

## Defending My Doctorate

While investigating the activities of the Ministry of the Interior during that earlier period of purges when people were being cruelly tormented and executed, I learned some hideously sad facts. I became exhausted and fell ill, unable to sleep, and suffered a further chronic stomach illness which prevented me from undertaking any official duties. Beside the need to undergo a prolonged period of medical treatment, I decided that having reached my forties, it was time for me to improve my qualifications. I repeatedly explained all this to the Party Central Committee, Comrade Tsedenbal, and to other members of the Politburo.

I wanted to be sent to the Soviet Union for a period of three years to study for my doctorate, and I hoped that this would give me the opportunity to receive some treatment. But Tsedenbal would not accept this and told me, "You can go for a while to get treatment but then you must resume your duties," which in fact hindered my plans considerably.

On the advice of doctors, in early summer 1957 I visited the Czechoslovak State Hospital at Karlovy Vary together with my wife Zina, my son Bayar and daughter Tanya. I was treated there for over a month. During that time I stayed in an annex of the Hotel Bristol in a small special building called Yavorina where I was accommodated along with the Party members of various other countries.

The people vacationing there included the Czechoslovak Prime Minister William Shirokii, the leader of the French Communist Party Waldek Roche, the Bulgarian Communist Party member Tsola Dragoicheva, the leader of the Italian Communist Party Pertini (who later became president of Italy), the wife of Vasily Kolarov, the son of Dzerzhinskii (a lecturer in the Central Committee whose given name I forget), the chairman of the Lithuanian Party Central Committee A. Snechkus, and the propaganda secretary of the Byelorussian Communist Party Central Committee V. Shauro (later to become chairman of the Cultural Department of the Central Committee).

We became acquainted with these friends and their families with whom we dined and reminisced together. During our free time at the hospital we went on trips and sometimes visited the cinema or passed the time playing various games. Tsola Dragoicheva, Pertini and his wife Maria, and Shirokii enjoyed singing and could sing well. We asked them to talk about the history and culture of their countries and they asked us about Mongolian history, customs, and current affairs.

We found out about the history of Karlovy Vary and the healing powers of its water. There were similarities here with the spas of Mongolia and the northern Caucasus. There were interesting stories from Mongolia, the Soviet Union, and Czechoslovakia about deer which drank the spa waters and ran off again, rejuvenated. The Russian Tsar Peter was treated at Karlovy Vary, and the street where he stayed was named after him. This tsar returned home and had the clever idea to proclaim that the waters of the north-

ern Caucasus mountains were useful medicinally.

There is a street in the Karlovy Vary spa region where the buildings along both sides of it commemorate Karl Marx and the famous Russian author I.S. Turgenev, who visited it on three separate occasions in different years. I wondered whether Marx became interested in the Russian language while he was taking the waters and strolling in the fresh air there.

Despite receiving good medical treatment for some time, because my health had not improved much, I repeated my request to be treated in the Soviet Union for a longer period. The Central Committee Politburo member Sambuu, First Secretary D. Damba, and other people supported my request for permission to look after my genuine ill-health, and the Politburo passed a resolution agreeing to this.

Following this decision, Damba wrote to USSR Central Committee secretary M. Suslov on June 20, 1957, requesting permission to send me to the Far Eastern Institute of the USSR Academy of Sciences where I would submit my doctorate thesis. (I still have part of this letter.) In a letter of recommendation concerning this official appointment, Tsedenbal wrote,

Shirendev is a leading figure of Mongolia, and alongside his political work he has paid much attention to science. Having achieved his doctoral candidacy in Mongolian history he has agreed to submit his doctoral thesis in the form of a three-volume "History of the MPR" through the Far Eastern Institute of the USSR Academy of Sciences. We request your assistance in this matter.

Suslov wrote a letter in reply to this request, accepting me for my doctoral studies and giving permission for my treatment.

Around the time I began studying for my doctorate in Moscow, D. Tsevegmid and a group of other colleagues awarded me the title of Professor at a meeting of the general academic council of the Mongolian Institute of Science and Higher Education held on October 11, 1957.

I was appointed to work as a senior staff member in the Mongolian section of the Far Eastern Institute of the USSR Academy of Sciences. My studies were reflected in its plan for the study of Mongolia. The subject of my work was "History of the People's Revolution of 1921," and was intended to contribute to the writing of my doctoral thesis. This was approved by the faculties and departments of the Far Eastern Institute and also by its academic council. Academician Ye. M. Zhukov was appointed as chief supervisor of my research work.

While carrying out this research I was still acting as rector of the university. I read a large amount of material on the history of the Mongolian revolution which was held in the archives of the Comintern, the Central Archives of the Soviet Red Army, the Archives of the October Revolution, in the library of the Far Eastern Institute and in the Lenin Library in Moscow. At the same time, I accepted the orders of the senior researchers at the Far Eastern Institute, I took part in formulating the research plans of the Mongolian section and regularly participated in the discussions and criticisms of topical questions which were held on certain days of the week. I sat in on the meetings where candidate Ph.D. and doctorate theses were being submitted on interesting topics which came under the planned research work being carried out by the institute. On occasion I defended my own ideas related to my dissertation.

I regularly obtained advice and ideas from the professors of the many depart-

ments of that institute, from Far East specialists, and in particular from the Mongolists. For three years, I worked as a member of the institute along with many other people. I maintained friendly relations with the director of the institute, Dr. B. G. Gafurov, and Dr. R. Ulyanovskii, the Mongolist scholars I. Zlatkin, S. Dylykov, G. Sanzheev, and Yu. Roerich.

The Mongolist scholars used to ask me to give talks on the foreign and domestic affairs of Mongolia. I took part in academic conferences and meetings on the key issues concerning the revolutions in Mongolia, Korea, and Vietnam. There were visits from highly-regarded scholars from India, some African countries, England, and the United States, including the U.S. historian and author William Dubois [W. E. B. Dubois]. Historians and students of ancient Japan and Africa also came to give talks and lectures. All these people took part in interesting meetings with the Soviet scholars with whom they exchanged ideas.

I continued doing this academic work until 1960. While I was writing my planned thesis, I wanted to improve my qualifications. I studied English and regularly sat in on the lectures given at the Moscow Hall of Scholars. A special program of interesting lectures was conducted there by famous and highly qualified scholars from all over the Soviet Union, including academicians, corresponding members, holders of doctorates, and professors.

On several occasions I attended lectures on the methodology of historical research which were given by Academician M. Nechkina and Professor M. Rostovtsov. Valuable, relevant, and interesting lectures were given on the main problems encountered in historical research, and on the ways source materials could be utilized. I mostly attended the lectures given in history, philosophy, sociology, international studies, and economics. However, I also attended interesting lectures on topics in physics, biology, geology, chemistry, and astronomy.

As a result of this I saw that a scientific and technical revolution was beginning in those developing nations where special attention was paid to establishing new institutes covering new and varied subjects. This required large amounts of capital expenditure. Each of the Soviet republics had an academy of sciences, and I felt that our country should pay attention to understanding how our trained personnel could be improved and the field of scholarly work broadened.

Academician Ye. M. Zhukov, who had many academic and public commitments, sometimes missed his appointments on Sundays. However, regardless of how little time he had, he always made it to our meetings, which pleased me greatly. Zhukov was an exceptionally well-known expert on the Far East and on international relations. He used to talk about the important international conferences which he had attended on many occasions in America and various European countries. In addition, because he read about some of the important subjects I was studying, he could give me some relevant books and some of his own work to read.

I later came across Academician Zhukov several times at academic conferences, meetings, and international conventions organized by the USSR Academy of Sciences on historical subjects. Whenever I went to Moscow he would also telephone me, and I remember him saying "Come to our house," and I would visit them at home.

When Zhukov was approaching seventy, his health worsened and he passed away in 1980. I was deeply saddened by his death, which was a great loss to the study of Soviet and world history. I offered my condolences to Zhukov's family. His wife Tamara

Nikolaevna and his son Sasha continued to invite me to their home, and we reminisced about Academician Zhukov and the works in his library, with its many albums and several thousand books.

I completed the basic text of my thesis by early 1960, and having shown it to Ye. M. Zhukov, my supervisor, and to the section and departmental councils, and after some discussions with the Academic Council of the Institute, a decision was made to allow me to submit this thesis for my doctorate.

Accordingly, while people were summarizing and distributing the thesis to various places, it was shown to the official reviewers appointed by the Academic Council of the Institute. These reviewers were Academician I. M. Maiskii, the corresponding member A. A. Guber, and Professor A. F. Miller. I obtained plenty of valuable advice from them.

Then, before long, I was defending my doctorate at a meeting of the Academic Council of the Institute held on December 3, 1960, at which speeches were made by my thesis supervisor, Zhukov, and by many official and unofficial reviewers.

Around that time an idea emerged from Mongolia to have me recalled before I had completed my studies. Soon after I had defended my doctorate, a letter arrived from Tsendenbal asking me to return home. I realized that the letter was timed to recall me before I was able to sit for my oral examinations. The director of the Far Eastern Institute, Academician B. G. Gafurov, wanted me to complete my dissertation work ahead of time, and on June 1, 1960 I was granted Certificate Number 140. (I still have the original document.)

During my three years in the city of Moscow, I frequented its many marvelous theaters and museums, and I will never forget my experience of the best of early and contemporary Soviet culture. I used to visit the Central History Museum of the USSR, the Uspensky Hall of Moscow's Kremlin, the hall of Vasily Blazhenny, the Archangel Hall, the Marble Hall, the six galleries of the Tretyakov, the Oruzheynaya Palace, and the Armaments Museum.

The Tretyakov Gallery contained paintings and sculptures from the seventeenth through the early twentieth century. The works of outstanding Soviet artists were preserved there. They included the interesting works of V. G. Perov, V. M. Vasnetsov, I. I. Levitan, and I. Ye. Repin.

I visited the places connected with the activities of the famous academic and socio-political figures V. G. Belinskii, A. I. Gertsen, T. N. Gramovskii, I. M. Semenov, K. A. Temiryazev, N. Ya. Zhukovskii, and N. P. Lebedev. I also enjoyed watching the performances of the famous actors in the major and lesser theaters of Moscow. Among them were I. M. Moskin, M. I. Zharov, V. I. Kachalov, M. I. Tsarev, A. K. Tarasova, A. A. Yablochkina, K. N. Pashennaya, and O. L. Kninper-Chekhova. In Moscow's main theater I listened to the outstanding Soviet singers N. A. Obukhova, M. S. Kozlovskii, S. Ya. Lemeshev, M. D. Mikhailov, and saw performances by the famous dancers O. V. Lepishinskaya, M. M. Plisetskaya and G. C. Ulanova.