburo of the MPRP Central Committee passed away. A countrywide state of mourning was proclaimed. It took a long time to resolve the question of whom to appoint as Prime Minister, and there was disagreement among the members of the Politburo. D. Damba, myself and others supported the idea of appointing Tsedenbal. Tsedenbal had worked in the Party and government leadership with Choibalsan for over a decade. He had gained great expertise and higher qualifications in finance and economics. In accordance with a decision of the MPRP Central Committee, Tsedenbal was appointed to that position by a decree of the Presidium of the Ikh Khural.

It was important to develop school education further in our country, to link education to work and make teaching relevant to life. To fulfill these aims, it was decided to hold workers' classes in the general schools and measures were also taken to increase time devoted to practical lessons in physics, chemistry, biology, and other subjects.

In 1955, the Council of Ministers and the Party Central Committee passed a resolution to begin compulsory primary school education for all children of school age. It was decided to establish evening classes for adults in seven-year schools in Ulaanbaatar, at the Industrial Combine, at the Central Workers' Council in Nalaikh, and in the aimag capitals. The bulk of the work involved in carrying out these measures was done by the enthusiasts of clubs and "red corners," the Arts Committee, employees of the Ministry of Education, and teachers.

Prominent among those engaged in such work were the senior teacher L. Jürmed, the senior teacher of Zavkhan aimag D. Renchin, Rashi-Onolt of Övörkhangaï, Sh. Luvsanvandan and D. Choijilsüren of Ulaanbaatar, the geography teachers D. Batsükh and D. Bazar, the female teacher S. Tserendulam, the math teacher Ts. Sharavnyambu, the chemistry teacher Doljin, and the employees of the Ministry of Education M. Jamsran, B. Sodov, M. Tömör-Ochir, Ts. Sodnomjamts, Kh. Luvsanbaldan, T. Mashlai and others who helped to develop the people's education.

While the first volume of the new Mongolian history was being written, we worked to cover the period of the People's Revolution, and while preparing and writing about related topics, I completed my candidate scholar dissertation written in Russian. After showing this work to the Mongolian historians to obtain their advice, I had it examined by the specialists at the Far Eastern Institute of the USSR Academy of Sciences, who offered me advice on corrections and invited me to defend my dissertation there. Accordingly, on October 27, 1954, I defended my candidate scholar degree in History at the Far Eastern Institute of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. I later made improvements to the text, which was published in Moscow as "The Victory of the People's Revolution and the Establishment of the MPR."