

Epilogue

I recall the efforts I made in my study and work between 1941 and 1981 as follows. While I followed this tortuous path through life I was very aware that my failures outnumbered my successes, although I have said little about them. After completing my doctoral studies between 1957 and 1960, I passed my doctorate examinations and returned home. I was then moved to the Institute of Science and the Academy of Sciences where I worked for the next twenty-one years.

During this time the MPRP Central Committee and all its conferences repeatedly castigated and vilified people such as the Party and government employees L. Tsend, D. Tömör-Ochir, Lookhuuz, S. Jalan-Aajav and others, who were dismissed and their actions described in detail in the press. They were discussed at meetings held in many different places, a commotion was stirred up, their human rights were violated, and they were sent into exile.

In passing, I will take this opportunity to mention another matter which took place before all this happened. In 1956, during the investigation into the activities of the Ministry of the Interior, Tsedenbal had concealed certain secret documents of Choibalsan, and a disagreement arose between Tsedenbal and Damba over the non-disclosure of these documents to the Politburo of the Central Committee and to the commission investigating the Ministry of the Interior. When Damba demanded the release of the documents, Tsedenbal thought that I too was against him and treated me with great suspicion. Relations worsened between the two of them, and Damba was dismissed from his post.

The former Party and government official N. Lkhamsüren included the following paragraph in his memoirs, published in *Khödölmör* on November 28, 1989: "Damba was told that N. Lkhamsüren and Shirendev had to be arrested immediately, as they were representatives of imperialism in our midst. To this day, Shirendev has been unaware of this."

On re-examining the deliberate references made to "imperialist propaganda" in the 1956 Party Central Committee resolution on the intellectuals, what Lkhamsüren wrote was probably true. Actually, something like this did happen. While I was in Moscow working on my doctorate, a group of people, including Damba, were dismissed from their official positions. In addition, the Party Central Committee members who were appointed by the MPRP Sixteenth and Seventeenth Congresses blamed a considerable number of the deputies for all kinds of shortcomings. Those blamed were expelled from the Central Committee and from the ranks of the people's deputies.

In accordance with the government's electoral regulations, there was a widespread custom whereby matters were decided with a show of hands, without allowing for any discussion. In 1981 I experienced just such an event when I was dismissed from all official positions and forced to accept my punishment.

There is another little story connected with this matter. Earlier I mentioned that

in 1948 a resolution of the Central Committee of the Politburo was passed which dismissed me from my duties as a secretary of the Party Central Committee. Items in this resolution which were quoted as being "anti-Soviet" were kept in reserve for more than three decades by Tsedenbal, who then included them in the 1981 resolution.

In 1954 no attention at all was paid to the 1948 resolution, and I was appointed to senior official positions, including membership in the Politburo and deputy chairmanship of the Council of Ministers. I was also asked to work as chairman of the Mongolian-Soviet Friendship Society over a period of many years, and I was elected a deputy in the Ikh Khural. There had to be a reason why I was being praised and recommended.

I fell ill and I received treatment in Moscow from 1957 until 1960. When I returned, with doctorate in hand, Tsedenbal continued to view me with suspicion, and kept me under surveillance. Once he asked me, "If you say you were born in Arkhangai aimag, why does your registration document have Khövsgöl aimag printed on it?" I thought nothing of this and replied, "It's true, I was born in Arkhangai aimag, but in the 1940s our three sums Shine Ider, Jargalant, and Galt were incorporated into Khövsgöl aimag."

Afterwards, Tsedenbal sent some people to my native area on a number of occasions to meet with my family and the local people. I heard later that they did not find anything suspicious or untoward. He questioned me several times about whether my income had increased since I had become a member of several academies of sciences and had received a doctorate from Leeds University. However, this was not the case and so I was not found guilty.

However, the investigations continued, either at Tsedenbal's initiative, or at that of his wife or other people who were trying to obtain favors from the two of them. The meanings and relationships in a book written about me entitled *Son of the Khangai Mountains* published in the Soviet Union¹ and in my own work *Short History of the Academy of Sciences of the MPR*² were distorted in order to fit their own way of thinking, and to make my behavior appear strange to others. All these things were put together bit by bit, and this criticism of my "self-praise" was included in the Politburo resolution of 1981.

Whenever a new member was elected to the Academy of Sciences, it was customary to write a short biography of that scholar in order to introduce him to the research staff and to the readership in general. In accordance with this practice, the Far Eastern Institute of the USSR Academy of Sciences decided to publish a tiny book about me, a task which was given to the research worker E. Novgorodova. The Academic Council of this institute discussed and checked the article and, after gaining the approval of the authorities, received permission to go ahead with it, with V. V. Grafurov as its editor.

The resolution which criticized me stated that I had the book written by my daughter-in-law with the aim of praising myself. Actually, she had been living with my wife's adopted son, and after leaving him, she did some research work in our country which led her to do a study of many people in my home area. She wrote her work based on the material she had collected, and I had clarified some points for her.

The resolution noted that "Shirendev had mentioned his name six times in the

¹ Eleonora Afanas'evna Novgorodova. *Syn Khangaiskikh gor*. Moscow: Nauka, Glav. Red. Vostochnoi literaturny, 1976.

² *Bügd Nairamdakh Mongol Ard Ulsyn ündesnii atlas*. Ulaanbaatar, 1980.

book *Short History of the Academy of Sciences of the MPR.*" In actual fact, this was in the context of the official signing of agreements with other academies. During this period, the work of the Academy of Sciences was investigated every year, sometimes on several occasions. Material on me was being compiled with the aim of gaining control of the academy in order to bring about an investigation of it. The veterinarian Maidar, who had no idea of how to conduct research work, was put in charge of the academy.

Based on an investigation into the activities of Tsedenbal's entourage by the 9th Commission of the MPRP, *Ünen* carried an article on April 30, 1991 about Maidar which said that he had seized control of many organizations, such as the Academy of Sciences, but was unable to show leadership in running any of them. Several prominent figures who were working with him drew his attention to this problem time and again. Maidar deflected questions posed by the Academy of Sciences, but he did get some workers on his side and gave them assignments. He had them compile reports of shortcomings in the work of the academy and in my own work in particular.

But that was not all. The article also mentioned how he approached the question of the construction and location of the barely-conceived new academy building. The resolution made the important point: "The distant location of the buildings of the institutes from the city center has been a hindrance to research workers, and has caused them to fall behind in their work." In addition, Maidar's decision to prevent suitable people from working in the academy was aimed at reducing the number of staff.

In 1980, a commission was appointed, headed by D. Gombojav, who was a secretary on the Party committee in charge of trade affairs. Tsedenbal, together with Maidar, his deputy in the Council of Ministers in charge of the academy, secretly directed the work of that commission and collected a list of shortcomings in my work and in the work of the academy, "embellishing" them along the way.

Although this commission had a duty to examine the research organizations, it concentrated its efforts solely on the academy and its presidium, and did not check the branch institutes very carefully. After the commission had made its report, D. Tsevegmid, the deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers, came up with the idea of transferring the academy's institutes of physics and technology, mathematics, botany, biology, and chemistry to the Mongolian State University and other related ministries.

This idea, which would leave the Academy of Sciences with only a few institutes, namely history, language, and social sciences, was a return to the position the Scientific Institute was in before 1960. In reality, this was an attempt to disband the Academy of Sciences. I was furious about this and confronted Tsevegmid in my own abrupt manner, saying, "As a corresponding member of the academy, how could you suggest such an idea? Have you forgotten how, as a small fry, you defended your own candidacy for the Ph.D.?"

The chairman, Tsevegmid, was in a fix, but a clever idea got him out of it: "If Shirendev carries on giving Tsedenbal bottles of vodka," he said, "he can get his staff back," which was an unfounded comment. At the time, some of the leading people in the Party Central Committee and government reported that this kind of talk was going around. However, I thought it must have been a lie and I gave it little further attention.

So, in response to a suggestion made by the commission, the Party Central Committee passed a resolution on December 25, 1980 which was intended to criticize and disparage only the Academy of Sciences. However, at the initiative of the honest members of that commission, the shortcomings in the branch institutes were also men-

tioned in detail. The resolution carried a list of twenty-four instructions to the ministries concerned with the Academy of Sciences, the National Committee on Science and Technology, and the National Committee on Higher, Middle, and Specialist Education. The majority of these tasks could not be accomplished in one year. They would take several years for completion. The Academy of Sciences remained under surveillance following this resolution, and material about me continued to be gathered.

Well before the Eighteenth Congress of the MPRP, as I was approaching my seventieth birthday, I asked Tsedenbal if he would allow me to retire before the Party Congress preceding the forthcoming elections to the Ikh Khural. Tsedenbal's reply was, "You're all right, carry on working."

Soon afterwards, the round of elections in Chuluut sum of Arkhangai aimag decided to elect me as a deputy to the Ikh Khural. Tsedenbal told me to go to Arkhangai aimag and meet with the electors. As before, my short biography was distributed in that sum, and was praised and admired. As soon as I had been elected as a representative to the Eighteenth Congress of the MPRP, I was assigned to make a speech there to the Congress and, in accordance with practice then, I submitted my prepared speech to the editorial commission a month in advance of the congress. When my speech was returned to me before the congress, appended to the text was a note saying, "In this speech, you must mention the fact that Tsedenbal has been leading the Party and government for over forty years." At the congress I was once again elected a member of the Party Central Committee. Five months later surveillance of the academy was still being carried out in an "energetic" manner.

It was likely that the joke about vodka had reached Tsedenbal's ears. I surmised that material was still being collected on me. So, the question is, why did they hide the fact that they would soon be discussing me?

Then it all began. A meeting was held to unveil the findings of the public prosecutor's office regarding the vice-president of the Academy of Sciences, corresponding member and physicist B. Chadraa, and T. Baldan, who was the director of the Institute of Chemistry. At the meeting, I briefed those present about the work of my two friends and said that there were good reasons to re-examine the areas which had generated the accusations against them.

Later, towards the end of December 1981 when Chadraa's case was being discussed, the Party Investigative Commission held a long meeting at the end of which they condemned him, dismissed him from his post, and issued a decree expelling him from the Party.

As the meeting ended and we were about to leave, B. Dejid, the chairman of the Party Investigative Commission said, "Wait here, we will talk about you now. This material has been gathered about you." He raised both fists, his face darkened and I wondered if he was going to take advantage of his large physique to knock me down. He continued in a ferocious, aggressive manner, "Strange types like you don't know any Russian," and put me through a Russian language examination. Many people spoke at that meeting and used the gathered material to blame me for a large number of things. "Whether you accept it or not, even harsher measures than this will be taken," Dejid told me in a menacing way.

Because I had been in the Party for many years, I thought that I would not be expelled, and that anyway I had no option but to accept my guilt. A day or two later I received a message urgently summoning me to a meeting to be held in Tsevegmid's of-

fice on academic examinations. Accordingly I made my way there.

While I was waiting, someone entered and said, "Shirendev, you are summoned to a meeting of the Politburo." Tsevegmid looked aghast at me and said, "No, what on earth is going on now?" "You know more about this than I do," I replied curtly, and left.

On entering Tsedenbal's room, the entire Politburo, except Maidar, was already there, sitting and waiting. Dejid briefly explained to those present the contents of the resolution about me. Tsedenbal began by glancing in my direction. "Ah! Have you admitted all your shortcomings at the meeting of the Party Central Committee?" Then he added, "Well, anyway, a Politburo resolution will go out on this matter. Have you anything to say?" "I have nothing to say," I replied.

In theory, as I was a member of the Party Central Committee, both the Politburo and the Party Central Committee were supposed to inform me in advance about such discussions. So I felt that there was no need for me to say anything at the meeting. I accepted all their criticisms in silence. Since the resolution mentioned that if I disagreed with it I would be thrown out of the Party, there was no point in trying to explain anything anyway. The Politburo members sat in silence until Tsedenbal raised his hand and asked, "Well, is the resolution correct?" The members then passed it.

The Politburo member D. Molomjamts and deputy member B. Lkhamsüren both asked me, "Shirendev, don't you want to know what is said in this resolution which is trying to get rid of you?" For my information, they told me about a few things which were in it. As I considered it to be a slanderous but harmless resolution, I let them know that I agreed with it and left.

Several days later, on December 30, 1981, the Politburo of the Party Central Committee passed a resolution entitled "Concerning the Unprincipled and Irresponsible Activities and Self-glorification of Comrade B. Shirendev." This resolution was completely different from what had been described in the Politburo meeting. The charges had grown in variety and detail, and it was published in all the newspapers of the capital and widely broadcast on the radio.

As my wife was seriously ill, I was careful not to tell her what had happened, but curiously, my wife of many years seemed to have an idea of what was taking place. Then, soon afterwards she suffered a fatal [cerebral] hemorrhage. As the resolution appeared just before New Year, that was the first New Year which we did not celebrate in our family. It was spent in sadness.

The next day Academician Ts. Damdinsüren came to visit us and brought a bottle of vodka with him. "I have read that resolution which concerns you. Be brave, I have seen a lot of things in my time. I spent a year and three months in prison, have twice been thrown out of the Party and was rebuked on four occasions. There is still time to find out the reason for all this." The two of us then drank the vodka and talked about old times.

Among the many press reports and radio broadcasts about the resolution was an article printed in the Russian-language newspaper *Novosti Mongolii*. Articles were also translated into English and French for distribution by the embassies in foreign countries. Eighteen thousand copies of a special leaflet were printed and distributed. On January 28, 1982, an expanded meeting of the Party committee of the academy discussed the resolution. The late convening of that meeting permitted better preparation of "reliable" people who were to make speeches there. The fact that I was prevented from participating in the meeting was also contrary to Party rules and to stipulated rights under basic law.

It was my duty to admit to the shortcomings mentioned in the resolution, and I

would not deny that there were plenty of deficiencies. My only regret is that all those who criticized me at the meeting, including the Party Central Committee, the Politburo, and Tsedenbal, had not alerted me to the shortcomings in my work, but instead all made approving and supportive noises. As a result of all this, I realized at the time that you are taking a great risk when you trust people whom you know.

This meeting of the academy's Party committee expelled me from its membership. Whether it was because the resolution had been translated into a number of languages or perhaps because they understood nothing about it, several newspapers such as the *Hong Kong Star* and *Renmin Ribao* carried a story entitled "Commotion in the Mongolian Academy of Sciences." The *Renmin Ribao* said, "Shirendev was thought to be on the side of the Soviets, but in fact he has turned out to be on the side of the Chinese." When this resolution was distributed through the Mongolian embassies, Mongols said, "We have expelled Shirendev from membership in our academy. Surely the same thing will happen in your academies." However, the academies in these other countries said that no principle requiring this existed.

Even so, I remained a member of the Academy of Sciences as before. During the regular plenum of the Party Central Committee, Tsedenbal said, "You must have read what was published on Shirendev in the press. Let's expel him from the Central Committee, shall we?" He raised his hand, and all the conference members also raised their hands in their usual, involuntary manner. I was also expelled from the presidium of the Mongolian-Soviet Friendship Society, and was relieved of my posts as president of the Mongolian Association of Graduates of Soviet Colleges, and as president of the Mongolian-Polish Friendship Society.

I was also expelled from the presidium of the Peace Committee. Not only that, but one investigator in the Ministry of the Interior, the Procurator's investigator, Badarch, along with some others, produced an investigative report on me.

Once again I had been hit by an ocean wave and came close to disappearing. On occasion, well-informed friends would alert me, saying, "People are watching your door, and your telephone is permanently tapped, so be careful."

I was dismissed as editor of Volume One of *History of World War II, First Edition*, which was published in 1980, and Sh. Natsagdorj was appointed in my place. I have a copy of the suggestions which I sent to the editorial staff who were correcting many pages of this book. They included the Bulgarian academician Sirkov, and the Soviet academicians Zhukov and Zhilin.

Later on, I wanted to have my name restored as one of the authors of the book and so on June 20, 1987 made an appeal to the Chief Procurator, S. Būdragchaa. This appeal was, however, transferred to the State Supreme Court on July 1, 1987, where it was handed over to the city judge. He replied, "As Shirendev has been punished by the Party, the appeal is invalid."

Although in 1987 and 1988 I made further appeals to [Party leader] J. Batmönkh to have my case re-examined, I received no reply. However, in 1987, when I appealed to B. Lamjav, chairman of the Party Central Committee, to reverse the guilty verdict, the reversal was then properly carried out as requested.

It was said that my books had been prohibited and some had even been burned. My paintings, which were on display in museums and other places, were taken down and torn up. My part in the documentary *Tuulsan Zam* [Traveled Road] was cut out, my book *Khangai Uulyn Khiü* [Son of the Khangai Mountains] was burned and things about me

in the Russian-language textbook *Raduga* were torn up during a subbotnik organized to destroy everything of mine.

From 1981 onwards I had been working on a textbook of historical notes entitled *Serel* [Awakening]. After I submitted it for publication, there were repeated delays until it was finally published in 1990. It is well known that it was not easy for me to get these recollections published. As soon as I had discussed this situation with the Party Central Committee Secretaries D. Namsrai and Ts. Balkhaajav, the appropriate organizations were informed that they were to carry on publishing anything written by me. About ten of my articles were published in various journals. These included the journal *Shin-jlekh ukhaan am'dral* [Science and Life], the secretary of which was B.Ölziisüren, who gave it due attention and published quite a few things in the journal. After my meeting with these secretaries, I took part in an international conference in Ulaanbaatar and in two conferences in the Soviet Union.

After my expulsion from the academy, the New Year greeting cards which had been sent to me by foreign scholars were kept from me by the foreign affairs section of the academy for nearly two months. When I found out about this from someone, I went in pursuit of the greeting cards and was told, "Because your things are being examined by people from the Ministry of the Interior, we cannot give them to you." I did not approve of this highly improper and illegal act and I spoke to the president of the Academy of Sciences, Ch. Tseren, and to the chairman of the Party committee, Kh. Tserev. They told the foreign affairs section to let me have the greeting cards, which I was then able to obtain.

After I was dismissed from my job, certain people who had worked together with me in the past were wary about meeting or talking with me. If they accidentally came across me, they would immediately try to get away, and occasionally even tried to find a way to rebuke me. Also, those people who had accused me in the past were still attempting to work their contrived material into newspapers and journals. Really, given how confused a period in history this was, it was understandable that certain types of people would appear and reveal themselves for what they were.

The herdsmen, workers, and the majority of intellectuals behaved towards me as they had always done, and continued to have a good relationship with me. While I was burdened by my thoughts, I revealed my emotions in a short article entitled "One Summer Night" (A Picture of Nature).

When confronting my powerful feelings under these circumstances, I wrote a few very short essays and articles which were banned at the time and could not have been published anywhere. I thought about the overcast sky which always clears, the falling rain which always returns and the setting sun which always rises, and so I wrote the poem "One Summer Night."

Due to the harsh climate of our motherland, the rapid and abrupt transformation of the weather is taken for granted and is even useful in the everyday work of the Mongols, particular that of the country people. When I was staying at a summer camp I noticed how the weather could waver and be transformed in an instant, something which I mention in my reflections.