

## ? . Tsogt-Ochiriin Lookhuuz : Former Director of State Farms

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journal or publication title	Senri Ethnological Reports
volume	96
page range	35-162
year	2011-02-08
URL	<a href="http://doi.org/10.15021/00001003">http://doi.org/10.15021/00001003</a>

## **I. Tsogt-Ochiriin Lookhuuz** **: Former Director of State Farms**

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### Translator's Note

I have endeavored to stay as close as possible to the Mongolian text except when I felt some modifications of the original were necessary for English readers.

I wish to thank both Tsetseg and Buyana Bayasgalan for their suggestions, which have been most helpful.

## I. The 1930s in Mongolia

Ichinkhorlog Lhagvasüren (from here on IL): Tsogt Ochirin Lookhuuz, the Mongolian people have considered you one of the most famous twentieth-century Mongolians. Could you begin to tell me a little bit about your life? When were you born? And tell me about your mother, father, and your sisters and brothers.

Tsogt Ochirin-Lookhuuz (from here on TsL): Sure. I am happy that people from places faraway are interested in the lives of Mongolians. I was born in 1923 near the border of the Mongolian Altai along the spine of the Gov-Altai Mountains. It was the Year of the Rat. I was born nearly 1,000 kilometers from Ulaan Baatar. Under the old administration, this was the Zasagt Khan *aimag* in the Zasagt Khan Khooshoo, which is now the Chandma *sum* in the Gov-Altai *aimag*. Our *ger* was on the Botgono River in the area of the summer pasture. My father's name was Ravjaa Tsogt-Ochir, and he had the social status of a *taiji*

IL: And being a *taiji* meant he was a person of high birth.

TsL: Yes, he was from the "Golden Line of Chinggis Khan," which was comprised of people of high birth with the titles of *taiji*. My father's father, Ravjaa, was a lama or priest of the rank of *toin*.<sup>1</sup> He wore a blue button and had inherited his title of *toin*. One of his brothers was named Gonchig *taiji*, but I don't remember the names of the other brothers although each one was a *taiji*. So there were plenty of *taiji*. That was our line of *taiji* men. Ravjaa was a lama of the *toin* rank, and my father inherited the title. In my area, there was a group of *taiji* in the "Khokh Danjinkhan" line but, from my father we were in the Chinggis line.

My mother was Baataar Lhamjav. Her father was Khalgai Baatar who protected the western border with soldiers in the time of the Bogd Khan.<sup>2</sup> There were six lovely daughters in the family. The oldest was my mother.

My mother and father had five of us altogether. I had two older sisters, one older brother, and one younger sister. In the family at that time, there were four children, and I was the fourth. When I was little, my two older sisters married, and one had two children and the other had five children. We lived by herding.

In 1932, my father was arrested and put in what is today the Uliastai Prison in Zavkhan *aimag*. I will talk briefly about my father's imprisonment.

In 1921, the People's Revolution succeeded in Mongolia. At this time, the Popular Government began its work. Up to 1924, it wasn't clear if socialism would be built. At that time, the Popular Government was not unified in its policies, and there were many questions directed to this Popular Government. One group did not support the Revolution, while another group supported it.

This was the situation starting in 1924. And 1924 was a new period in this ever-changing revolutionary period in history. In May, 1924, the leader of Mongolian Buddhism, the Bogd Jebtsundamba Khutukhtu, died. The Buddhist religion was immensely influential in Mongolian society.

The Bogd Jebtsundamba Khutukhtu was not only the leader of the Buddhist religion but was also the leader of the Mongolian State. Before 1921, he was an absolute monarch. After the People's Revolution, the Popular Government limited the power of this monarch. It was a new time in Mongolia's history, and young generations of scholars would tell the truth about the reasons for the death of the Bogd Jebtsundamba Khutukhtu. I hope that these scholars will tell the truth. Many events occurred after his death which scholars also need to speak about truthfully.

Another person died in February, 1923 before the death of the Bogd Jebtsundamba Khutukhtu. This person was D. Sükhbaatar, who had led the People's Revolution in 1921. D. Sükhbaatar was the most distinguished of the revolutionary leaders, and he was warmly valued as a true patriot of the Motherland by the Mongolian people. It is recorded in the history of the MPRP that "D. Sükhbaatar died because of his deteriorating physical condition." Many people questioned if this was the real reason for his death saying "it couldn't be the real cause." Those historians who disagree with the goals of the MPRP should speak about this.

Thus, after the Bogd Jebtsundamba Khutukhtu died, there were many events in the development of the Mongolian government. In November, 1924 the first national Great Khural met, and the first constitution was approved. By this time, the legal authority of our country was vested in our Sovereign People's Republican nation. It was decided that the Khan's throne would not be inherited. The MPRP had strict control. At this time the MPRP firmly held the power of the State. The Party was clearly concerned with the lives of the Mongolian people and the development of the country.

In August, 1924, the Third Great Khural of the MPRP met to consider the future development of Mongolia, and many issues were discussed. Later the course of development for the country was stated: "Promote the road to capitalism." This line was called "the general MPRP line." Though such a course was supported by the MPRP in the Great Khural, it was opposed by some who were very powerful. Thus, at this time, some people were arrested and, without a word, were shot. Some of the important figures who lost their lives were also important government figures.

It was written in the history of Mongolia that the "Communist International" played a major role in this tragic event. "The October Revolution in Russia which was directed by Lenin was victorious, as was the Comintern, and many

countries created workers' movements." The main goal of the Comintern was to foster "a world socialist revolution". The theory about "the World Socialist Revolution" was first described in the middle of the nineteenth century in Germany. This was the basic theory of K. Marx and F. Engels. They posited that a "Socialist Revolution in one country could not succeed. The capitalists in each state would join together and suppress such activity. Thus, the proletariat from many countries had to join forces and establish a socialist revolution." These two men had written "The Communist Manifesto" in 1848, which was the first popular development of these ideas. V. I. Lenin worked to develop this, and in 1924 the Comintern proclaimed the popular slogan of "Proletarians of all countries, unite!" In 1936, this organization of workers from many countries was no longer united and fell apart. During the twenty years of building this "world socialist revolution" all sorts of terrorist work did not succeed in influencing decisions made at the Third Khural, which played an important role in the history of the MPRP.

At the time when the Mongolian hereditary nobility began, the rank of *taiji* was the basis for the aristocracy, and the high lamas of Mongolian Buddhism were considered oppressors. Thus they were "the enemy class" and the so-called "counter-revolutionaries," and their ultimate destruction began. In 1923, the People's Government passed legislation limiting the power of the princes and introduced administrative regulations into Mongolia. These two measures forced the removal of the Mongolian hereditary princes and the *taiji* — the enemy class — and played an important role in abolishing the princes.

Thus after the Third Great Khural, there was again a difference of opinion on this issue, and there was a split as some leaders did not support these decisions. In the Third Great Khural, there was a decision within the MPRP to renounce and oppose this one new group of Party members. These "Rightists" and those who supported the "Leftists" were recorded in history. However, a group of "Leftists" was needed to support and implement these decisions. This struggle continued for many years. At first, the "Rightists" seemed to be winning. They were the people who had the ability to amass as much capital as possible because a comfortable life appealed to them. Many people supported that concept.

The so-called "Rightists" were finally defeated. In October, 1928, at the Seventh Great Khural, the MPRP removed the "Rightists" as Party members. Later they were all imprisoned and executed. At this time, the "Leftists" began to direct the MPRP and began to implement their policies. This Khural also promoted the destruction of the economic policies of this "oppressing class," which led to the decision to collect the property from the ancient and aristocratic nobility and the *taiji*. In 1929, near the National Small Khural, a

Central Commission was set up to collect this property. This Commission directed the gathering of property throughout the country.

Thus began the gathering of the property from the monasteries and lamaseries and the Buddhist temples in Mongolia. This was called the “lamasery campaign” and is part of Mongolian history. In 1930 the MPRP’s Eighth Great Khural met under the leadership of the “Leftists”. At this Great Khural, the decision was made to collectivize many of the herds and much private property. So began the collectivization of private property and the herds and “the decision by the Mongolian Socialist nation to rapidly move toward this goal,” as it was explained by many Leftist directors from the MPRP. The animals taken from the monasteries were given to the new collectives.

In 1930, the MPRP, the People’s State, and the People’s Government of Mongolia established a monopoly over foreign trade, making private trade illegal. At this time, in the nation’s trade, the co-operatives were preparing to exchange products for foreign imports. Although consumption was growing, there was a shortage of goods, a situation which continued until the 1990s. At the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s, wrong decisions and mistakes were made concerning collectivization, which led to great obstacles in the country’s development.

In the middle of these events, and as a result of all of this, in 1932 my father was arrested. The Interior Ministry imposed the death sentence, and he was seen as a “class enemy” and a “counter revolutionary.” At this time, my father was deemed a hereditary prince of noble descent coming from a line of *taiji* and he was arrested by the Interior Ministry. Many like him received death sentences, but since my father was emaciated and his life was delicate, he was released from prison. However, the reason for freeing him may not have been connected to his illness. In the beginning of 1930, the MPRP was at a difficult period, and its policies turned some people against them, leading to numbers of popular uprisings in the *aimags*. Many of the collectives were organized, and their rebellions spread to the mercantile areas. However, history records these uprisings as the actions of “counter revolutionary” lamas. The fact is that these uprisings among the Buddhist lamas were spontaneous and were not organized. The MPRP, the People’s Government, and the loyal military of the Interior Ministry powerfully crushed the leaders who were imprisoned. The MPRP and the People’s Government decided to revoke some of their earlier erroneous decisions. Thus my father was released from Uliastai prison together with a few other men who had been detained. But the trouble was that there were many other good and guiltless people who were not freed from prison. My father was released by the People’s Government at the time,

according to Mongolian history, following the government policy called the “New Revolutionary Policy.” There began at this time excessive limitations on the authority of the MPRP and its policies. Accompanying that decision and with the implementation of that policy, the tendency to deviate gained ground. The country was on the verge of a dangerous situation, and the leaders of the government began to understand this. Thus, the “New Revolutionary Policy” could not continue for too long and ended shortly.

The year my father was taken away and imprisoned by the Interior Ministry was a difficult one. In 1932, my older brother was called up for military service in Ulaan Baatar. As a result of my brother being called to the capital, one unfortunate thing happened to us. My brother was called for military service when the conditions in the country were very unstable, and there was great anxiety everywhere. In almost all the *aimags* in Mongolia there were “countrywide revolutionary uprisings of the lamas.” My brother was doing his military service in military quarters in Ulaan Baatar. There was an uprising among the military, and the Interior Ministry and the People’s Volunteer Army of 1921 suppressed it in a central *aimag*, arresting the leaders of the rebellion. Actually, I don’t know if my brother was involved in this work. It was very sensitive for a person to be located in the military quarters because, in many places, the soldiers’ wells could be slaked with lime or poisoned. The MPRP and the People’s Government, however, repudiated those who purposefully committed these acts of vengeance. Many people died from this, as did my older brother.

Moreover, the year my brother died, my mother also died. My father had been out of prison for two years. At the time of all the news about my older brother’s death, my younger sister was about to be born. This news, my younger sister’s birth and my mother’s illness and death left me with little strength. My mother was about forty-four years old when she died and in the prime of her life. So, there were now only three of us at home, including my new born sister, my father, and myself. At the time, I was fourteen years old. My two older sisters lived separately.

This was not a peaceful time. In the mid-1930s, there were more dangers, and tragic events happened. There arose the “cult of personality,” which led to the questions of what sort of government frame-ups would arise and how many thousands of guiltless Mongolians would be put to death. In Mongolian history, this was called “government persecution,” and it reached its peak in 1937-1938. As recorded in the history of the MPRP, the Mongolian government increased its persecutions under Prime Minister Marshal Kh. Choibalsan.

Kh. Choibalsan had led the People’s Revolution in 1921 and was the central builder of the MPRP. He was born in 1895 in Setsen Khan *aimag*,

Sanbeisin *khooshuu*<sup>3)</sup>. In 1921 D. Sükhbaatar built up a loyal People's Military, and the Mongolians took up quarters and fought the Russian White Army and the Chinese Guomindang.<sup>4)</sup> The Mongolians who joined in the chase with Kh. Choibalsan performed heroically. In July, 1921 the Commander-in-Chief D. Sükhbaatar, aided by Kh. Choibalsan, commanded "the western road special unit." The White Russian General Baron Ungern was in Urga [later known as Ulaan Baatar] with his superior fighting troops who were fighting for freedom for the Mongolian nation. In this case, the Mongolians had one tested military leader. In 1921, the People's Revolution was victorious. Later Kh. Choibalsan was not appointed to high government service, but after the Third MPRP Great Khural he began to participate in important government work.

In 1929, the State Central Commission on the Confiscation of Property appointed a leader, and it is said that its work went well. In 1936, Kh. Choibalsan was appointed Minister of Internal Affairs and in 1937 Prime Minister and Commander of the military. From this time, the MPRP began to direct almost all things by itself. Thus all authority was vested in the MPRP and the People's Government. This situation in Mongolia led to a strengthening of "the cult of personality" and provided the government with greater possibilities for destruction.

Between 1921 and 1937, there is proof that about thirty thousand people were executed in Mongolia on false political charges trumped up by the government. It must be mentioned that in the 1920s there was the "Bodoo Affair" and in the mid-1930s, the "Lkhümbe Affair." There were counter-revolutionary organizations like the "Genden, Demid", the "Amar, Tovchin", the "Luvshansharav, Losol, Dogsom", and the "Abbot Yenzon and Abbot Ded" groups.<sup>5)</sup> These groups were fabrications. Their members were not involved in confrontations but were slandered, called to trial, given the death penalty and killed. The People's Government became involved in the execution of these people. In fact, three Mongolian Prime Ministers were slandered and executed. Many leaders in the Small Khural, ministers, high officials, major Buddhist lamas, and ordinary lamas were executed.

Kh. Choibalsan was not alone in devising the government's methods of destruction.

The policies of the Soviet Union exerted a strong influence on the MPRP. As is recorded in the history of the People's Republic of Mongolia, the General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, I.V. Stalin, offered a great deal of advice. And it is I.V. Stalin, the bloody dictator of the Soviet Union, who in great measure personally directed this terrible destruction in our government.



Our Prime Minister P. Genden was considered a man with a very fiery character. He spent his youth in the grazing areas of Arvaikheer<sup>6)</sup> and was a wonderful, simple, good Mongolian man. The policy toward many Buddhist lamas came from listening to this [Stalin's]"advice." Prime Minister P. Genden got angry at Stalin, and there is proof that he slapped him. I stood while the leaders of these two countries exchanged advice and questions. It is, however, easy to guess what sort of "advice" Stalin gave. At the time Stalin also destroyed the glorious Russian religion.

It was important to serve the government and the State, but there were many who disagreed with the policy of the MPRP, and charges against them were fabricated and they were killed. The influence of these executions, as they intensified, can be seen on people inside and outside Mongolia. The leadership of the MPRP was warned about the great danger to the country, which came not only from foreign wars but also from those forces inside and outside Mongolia which disagreed with the MPRP. And if there was a war, these groups could unite. So the war began as did the "internal war" which was suppressed. All of this took place a little before the Khalkh River war, and such was the situation right up to the Khalkh River war.<sup>7)</sup>

## **2. Primary School**

Yuki Konagaya (hereafter, YuK): In 1932, was your father arrested by the Interior Ministry and was his property taken?

TsL: My father did not have enough property to be confiscated. Our family had a few herds, which totaled a hundred head. There was a riding horse, a milk cow, and sheep "for eating." The *taiji* were of two types: "the *taiji* with serfs" and "the *taiji* without serfs." My father was a "*taiji* without serfs". These *taiji* were called "*taiji* without serfs." My father was a hard working man. He was also a farsighted man. While he herded, he also was into manufacturing. He dressed animal skins and hides to make children's clothes, as well as producing animal halters, hobbles, and leather straps. He also did carpentry work and made tent frames and wooden furniture such as chests, beds, cupboards, and wooden milk bowls. In addition, he worked as a metal smith making bridle bits, saddle knobs, Mongolian locks, knives, and awls. Actually, before 1921, the year of the People's Revolution, the Mongolian people needed to do all sorts of things. So the "home industries" flourished. We, ourselves, needed things like newer implements to scrape the hair off the hides. After one thousand years of doing things the same way, new techniques were necessary. Due to the circumstances at the time, "home industries" developed. But after 1921, these "home industries" were abolished, and a collective system was established.

The number of people making these things decreased or people forgot how to make them. I understood this well when I was a member of the MPRP and, after being expelled, was banished under strict observation. People used ready made things which could have adverse effects. Thus there were negative features to this situation. I thought that the creation of national trade based on the co-operatives had very bad effects. My father assembled poor people in order to teach them methods of dressing hides and skins, making felt, crafts, and carpentry. He himself was a man who spoke about the need to live wisely.

After the death of my mother and older brother, my father put me in a primary school. At the time, the primary school was in a hall because there were generally no schools in the Altai area, nor was there a national trade and co-operative movement. All of this was created later. In 1922-23, the first school was built in Ulaan Baatar. Ten years later, the first school was started in the Altai area. By 1935, schools had been built in these five places in Gov-Altai *aimag*: Chandman, Erdene, Biger, Bayan Tsaagan, and Bayan Ondor.

When my father sent me to the primary school, he looked to the future. “A new State, and a government revolution. This is a new time. In this new era, children will study books. In the future, in these new times, it is necessary to act.” Such were his thoughts. My older brother had gone into the military, so perhaps this was an influence. At this time, people did not like their children to go to school. Each person had his own private property with his own herds. So the school teacher visited each family to advocate going to school. “School is a real necessity and studying is needed in life.” But most people did not accept what was said. It is important to realize that at this time many of these peoples valued their children becoming lamas.

YuK: Did you leave your home to go to school?

TsL: Yes. When I was seven, the first school was built along our western border where eight *gers* were located. Mothers and fathers brought their children from their *gers* on horseback. There were dormitories at the school. The first of these State-supported dormitories were *gers*. Later, buildings replaced the *gers*. The children who attended my school wore the clothes their parents had made them. Later, there was a school uniform. In the winter students wore a small white hat, a fur *deel*, and Russian felt boots. For the fall, students wore a green, grey, or brown colored *deel*. There were different ways of looking after these children who were homesick and who ran away. In our area, the school attracted children, and the work was organized in such a way to make the children like school. The students were fed three times a day in our special cooking *ger*. Our school *gers* were in the *sum* center where there was also the *sum* administration, including the medical service person, the primary school, the veterinarian and other service people. The compulsory

MPRP and the Mongolian Revolutionary Youth League cells were also there. The people who worked in the *sum* center alternated each week, and the school children relaxed on Sunday, when they left the *sum* center to wrestle, race their horses, sing songs, and do other things. The winners in these organized activities received sweets and cookies as prizes.

YuK: Did some children run away from your school?

TsL: Almost none at all. From the beginning, they were free to go home, but at this time very few ran away. And the children amused themselves. Moreover, the youngest children did not attend the school. I was fourteen and in the first class. Children under ten almost never went to school. Those over ten and all sixteen-seventeen year olds went to school. Thus, having reached nineteen or twenty, they had finished the Fourth Class at the primary school.

We were taught the Mongolian alphabet and had lessons in arithmetic and geography. We were taught the Mongolian script, reading, writing, addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. We had lessons on the world situation and were taught to distinguish various states on the map. There were also lessons in the study of nature, the origin of animals, and the locations of the sun, moon, stars, and planets. At that time, I was introduced to the contemporary scientific information.

Three teachers worked at our school. Our *sum* had quite a high rate of literacy, and teachers came to work there even though not many people from the *sum* became teachers. D. Gonchig was the administrator at our school. D. Gonchig had finished the Teachers' Technicum in Ulaan Baatar and had taught in the primary school in Taishir *sum* primary school. Taishir *sum* was the first primary school organized in our *aimag*. S. Ladma and Kh. Lochin were two teachers from outside the *sum*. S. Yadmaa came from Togrog *sum*, and Kh. Lochin was from Erdene *sum*. These three people were my first teachers. D. Gonchig taught us Mongolian script. There was very elegant script writing in his room. This elegant script stood out, and I copied it. D. Gonchig did not only spend time on our lessons but played ball with us as well.

At this time, a ball was a very rare commodity, and people had few to play with. The culture of the city had not penetrated. At this time, notebooks and books were scarce, as were lead pencils and metal pens to dip into ink for writing. In the old days, an "ash board" was necessary for writing. Grease had to be evenly applied to the wood and then one could draw or write on this wooden board. At the time, our school had stopped using these boards, though they were still necessary throughout the country. At our school, we were given pencils and notebooks. Pens and pencils were expensive. We took them back with us when we returned home. Those children who were not in school were very interested in all of this, since mothers and fathers exchanged a sheep for

what their children needed. I, myself, bartered a sheep for a pencil from a child who did not go to school.

Our school had over twenty children. There were few female students, perhaps two or three girls. All the rest were boys. They all finished school and went to Ulaan Baatar to continue their studies. At that time there was no high school in Ulaan Baatar. There were, however, five technicums: a medical technicum, a veterinary technicum, a teachers' technicum, a communications technicum, and a finance technicum. At first, I was the only one of my school mates who remained in the area. All the others went to study at the technicums in Ulaan Baatar. My mother had died, as had my brother, who had been in the military. Our *sum* leader took stock of my home situation and said, "Stay home and help your father" so I didn't go to Ulaan Baatar with the other students.

That year I was selected as the *sum* leader and joined a cell of the Mongolian Revolutionary Youth League (MKhZE). At the time most of the cell members came from the *sum*. I began to sit as a member from the primary school. I had turned sixteen, which was the age when all school children automatically joined the Mongolian Revolutionary Youth League. And this practice has continued for ninety years. The MKhZE had been set up in August, 1921, and it was seen as "preparing assistant warriors for the MPRP!" The Youth League played an important role since it was started by the MPRP. The MPRP turned to the League during its membership campaigns. I was involved in such work for five to nine months. Our Youth League cell had twenty members.

The leader of our Youth League cell had monthly meetings for the members. At the meeting, all sorts of questions were asked about what happened in the *sum* and the surrounding area. The *sum* and its locality had to be organized, and it was necessary to find someone to undertake this work. At the time, there was a movement to pursue what was stated as "wool is gold." Actually, all raw materials were regarded in the same way as wool, and these goods were given to the State at a low price. The livestock of each family was officially classified, and orders were based on this.

As a leader of the Youth League, I ordered members to participate in this work of "wool is gold." At the time, our sheep's wool was of little use. Only the male sheep were sheared, and the female sheep were not sheared. The male sheep were sheared twice a year. In the spring shearing, the wool was called "the long wool," and in the fall, the wool was called "the short wool." The wool was mainly used for felt. Sometimes the hair from the tail or mane of a cow or ox was twisted into rope. These ropes were useful in loading the *gers*. At the end of the 1930s, the Mongolian and Soviet governments reached

an agreement about wool and cashmere. I was a member of the Youth League cell, and our task was to collect three sacks of the wool, which had been discarded at campsites. Wool from the shearing was usually thrown away in the spring pastures where it would land up in the hollows. If the sheep had not been sheared, the wool would fall off by itself and would be left behind. So we went and collected and combined all of this wool to meet the *sum*'s demands for wool. We participated very little in shearing the sheep since we collected only the discarded wool.

As the Youth League cell leader, I did propaganda work. At the time, our Constitution was being prepared for publication. I went to the families to talk about the plans for the new Constitution. All this work for the MPRP in the *sum* was under the direction of the cell leader. While I was working in Zavkhan *aimag*, the leader, Sh. Gonchig, from the Treasury Department, was appointed to our *sum*. I went to the countryside with this man to do propaganda work. One day he said to me: "For a youngster, you write very well! Why aren't you going to school in Ulaan Baatar?" I answered: "All children go to study in the primary school" and I explained to him why I had to stay home. He asked me if I wanted to go to Ulaan Baatar, and I answered that I wished to study, but the time to arrange that had passed. Mr. Sh. Gonchig said nothing further and left the next morning. However, soon an official letter about studying at the Finance Technicum came from the Financial Department in our *aimag*. I showed this letter to my father. Father said "Go, go and study!" Thus it was that Sh. Gonchig helped me to study at the Finance Technicum.

### **3. I Go to Ulaan Baatar**

YuK: When was the first time you went to Ulaan Baatar?

TsL: In late autumn 1939. I went in the mail van to Ulaan Baatar. Our *aimag* didn't have a mail van, so the Zavkhan *aimag* mail van took me. It was intended that several people from the area would go together. We arrived in Zavkhan *aimag*, but the mail van didn't come. We waited several days, and in the end a Russian car came, and I went in it. This car stopped and broke down many times, and we all worked together to repair this car so we could go on to Ulaan Baatar. But we country folk just helped the driver who was the only one who could repair the car. We believed that the car broke down three times — lastly in the Tsegeen Range, which is today the Lun *sum* in Töv *aimag*.

Our driver said that the piston was cracked, and we asked "What is a piston?" "Can it be fixed?" "Is it unreliable?" "Who knows? We might sit here a while." Our driver went on to say that Ulaan Baatar was far away. So he, in the morning, cut a birch rod from a tree in the Khustai Range to make a piston that would fit the car, and then the car ignited. Thus we took off for Ulaan

Baatar. As I later learned, Ulaan Baatar was about 130 kilometers away.

“The car managed on the birch wood piston!” said an incredulous youth today on hearing this story. At that time, Mongolian drivers had a hard time. There was a problem with spare parts. Mongolia is a huge country with few people, and though the car is a good mode of transport, there is very little equipment for it. The road conditions are poor, so cars inevitably break down. In January it is minus forty degrees [Centigrade] at night in the Altai Range, and in summer it is more than fifty degrees plus on a burning hot day in the Gobi desert. And a loaded car breaks down. Who can phone a repair shop? There are no phones, and are there any repair shops? So the driver has no way to fix his car. That is why all Mongolian drivers study car repair. That is basic car repair. The Mongolians have little. They do not produce cars due to obsolete materials, and there are no classes for repairing cars. No matter the “piston” — all Mongolian drivers can do their own repairs. It is really amazing to talk about these Mongolians. For them, whether wood or metal, one can always replace the other. In a word, they “improvise.” Mongolians can repair any technical thing one speaks of.

Recently, foreign-made cars flooded the streets of Ulaan Baatar. In fact, a driver hears so many cars he doesn’t know where they come from. How times have changed! Now we can go along the road at any time and have a good look all over Ulaan Baatar. We took a trip in a Russian car, which was Soviet made by the “Pulu” factory. [From the Russian Pulia = bullet]. Actually, in the 1920s, there was a period when there were a lot of American cars in Mongolia. For us there was the “Ford Select”. A “Ford Select” man was here at that time. And it was important for us to have foreign car companies. At that time, American, German, and Russian companies were quite active in Mongolia. I haven’t heard if a Japanese company came here. Perhaps the Mongolian market was of interest to them. I heard later that there was a representative of the Japanese government in private trade during the Ikh Khuree period [i.e. before 1924].

At that time, the Chinese tended to dominate the markets. In the beginning of the twentieth century, there was a crisis in which Manchu power was being eroded to extinction. After this, the Chinese government arose, though I don’t think that the Chinese government is the legal successor of the Manchus. The crisis in the Manchu Qing dynasty and the disunion in China came to the attention of the world states. Henceforth, the Chinese government held power south of Mongolia; the nomads of the Manchu steppe who lived in the territory of present-day China had had their own government for many centuries.

This story has many elements. Some of these have led to positive consequences for uniting a disunited China. With the new Chinese government,

however, there was strong competition among many countries to take over the Mongolian market. Since Mongolia was situated in a directly adjoining place, it was possible that its position was advantageous. In 1924, the Third Great Khural met, and as a result an economic policy was implemented which led to “the forced elimination of foreign capital.” In 1930 the Mongolian government started having special rights. At this time, the Mongolians had the monopoly, and foreign companies including those which lent money were forced out.<sup>8)</sup>

When I came to Ulaan Baatar, I saw that electric lights and radios were becoming more popular. But these things had not yet reached our area. I saw them for the first time in Ulaan Baatar, which felt like a big city. It is funny to compare the appearance of Ulaan Baatar then and Ulaan Baatar today. At that time there were no three story buildings. There were two or three buildings with two floors. The Government Palace was circular in shape, and the theater had a green felt roof. The theater building was taken from a German design. We called this building “The Green Dome.” The Fine Arts Museum was the State Department Store. Some people called it the “Tall Door.” The “Lenin Club” hasn’t moved. Today the People’s Movie Theater was once the MPRP headquarters in Ulaan Baatar.

Now the Pedagogical University is in a two story building. It is a red color. Kh. Choibalsan’s workroom was in a two story Mongolian government building. At the end of the lower floor in this building was the Teachers’ Technicum. Now the MPRP Central Building is a small white building. And this is a building of the CC/MPRP. The American Consulate was to the left, and the delegates of the American companies called the place “American Hill.” The German Company was near the Court Center.

At this time, the Gandan Monastery with its “80 cubit chenrezi” was clearly seen. It was called the tall “chenrezi.” In the nineteenth century, the eyesight of the Bogd Jebtsundamba Khutukhtu deteriorated, and he saw poorly. The Chenrezi Buddha was built with the intention of restoring his sight. I read the following in a book that was given to me, and I still remember it. At the time of the construction of “The High Chenrezi Buddha,” the Russian Embassy needed a new building and began to construct one. Apparently, this was built where “The High Chenrezi” was to be built. Our Gandan Monastery lamas went to the Russian minister and demanded: “Your building must be lower than our “Chenrezi Buddha.” When I went to Ulaan Baatar for the first time, the population had reached 100,000, and we didn’t know anything about this.

YuK: Were there many foreigners when you were in Ulaan Baatar?

TsL: There weren’t many. Most of the foreigners were Chinese, After the People’s Revolution in 1921, the area in the east side called Amgalan was a small city where the Chinese traders lived. Now there is no trace of the

Chinese who lived there. The economists from the People's Government began to enforce the "policy against foreign capital," and the number of Chinese people went into a steep decline. The Chinese money lenders had come together with the companies to Mongolia. Now fewer are seen. And, it was never known what happened to the Chinese.

In 1970 some Chinese people who had lived in Mongolia illegally returned. The Mongolian State allotted to those Chinese who became Mongolian citizens an area in Selenge *aimag* where they could live. So the Chinese had decreased in number, and it seemed there were no Chinese people. For all sorts of reasons, many Chinese returned to Mongolia in the 1990s. Especially in 2000 when our government needed to begin to build "the Millennium Road," many Chinese came back.<sup>9)</sup> Although it was illegal for the Chinese to live in Mongolia, their number increased.

When I was first in Ulaan Baatar, many Chinese lived on a street called "Nine Street" where there was a barber, a food shop, and many other services for the Chinese. They dug toilets and took the refuse in horse carts to the green square to be used as "green manure" or night soil. The Uliastai vicinity in Ulaan Baatar was the Chinese "green square." The Chinese grew vegetables to eat. The Chinese green vegetables were not for the Mongolians. Knowing that these vegetables were grown in "night soil," the Mongolians did not buy them.

At the time, in Ulaan Baatar, people used many horse carts to go from Nalaikh.<sup>10)</sup> The horse carts carried a wooden barrel filled with water to distribute to families. This work was done mainly by Mongolians and some Chinese. In Geser *sum*, there was the Chinese restaurant called "Shanzan." Many Chinese ate there. There were pungent rural aromas which were very striking as well as food that stank and smelled rotten. There were at this time shadow puppet plays, which were seen by many Mongolians. At this time, the Chingeltei River flowed on the west side of Ulaan Baatar and the Selbin River on the east side. These two joined in the Dund River and flowed into the Tuul River. The Arslantai Bridge spanned the Selbin River, and the Tomorchin Bridge spanned the Chingeltei River.

There were stalls surrounding the Tomorchin Bridge. All of these were little Chinese stalls. Metal and wood items were made, and people were employed to make and sew cotton items. Such city life was of little interest to the Mongolians. Life in the countryside following the herds was more highly valued. Perhaps this was because at this time few Mongolians lived in built up areas. Later the population in Ulaan Baatar increased, and there were more schools and cultural centers.

At this time, the present market for goods called the Dome was in place.



On rest days, many people went to that market. In the winter, the white camel caravans came from the countryside. On the north side of the hill, the camels were loaded with wood. At the time the market had all the necessities. Horses, sheep, and cows were sold. The animals and other goods were very cheap. In the country, a female sheep cost three to four *tugriks* and a male sheep five *tugriks* and in the city — five to ten *tugriks*. I finished the primary school in the *sum* and was paid thirty *tugriks* for working for the leader of the Party cell of the Youth League. With the first five *tugriks*, I bought a pair of trousers and a shirt in a paper package with a picture of a yak on it, some brown sugar, a kilogram box of sugar from the Russian factory, and a package of pipe tobacco. With all of this, twenty-five *tugriks* remained for me to give to my father. The shirt and the pants were for myself. I thought that I was a big, elegant young man. This youngster in the country worked for a salary and made his father happy. At the time, it was rare for a person to work for a salary. That was because money wasn't readily available for most people. I had, therefore, told my father in the modern way "in case of an emergency, a sheep can bring in three *tugriks*." There were, at the time, many animals in my area. Each family had a herd — a herd of sheep. For that reason, there was no trade in the livestock market. It was unusual for a person who owned animals to trade them. In the city, however, there was a place to deal in animals. The market in Ulaan Baatar used paper money to exchange livestock from the countryside.

#### **4. I Go to the New Party School**

YuK: Where did you see your first movie?

TsL: Culture did penetrate the western Altai but it was far behind Ulaan Baatar. In summer time we children did not wear boots. We didn't wear them to chase the sheep. After the first snow in the fall, we wore our boots. One day after this first autumn, I was looking after the sheep. Then a great noise came from the sky. There were no clouds in the sky. Everything happened so fast, and I didn't understand the sound. I couldn't see where it came from, but it was all over the place. In the evening people came to our *ger* and said "the machine is coming." "Machine — what could it be? Who knows!" Then people went near the Zeretin steppe/side and talked about the machine that was coming. I was friendly with the other children, and we went to the place where there were tracks from the machine. No shoes and naked feet. The snow was beautiful and made long patterns. The patterns were beautiful. We ran after the tracks of the machine so we could see it. The tracks went to the right and the left. They didn't stop. We couldn't find the machine so we ran to follow another road. It was evening. We decided to go back. We lost the light,

and it was dark. I was tired but had a rough idea of where my *ger* was. We all ran to look for our *gers*. It was night, and we were tired. The children fell down, but they were close to home. We were freezing, but near to our *gers*. We still couldn't see the machine. I was about ten years old then.

The Chinese came across our frontier. A group came and robbed the *sum* area, creating a disturbance, taking the herds and property of the local people, and killing those who resisted. The People's Volunteer army came from Ulaan Baatar to chase them away, but they soon returned to the area of Botgon Uul. A machine came with these soldiers. At the time, we had never seen such a machine. The patterned wheels looked elegant. We children thought that perhaps the machine was alive. The driver raised the hood of the motor. We thought that "the machine was opening its mouth." "and what a big mouth." was said by all of us. We went around the back and looked underneath and tinkered with it.

I was seventeen or eighteen when I saw my first movie. At that time, the "Propaganda Brigade" came to my locale from Ulaan Baatar. This "Propaganda Brigade" showed movies. The kino was called a shadow film. We thought there were people "behind the screen." So we looked everywhere. This amazed people. I think that the first theater that I saw in the *sum* center was the Red *Ger* Theater. One went to a *ger*, which was the cultural center to see the "Red *Ger*" Theater. Now that *ger* is called the "The Cultural Center." The *sum* was responsible for this. At the time, the movies in the area were silent, and one saw only images.

I ate vegetables for the first time when I went to Ulaan Baatar. I tasted potatoes and the first time I ate them I found them very unpleasant. In my part of the world, people did not eat cultivated greens. They ate wild onions. In our area a lot of red barley was planted. It was made and distributed as flour. Barley flour is very delicious. Millet was also planted. We, ourselves, did not plant grain. So our family exchanged livestock for barley flour and yellow rice. Each family needed this barley flour. Herds were exchanged for the barley flour. Some Mongolians themselves planted barley for flour. In our area, there were no Chinese people.

In Ulaan Baatar, I also ate a chicken egg for the first time, and it made me sick. We were very tired when we arrived in Ulaan Baatar since we had been on the road for many weeks, and in the city people go hungry. We unloaded our car at the Bureau of Transport. At that time, the Bureau of Transport was near the "Dome Market." I had come to Ulaan Baatar for the first time and was the only one who didn't know the city. The boots that I had worn in the country were torn all along the seam, and my bare feet protruded. When I got out of the car, I had no money and nothing to eat. I was very tired

and hungry. I didn't know anyone or where to go. We arrived in the city at noon. I got out of the car and asked each person I came across. "Brother, sister could you tell where the Finance Technicum is?" At the time, people in the city were very well mannered. Now this is not the case. Some people stopped and showed me the way. We went along the road where the Teachers' College is now located, and we reached the Arslan Bridge. The Arslan Bridge is on the south side where many Chinese worked in the stalls and restaurants, which emitted an interesting smell. At these restaurants on the south side, I stopped and talked with a group of youths and asked one of them: "Where is the Finance Technicum?" One answered by asking me many questions: "Are you from the countryside? Are you going to study at the Finance Technicum? Is this your first time in the city?" I answered: "Yes, I am from the Gov-Altai." He said: "I also study at the Finance Technicum. You can follow us." So I went with the group. It appeared to them that I was very hungry, so the one fellow told me to come along with him to get something to eat. Then we both went to a place for food. The young waiter was given the order. I paid no attention to the order. Soon the waiter put down two bowls of something yellow. The other fellow really enjoyed the yellow stuff. I had never seen what was put in front of me and drank and swallowed the yellow stuff without looking. It was nasty stuff and had a bitter taste. Drinking it was one way to make it disappear. This nasty tasting drink was discussed. I sat there thinking "this stuff is as clear as horse piss!" Such was my first taste of beer.

The other young man noticed I didn't like the beer. He said: "Aren't you drinking? Do you want some tea?" Then the waiter brought some black tea. We drank the tea, and the waiter came and brought food. The food was white rice, which was very rare in my area. We had only eaten it once or twice. Even grown people rarely ate it. It was said that "white rice is a very cool food. Eating it leads to a lot of piss!" Giving me white rice and other white food along with something yellow makes a person weak. All of this food was unfamiliar. "What else?" I said to myself with amazement as the other fellow ate the food. I ate a little rice and some other yellow thing and some very nasty jelly, which was sticky and not tasty. This other yellow thing was good for nothing, and I got sick and vomited. Thus I had to move from the place where we were eating. So I went outside where there was nobody around. I wanted to vomit, but I had nothing in my stomach to vomit.. So this was how I saw and ate my first chicken egg. At the time in Ulaan Baatar, there were few greens eaten, though bread was enjoyed. There was even a small "bread factory" that was working.

IL: At that time, how many students went to the Finance Technicum?

TsL: Altogether there were forty students at our school. I recently saw six of

those students who were there with me. All my other friends have died. Finally, D. Tserendorj died this winter. When our school finished, many people were assigned to the military, state industries, government ministries, or to the banner offices to work on accounts. I studied together with Namsrai, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and a man called Ser-Odjav. N. Ser-Odjav did research and was very learned and defended his Ph.D. degree in the Soviet Union. He worked for many years for the Mongolian Committee of Sciences at the Historical Academy. While there, he wrote “Ancient Turkey,” which was a thematic work which I read. I graduated a year before the woman D. Dolgorma finished. This woman worked many years for the Mongolian Finance Ministry. D. Dolgorma finished our school and taught at the Mongolian State University and after the Soviet Union, she went to the Treasury. Thus it is clear that, once she had graduated from our school, she continued to pursue a career in economics. She also earned a Sc.D degree in the field of economics. D. Dolgorma was appointed for many years to be the Mongolian representative in Moscow for the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance for the socialist countries. I finished the Finance Technicum in 1942.

YuK: Where were you assigned when you finished school?

TsL: There was an event for us. I finished work with excellent scores and was taking my last exam. I was sitting in the classroom preparing to answer all the questions on the exam when one of my teachers came and said to the teacher giving the exam that the Dean is calling Lookhuuz. The teacher giving the exam said that I hadn’t finished yet. The answer was “no problem! Let him go to the Dean’s office now.” With the head teacher’s permission, I went to the Dean’s office. The head teacher and two outside examiners were sitting there. I was amazed. The head teacher knew the others and told me they were “from the CC/MPRP.” One of them said: “What interests you as a good worker for the MPRP?” one asked. I didn’t quite grasp the meaning of this question and answered that all of it interested me. This man then went to the hanging map and asked me to name the continents of the world on the map. I had been taught all of the continents and named them. Then the other man named several countries and asked me to find them on the map. Since I had learned the names of all these countries in my primary school, I knew them well. He went on to ask me if I knew what kind of countries these were. I knew that they were all capitalist countries. After that there were no more questions from him. Then the other man said: “Yes, so for you in the future there is the new powerful Party School for you to study in. Don’t you agree?” I was asked. I wondered a little but I answered. ”Agreed.” Thus I moved from the Finance Technicum to the Preparatory Party School.

After this conversation, I returned in the morning to the Finance

Technicum because I needed to collect my books and equipment. Then I began to prepare for the Party School. The day came when I went to this new school by bus. I went to register.

After that, I went to a dormitory. The building was a well established and nice one. There was a carpet spread out and a “white bed,” which was popular at the time and was covered with a quilt. Four people lived in this room. I myself lived there with my belongings, books, and notebooks. After entering the Party School, we were given new clothes, which included a new suit, jacket, black boots, and a tie, all of which should be put on each morning. Our old clothes were no longer needed. We were given clothes imported from Germany. Having finished all of this, I went to the cafeteria to eat. We could eat all our meals there for free. This school compared very favorably with the Finance Technicum. Each month I received a salary. And so my life began anew.

That year, two people transferred from that school to our school. Their names were G. Jamsranjav and D. Badamjav, who was a well-known literary critic. D. Badamjav served as a leader of an *aimag* and was selected as leader of the Central Council of Trade Unions. Finally, the term “taking steps for the Party” must be discussed. “Taking steps for the Party” was our expression. As a member of the MPRP, one either worked responsibly or failed in one’s responsibilities, which reflected a lack of discipline in doing one’s work. The MPRP “took steps” to punish those who didn’t fulfill their responsibilities. However, sometimes the policy of the MPRP was not applicable to the people it demoted, fired, or punished. Such a method of punishment was the same as “taking steps for the Party.” Both came from the united MPRP, which taught that “Members of the MPRP are of one opinion and agree on this policy towards building socialism in Mongolia and are united in controlling this goal. A person in the ranks of the Party has no views!” There was no disagreement among the ranks of the leadership of the MPRP, and it was not acceptable to disagree over policy. Only when you became wealthy could you disagree with the Party. The Party kept secret those people who questioned it, and this was another example of “taking steps for the Party.”

YuK: Could you speak a little more about the teachers who taught you at the Party School?

TsL: Right! The Party School was organized by workers of the CC/MPRP and our government. Much attention was paid to the selection of teachers. After the victorious People’s Revolution of 1921, our wise and capable leaders chose many good men who were labeled from the “enemy class,” “enemy of the people,” “counter revolutionary,” and all sorts of other names. The later governments slandered them in a frame-up and executed them. One way to

survive was to denounce others to the MPRP or the People's Government. There was, then, at the time a failure of skilled staff in organizing the Party School. Actually after the 1921 People's Revolution, great attention was paid to the issue of the preparation of national education. The first government Minister of Education was Ye. Batkhan, who made the invaluable contribution of establishing a new era in the basic educational system. This wonderful and unusual Mongolian man came from the shores of Lake Baikal. On his own initiative, he had gone as a youth to study in Germany, France, and Russia. Our great writer D. Natsagdorj also studied in Germany and after that in Russia. Those who had studied abroad and were learned and capable were framed by the government. Since these educated people had few connections, they were imprisoned and executed. This was very significant for the Party School. This School aimed to follow new policies in education in the new era. Central to the school was its "nationalist ideology," and its goal was to prepare a non-religious education. Thus Marxism-Leninism was studied as the foundation of the truth, which would lead to the goal of building socialism. As I began my life with the State, it was necessary to speak about the term "nationalist ideology." At this time, it was not a good idea to find another name for this term.

How could people drop this term? Actually in the interests of the Mongolian State, office people had put forward the term "nationalist ideology" some forty years before, but it was not attached to the intellectuals. Our respected government public figures, scholars, and intellectuals were seen as following this "nationalist ideology." Nevertheless the practice of the "party taking steps" led to oppression and difficult conditions in their lives.

Mr. Ch. Sürenjav was head teacher at our school. Mr. Sürenjav was the deputy to the Mongolian Prime Minister. He and Marshal Kh. Choibalsan were very close and on friendly terms, so he was trusted. He was a member of the Politburo of the CC/MPRP and served as Secretary General. The second head teacher was a Buryat called N. Davjaev. He was born in the Buryat area near Lake Baikal and grew up to be a highly educated and talented man. N. Davjaev was a strong head teacher who believed in strict discipline and kept me firmly in hand. The lesson for the students at our school was that one could be outwitted if one did not excel in one's studies. In the summer vacation, all of us went to the countryside to plant seeds and help in mowing the hayfields. It was a break from the "ideological work." Wood from the lower slopes of the Bogd uul Mountains near a branch of the Tuul River was gathered for fuel in the winter. Those two years were very busy.

We listened to N. Lhamsüren's lectures. N. Lhamsüren was a very talented and marvelously knowledgeable man. N. Lhamsüren was a member of the

Politburo of the CC/MPRP and served as the General Secretary. He also served as a Minister at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for a year. We read our teachers' lectures, and those of N. Lhamüren were among the most intelligent. His lectures were the only ones with unlimited themes, and the various explanations of their overall meanings were discussed. There were questions, especially, about the well-known history of Chinggis Khan's organization of Greater Mongolia which at the time had been explained.

In our school, Daram Tömör-Ochir lectured on "The Theory of Social Development" and "The History of Philosophical Thought." Later, D. Tömör-Ochir was a member of the Politburo of the CC/MPRP and worked as one of the general secretaries. D. Tömör-Ochir lectured us on the three basics of Marxism, which were "Marxist Philosophy," "Historical Materialism," and "Dialectical Materialism."

We listened to the lectures of Sanpil Jalan-Aajav. This man was the first to graduate from our "Party School." Then he himself became a teacher at the school. He was a member of the Politburo of the CC/MPRP and, as the General Secretary, he was responsible for Party work. He also was a deputy leader of the People's Great Khural and held several high offices for many years. In the 1970s, Yu. Tsedenbal appointed him head of the Council of Ministers, but he didn't accept the position. In 1983, Yu. Tsedenbal discharged him and abandoned him, labeling him as the dregs of society. Soon the Control Committee of the CC/MPRP slandered Ts. Lookhuuz, B. Nyambuu, and B. Sürenjav as the opposition group in the Party in an effort to drive them from the MPRP and send them into exile. S. Jalan-Aajav had no connection to us. But since S. Jalan-Aajav had met with us, he earned the wrath of Yu. Tsedenbal.

Demchig Molomjamts also lectured to us. This man was, for many years, a member of the Politburo of the CC/MPRP and was the Secretary General responsible for economic issues. He had been Finance Minister at one time. D. Molomjamts was one of the few people who did not suffer and for whom "steps for the Party" were not taken during Yu. Tsedenbal's term. Much later, in the democratic and more up-to-date atmosphere of March, 1990, a special MPRP Great Khural met to explain "about people surrounding Yu. Tsedenbal" and members of the MPRP were expelled. The Procurator was removed. D. Molomjamts and Yu. Tsedenbal were both at the Great Khural, both were in the MPRP, and both had served in the government. In addition, there were about forty people in high offices who surrounded Yu. Tsedenbal. Offenses that were committed were examined, and a just penalty was imposed. The matters were then transferred to the Procurator. The public then could see "the legal grounds for imposing the just penalties."

The lecture on history by the scholar Sh. Natsagdorj was read. Our O. Budaev was a great lecturer. He talked about the relations between many countries, which was very interesting. Later, in the course of the lesson, O. Budaev would give us a “special” test. Because of that “special” test, the total results on the national exam could not have been better. S. Tsedenjav was the harshest. He was very strict and taught mathematics. We did, as they say “plokho” or [in Russian] “badly.” For the national exams, we only prepared the lessons for “plokho” Tsedenjav. For the other exams, we were not well prepared. The teacher who taught the course did not give the State exam. Another teacher gave it. S. Tsedenjav was very strict, and the students studied so well that every student passed the exam.

YuK: Were there outstanding students at your Party School?

TsL: There were many young people. Our Technicum in Ulaan Baatar “graduated” a considerable number of people. Of the people left, D. Khurmetbek and S. Telekhan were the two young men who distinguished themselves by their abilities. They were both of Kazakh origin. These two always received degrees with honors. They were marvelous, talented people. The teacher gave the lecture, and these two could remember those lectures word for word and didn’t need to read the books. During State exams, they recalled what they remembered from those lectures. S. Telekhan later served for many years at the Ministry of Construction. In 1960, Ulaan Baatar began its development and growth. Many new buildings were built, and the city took on its own unique appearance. D. Khurmetbek lived in Bayan Olgii *aimag* for a long time and served for many years as a leader. In 1958 our Party School expanded into a college. In June, 1944 I finished school. After our school ended, all of us went to the countryside. The majority of those who had left school were about twenty-five to twenty-seven. They were appointed either *aimag* leaders or administrative deputies in the *aimags*.

## **5. The Central Committee of the Mongolian People’s Revolutionary Party –(CC and MPRP)**

TsL: The leader appointed the ideology committee of the Party. Our head teacher, N. Davjaev, was given that position. This was a good appointment. We had had our exams and had finished school. School was over, and we had received our diplomas. We awaited our work assignments. During this period, we went to families we knew in the city and went shopping. Our building was quiet, and there were few families in it so we were lonely. I didn’t know people in the city and didn’t know what to buy so I stayed alone in my room in the hostel. A woman who had graduated with me came to my room. Her husband was head of our ministry but he had died. She asked me what I was



doing in my room all alone. And I answered that I didn't know anyone in the city, and I was waiting for my exam results. I went on to ask her to sit and talk a while in the room and, in time, go out. She told me that if my family couldn't come to see me, I should go with her to her family. She told me that her *ger* was very nice and asked me to walk with her to her home. A gentle breeze blew from the direction of the Tuul River, and the rays of the setting sun made for a beautiful evening. We walked toward her *ger*. We ate well there. I helped chop firewood, but I would never return after staying the night. The next day, the two of us would go to school together. We came into the school where the students were assembled and as our head teacher Davjaev found us returning together he remarked, "Our school is giving birth to a family. Congratulations to you two!" So we went with N. Davjaev to his office where there was a phone and he talked with people. I didn't know who to talk to, whether Marshal Kh. Choibalsan or his deputy Mr. Sürenjav. When it was my turn to talk, I took the phone to finish speaking. N. Davjaev said: "Well, Lookhuuz! Those of us on the CC/MPRP can give you your assignment" and he shook my hand. I was rejoicing in how wonderful it was for us to be side by side and holding hands. And, I was assigned to Ulaan Baatar. We returned to the head teacher, N. Davjaev's, room where we rejoiced, and he applauded us. In 1950 I went to Moscow to study at the Communist Party Institute and left her behind. I did not meet her again for a long time. We lived altogether separate lives. We did meet again in 1990. We could talk about this at length.

In June, 1944, the CC/MPRP transferred me to a new work situation. In 1944, on the initiative of the Prime Minister Kh. Choibalsan and the CC/MPRP, a lecture bureau was organized, and I went to work there. The goal of my new position was to teach Marxism-Leninism to the people. At this time Marxism-Leninism was not publicized, and people paid it little attention.

The leader of this lecture bureau was Chadrabal Lodoidamba. At that time, Ch. Lodoidamba was a young man who had just finished the Institute in Irkutsk, USSR. Ch. Lodoidamba later served for a time as Deputy Cultural Minister. Later still he became a famous writer. He wrote many good stories, histories, tales, and novels. The most famous was the novel "Tamir River". He began writing the book while he was the leader of the Lecture Bureau. For many months, we talked about each chapter, and each person gave his opinion. Each person gave his ideas about the form, adding corrections while he finished the writing. The novel was translated into many languages abroad. This is one of the best novels in modern times in Mongolia. It still measures up. The book is very similar to "And Quiet Flows the Don" by Mikhail Sholokhov, which focuses on the victory of the socialist revolution for the ordinary Russian people. The "Tamir River" starts with the events which

develop in twentieth century Mongolia and includes the changes in the lives of the Mongolian people, which are described with honesty. In 1970, Mikhail Sholokhov won the Nobel Prize.

In 1944, the first Mongolian State University was founded, and two people in our Lecture Bureau were appointed there. These two were Badam Lkhamsüren and Ts. Baldoo. Later B. Lkhamsüren was a member of the Politburo of the CC/MPRP and was the General Secretary. Later Ts. Baldoo was on the CC/MPRP and served as head teacher at the MPRP Institute of History. He also served as ambassador, representing Mongolia to other countries. He was also a friend of the General Secretary of the CC/MPRP. Yu. Tsendenbal was his great friend. They both came to our Lecture Bureau where about ten people worked.

My Lecture Bureau was permanently located in the CC/MPRP building. The new building of the MPRP is located in precisely the place of the CC/MPRP. The Lecture Bureau was located in one room. The office of Yu. Tsendenbal, the General Secretary of the CC/MPRP, was located on the opposite side of the building. The door of his room could be seen since it faced the door to the Lecture Bureau's room.

Yu. Tsendenbal was born in 1916 in what is now Uvs *aimag*, “Davst” *sum*. He finished primary school in his *sum*, finished middle school in Khovd *aimag*, and finished studying in a “Workers Facility” in Ulaan Ude in the Soviet Union. This facility was intended for Mongolians, and its aim was to enroll students and prepare them for classes. Thus many Mongolian young people studied there and went on to Soviet Institutes. Yu. Tsendenbal finished at this facility and went on to study economics at the university in Irkutsk. On finishing, he began lessons, as did Kh. Choibalsan, at the Finance Technicum, and after that he was director of the Mongolian Bank, Deputy Finance Minister, and was appointed as Minister to higher posts.

In 1940, he was chosen General Secretary at the Tenth Great Khural of the MPRP. Before the Tenth Great Khural of the CC/MPRP, there was no General Secretary. Before being elected Prime Minister, Marshal Choibalsan had performed this role. At the time, Yu. Tsendenbal was twenty-four years old. When he was elected to this post there was talk that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union had participated in his appointment, but it was hard to establish if this was true or false.

Since the Lecture Bureau and our General Secretary's office were near each other, we had the opportunity to become acquainted. All was clear as daylight as to where, when, what, and how the work was going. We met as contemporaries, both of us in our twenties. Neither of us was married with a family. We had similar interests. General Secretaries and officials from the

countryside, workers in the Party cells, committee heads, government ministers and figures in the arts and culture community came to the offices. There were famous singers, actors, and female dancers, and now I would like to take the time to speak about one of these “stars.”

That year, the work of our Lecture Bureau began with our most learned author Byamba Rinchen, the author of “The Tsogt Taiji,” which the new industry “Mongol Kino” made into a movie. This *taiji*, who lived in the seventeenth century, was a wise and learned Mongolian who fought bravely and fiercely and was a spirited and historic patriot.<sup>11)</sup> He was in the direct line of Chinggis Khan and was of “high birth” with a line that continues. In the Mongolian film, the role of the *taiji* was played by the great artist and master, the People’s Actor Tsaagan Tsegmid. Also in the film, which had many actors, was Luvsanjamts Tsogzolmaa, who was a singer in the Mongolian opera and a fine, famous and beautiful woman. I saw L.Tsogzolmaa for the first time when “Yu. Tsedenbal and L.Tsogzolmaa were going to be married.” That was the gossip. The question was “at this time, did Yu.Tsedenbal already have a wife?” People hoped that he would marry a Mongolian woman and have a family. But fate itself decided this issue.

In 1947, Yu. Tsedenbal was in Moscow in the Soviet Union where he met the woman of the golden hair, Anastasia Ivanova Filatova, who had been born in Riazan. It was clear that Marshal Choibalsan did not approve of this woman even as Yu. Tsedenbal was about to marry her. Yu Tsedenbal and A.I. Filatova had their wedding in Moscow. The Mongolians waited and gave a wedding reception, which Kh. Choibalsan did not attend. In that way, Kh. Choibalsan displayed his displeasure at their marriage. The Russian wife of Yu. Tsedenbal, the leader of the MPRP, had a bad upbringing and a rude character. For many years, he held high office in the government service and managed to keep his own life private. He used his wife, A.I. Filatova, expertly as proof of the deep friendship between the MPRP and the CC/USSR, and many understood why he did so.

One might raise the question, in spite of oneself, did the Soviet leaders show good judgment in supporting the leadership of Yu. Tsedenbal over the MPRP all those years? This is actually most interesting. Even with his Russian wife and his Russified “eye,” Yu. Tsedenbal was always seen as his “own man.” However, in August, 1984, the CC/MPRP at the Eighth Great Khural made a decision to dismiss Yu. Tsedenbal. The main reason given for this dismissal was his “Russian wife!” It was necessary to cut down this famous man because he was married to this rude and strange character. “Yu. Tsedenbal has become the toy of his wife” was the gossip which was not completely unfounded. Even members of the Politburo, the Central Committee, and the

Party said this. His wife supported her husband in front of the assembled Party members. The Politburo was seen as helping to defend his wife, and there was talk that they worked for the Communist Party of the USSR. He was finally dismissed from the Party because the members had lost patience with his wife, whom they had borne for so many years. They faced the issue of dismissing the wife or themselves. However, the USSR decided that Filatova would hurt its image, so she and her husband had to be brought down.

The Mongolians say that “Curses like chickens come home to roost” or “Do not dig a hole for somebody else; you yourself will fall into it.” A man can’t control his wife, and a nation can’t control all its talk, so it is useless to think that such actions are helpful. In this way, the life story of the General Secretary of the CC/MPRP who had served for more than forty years in politics ended in disgrace. And Yu. Tsedenbal spent many years defending himself, but his cronies turned against him and his wife and asked the USSR to get rid of them; this was the “strange story.” All the Mongolians knew the proverb and the phrase “Bite the hand that feeds you “ and “Black Ingratitude.” After being dismissed, he was cared for by his wife in Russia. All of this must be left to his son Zorig, Ambassador D. Gurbadam, and the journalist Leonid Shinkarev to write about with clarity.

Before he was dismissed from his position, many people testified that on meeting him he was healthy and bright. However, the false conversation was now “how poorly Yu. Tsedenbal looks!” which was the supposed reason he left his position. This reason, however, came from the “Tsedenbal Clique.” There had been many such fabricated pretexts for dismissing people from their work, as was the case at the 1956 meeting of the CC/MPRP at the Second Great Khural and in 1964 at the Sixth Great Khural. Twenty years after that, Yu. Tsedenbal was dismissed from his position, although the true reason was hidden from most people. So this strange, fictitious reason gave people much to think about. And this case encouraged many people to oust him. The Politburo of the CC/MPRP tried to make people believe that he was ill. In any case, as Yu. Tsedenbal grew older, his vigor, strength, and good health waned. This is the truth.

We in our Lecture Bureau were very frightened of the Prime Minister, Marshal Kh. Choibalsan. His reputation was very high among the people. Sometimes Kh. Choibalsan summoned people. Then our leader, when the chief wasn’t around, abandoned everything and jumped to it. Such was life. In this situation we all worked for six years. The CC/MPRP held their meetings in a building with a big hall. All the CC/MPRP convened there for their meetings. We, at that time, attended the meetings where the decisions which pertained to life and work were made. Actually, at this time in our community, the

Government and the MPRP began to increase their participation in our lives. As the country developed, the MPRP interfered in the lives of the people.

Thus, gradually, the MPRP began to control the high officials in the government. And at this time, the Government started to use the expression “our beloved MPRP.” All the official documents used this expression. In 1960, the Constitution was confirmed. This was our third constitution. The first was confirmed in 1924, and the second in 1940. The new Mongolian Constitution of 1960 stated that “the base of socialist materialism has been built in Mongolia.” “The stage of earlier development which entailed the construction of a socialist-materialist technical base in our socialist-communist society is finished. This stage of construction is over, and our socialist-communist society has been transformed!” It was explained that since the material-technical base had been built, the socialist-communist society could begin to be organized.

In all the years of “this socialist material-technical base” many people told this anecdote. At the time, students at the university and in the high schools were taught “about the theory of socialism-communism” and took tests on it. “What is the material-technical basis of socialism?” was asked of one student. Then another student pondered this and answered that the socialist material base is the big wooden “khaasha” around Tolghoit.<sup>12)</sup> The teacher gave him a poor score. Our students laughed at this. The true answer concerning this theory is that “the socialist-materialist technical basis is a stage in the development of the construction of a socialist-communist society.” It is understandable that people make the “bad” mistake of answering that the theory is a big wooden khaasha at Tolkhait. It must be said rather scornfully to them that “you don’t know the theory.” And, mockingly, “what a bad score!” “This student is certainly busy with the answer!” we say with a laugh. This student spoke of the “big wooden khaasha at Tolghoit.” But truly this big wooden fence the student talked about is located near the Tolghoit train station which is on the way to Ulaan Baatar, which was a central place for receiving goods. The Soviet Union and other countries sent donations of commodities, technology, and equipment to this Tolghoit! Thus, this student confused the theory of “socialism’s material and technical base” and Tolghoit’s big wooden fence. Perhaps it is difficult for foreigners to understand that the main reason for our laughter and mockery was that “the socialist-materialist technical basis was not the Mongolians themselves! but the help received from foreign loans!” The 1960 Constitution and foreign loans supported the building of socialism-communism and legislated the ideology of the MPRP.

YuK: How was the work of the Lecture Bureau managed by the CC/MPRP?

TsL: The MPRP publicized the work of the Lecture Bureau. We began working

at the time of World War II. Our propaganda work focused on the situation of German fascism and what our older brother, our neighbor, and our friend — the Soviet Union — needed to win the war quickly. Our aim was also to promote help for the Soviet people by the Mongolian people. At this time of war, we collected news to present to the Mongolian people from the Soviet-German front as well as information about the activity of the Germans on the second front, which had been opened by the English and the Americans.

Japan was at the center of the war in the Far East and was an important source of the propaganda and news which we tried to bring to many people. We also informed people about the possibility of a Third World War because many countries were moving in that direction. The propagandist was principally familiar with Marxism in doing this work. Knowledge of the laws of dialectical materialism informed the work we did. “Capitalism will not develop later in future societies. Rather, capitalism will exhaust the possibility of social development and soon people in all countries will develop communist societies. England, America and Japan are the big capitalist countries with working communist parties. In these countries, the people will lead the struggle for the victory of the socialist revolution. The time is near to raise the red flag of communism in every country. And in each country, the proletariat will unite and usher in the victorious socialist revolution. Humanity will have a bright future in a communist society.” So stated the propaganda.

We went into the nation’s industries, public offices, government ministries, and banner offices to create “this political club” which could still be found in our society in 1990. It was all the work begun by the Lecture Bureau. At that time, the discussions followed changing themes. We mainly met as “the political club” in the evenings after work. We prepared the themes to promote for each lecture. The Lecture Bureau had to certify all the discussions. We used mainly Russian books to prepare these lectures. I read and understood a little Russian. Our Russian language material was well translated by a translator. We prepared to compile these lectures and publish them as the “Lecture Collection.”

Our teachers went to lecture in the countryside. At the time, I went to almost all the *aimags*. The secretaries of the CC/MPRP, government members, and leaders from various places all went to work in the countryside. We went together with them. At the time, the work was well organized by the sharp, aggressive leader and translator from the Council of Ministers, Mr. C. Sürenjav. He was a forceful and celebrated organizer. The other translator from the Council of Ministers was a man called S. Lamjav. Kh. Choibalsan valued him highly and said that he was “a man of great qualities who knew how to work well.” I went to the countryside with him twice. Prime Minister Marshal

Choibalsan called me “right and left hands.” At the time the People’s Government was very active. There was much to do when we talked to the country workers. People reflected on new things well. During the war years, our people developed a nationwide friendship with the Soviet Red Army. Germany attacked the Soviet Union and after the ninth month, the Mongolian people began to organize and direct a movement to help the Red Army, which was called “The Donation from the Central Committee.” Divisions from the *sums* and the *aimags* were organized. “All for the Front!” “All for Victory!” These were the slogans. Many people then gave contributions to “The Donation from the Central Committee” as a gift to the Red Army. People gave as much gold, money, and horses as they could.

In the war years, the Mongolian People’s Committee organized the construction of a squadron of planes called “The Mongolian People” and a tank column called “Revolutionary Mongolia” for the Red Army. Many people made warm woolen *deels*, gloves, hats, and boots for the Red Army. On their own initiative, people prepared useful things and organized into an aid column, and several times Marshal Kh. Choibalsan, leader of the Mongolian government, accompanied the Red Army as it mobilized to fight. The first time this aid column was presented to the Soviets by a Mongolian representative, I.V. Stalin waited to meet it. “In difficult times, one knows who one’s friends are” were his first famous words. Mongolia did not participate at this time in the war, but tried to help the Soviets achieve success.

In regard to this, Mongolia was fulfilling its duty as agreed to in the Protocol of Mutual Assistance. The Protocol of Mutual Assistance was signed in 1936 by the leaders of Mongolia and the Soviet Union. In this Protocol, if one of the two countries was attacked by a third country, it was agreed that the other country would come to the aid of the country that was attacked. In 1939, when the battle of the Khalkh River began, the Soviets fulfilled their agreed upon duty and came to the aid of Mongolia. At the Battle of the Khalkh River, the Soviet Red Army was commanded by General G. K. Zhukov, who was the most famous of the generals in the Second World War. We Mongols greatly respected and honored him. In Ulaan Baatar, there is a museum to him. Actually, in the Soviet-German war, the three most distinguished generals were G. K. Zhukov, K. K. Rokossovski, and F. Konev. K. K. Rokossovski and F. Konev were both twenty years old and were under the Red commander when the White troops were fighting in Mongolia. At the time of the battle of the Khalkh River, the Mongolian People’s Revolutionary Army was commanded by Kh. Choibalsan. J. Lkhagvasüren worked as the Deputy Corps Commander and directed the Khalkh River battle and achieved victory as commander of the Mongolian troops. He was the most talented young general.<sup>13)</sup> People wrote

and sang songs about him. On the fiftieth anniversary of the victorious battle of the Khalkh River, a bronze statue of him was erected in Ulaan Baatar in his honor. But Yu. Tsendenbal inappropriately suppressed such action for many years and was criticized for this. I have heard that people had very little knowledge of the Japanese war at Khalkh River. The Second World War began without any official summons whereas within a short period of time there was the major Battle of the Khalkh River. In the war at this time, the choicest airplanes, large guns, tanks, and other military technology were selected for use. The Khalkh River war ended in a Mongolian victory.

In 1941, the Soviet-German war began, and the Mongolian economy received a severe blow. At the time, our industrial goods were underdeveloped. In 1934, the Industrial Kombinat was organized to meet the goods shortage because necessary goods had been imported from the USSR. However, we also had to help our major trading power and supply goods in this war economy. Thus our own war time economy moved toward production.

At the end of 1941 and the beginning of 1942, the MPRP Great Khural met and discussed how it would address the issues of a war economy. All of those at the meeting decided that the need for goods during the war necessitated the development of industry to produce what was needed rather than relying on the USSR. Thus “The Higher Handicraft Council” was organized. Its chosen leader was N. Demchig, and branches of this Council were organized in the *aimags* and *sums*. N. Demchig was a leader with great initiative. He was a good man who directed all sorts of economic work. The present term “management” could be applied to this good leader. The Ulaan Baatar Service Center on “Urt Tsagaan” was the handicraft industry that N. Demchig had organized.

At the time we didn’t make many European clothes. There was one section of the government service which sewed clothes for the leaders and the ministers. Different measurements were not used, so all the clothes were made in the same size. Some were, therefore, too big, and some too small, and others were odd. In 1950, N. Demchig brought patterns from Rome, which were used to make European clothes in different sizes. Thus, I had my first suit made — size 48. So I had my own European clothes that fit.

People were introduced to new things. Tools needed to make various items were of great importance to the economy, so machines had to be imported from abroad to make them. In my time, iron was used for nails and other things. Different types of glass were also made which were used in buildings. In the *aimags*, the handicraft industry developed ways to dress hides and make *deels*, hats, and boots, all of which were needed.

Slowly, the import of prepared goods decreased. The Industrial Ministry



began to be organized, and work in the handicraft industry was lively. D. Bavuudorj was appointed the leader. He had previously been an *aimag* leader. He was an active warrior and a capable man. Thus the Industrial Ministry subsumed the handicraft industry so both industries developed at the same time. On the initiative of Kh. Choibalsan, work was done.

YuK: And did you meet with Kh. Choibalsan?

TsL: I did not have a friendly relationship with the Marshal. I was young at the time. I met him for the first time on an assignment from Mr. B. Shirendev.<sup>14)</sup> At the time, Mr. Shirendev was the General Secretary of the Party and a member of the Politburo of the CC/MPRP. I was given the assignment by the leader B. Shirendev to prepare and organize propaganda work in the *aimags* and *sums*. Marshal Choibalsan knew about this assignment himself. The fame of the Marshal had spread among the people, and a “personality cult” had formed around him. Everyone who came to his office for the first time was very anxious. I was frightened. And then I entered. In one corner of the room, people were sitting at a big table. The room was very large. At the back table sat the Marshal, looking very small. He was sitting at the table which was covered with a long, colored cloth. He sat at the back and hanging on the wall were two pictures — one of V.I. Lenin and the other of D. Sükhbaatar. His own picture was not there. Kh. Choibalsan got up from the table and approached me:

“Hello” was the greeting. “Did you come with B. Shirendev?”

I greeted him with the answer: “Yes. I came with the leader B. Shirendev.

Kh. Choibalsan said:

“Ah, yes. What is your name?” I told him my name.

“And what work do you do?” He asked.

“I work at the Lecture Bureau as a propagandist.” I said.

“Ah, yes. So you are involved with some degree of propaganda. Do you go to the countryside and meet with lots of people?” He asked. Then he went on and said:

“You come here! Sit down! Show me the plan you have made and put it here on the table. And explain it well without hurrying. “

Kh. Choibalsan was himself very simple, and he talked nicely with us. But my knees were shaking. I spoke and somewhat explained the plan. The Marshal asked if we knew how important it was to draw up a plan.

“Who knows!”

The Marshal said: “Sure. I understand. You are now working with Ch. Lodoidamba. He is a man who sits down and knows how to write! You are doing necessary work. It is important that we do work that our people can understand. This is essential.” He gave me his hand, and we shook hands and

I left his office. That was the first time I met with the Marshal.

In 1952, I was studying at the Communist Party School in Moscow when Marshal Choibalsan fell ill, went into the hospital in Moscow, and was operated on. The surgery was not completed, and he died on the operating table. Under the leadership of the Soviet government, his body was placed in the Hall of Columns in Moscow. The Soviet government and leaders, government members, and many public representatives made ceremonial visits.

At the time, I stood as an honor guard near the body of Kh. Choibalsan. After that, his body was laid in a car, put on a train for his own country, and then we kissed the train. The Marshal was a famous man. However, some of his activities had led to the “cult of personality” and mistakes were made which sadly included the frame-ups and executions of many innocent people in the government. Nevertheless, all mature Mongolians shed tears. “The World War erupted and there was fighting among the Great Powers. It was a serious time and the fate of Mongolia was in the Marshal’s hands! The Marshal was a man of courage and endurance and nobody but the Marshal could lead the country” said many people. I thought “the Marshal has made many mistakes in the government but he did the right thing for Mongolia. We are a small country between two big countries, which have treated us badly in recent history. At the time, holding the reins of the State in those changing times called for great patience, courage, and intelligence. “The Marshal is incomparably capable of doing all this” I thought.

Our Lecture Bureau of the CC/MPRP was at the Great Khural where Kh. Choibalsan spoke. The Marshal spoke of one thing in particular which was the issue of “internal Party criticism.” “The Party calls for a great build up of people. There is a job to be done in organizing the public to lead the country. It is time to review and update our activities, so the society does not go backwards. It is necessary to move beyond our backwardness. The best way to update is through criticism within the Party. Internal criticism can enable us to realize what those of us in the Party are lacking and what should be stopped. Without understanding what the Party is missing, things can only become worse. Criticism should come from the higher leadership. We are the highest people in our Party and can criticize those who are lower down in the Party. But we must listen to all Party members. Yu. Tsedenbal and I both went to each Minister and to the Party leaders and listened to what they had to say. We wanted to hear what was good and what was bad in the work of our Party” said the Marshal. Until the Marshal’s death, the principal criticisms were published by the Party press. In fact, people did not like the sort of gossip they heard which included such talk as “that person isn’t doing his work.” At the time one did not actually hear many words spoken. The only spoken word was

“chort” (the Russian for the devil). People did not like flatterers and toadies. Those in high positions in the government listened to new people and always watched how those appointed to their jobs did their work. “If a person worked well in the *bag*, he became the leader of the *sum*; if he did good work in the *sum*, he moved up to be the *aimag* leader; if he did good work in the *aimag*, he became a Minister; if he did good work in the Ministry, he advanced to be a deputy minister, and if he did well there on he went to be the Secretary of the CC/MPRP!” or so it was said.<sup>15)</sup> I think that this was the tried and true method. From studying history, I learned that at the time of Chinggis Khan the princes were leaders of ten men, a hundred men, and a thousand men. At the time of Kh. Choibalsan, all the thirteen Ministers in the Ministries were people who had been *aimag* leaders. They had directed the work in the *aimags* well, so they became Ministers. I think that the Marshal carried out the correct method with his staff.

Yu. Tsedenbal changed the basic thinking about the power of the government to select the cadres. Yu. Tsedenbal did not choose people for the results of their work but through promises. Those who had finished school or were from a particular locality were selected, which was the wrong method. After us, the appointments of people for high offices in the government led to work that was begun but left unfinished. This is the reality, and one could see a conflict beginning between these two styles of leadership. Yu. Tsedenbal’s leadership could not deal with real life questions which needed to be answered, and thus correct decisions could not be made. This conflict persisted. People could not criticize directly or even indirectly, and they tried to find a way out of their difficulties. So the workers in our national industries did not listen to the leaders who were not doing their work. On the other hand, these leaders did not understand the thoughts, hopes, and needs of the workers. Thus there was little support for or from either side. As a consequence, a period of stagnation ensued, which lasted for weeks on end.

## **6. Yu. Tsedenbal**

YuK: What were the personal relations between you and the General Secretary of the CC/MPRP?

TsL: We were close and had a good relationship. And I had a good relationship with his younger brother. He had one brother and one sister. I was friendly with his sister. I will talk about one incident that happened after I finished the Moscow Communist Party College.

It was during Naadam,<sup>16)</sup> which was widely celebrated. There was a holiday of many weeks. On that holiday Yu. Tsedenbal’s sister and I wanted to go to the Tuul River to rest. We tried to reach the Tuul River without a car.

But many people with cars had gone to the open space for the Naadam festivities. Cars assembled, and many people were seen going on to Naadam. Thus my female friend said: “Hello! My brother’s car is over there. We both can go in that car. I know who the driver is!” Actually, we were not going far. There was a stop for the black car for the leaders of the government and the CC/MPRP, and there was a new government car, which was her brother’s. The driver sat inside, and he did not like what we wanted to do. Still, he did not refuse. He warned again and again that “during Naadam everybody goes off but it is also important to return, really!” We told him that everyone goes off at Naadam, and we promised to come back. So we sat in the car as it hurried down to the Tuul River. We went to a lovely place with a willow tree. Later, a rest area called “Songino” was set up there.

Both of us and the driver sat in the shade of the willow tree, boiled water for tea, and had a little picnic. It was such a hot day that both of us and the driver dove into the water. We stayed until noon as Naadam was going on. All of us were relaxed as we lay in the soft sand after we had finished diving, and our tanned bodies slept soundly. When the three of us awoke, the sun was almost setting.

On a summer day the sun sets very late in the evening. Thus Naadam was over. We didn’t want to get into trouble and realized that all we could do was to tell the truth and ask Tsedenbal’s forgiveness. We promised we would never do this again. Tsedenbal went to where his car was usually parked after Naadam was over, but he did not see his car and took the Prime Minister’s car and went home. At that time our country was very nice and peaceful. Now it is not like that. Then the government leaders, Party directors, Ministers, and rich and poor people walked along the street. That is what it was like on the street. Her brother was not very happy with us. But there was no sign of anger.

Yu. Tsedenbal’s younger brother is called Ayush. His wife’s father was a man called J. Nansal. Ayush accompanied by his wife, Tsedenbal and Filatova, and I and my wife went to Mr. Nansal’s home to celebrate several occasions like the Women’s Day festival, New Year’s Festival, and the October Festival. The wife of Tsedenbal’s brother, Ayush, and my wife were united through marriage and were relatives.

IL: What sort of character did Yu. Tsedenbal have? Was he difficult?

TsL: Oh, alright, alright. Actually alright. He had a free and gentle and good character. Some of Yu. Tsedenbal’s personal deficiencies, his work methods, and his ideas about government were criticized. He was cut off from the lives of people. I’ll give you some examples of this. At the end of 1950, we organized a new State Horse Farm enterprise at Bor Lake. Many horses came from a good breed from the USSR. One day, Yu. Tsedenbal summoned us. I

went to his office:

He said: "I am telling you that tomorrow there will be a showing of the Horse Farm. You will come with me." Tomorrow was a holiday but we still left at the appointed hour from Ulaan Baatar. None of his official comrades came. We arrived at the State Farm near Bor Lake in a short time. We did not speak about going to the Horse Farm to the leaders in Ulaan Baatar. So no one was there to greet us. Everyone was on a holiday. One old man was the caretaker, and he let us in. In fact, he could not quite understand who we were since we were there on a holiday.

We said: "Hello?" giving a hand. He began to greet us after shaking hands. The caretaker led us to the *khashaa* with the horses. I gave Yu. Tsedenbal an explanation of this breed of horses. Then we all left the *khashaa*. We saw another old caretaker there.

"OK. Goodbye" and he gave us his hand.

"OK. Good bye and thank you" we said to him, shaking hands again. Then we went to our cars. I started the car since Yu. Tsedenbal couldn't! Going to the city, his car went first and ours followed behind. Our driver waited a little for Tsedenbal. After a while, I decided to get out and see what was going on with the car. Then Yu. Tsedenbal carefully opened the back door of his car with a large bottle in his hand. This beautiful white bottle of spirits was wrapped in an absorbent cloth or handkerchief with which he wiped first one hand and then the other. At that moment I became very angry. "This man is completely removed from the lives of the people — that simple old herder who shook hands with him nearly fell ill with fear. These spirits and this white cloth all had to be arranged for his Russian wife! What do you say to that Yu. Tsedenbal? Do you always have that white handkerchief to wipe your hands? Do you always wear a white jacket and are you always fresh and elegant? Surely not. He grew up in the same environment as this old herder. He and I and actually all Mongolians are living and growing up in such an environment. All alike. So how did this man develop such behavior? Is this man an insult? Where did he come from? He certainly is not Mongolian like the rest of us." All of these thoughts welled up in me. We, ourselves, drove at full speed in the direction of Ulaan Baatar without looking back or turning around. And that person was far removed from our lives. Because of the influence of his Russian wife, he had to do things the Russian way. A.I. Filatova lived more than forty years in Mongolia, and she never spent a night in the *ger* of a herding family, nor did she speak a single word of Mongolian before she went home. When her two sons, Slavik and Zorig, were small children they never played with Mongolian children. Nor did they know any Mongolian until they were twenty years old. Such were these people. During his whole life, he tried

to teach and guide, while at the same time he and his family lived such a life.

There were many problems arising in such a situation and much to think about. There were questions about supporting such a style of life which was harshly criticized as well as questions about the connections between his government life and his private life. Many voiced the opinion that “This should not be. He must know about the conditions in the country and understand the life of the people.” But things did not improve.

## **7. I am a Student at the Soviet Communist Party Institute**

YuK: When did you study in the USSR?

TsL: I worked at the Lecture Bureau from 1944 to 1950. Our propaganda was highly valued. At the time, I studied Russian independently and did a lot of translation work. Up to two nights a week, I stayed late to work on reading Russian for translation. At the time, the ideological questions of the CC/MPRP were handled by the General Secretary N. Sosorbaram. This man had some ideas for me as I tried to learn to speak Russian.

At the end of 1950, this Mongolian went to study at the Moscow Communist Party College. At the time, the Communist Party of the USSR had begun to build socialism and later it was interested in preparing people from other countries to help in this task. The Mongolians went to a number of these countries. The first year four people who went to the USSR included Ts. Dugersüren , S. Zuhdui, D. Tsedendambaa, and B. Enebish.

The next year four others went, including D. Chojjamts, S. Deleg, Ts. Dagvasüren and myself. Mr. D. Chojjamts was the General Secretary of the CC/MPRP and the oldest among us. Ts. Dagvasüren was the leader of the Department of Foreign Relations of the CC/MPRP, and he now lives in Moscow. He has a Russian wife. We three were contemporaries –all about twenty-seven years old.

At the time we went to the Soviet Party College in Moscow, it was located in a gray, ten story building with good resources and good teachers. All the Soviet Party secretaries, department heads, government members and ministers, and special local leaders had graduated from this school. Besides students from our country, members of Communist Parties from the USA, France, and England studied here but in secret. I don’t know if anyone from Japan came to study there. Perhaps in secret.

Students received a stipend of fifteen hundred rubles a month to attend this school. People coming from abroad received an additional five hundred rubles. The first year, there were two people to a room. After that, there were single rooms. There was a branch of the “Kremlin Cafeteria” in our building. We ate there seven days a week, having paid in advance. For the three years

that I studied in Russia, I ate very little bread and potatoes. We were waited on, and I liked to order all sorts of meat dishes such as goose, chicken, pork, mutton, and beef. At that time, the Kremlin cafeteria got its meat from France. Goose and chicken were both imported. The pork came from the Ukraine. We also ordered our clothes, which had to be made in the main factory. Those who were entitled could go into places of art and culture without waiting in line. We students went right in, having shown our credentials.

The CC/CPSU All Soviet meeting and the anniversary holiday of the October Revolution were the focus of festive ceremonies to which we were invited. There was a military parade and a workers' demonstration in Red Square. The leaders of the CPSU and the Soviet government leaders stood on the platform above Lenin's Mausoleum and the workers' holiday demonstration and the military parade waited in front. We stopped quite near the Lenin Mausoleum. There was a special standing place for the government members, the ministers, and the foreign ambassadors.

Our school had a very large library. We were also able to use the V. I. Lenin Central State Library and near to the CC/USSR the Library of the Marxist-Leninist Institute. We read about leaders, ministers, and labor heroes who worked in industries and then heard about their work experiences and their successes. We worked in solid enterprises and industries and became acquainted with the working conditions. We learned a lot of new things in our three years, especially how to keep work records, and we took away many things from this experience.

YuK: How did you spend your free time in Moscow?

TsL: In the three year period when I was studying in Moscow, I went to the theater often. In this connection, let me tell you a story.

When we first arrived in Moscow, we didn't know the Russian language. We understood little when spoken to. However, we did understand a little of what we read. Thus we raised the question of how quickly we could learn the language, and we set out to learn it in every way possible. We agreed to "learn Russian as fast as we could in every way, including getting to know Russian girls."

We were around twenty-seven years old. The three of us decided to get to know Russian girls who would teach us Russian. At the time, our Moscow school had many famous people. Since it was not so long after the war, we had nothing to trade. The ordinary Russian family ate mainly bread and potatoes, and the Russian men drank a lot. I understood the reason for this later. In wartime, Russian working people had tea and one slice of black bread at noon, and then they drank some buckthorn beer, which one gave into slowly. They spread mustard on their bread, and that was it.

At that time, the number of men had greatly decreased. In the war, many thousands of people had been lost, and as a result the women were rather carefree, and foreign men were of interest to them. And getting to know the Russian women was particularly interesting for us students. But at that time, it was not lawful for Russian women to marry foreign men. This law was terminated by the end of the 1950s, but we three did not know the Soviet law, which existed at that time. Therefore Mongolians and Russians were known to marry.

We found near our school a place for dancing. There were many young Russian women there. They went there to dance. We also went there to dance. Our S. Deleg was very good at dancing. He was good at the waltz. At the time, everyone did the waltz. Today's youth can't do the "Mango" and the "Tango" dances nor could we though we still loved to dance. The Russians danced well, and it was lovely to see them dance with their slender, tall, and elegant backs. It seems they were born to dance. We went there often. After coming back from dancing, it seemed as if we could still hear the music and see people dancing to such an extent that we could not concentrate on our courses or go to sleep.

The three of us each had a girl friend. I came to know a woman who was a teacher. She lived with her mother in the outskirts of Moscow. She was a teacher in a middle school, and her mother worked in the airplane industry. She was very cultured and well read, and she liked to go to museums and the theater. The virtue of this was that for the three years I spent in Moscow, we went to every theater and museum. There were altogether thirty-three major theaters in Moscow. Among the most famous were the Bolshoi Theater, the Malii Theater, and the Vakhtangov Drama Theater. We saw the complete repertoires of all the five main theaters.

In the beginning the most incomprehensible thing for me was listening to music. My girl friend and I went to the concert hall named after P.I. Tchaikovsky in the Moscow Conservatory to listen to the concerts of the music of Beethoven, Mozart, Strauss, Schubert, Chopin, Tchaikovsky, Bach, Shostakovich and Khachaturian. I would feel sleepy when the concert began, and I would begin to fall asleep in my chair. My friend sat beside me and made a sound to wake me up. Again, I would fall asleep. But it seems I slowly began to appreciate the music. In the end, I liked to listen.

And I saw theaters and museums outside of Moscow which had beautiful art objects. Sometimes I went to Leningrad, which has the greatest number of museums in the world. On a Saturday, we would take the fast train to Leningrad and return the next day. At the time, the All Union Radio administrative office was in Moscow, and it began to broadcast in Mongolian



under the editorship of S. Deleg, and we worked on this. I gave readings and received a salary of one thousand rubles a month.

The administrative office of the All Union Radio had a vacation resort on the Black Sea coast in a place where one of the old Russian Tsars had lived. It was nicely located in a lovely area of nature. I went there for two months with my Russian girl friend when the school was on spring break. We went there from Moscow in a hired car with a driver who took us to our place and stayed at the resort as well.

We rested along the Black Sea coast, which was wonderful to see as was its natural setting. The city of Sebastopol was not too far to the west and the Caucasus mountains were to the east. We organized outings by car. In the fall, we returned to Moscow, with fruit from the Caucasus and the Ukraine. We brought the fruit to my girl friend's mother who made very good jam with it. This was how we lived. I had learned the Russian language and, thanks to my girl friend, music and the theater had become comprehensible to me. At that time, I bought many books and recordings of the best symphonic and operatic music, all of which I took home from Moscow. I didn't learn to smoke or drink spirits since all my time was spent studying, going to the theater, and listening to music. Five days a week were devoted to study. We read until 2 or 3 in the morning. I thought that the opportunity to study will not be offered again so this was the time to succeed. What I did in Moscow enabled me to become one of the general secretaries of the CC/MPRP, and from time to time high-ranking officials came to Moscow, and I met them. We were interested in the news from their countries.

IL: Did the foreign students who graduated from the Communist Party College become leaders on returning to their country?

TsL: All of them. It was customary for them to become members of the government and as ministers perform official work. Thus in many countries there were leaders like the Romanian President and head of the Romanian CC/CP, general secretary Nicholas Ceaucescu.

N. Ceaucescu and I were students together. In December, 1956 I received, as a representative of the MPRP, an invitation from N. Ceaucescu to attend a meeting of the Romanian Communist Party. At the time, I had finished the Communist Party College and worked as First Party Secretary on the MPRP committee in the Gov-Altai *aimag*. The Chinese Communist Party head representative who also attended this meeting was Zhu De, from the Ministry of Defense. The Secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party represented the USSR. There were many representatives from the Communist Parties of other countries. After the meeting, the Romanian President, Georgii Dej, received the foreign representatives at the Palace on the edge of the city of Bucharest.

The New Year was approaching, so a reception and an important soiree were organized. There were many representatives at the reception, and President Georgii Dej danced with a young lady with a large face and silvery white hair who was considered nice. President Georgii Dej and this young woman both lived in the Palace. His wife had died. We had an interesting meeting with the President and when we were dancing happily, he said: “Now we will all go to my play room.” I understood him to mean a “room for playing sports.” We descended to the first floor and were let into a room full of children’s games. So many games. Then he said: “This is my room — the President’s room!” He exerted much brain power and at times was so tired that he had played there to relax. So all the foreign representatives, in spite of themselves, played with the toys and games. This is the amusing memory of that room that stays with me. The Minister of Defense, Zhu De, from the Chinese People’s Republic, also played these games, and the sincerity of his laughter as he enjoyed himself is unforgettable. It was really nice to see adults who could play children’s games. It is thought that there is a possibility that people can extend their brain-work by freeing themselves from exhaustion. This, then, was an interesting method. People nowadays talk about “freeing themselves from stress!”

At the time I was acquainted with Nicolai Ceausescu he was responsible, as Secretary General of the Romanian CC/CP, for ideology. He met with the Mongolian representatives on this subject. Before meeting with N. Ceausescu, we talked about what we wished to say, so all would be clear. Romania was a poor country, but it had many natural resources, including reserves of oil. It was said that it had “to be careful not to lose those oil reserves to the USSR.” Actually, at this time, N. Ceausescu opposed many Soviet policies, had his own ideas, and decided everything himself, taking little advice from the USSR. In the end, this situation only strengthened N. Ceausescu as the President of Romania and the General Secretary of its CC/CP. After ninety years, the world socialist system has broken down, and Romania alone of the socialist countries is without debts. All foreign socialist countries had enormous debts. However, Romania’s internal policies were not right. Elena Ceausescu, the President’s wife, participated in government matters and had her own way in dismissing ministers and leaders, or if not that, at least in extensively shortening their lives. In 1990, the Romanian democracy took major steps in changing things. Nicolai and Elene Ceausescu were both arrested and before the eyes of the world were executed. Actually, a wife’s participation in political matters, whether abroad or here at home, is a mistake. There must be a boundary between one’s personal and private life and one’s political life.

YuK: How many years did you study at the Communist Party College?

TsL: I studied there for three years. When I finished school, I got ready to return to my country, and my Russian girl friend and I decided to go back together. Then the trouble began, even though it was not against the law for a Russian woman to marry a foreigner. In spite of that, there were difficulties for Russian women who wished to marry foreign men. To accomplish this, a High Soviet of the USSR had to give its permission. At the time, the leader of the High Soviet of the USSR was Kliment Efremovich Voroshilov. We decided to have a meeting with K. E. Voroshilov. The Kremlin didn't participate in such matters with ordinary people. There was a specially allotted day for K. E. Voroshilov to receive workers. We went in advance of the allotted time to meet him and get his permission. So we decided to meet in the Kremlin "workers' reception area" and talk with K. Voroshilov about the issue and await his answer. On the assigned day, we went to the Kremlin's "workers' reception area." There were many people who wished to meet K. Voroshilov. We waited in line the whole day. Then K. E. Voroshilov met with us, and we discussed our wish for permission. Then we waited. After waiting many weeks, the answer was: "It is impossible to accept your demand." Thus, our plans to go to Mongolia together collapsed.

## **8. The Marxist-Leninist Section of the CC/MPRP**

TsL: So I returned to Mongolia alone. Our Lecture Bureau had expanded and was now called the Marxist-Leninist Section of the CC/MPRP. I was appointed leader of the new department. Having studied for three years in the USSR, I spoke Russian, wrote it, and enjoyed using it in my work. I had just reached the age of thirty. It was the fall of 1953, and my thoughts turned to my work. In the past, we had always prepared lectures, and many people came to know them. But our method was considered unsatisfactory, and the thought arose that "the theory of Marxism-Leninism makes for the best work." I spoke to the work section about the idea, and we decided to write a book about the three basic concepts of Marxism-Leninism; "dialectical materialism," "historical materialism," and "Marxist political and economic consciousness." Altogether we published three books on these themes, and it took us many years. These books are used as reference works by teachers and students in the university.

Also at this time, the Soviet Academy of Sciences and the Mongolian Literary Committee (a predecessor of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences) began to work together to publish new books about Mongolian history. The scholar Mr. B. Shirendev was in charge of the Mongolian side of this work, and one new volume of Mongolian history was published in the Russian language. It took our Marxist-Leninist Section a month to translate the Russian and then publish the volume in Mongolian. Beginning the work, my main

thought was about the future development of Mongolia. “What would be the proper development of Mongolia in the future?” was the issue I thought about. Regarding this question, the MPRP was not moving in the clear direction of following the outline of the theory. There was, in fact, no clear plan or theory about the future development of Mongolia. I thought it was necessary to draw conclusions and make correct appraisals of the nation’s present and future realities. Many people discussed this idea, and some wrote articles proposing new policies. Articles were printed in the newspaper “Truth” and the magazine “Party Life.” Sometimes, when we wrote articles, the cautious or frightened editors refused to publish them. At the time, the head of the CC/MPRP publishing section was a man called Ts. Namsrai. The newspaper and magazine editors gave assignments to the publishing houses. The General Secretary of the MPRP met with us and gave us our assignments and told us what direction to take. At this time, publishing had begun to be strictly controlled, and freedom of the press had been stopped. A decision was made which became the policy of the MPRP to curtail the freedom of the press. Thus it was prudent that an article rarely present an opinion. However, I decided to speak to Yu. Tsedenbal about this issue so, one day, I went to his office to meet with him, and I put the question to him.

Yu. Tsedenbal: “Why did you come to talk to me about this?”

Ts.Lookhuuz: “It is important to talk about this one question with you. Your help is necessary. We Mongolians are writing articles on the future development and promotion of theory and thought. Subsequently, the MPRP has decided to prepare the basic theory which will clarify the future trends in this country. As a result, newspapers, magazines, and publishing houses refuse to print our articles! Yu.Tsedenbal, my leader, speak to this question.” I said this hopefully, but I received quite a contrary answer.

Yu.Tsedenbal: “Postpone this issue of theory for now. It is not time for our Party to discuss this.” That was his cool response. And on hearing that, my mind was in a tumult, and my hopes were dashed, but I continued my strong line of questioning:

TsL: “How can our Party and our country develop without at least some rough ideas and preparation? Now everything is an imitation and the twisted words of someone else. Aren’t we wandering in the dark and groping to find our way? Without a theory, isn’t the Party blind? And without a plan doesn’t the Party just limp along?” Our conversation was not pleasant, and we both went out the door without a firm sense of where we were going. Our first disagreement began in this way.

After this, Yu. Tsedenbal was reluctant to reply. Then before long he appointed me the First Secretary of the MPRP Committee in the Gov-Altai

*aimag*. He made this decision hoping to remove me from this issue of theory, implying that the first secretary of an *aimag* Party committee must be more practical than theoretical. Actually it was clear later on that Mr. Yu. Tsedenbal had been afraid that someone else knew the theory of Marxism-Leninism better than he did. Yu. Tsedenbal relied on the USSR, claiming it had taken the right road, and Mongolia should do the same. He had no idea that we had to analyze reality for ourselves and not just blindly follow the USSR.

The events in Hungary in 1956 and in Czechoslovakia in 1968 had a powerful influence on Yu. Tsedenbal, who had slammed the door on progress.<sup>17)</sup> In fact, they led to a profound examination of what was necessary for us to work on in the future. If we had learned from 1956 and 1968, our economic system would have performed better and we would not have been in such a mess in 1990. If other Communist Parties had studied and assessed the events in Hungary and Czechoslovakia correctly, the rate of economic growth in the socialist countries of Eastern Europe would have been better. In 1990, the world socialist system collapsed, and the economies in these countries were in crisis and suffered losses, but little could be done.

Yu. Tsedenbal himself had a rather mediocre grasp of theory, and those better prepared people were, as usual, exploited by him and dismissed. The future of such people always ended badly. Yu. Tsedenbal exploited this one group, finally giving various reasons such as mistakes had been made. Some work appointments were wrong, and so some people were banished for an indefinite period of time. The banishments of D. Tömör-Ochir and L. Tsend were the most regrettable. These men could have been the most successful people for the Motherland. However, their lives were sad, as all the Mongolians know. Similar banishments led to the very early deaths of Tömörbaatar and Lkhamjav. Tömörbaatar was exiled to Khövsgöl *aimag* and died there. Lkhamjav died in prison. And people in the Security Service were, without exception, Ph.Ds in philosophy.

## **9. I Go to the Gov-Altai *Aimag***

TsL: In 1954, I went to the Gov-Altai where I was born. Until then, I had not done economic work there. This was the first time that I would direct major economic work. When Marshal Choibalsan had been Minister, the leaders used to go to the countryside to see how some of this work was done. The Marshal had demanded a lot of everyone. He did not like flatterers and sycophants. My own father was a man of character, and this had an influence on me. In the Gov-Altai *aimag*, new work assignments were necessary. I met with the MPRP *aimag* committee workers whom I knew, and when I met with them, I was often singled out to speak.

Each separate *aimag* in the country calls on workers to carry out economic plans that can be completed within a certain period. All the *negdels* should work peacefully together. All must follow the laws in the Mongolian constitution and the work rules as organized in the Khural. In each legal situation, it is necessary to try to work with any person who has broken the rules. A person has to accept the responsibility for deliberately or even accidentally breaking the rules and the law. A problem with either land or water should not be left for one's cronies to settle. Each person's work is of value to him. The work of anyone with great initiative must be highly valued. Work was to be changed by the workers themselves and not by a white collar worker. It is necessary to shoulder the burden of work done in the old way and discuss what changes are needed when the work results are monitored.

After the meeting, I went to the *aimags* and *sums* to become acquainted with their conditions and their plans. At this time, the Gov-Altai *aimag* had seventeen *sums*. People lived privately with their herds rather than being organized into *negdels*. They educated themselves about herding, and everything they needed they did themselves. They had their own raw materials and also made felt, processed dairy products, and tanned skins to make into ropes. And this old way of life was passed down from generation to generation. I lived such a life, as did many of my contemporaries. However, during the war years, this life changed somewhat.

At that time, a new concept of official involvement in the community arose. People used to fix prices themselves for the goods they got from their herds including hides, fur, wool, milk, meat, and fat. Now the prices were fixed by the State. The State prices were very low. Each family had its herds, and the number for each head was officially adjusted. This new development began to lead to a decline in the growth of the private herds. Many people's private herds decreased in number when they engaged in "official" trade with the State. People changed their work habits with great difficulty. Now the work of inseminating the herds was supervised by the State. Following regulations, the work of insemination began to be organized once a year. Therefore the herds in the Gov-Altai *aimag* did not increase in number.

At the time, in that same *aimag* many things were going well, but the conclusion about the growth of the herds was not good. The government order to increase the number of the herds was going badly. My name was respected in the *sums* and the *aimags*, and especially in the Gov-Altai area, so I deliberately went to meet with the people who had been involved in working with the old regime. Thus I met with a man called D. Gonchig. We talked about the growth of the herds in the *aimag*. He pointed out that the herds were not growing and in our area the herds used to calve twice a year. The

work of inseminating the rams and billy goats was supervised by the government. The number of sheep increased to meet the ever rising demands of the State. Compared to earlier times, the expenses for the herds were now high. In the past, we also had expenses but since our herds calved twice a year, we could cover our expenses. The herds must again calve twice a year, not every two years.

This talk was very interesting and gave rise to some ideas. When I was a student at our little school, people supported two births a year. People believed that these two births a year were essential for the male sheep because one of the sons of the female sheep would become the father of the herd. Patience was best for the herds. I knew that calving twice a year was the best method and came to think that one reason for increasing the time between births was simply to change the traditional methods. This question was discussed with friends in the *aimag* and on the MPRP committee. Some of the old people agreed to try the new methods. But others cautioned that the Ministry of Rural Economy had to give permission for any change. It seemed, then, that opinions were divided.

I agreed to work for the Ministry of Rural Economy, even though it had no clear plan. Here is the reason. There was a question from those who wished to follow the new plan of work, and some part of the Ministry should have been acquainted with this. The banner offices did not accept most of the new ideas and did not support them.

The plan reached government ministries, the Planning Commission, the higher Ministry Council, and the very highest — the CC/MPRP. General Yu. Tsendenbal was the leader. The system was such that several months or a year passed before a decision was reached. Sometimes a decision was made about a particular project, and then the plans would change and an entirely new decision might be made, depending on budgetary demands. All of this could lead to a reduction in property. Thus it was impossible to know what to do. Few plans were endorsed, and when new issues were submitted, one did not know what would happen. So that is what happens when one takes the initiative and presents ideas. Those who offer a plan must protect themselves because sometimes mistakes can lead to punishment. Many people abandon their efforts because if one makes demands that are too great, one can land in prison. The leaders and not those in the Ministries knew the specialists but everyone was afraid of punishment. Later, I directed the State Farms and was confronted by such obstacles at each step. It was very difficult. At the time I showed some initiative and tried to instigate many different kinds of methods approved by the Politburo. One had little enthusiasm for work, after many years of working in such an atmosphere. I'll speak about this later. In the Gov-

Altai *aimag*, the herds produced young twice a year, and if we had the approval of the Ministry of Rural Economy, which was inclined not to approve, I knew we would be able to continue this policy of calving twice a year. I also knew that we would be given a penalty and not permission. One couldn't imagine how success could be possible. Later when I talked with people after I had left the Gov-Altai some said that "the Gov-Altai work was bad!" and wondered if there had been any hope. That was indeed the first big test I had to meet.

I supported a plan to study this work, so the MPRP called a meeting at which an official decision was made about the herds calving twice a year. However, the Khangai *aimags*, with their three to four herding *sums*, were not included in the plan. In these *sums*, it became cold so early that the herds' birthing had not finished when the snow came. In addition, people confronted difficulties which sometimes led to the reduction in the herds.

We mated the ram and the billy goat herds in the spring, and that year there was a very good summer. The herds passed the summer well. In the fall, they again began to give birth. The end of the year total was up, so we continued this plan. Each *sum* location was supervised annually, and the results from the herds for consecutive years were conclusive. Thus the plan to increase the herds in three years was fulfilled, and we came in first in the country. The Gov-Altai was the leading *aimag* to win the "Red Flag" for three years. The government valued highly the work of my *aimag* and awarded us 300,000 *tugriks*, and peoples' efforts revived.

With the prize money, we built a very nice two-story museum for the *aimag*, and it was the first such museum in the country. In 1956, we organized a local exhibit of rare historical and cultural artifacts. We had a saddle ridden by the Galdan Khan of the Zunghar State. Many people came to this unusual show. And the museum still exists.

There was a school in the *aimag* and a steam-heated hospital. Families used iron to construct cooking stoves. In the past, almost all families used a brazier. Charcoal was burned in the iron stove. In our area of the Altai there are few trees, and what fuel to burn is a serious issue. The Altai was rich in coal though it was not often used. Each family had to decide what to burn in their iron stoves.

We used an artificial lake in the *aimag* center because the air was very dry. The artificial lake was thought to moisten the air, and it had a pleasant influence. The source of the Chatzarganat River was in the Burkhan Buddha Mountain. The Red Bull Channel drew water from the Chatzarganat River to give to the Khaluin valley. Because it was difficult to ride horses in these very high mountains, the people cut through the mountains to make roads.



In our area, “the wild onion grass” grew, and the herds ate this good onion grass in the spring when it was gathered and mixed with salt. In the winter, this mixture was soaked in water and given to the weakened herds in small amounts, and they revived quickly. Long ago people prepared this food, and we organized an *aimag*-wide works project to produce it. If we had not done so, some people would have made this stuff but others would not have, and during the winter their animals would have suffered and their herds would have decreased.

Our *aimag* does not have natural water. Without it and suitable pasturelands the herds cannot increase. My *aimag* is on the north side of the smooth flowing Zavkhan and Baidrag Rivers. The two rivers are in the middle of the Guuling steppe and are nice and broad. In three *aimags*, people move about by horseback. But if the water is not flowing, families cannot migrate. Many families camp near water so the herds can take advantage of a good area. Once I worked in Delger *sum* and spent a week there with a family in their *ger* where their herds were pastured. We talked quite a bit about water, and it seemed the man knew a lot and told us that “in due course the Zavkhan and the Baidrag Rivers will flow through the Guuling steppe, meet at the Shal strait, become one river and form the Beger hollow.” Many people had spoken about this over the years because they had missed the flow from the Zavkhan and Baidrag Rivers into the Guuling steppe, and there was talk about what to do. With these thoughts in mind, the comrades on the MPRP *aimag* committee discussed what work should be done.

Thus began the work of digging a channel so that the water from the Zavkhan River could flow through a channel to the Guuling steppe. Young fellows between the ages of 18 to 45 were assembled near the *sum*: together there were about 3000 young men, and work on the channel was underway. The digging had finished except in one place where the Zavkhan River was blocked. The water flowed eight kilometers through the channel we had dug, but it was blocked by a hillock, which it couldn't surmount. We had dug this channel by hand and now because of a technical glitch there was the chance that it would not be completed. Our work could be stopped by a decision of a specialist at the Ministry of Rural Economy, so we went to meet him and asked him how this mistake could be corrected. When the work was finished, I was finally made First Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Rural Economy. The Minister at the time was Mr. N. Jagvaral, and he and I had a very good relationship. He always supported me in my work and highly praised it. He was an educated and learned man who was well known and respected. As a member of the Politburo of the CC/MPRP, he spoke in response to what he heard. As our Minister to Moscow, he went to defend his thesis for a degree

in economics (Sc.D). The Ministry of Rural Economy had two Deputy Ministers at this time. I was the First Deputy Minister, and I dealt with financial questions while the other Deputy Minister, D. Baljinyam, dealt with questions pertaining to the rural economy and the *negdels*.

1958 was the year we devoted to developing the concerns of the Ministry of Rural Economy, and the USSR gave us thirty million non-repayable rubles to help us in this task. N. Jagvaral asked me and D. Baljinyam to meet and discuss how best this money could be spent. Seven weeks passed, and Minister N. Jagvaral called us together again. D. Baljinyam offered his ideas first. He suggested financial aid to the *negdels* to be used on tractors. When he finished talking about his plan, the Minister asked me about mine. I spoke about my ideas:

“D. Baljinyam has suggested providing tractors, and I think that our country is now involved in the foreign trade and the purchase of many tractors. In the future we will possibly buy some more. The Ministry of Rural Economy *negdels* have already bought tractors, but they need to be improved if they are to be used effectively. Should we really buy tractors again? Perhaps the Ministry of Finance can transfer these tractors to the Ministry of Rural Economy. This money given us is helpful and must be used productively.

Wouldn't this money be used to great advantage in constructing the channel for the water from the Zavkhan River? We could have an early trial run. The local people had hoped for just such a thing for a long time. For them, success was planning for many herds, and for as many people watering their herds in as broad an area as possible.” So Mr. N. Jagvaral offered me words of great support and introduced this proposal to the Politburo of the CC/MPRP.

At this time, there was an Institute of Field Research, which later became the Ministry of Water Utilization. They supported my proposal, as did the Politburo of the CC/MPRP. So the work began on making the Zavkhan River flow through the Guuling steppe. The Ministry of Rural Economy and the Institute of Field Research designed a plan for building the water channel. The leveling work on this channel proceeded and after a year, in 1959, the engineers had made the channel ready for use. Henceforth, the Zavkhan River flowed across the Guuling steppe which, for many years, was what people had hoped for, so that the migrating herds from many *sums* could enjoy good pasturage.

The water was later used to power an electric station, which produced electricity for the new village of Guuling. I received an invitation to attend a celebration of the fortieth anniversary of the construction of the channel.

## 10. Tsedenbal Appoints Me Leader of the State Farms

YuK: For how many years did you work as the First Secretary of the MPRP committee in the Gov-Altai?

TsL: I worked at that job for almost three years. At the end of 1956, I was appointed by the leader to direct the State Farm office. At this time in our country, the Virgin Lands Movement had barely begun, but it was a major goal of the MPRP in the future. At the time, the USSR had developed their Virgin Lands scheme and the broad steppes of Kazakhstan were completely ploughed and sown with grain to be used for food.<sup>18)</sup> Where there had been no corn in the past, efforts were made to plant it. Our national State Farms were founded at the time of the Bogd Khan, who with members of his government set up a state rural economic office. The name for this enterprise was the “horse station,” and it took care of the breeding of the herds, planting seeds for grain, and mowing and harvesting the hay for the herds.

In the 1920s, we bought ten spotted sheep from Australia to improve the yield of wool from our Mongolian sheep as well as the “Semental” breed of horned cattle. These herds then needed careful study to ascertain how to take the best care of them. In winter and summer a regular building and a permanent food supply with various kinds of feed were required. Our herds pasture themselves. Foreign herds, on the other hand, can’t be cared for because we can’t satisfy all their demands, and they fall ill and die. In Khentii *aimag*, Bayan uul *sum*, all of the rams died, and all their horns were in a pile on the ground. They all had died of mange.

After the war, the military units were dismantled on the eastern side of the *aimag*. The military had run a large enterprise to provide itself with food. After dismantling the military units, the power was transferred to the State, and our State Farms took over the base. These State Farms were all financed from the State budget and generally did not make a profit. The reason they were financed by the State was because there were always expenses to cover. Everything was in the red. There were about twenty State Farms overall, and they lacked at least ten things necessary for planting the hectares. The Zun Kharaa and Tsagaan Tolkhoi State Farms planted a little wheat and from this got a small amount of flour. A few oats were grown for the herds. At the time, the Kharaa River had two working electric stations.

The Soviet Virgin Lands Plan had a direct influence on our work. This plan was initiated by Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev, who had been the First Secretary of the CC/CP Party of the Ukraine. In 1953 after the death of I.V. Stalin, he was the First General Secretary of the CC/CPSU and the Soviet Council of Ministers. The Soviet Union had been victorious against the Germans, and it was a special time because many countries in Eastern Europe

had taken the road to socialism and “the world socialist system had been formed.” “The socialist system of communal property has qualities which make it relatively superior to other systems since it has the possibility of providing people with better lives, and their lives confirm this!” Such ideas were gaining ground at the time. N.S. Khrushchev was a strong leader in socialism’s final victory over private property. He said and wrote that “The bright future for humanity will soon be ushered in by the Soviet people in their communist society in which there will be no rich and poor, and all members will lead the same good life. Without money, they will reach the highest cultural and scientific development through their strong capacity for work and doing what is useful for society.” For this reason, much attention was paid to those countries which were beginning to follow the road to socialism in their economic development. N.S. Khrushchev knew about the rural economy and paid great attention to Mongolia’s economic development.

At first we did not know what steps to take to begin building our own Virgin Lands Movement. So we sent an experienced representative to study in the USSR.

I was that leading representative and was sent to work in the Soviet Ministry of Agriculture in Moscow for two months. Some Soviet State Farms were organizing their Virgin Lands Plan, and the Soviet Ministry of Agriculture was very efficient. Their ministers and leaders liked to go by plane to the center of the Virgin Lands in Kazakhstan, and once I went with them. We flew to many places, and I saw with my own eyes that the work had begun on the area being ploughed for grain. Such an experience led to many good new ideas. But, for some people, this work was so familiar that they knew it like the back of their hand. This Virgin Lands Plan made unavoidable demands for new approaches and techniques. In Mongolia the technicians and specialists had to be selected. My own work with the Soviet Minister of Agriculture gave me some helpful ideas. He was a very good man, and I owe him eternal gratitude. My most recent meeting with him was just before my return to Mongolia. I told the Minister that my final wish was to have the Department leader Sergei Ivanovich Elizarov get permission to come to Mongolia to work in the Ministry of Finance. When I hit him with my suggestion, he answered that there was little urgency and said: “Wait a little! We’ll decide!” In fact, a few weeks later the issue was decided. It was necessary to have experienced people who knew about these economic issues work for the State Farms. Thus Sergei Ivanovich Elizarov came as an advisor to Mongolia, and he helped us on many of these issues. It was often quite difficult for us to take the advice of foreign specialists, but we listened to the Soviet advisors on those questions involving the work for which we were responsible. So there were discussions

in the Politburo for Mr. S. I. Elizarov to answer.

Peter Ivanovich Starkov came to Mongolia from the Soviet National Bureau of Foreign Trade to give advice on agricultural matters, and he was another person who was very helpful in my work. The Virgin Lands Plan depended on new scientific developments in agricultural technology and “know-how” rather than relying on old traditions and methods. Technical help was needed in plowing the land, planting the seeds, and collecting the crops. It was important to know where and when to plow, what seeds to plant, how to plant and take care of the seeds, how to protect and water their growth as well as keeping up with the body of scientific research in agricultural technology. And, in spite of the difficulties, we had to be successful in a short period of time. S. Gombojav from the Ministry of Foreign Trade was responsible for the technical issues of this Virgin Lands Plan on the Mongolian steppes. S. Gombojav and I had good relations and were friends. In December, 1964 the CC/MPRP met at the Sixth All Khural where most people protected Yu. Tsendenbal and opposed me — all except S. Gombojav. The question then arose that “maybe Lookhuuz, the counter-revolutionary, has an accomplice.” I felt badly that Gombojav was a suspect.

Later, a learned man called Yu. Starkov who was in charge of some important research projects came to study the topsoil of Mongolia, and using drawings and maps, he suggested suitable places for cultivation. He pointed out that there were 550,000 hectares of virgin land in Mongolia that could be used for planting, and he gave me a map of the agricultural areas of Mongolia, which I hung in my office.

After this, the structure of the State Farms changed. Some joined together and increased in size. Fields were now used for planting, and new areas of fertile soil were organized.

Meetings were held, and a new organization which focused on seeds was set up at the Darkhan State Farm. After that, the Ministry of Rural Economy imported tractors and allotted them to the State Farms. So, in this way, the Virgin Lands Plan began.

In all, there were thirty State Farms where the earth was plowed, and the Khangai was worked for planting, beginning with the wooded steppe zone which had abundant fertile soil for cultivation. In the beginning mainly wheat was planted, along with potatoes, onions, turnips, carrots and cabbage. In the early years, there were ten seeded “centners” or 1000 kilograms of harvested crops in a hectare, and much thought was given to each plant. Two-thirds of what was grown was thrown out as garbage. What should I say about this? The seeds that were planted became garbage if their stems became straw-like after sprouting. Then these had to be discarded, though they could be used to

feed the herds, which led to an improved breed of pigs, poultry, and fur bearing animals.

All of our millet was imported from the USSR before the Virgin Lands Plan. After the plan was implemented, we could grow our own millet to provide for our own needs, and the imports from abroad could stop.

Various plants, fruit, berries, and apples were also planted. The first apple crop came from the Shaamar State Farm, which raised other fruit and berries. Almost all the apple trees and fruits were planted on the east side of the farm where the Khalkh River flowed. The Yuenchin and the Bulgan Rivers were located in the western Altai, and the apples introduced there were called “Siberian apples.”

YuK: What were the difficulties connected with plowing the land and planting vegetables? The Mongolians had never planted so many green vegetables.

TsL: Actually, the MPRP and the government paid great attention to the Virgin Lands Plan. For hundreds of years, there had never been an independent agricultural department in Mongolia because agricultural products had always come from abroad. If we paid more attention to this we could, possibly, have used the land to raise agricultural products and develop an industry around them, and perhaps this would have helped our country economically. These thoughts encouraged the MPRP to organize the Virgin Lands Plan into a popular movement. From every corner of Mongolia hundreds of thousands of young people came to work at the new State Farms developed from this Virgin Lands. The Mongolian Revolutionary Youth League spearheaded and participated in this work. I, as a young man, had worked in the Mongolian Revolutionary Youth League and was friendly with the youths working on the Virgin Lands. In a short time, these young people could master the new technology of planting and plowing the Virgin Lands. In many *aimags*, “schools to prepare tractor drivers” were established and after a 45 day course, these tractor drivers were given certification. The Soviet specialists evaluated the especially talented young people, and in 1959 the first “labor hero” was named. He was the tractor driver D.Byambatzogt, who had exceeded many times over the plan for plowing the earth. After him, at the Tovshurleks State Farm, the labor hero was N. Tuvaan.

But there were many difficulties. Especially on the newly established farms people had serious questions about work, and important decisions had to be made. Home for the herder was with his herds, and he seldom went off to plow the land. Almost never. Basically, Mongolians did not enjoy plowing the land because it destroyed pastureland for the herds to graze on. “Plowing and planting the land was called work for poor people. But by doing so, people would have food to eat and would not starve to death!” This Mongolian

wisdom was passed down the generations for a thousand years, and it was difficult to change this pattern of thinking. “These ideas were only abandoned when technology and science came into prominence. Nothing could have helped” I thought.

A Mongolian believes that pasturing the herds and the customs of herding are linked to both nature and to tradition, which are much beloved and need to be preserved. Spirits and local deities inhabit our world of nature. If one treats the natural world recklessly by plowing or otherwise harming the land, the spirits will be enraged, which could lead to a drought, a “*zud* or a decrease or illness among the animals.” We cajoled these spirits and deities and offered them sacrifices at the *ovoos*.<sup>19)</sup> In our area, we talked about the tradition of harmonizing with Nature. Those families who planted had plowed the land and observed the rules. There was not a problem of plowing where one wanted, and planting near a river did not seem to harm the herds’ pastures.

The Virgin Lands Plan began at the same time as the Ministry of Rural Economy’s *negdels* were organized, and the herds were collectivized. Many people without herds had to move into the towns. The young people especially went to the towns. Recently our clerical and lay press has called this movement to the towns the “small migration.” In 1990, many more people moved to the cities and into the settlements. Our press called this the “great migration.” In fact both movements included a lot of people. The Ministry of Rural Economy organized the co-operatives, and many people’s herds were collectivized. They then had no way to live, so they went to the towns. This movement, however, was kept secret, and generally there are no statistics. In the 1990s, it was useless to follow the migrations since again official statistics were lacking, and this absence is connected to the ideology of the MPRP. Many things which the public would have looked on badly were kept secret by the policy of the MPRP. The tenfold increase in those working was, however, publicized. It is not possible to know the real truth about the things that happened in society.

After the herds were collectivized, those youths with no herds who went to the towns had no work to do. So they returned to the countryside even without herds. At that time, Ch. Purevjav was the leader and First Secretary of the Mongolian Revolutionary Youth League on the Central Committee, and I took advantage of him and even as they say “used him like a handkerchief.” He was a veterinarian but, poor chap, his knowledge and ability were just so-so. This leader flattered Yu. Tsendenbal especially and told him tales. He treated subordinates roughly, and I realized it was futile to deal with a person of such character. It was essential to send those youths who had left the countryside to live in towns, and especially in Ulaan Baatar, to work on the collectives on the Virgin Lands. The leader and Yu. Tsendenbal were friendly which helped me. It

was said the Mongolian Revolutionary Youth League and the MPRP were preparing to send these thousands of “assistant warriors” to work on the Virgin Lands. The organization for this plan had some odd things connected to it.

The work of planting the land began, and things from the first harvest were stockpiled waiting for the storage buildings to be prepared. We could not construct these buildings in the first year so there was a problem of where to store the produce. Since there was no building or factory to store the grain, in the first years it was stored in Naadam stadiums and covered over with tarpaulins. Storage buildings were constructed when grain factories were built in Khövsgöl, Dornod, Bulgan and Darkhan *aimags*. There were a lot of regulations for keeping vegetables. They were generally preserved at minus one degree. Places where the ground froze above minus one degree were too warm so a “cold cellar” was built which preserved the greens. In the fall, the harvest was put in the “cold cellar,” and in the spring when it was opened the vegetables were in excellent condition. The first “cold cellar” was built on the Batsumber State Farm.

Chinese people who had used such “cold cellars” long ago told us Mongolians about them, though we had never seen the Chinese building them. We had to build a lot of the cellars, and the People’s Army began their construction. In the first years on these collectives, there was a problem of desertion and rebellion so in subsequent years we handled these issues more slowly. The harvesting work had to be done at certain times and required a great deal of manpower. In Mongolia the weather conditions made clear demands, and a sudden change in the weather could be dangerous. Thus the harvest had to be completed within a short period of time, and for that reason the People’s Army was mobilized.

In recent years, Mongolians have grown potatoes and green vegetables for themselves. Now families build their own “cold cellars.” I majored in the social sciences and in directing the State Farms, and I learned on the job from Russian specialists and later Mongolians also became experts. In 1959, we began preparing specialists for our own rural economy.

While I was working with the State Farms, we changed our accounting system, which included the payment of wages. This improved the profitability of the State Farms, and all accounts moved from being in the “red” to being in the “black.” There were also subsidies from the State budget. This system of accounting and financing was first used by the railroads in Mongolia, and it calculated the amount of money people should be paid based on their work. When someone spoke about how well he worked, he certainly wanted higher wages. “What you do at work has a direct connection to the wages you receive” said knowledgeable people. To be well paid, one must do good work



and with a good salary one lives well. This policy generally led to improvements at work. This new system of accounting had to be introduced into the agricultural sector, and people had to be informed that the profitability of an enterprise was directly related to their wages.

Mr. N. Demchig introduced this system of commercial accounting to the Mongolian railroads. He was a good economic administrator, but the director of the railroads had changed hands, and N. Demchig had retired and was not working when I met him. The State Farms financed themselves using this new policy of commercial accounting when I talked to N. Demchig about it. He agreed with me that we had to use this new accounting system, and we offered him a position and a good salary to work on the State Farms. The State Farms used the old system, so Demchig and I moved to the new wage system. N. Demchig worked with me in the first two months of the Virgin Lands Plan, and we worked on the new accounting system every day. We knew about the Treasury plan and at first the Ministry of Finance opposed our plan. We submitted and explained it many times, and finally the Ministry of Finance agreed, as did the government. Certainly Mr. Sergei Ivanovich Elizarov helped in getting this plan approved, and the State Farms introduced this new system of accounting.

In this system, each person had a labor norm to fulfill, and if he did so, he received his wages. If the norms were over-filled, the person received higher wages, and if these norms were not fulfilled, wages were reduced. In this way, everyone would begin to fulfill their norm, which was the intent of the system. In the beginning, people wondered how they should approach their work. When should they sleep? When should they get up?

There was the correct number of tools and instruments, but the breakdown of the tractors and the combines led to unfulfilled norms. Thus it was necessary to prevent the breakdown of the equipment. A plan was devised for the use of the tractors and the combines. Gas and fuel were used sparingly. Such was the situation at work.

Knowing about the resources their money could be used for helped overfill the norms. The Jargalant State Farm had twenty million *tugriks*, which the leaders themselves managed to spend on public activities and culture. The State Farms built “palaces of culture,” each with a red corner and made their own money to cover their expenses. Even with losses, such work was profitable. The State Farms were not in the “red” and helped one another make up losses. Often the location of the State Farms determined how great or small were their losses. In fact, some State Farms in the forest steppe zone and the black earth areas had great success in breeding. But in Dornod and Khentii *aimags* the losses were greater. Some State Farms were very profitable, while

others had to work to make up their losses.

This was the first thing that had to be brought to the attention of the State Farms, which had small profits and small revenues. Nevertheless, the expenses were still too high, which made it necessary to carefully organize all the economic accounts. Great attention in the State Farms in the steppe zone focused on the cultivation of crops alongside herding. In addition, the State Farms worked out the planting appropriate to each particular zone to assure food for the herds.

IL: What was the economy like aside from the State Farm agriculture and herding?

TsL: Aside from the agricultural and herding economy on the State Farms, the economy began to diversify its basis to include pigs, chickens, and rabbits. The State Farms themselves had construction brigades to build chicken coops and pig pens, and the main part of the State Farm economy became financially independent. On the Torkhurakh State Farm at Bogd uul, a new feature of the economy included raising sables. On the State Farm in the Khentii Mountains more than three hundred sable areas were organized, their numbers increased, and they became a source of trade with Siberia and other countries. Sable skin was very costly, and the best quality was made into hats and coats for the winter.

At Bogd uul, there were one thousand stags, and a “stag economy” was organized. We studied the stag trade with the USSR and how it “fit into” the economy as a whole. Stags were also a feature of the Siberian economy. Stags’ antlers were used in medical therapy and were highly valued. The USSR purchased stag antlers for dollars. We planned to set up ten enterprises to raise stags, which were estimated, in a year, to be more profitable than a year of herding in Mongolia. This sort of live animal trade with the USSR was not publicized, although the profits and income from the export of stags’ antlers was given an accounting.

Besides that, there were in Mongolia many tens of thousands of white antelopes, which could also be of economic importance. We studied how to work with the antelopes for the USSR and organize the Saiga antelope for profit. Organizing these wild animals for profit was not difficult. One learned about their dietary needs, precautions to take against illness, and the correct method of breeding. All this work had to be done.

The Politburo of the CC/MPRP did not accept our plan for these wild animals, nor did it support many of the other plans that I presented. Thus I lost my enthusiasm and wanted to leave my job, and I went to talk about this with Yu. Tsedenbal.

At the time, there was a big, sensational case. In September, 1962 the

Politburo of the CC/MPRP met at the Third All Khural where the secretary was Daram Tömör-Ochir who was slandered, and it was said he had committed “work against the Party.” Thus a resolution was passed, and there was an official command relieving him of his post, removing him from his locale, and banishing him. Tömör-Ochir was a learned and highly educated man, and many people valued him and thought he might possibly be the leader of the MPRP. Marshal Choibalsan placed his hopes on him. At the Tenth Great Khural of the MPRP, Kh. Choibalsan mentioned by name ten young people who “would be very necessary to the future of Mongolia.” Among them, he said, was “D. Tömör-Ochir who had been studying in the USSR.”

Yu. Tsendenbal, the General Secretary of the MPRP, called for D. Tömör-Ochir who had been studying in the USSR to be brought in and prepare a report to be given to the All Khural. Yu. Tsendenbal prepared a special room for him to prepare the speech which he delivered. D. Tömör-Ochir was a man who knew the Russian language very well. A decision was made by the CC/MPRP at the Third All Khural directed by Yu. Tsendenbal to relieve D. Tömör-Ochir of his work. Yu. Tsendenbal, himself, secretly organized the members in this plot.

D. Tömör-Ochir was born in 1921 in what is now Töv *aimag*, Lun *sum*. He studied at the Soviet Oriental College, Moscow State University, and the Social Sciences Academy of the CC/USSR. He obtained a Ph.D and a Sc.D degree and had a role in the New Party Forces College. He became the head teacher at the MPRP History Institute and served as Secretary of the Politburo of the CC/MPRP at the time that Yu. Tsendenbal’s personal deficiencies were exposed. D. Tömör-Ochir criticized Tsendenbal and his work at every meeting. D. Tömör-Ochir was one of the last Mongolians who had the courage to try to destroy the dangerous consequences of “the cult of personality,” which had intensified under the leadership of Kh. Choibalsan. Perhaps Yu. Tsendenbal, who had worked for many years with Kh. Choibalsan, believed that he was also being attacked by D. Tömör-Ochir, who was one of the people who knew a great deal about his activities during the Kh. Choibalsan era. Therefore Yu. Tsendenbal dismissed him.

Yu. Tsendenbal accused “D. Tömör-Ochir of having an ultra-nationalist point of view.” In 1962, D. Tömör-Ochir was the Secretary of the Politburo of the CC/MPRP and was accused of focusing on the celebration of “the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Chinggis Khan.” At the time, it was forbidden to give great attention to Chinggis Khan even though his deeds and those of his successors were known throughout the world. In so doing, the Mongolian administration did not antagonize countries like the USSR, even though this action was not recognized by the CP of the USSR. It isn’t the question of what is acceptable

in a nation's history. The past that is known cannot be obliterated even though communist ideology allows it to be. The doctrine claimed that "Chinggis Khan was a world-wide conqueror who captured slaves in many countries and destroyed many cultures. The CP of the USSR and the MPRP are peace loving parties and promote peace throughout the world. Many capitalist countries do not support peace and are war-mongers like Chinggis Khan and his successors, and they cannot be praised!" The stated ideology was that "we can talk about Chinggis Khan, the great war-monger, but we can't write about him."

There was a very important question hidden behind this communist ideology. If the Soviet empire included Tatars from the Mongolian line and the Central Asian nomadic Kazakhs, Kirghiz, Uzbeks, and Turkmen, were the Siberians also united under this one nationality? Many opposed this policy of one nationality and took up arms to fight against it. Chinggis Khan had united these disparate groups into one empire, but there was much fighting and blood which flowed for many centuries. Now the Soviet empire included various nationalities under one structure, which lacked unity. After the victorious socialist revolution, the Soviet leaders had to decide on this very important nationality question. In Mongolia, the descendants of the Turkish nomads opposed a Soviet style government and frightened the leaders of the Communist Party. And hope for these Turkish nomads who descended from Chinggis Khan's Mongolian Khanate was confirmed in the 1990s when these nationalities in the USSR announced their independence and the nation broke apart. When these Republics announced their independence, there was no reason to support Mongolia any more. Previously, our nation was not considered very strong, but now Mongolia has become geopolitically interesting, and it is desirable to learn about and understand our country. In fact, it was true that Chinggis Khan conquered the world and introduced new and progressive institutions which were celebrated. He built a world administration from a fragmented world which he united, and he simultaneously preserved the local colors and cultures and enabled relations between states to blossom.<sup>20)</sup> Chinggis Khan and his descendants treated the various religions of the empire with restraint and furnished the conditions to prevent clashes among the religions. These issues remain important today. How are they being resolved? Quite truthfully, they are not being resolved.

D. Tömör-Ochir himself was knowledgeable about these themes in Mongolian history, and he wrote about them in an article celebrating the 800<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of Chinggis Khan's birth, which Yu. Tsedenbal, himself, advised him on! Now a monument has been raised to Chinggis Khan in Dadal *sum* in Khentii *aimag*, and a major research conference was held in Ulaan Baatar. This was the first such scholarly meeting organized in Mongolia to

exchange ideas and establish contacts. Many interesting contacts were established and interesting papers given. Good and honest work was done. Yu. Tsedenbal would have blamed D. Tömör-Ochir for “intensifying this nationalist ideology.” He had, after all, been dismissed for such work and banished.

A year after this, there was a rumor in the government which created a big sensation. In December, 1963 the CC/MPRP held its Fifth All Khural, and the slander was that “L.Tsend was not properly carrying out the work of the Party.” So it was decided that he should be dismissed from his work and exiled. The work of the CC/MPRPP under Yu. Tsedenbal and its members was top secret, and all sorts of conspiracies were organized. At the time, L.Tsend was a member of the Politburo of the CC/MPRP, and he served as the Second Secretary when Yu. Tsedenbal led the MPRP. L. Tsend was born in 1922 in Shamar *sum*, Selenge *aimag*. He attended the Economics College in the USSR, which was named after Plekhanov, and he defended his Sc. D degree in economics. He was the national representative and then the leader of the Railroad Commission, where he performed his service with honor. He was a man who had both great organizational and theoretical talent. In every respect, this leader of the MPRP was a man whom many people regarded highly. Many people supported the MPRP at this time, and Mongolian intellectuals respected it. Several times L. Tsend was not able to speak when Yu. Tsedenbal was directing the Politburo meetings. When he did speak, L. Tsend said that Tsedenbal was not able, and he was most thoughtful and expressed his thoughts clearly in a few words with the dignity and steadiness of the fine man he was. When Yu. Tsedenbal spoke of his decision to dismiss him, he mentioned that “L. Tsend did not do his work diligently,” and this misrepresentation got him into trouble. In fact, many people, including Tsedenbal, believed that L.Tsend wanted to be the General Secretary of the Party. Thus, Yu. Tsedenbal dismissed him from the Party.

“Was L. Tsend really preparing to remove Yu Tsedenbal?” was asked. It was clear to many people that because Yu. Tsedenbal could not lead the country himself, he was preparing the case against L. Tsend. Some on the Politburo of the CC/MPRP commented that “it is time we thought about the interests of the country rather than the interests of Yu. Tsedenbal! We must get to work!” Such talk involved not only the Politburo members but also the Second Secretary F.R. Kozlov from the Politburo of the CC/CP of the USSR when Nikita Khrushchev was the leader. L. I. Brezhnev, another famous man of influence, was also consulted.

It is difficult to surmise what transpired in the conversations between Tsend and F.R.Kozlov about our internal problem of Yu Tsedenbal. Kozlov then told the KGB leader Yuri Andropov, who, in turn told Yu. Tsedenbal, and

provided him with a pretext to dismiss yet another fine man, L. Tsend. The dismissal of these two men was a bad event which hit the newspapers, and the honest members of the MPRP knew that it would not help Yu Tsendenbal's reputation.

The people I worked for wanted to straighten out the condition of the country, but the highest leaders of the MPRP were men with little knowledge and education. They had little work experience, were indecisive about state issues, and had a poor understanding of the revenues from the economy, and all their short-comings presented obstacles. They relied heavily and for long periods of time on aid from the USSR. Their policies were ineffective, and there were no efforts to push the economy forward. The MPRP did not consider new approaches and questions from the Left nor could it lead successfully. Such ideology did not fill empty stomachs. There was no full evaluation of revenues so a new group was organized to explain how to profit from the economy. If the economy was profitable, peoples' lives would be better, and Mongolia would grow. In other countries people work — don't we? However, perhaps the leaders were not really ready to evaluate our economy. The unsuccessful decisions made and the efforts taken in handling the country's debts were then just a waste of time and resources.

Was a loan necessary to help the Mongolian economy? It was necessary. But should everything be decided like that? Certainly not. The head of the country must encourage us to work ourselves. We must work to improve our lives as our history has proved.

IL: Does agriculture have the possibility of improving in the future?

TsL: Our agriculture has the possibility of limited development and can proceed in a satisfactory manner, though growth is dependent on the amount of rich black soil. One thousand meters above sea level, the wheat does not ripen so we must plant in lower areas. However, the average height of our public lands is fifteen hundred meters above sea level, so the wheat will not grow sufficiently. The Selenge zone is nine hundred meters above sea level and has the best agriculture. The area around the Khalkh River is the same height. The area in the trans-Gov-Altai was high, and there was only yellow clay and no black earth for planting. The first Virgin Lands Plan began and was led by Yu. Starkovich from the USSR. His research results were similar to my readings. He led the work and did research on the black earth zone and developed plants that were suitable for the Virgin Lands. Although wheat was planted, it did not grow too well. He flew over areas both above and below sea level to decide whether to cultivate the area.

Late in the 1970s and 1980s, under the pretext of the Virgin Lands Plan, large amounts of pasture land were destroyed. In Töv *aimag*, Lun *sum* lands

were plowed and planted, but the growth of greens was small because the soil was very poor. And in Khentii *aimag* in the steppe zone, everything was planted enthusiastically but not scientifically. That area could never support abundant growth. It has now been abandoned and has lost its importance. It is no longer even a suitable grazing area for the herds.

We first plowed the Orkhon-Selenge pastureland in the Bulan *aimag* area and now there is high growth. We made the choice of this particular area quite scientifically so the land has retained its value and there are benefits after many years.

As leaders on the State Farms, we organized a radio communications center. Such a communications system was first introduced in Soviet Kazakhstan in Tselinograd. I went to Kazakhstan to see if such a system was suitable for us since many places needed radio communication. Then the Council of Ministers decided that this system would require too much work and would take too long. However, the Minister of Communications, S. Damdinjav, agreed that it was necessary. At the time, it took almost a whole day or sometimes even two or three days to set up connections from our State Farm. Even with a faster connection, one still couldn't hear, and a person generally had to shout two or three words, and there was still a lag in the voices. Such were Mongolia's connections. I thought "referring to this situation, how could you speak of progress?" This was the problem that Minister S. Damdinjav had encountered. This communication system was discussed at each meeting, and little by little he had begun to understand how poor our connection was. Thus one day he had exclaimed: "Yes! You speak the truth! The connection does work badly!" I was prepared to take him at his word, but I urged him to put all of this in writing, which he did, and added his signature because the Council of Ministers had to take up the issue and put out a resolution. But the Council did not give its consent, and all these many months of work seemed to be in vain and only luck would determine what would happen. But I was in luck when the issue reached D. Molomjamts who directed the meeting of the Council of Ministers. D. Molomjamts, a member of the Politburo, was the Secretary who was responsible for the economic decisions of the MPRP. Yu. Tsendenbal was away for a short time in the USSR, when the Council of Ministers and the leaders met.

D. Molomjamts spoke at the opening of the meeting and asked some questions about our proposal. D. Molomjamts asked these two questions: "Since we have a state communication system, why do we need a system for the State Farms? Do you mean to create a new system within the present one?" Minister S. Damdinjav, who was acquainted with the question, answered that he didn't know and that I was more familiar with the issue. I could not

explain why a new communications station was necessary, and I thought that the issue was done for, and thus I felt faint.

There really was nothing to understand. The Virgin Lands Plan was an issue close to everyone, and the Party knew that it had the support of the people. The time for planting had come, and we had to rush to finish the work of setting up this connection if we were going to do it. So we did finally build the State Farm communications connection in several days. But why hadn't the Council of Ministers understood the problem? The leaders did not seem to do what they said they would. Did Minister S. Damdinjav understand the situation? Did he agree with us? Yes, he did agree. Finally, D. Molomjamts, who had understood the plan, signed the permit while Minister S. Damdinjav had remained silent.

The leader of the Khural, D. Molomjamts, had something a bit different to say: "It is the policy of the Party to understand and support the work of the people, and it is good to discuss this. You and S. Damdinjav spoke about this project before." Then the Council of Ministers came to its decision, and luck was with me because we got the communications system.

We used this radio connection day and night. Each day, news came to the State Farms about the scale of the planted areas throughout the country. I had a map of the plowed areas of all the State Farms in my office. Thus we could learn how many tractors were plowing and how much land had been plowed per day. During harvest time, one could learn how many hectares were harvested per day. From my office, I was able to hold "radio meetings" with other leaders. To save time, I worked efficiently and flew from State Farm to State Farm.

We rented a Mongolian Civil Air Transport plane. Later I worked with the honored Mongolian state pilot, Ts. Daravgar. Our State Farms worked at a profit. The State Farms Management, as it was known by the leaders, collected two hundred million *tugriks*, which is today two million American dollars. I made the decision to spend this money myself.

## 11. I Defend My Academic Thesis

YuK: In 1962, you presented your wish to the General Secretary of the CC/MPRP to leave your post. What happened?

TsL: I left work and went again to the USSR to do research in Moscow at the Agricultural Academy which goes by the name of Temeriazov, where I defended my academic thesis. The theme of my research was "Methods to Create Profit in the Herding Economy on the State Farms," which dealt with both settled and semi-settled herding. My professor was a man called Sergei Lazo who defended his thesis under the guidance of Western professors. His



“directed research” was in the field that is now called “management.” This research topic did not encounter any difficulties.

In our country it was generally true that as the breed improved, so too did the profits and revenue. The Mongolians tried to increase wool-bearing sheep in particular since there had been little profit. These sheep needed constant attention paid to their food and a permanent and warm *khashaa* with eaves had to be provided. Without such necessities, the sheep could not produce wool. It was not likely that the sheep would be more productive following the old ways of pasturing the herds. For many centuries, Mongolians have followed the same pasturing methods, but the State Farms offered the possibility of providing these wool-bearing sheep with consistent sources of food and warm, covered *khashaas*. The State Farms had large stocks of feed, and the *negdels* of the State Farms offered plentiful stores of grain and grass to support an increase in these herds. Fine and semi-fine wool had to be considered for the wool industry which, however, did not have adequate technology. I thought there were Mongolian sheep on the State Farms, which could be bred to produce this semi-fine and fine wool for a profit. Besides the herds, food for the pigs and chickens was also necessary, and these animals could also be profitable.

You certainly know of the “Peking white duck.” At Bor Lake State Farm we fed one hundred thousand Peking white ducks, and their meat was then sent to restaurants in Ulaan Baatar and elsewhere. Eggs were also sent. This economic enterprise was very profitable. I myself studied these ventures and found there were few difficulties. I spent two years in the USSR preparing my dissertation.

## **12. I Criticize Yu. Tsedenbal**

IL: You were at the Second All Khural in 1956 presided over by the General Secretary of the CC/MPRP Yu. Tsedenbal, and you criticized his work methods for the first time. Could you speak about this?

TsL: Both Kh. Choibalsan and Yu. Tsedenbal treated the intellectuals differently. Kh. Choibalsan listened carefully to the words of those young professionals who were his companions. Such people came from his area of the country, knew him and his methods of work, and supported him. However, these young professionals were few in number. In the future, the number of these young professionals would come from the graduates of national and foreign colleges. They would be responsible for creating the policies for Mongolia’s development. These young people showed much initiative. The First Secretary of the Mongolian Revolutionary Youth League had started the Chingel River water project for the blockage at Green Lake, and the flood control methods were

successful.

Ulaan Baatar had a proposal to improve the energy supply, and the young took the initiative in presenting many plans which included building a hydro-electric power station. Clearly, Yu. Tsedenbal could not control the increased number of young people and specialists who talked about the personal weaknesses of Yu. Tsedenbal and his wrong-headed government policies which, they said spread like “flames in dry grass.”

Yu. Tsedenbal responded by calling these young people “deluded intellectuals” and wished to get rid of them, but he was not able to pick out those people who had talked against him. The Secretary of the CC/MPRP, the government ministers, the leaders of industry, those in many economic and social organizations, and several laborers set up a meeting where “they listened to and studied many ideas and then focused on developing a plan and implementing it!” It was stated that “free thought and frank and open discussions were necessary! There was no danger and nothing to fear!” Many people believed that “the leader of the MPRP, the government ministers, and the officials who were developing the future of Mongolia had to listen to their ideas!” In the meetings with Yu. Tsedenbal, who could not even lead his own country, there was talk about the friendship between Mongolia and the USSR, the development of the country, and freedom of thought in the future. There is material evidence that at this meeting all those, including MPRP members, who criticized and spoke out against Yu. Tsedenbal’s friendship between Mongolia and the USSR, were banished to the countryside. Thus many people suffered from these fabrications about “deluded intellectuals.”

At the All Khural in 1956, Yu. Tsedenbal did not criticize me for anything new since I repeated what I had already said many times. There was a different Speaker at this Khural where I set forth the following:

1. Listen to the ideas of the national intellectuals who could help improve work that was now not going successfully. Invite professional engineers and technicians from foreign countries to teach us how to use machines and industrial technology. Could we rely on our own national intellectuals to raise our level of development and draw up long range plans on theoretical questions? We could not do this work ourselves but we have not been shown which road to take. In the long run, how could we do this work when we didn’t know how to? The intellectuals had the creative power to take a role in all of this, while the MPRP did not. However, in our country, the intellectuals were not highly regarded and were scorned. Yet even though their power was minimal, they still presented their ideas. This, frankly, was worrisome because they elicited

criticism, and the people who spoke out were discriminated against. This was certainly not a healthy situation, which could not be reconciled.

2. There was no active help from foreign countries. We did not learn about policies from other countries at the United Nations where relationships and connections were made.

My full speech is in the beginning of the MPRP archives. Many people had become frightened, and some went into hiding. There had been ten problems in Mongolia and for the past ten years there were constant attempts to correct them. And now after ten years, what should be done? It was decided that in the next decade work would be accomplished to move us in the right direction. But this work must be properly done by first rate intellectuals; Mongolia is rather unique and even a clever, educated foreigner does not understand us. We had begun during the war and continued thereafter a system of specialists, modeled on the Soviet system. However, we did not always agree with the Soviet specialists, and their advice was not always accepted. Sometimes the Mongolians refused to implement the Soviet suggestions, which led to demotions at work and sometimes even banishment. Yu. Tsedenbal was responsible for these punishments, which removed many good Mongolians from their jobs and their lives. The stories of these people, thrown out like garbage, resonate even today.

Were our friendly relations with the USSR necessary? Very, very necessary. I finished studying at a Soviet school and had many rich friendships with Russians. The Russian people had good characters and were honest, and many had strong mental and spiritual qualities. Thus I made many friends. Yu. Tsedenbal was both the defender and promoter of relations with the Russians. My patriotism serves my friendship both with Yu. Tsedenbal and the Mother Country. Even with this strong friendship, there were things we did not do together. He didn't know anything about the "cattle drives." A joke was passed around by a herder in a western *aimag* who asked if going on a "cattle drive" would "shake up Stalin's antenna?" There was also a joke concerning the railroad to Ulaan Baatar, which the Russians often took. The train from Moscow seemed to make the sound: "fat, fat, fat!" and returning it made the sound "I'm satisfied, I've had enough!" The friendly relations between the people of our two nations were not equal, and this inequality underlay many criticisms and jokes. Many people spontaneously asked if Yu. Tsedenbal's policies promoted the USSR, and it was difficult to know if he put the interests of Mongolia after his own.

This was the old Mongolian “secret government policy.” For many years Mongolia struggled between our two large neighbors. Russia began to exert its authority over all of Siberia because of our increasing interests there. There was much activity in the Buryat area. The Russian policy toward Mongolia was very different from the policy of the Manchu Qing dynasty. Few Mongolians considered themselves part of the Manchu State and had little interest in it. Although Mongolia controlled its own country, it was greatly interested in Russia, but it kept its distance in its broad and spacious land from Manchu China. Because of the railroad, Russia had a close connection with Siberia and geopolitically with Central Asia. It was in Russia’s best interest to prevent Manchu China from having access to this railroad, which would benefit Mongolia. Russia was eager to start work on this railroad but here were two obstacles that had to be reckoned with.

The first was the great influence of the Buddhist religion and the second was Mongolian nationalism. Was it dangerous to separate these influences? The possibility arose of treating these two obstacles together, and Lenin, as leader of the Russian communists/Bolsheviks, decided to handle this headache. We remembered that V. I. Lenin had organized the Comintern to rid Mongolia of its educated and patriotic people one by one. I.V. Stalin was familiar with “terrorist” methods in all he did and in speaking about socialism and communism one does not need to hide behind a screen.

And Mao Zedong was as like them as two drops of water. He meaningfully said that “we have had a debt to you for three hundred years, and we will repay it!” Later in 1956, there were new representatives to the CC/MPRP, and Mao Zedong came to visit and speak. Did Mao Zedong speak of “we?” Three hundred years ago we knew that there was no Mao Zedong, no Communist Party, and no Red Army leading China. Three hundred years ago there was the Manchu Khan, the Manchu State, and Mongolia. The Chinese Red Army had suffered under Mao’s red foot. The true stories of V. I. Lenin, I.V. Stalin, and Mao Zedong have been distorted. History should remain history and not be revised without explanation. It should not be like that.

During the years when Yu. Tsendenbal was in power, there was no true history, and people had to live without culture. Even when a nation has a great history which leaves a profound footprint, those traces can be wiped clean from world history. People construct their national cultures, and enduring traditions can’t be dismissed, eliminated or denied. However, few nationalities are alike in their levels of literacy and speech. Nations without literacy do not have their own history or culture, but we are a literate nation.

“Few in the communist nations can develop their independence because in a communist society people are forced to stay together.” In fact, the

composition of the USSR has few groups that are alike and it must rely on the “Russian nationality” or the “Soviet nationality” to create the higher Communist society.” That is the accepted opinion.

The efforts of the Soviet government and the Soviet scholars included a theory about the many nationalities which compose the Soviet Union. In time a rumor spread and some people were “brain washed” into thinking that “Mongolia was going to become the sixteenth republic of the USSR!” Such talk was not well founded. This rumor found its way to the CC/USSR and was denied. Many people believed that Yu. Tsedenbal had started the rumor and for the first time, educated Mongolians expressed this fear to the government. This empty talk began to fade after the death of I. V. Stalin.

At the end of the 1940s, there were talks about Mongolia becoming a member of the United Nations. This was a particularly important issue for the Prime Minister, Marshal Choibalsan. The fulfillment of the hopes of the ordinary young Mongolian who did everything but die for his country would be Mongolia’s entrance into the United Nations. Thus, in 1947, Kh. Choibalsan dispatched Yu. Tsedenbal to New York where he went to the United Nations complex and spoke once but was generally ignored and returned to Mongolia, having done nothing. The work at these meetings was rather disorganized, and each representative advocated for his country. The question arose: was Mongolia really interested in joining the United Nations? Then one asked how could a person go to New York and stay in his room for several days doing nothing? All this seemed strange and required an explanation.<sup>21)</sup>

Perhaps interest in what Yu. Tsedenbal had done bore fruit. After the issue had dragged on for a long time, in 1962 Mongolia finally became a member of the United Nations. At the time Mongolia joined the United Nations, Yu. Tsedenbal had been admitted to a Moscow hospital with a broken leg. There is a Mongolian saying: “None is so blind as those who will not see.”

### **13. The Sixth Khural of the CC/MPRP**

IL: In 1964 at the Party’s All Khural you strongly criticized Yu. Tsedenbal. You accused him for having “no scientific basis for developing a plan.” Did you offer any explanation?

TsL: 1964 was the very special time of the Twentieth, Twenty-first, and Twenty-second Soviet Communist Great Party Congresses. At a Soviet Party Congress, the First General Secretary, the Soviet leader N. S. Khrushchev, sharply criticized I.V. Stalin for destroying the State, which raised the morale and confidence of the whole society. Historically, this time is referred to as “N.S. Khrushchev’s Thaw.” I was working on scientific research at the Temeriazov Agricultural Academy. B. Nyambuu was studying at the Communist

Party College when the All Khural criticized him and me. We were both members of the CP/MPRP and the All Khural, and there was a reason for the criticism at the Khural. The All Khural and the MPRP Fourteenth Great Khural would meet in a final Great Khural. A year later the Fifteenth MPRP Great Khural was to meet and select new members for the CC/MPRP because our terms at the All Khural were over. Following the regulations, those members elected to the CC/MPRP had to be confirmed by the MPRP at the Great Khural. The names that were put forward in the election were chosen by the General Secretary of the CC/MPRP. After being discussed and confirmed in a meeting of the Politburo, the names then went to the Great Khural for the election. A hundred per cent of those voting had “elected” those people put forward in the Great Khural. We criticized Yu. Tsedenbal and those surrounding him several times at the All Khural. Thus after the Great Khural we understood that our names had not been put forward to serve as members of the CC/MPRP and recognized that this was our last chance to oust Tsedenbal.

We met in Moscow to discuss this. According to the rules of the CC/MPRP, all members of the All Khural had to personally participate in the work of the All Khural. Therefore, we both decided to attend. This news reached Yu. Tsedenbal just before the All Khural, and he must have planned to go to Moscow.

A meeting with us was organized, and he said to us: “Today there may be questions about the work of the All Khural. We have decided to give you two a leave from your studying, even though it is not necessary to participate personally in the work of the All Khural.” He tried to convey to us that we would not participate in the All Khural.

People working in Moscow spread stories about those of us who studied there, and this news had reached Yu. Tsedenbal. Members of the MPRP and students spied on one another, leading to a very bad situation. Such methods, however, enabled Yu. Tsedenbal to wield control over Mongolian society since many of those who spread these tales were in high office and were rewarded with money by Yu. Tsedenbal.

Therefore we decided to secretly go to the CC/MPRP All Khural. We recounted Yu. Tsedenbal’s mistakes and shortcomings when we met with him. People should not be afraid to criticize, and in private meetings at the All Khural of the CC/MPRP in 1956 the work of the Party was criticized for the first time. “People are saying that there are mistakes and things are not working well.” That was about ten years before.

The MPRP Sixth All Khural met in December, 1964. Yu. Tsedenbal reported that “The Party controlled the State and the Party control had to be tightened.” Members were supposed to have a 15 minute general discussion,

and they were well prepared when we presented our criticism. A list of speakers and their speeches, planned in advance, had been drawn up to counteract our arguments. I made many points critical of Yu. Tsedenbal:

(I said that) Yu. Tsedenbal has been leader of the CC/MPRP for a long period and little has been accomplished. Yu. Tsedenbal who was born in Mongolia was willing to give up his country and identity to a foreign State.

— Yu. Tsedenbal — Our foreign policy posed a danger. The USSR and China, the so-called major powers, were in a dispute, there were disagreements in the world labor movement, and these differences were intensifying.

— Yu. Tsedenbal presented no plans to decrease our foreign debt which was a mess and was increasing.

— Yu. Tsedenbal's leadership promoted no genuine scientific plan to handle foreign loans. Everything was haphazard and lacked a clear direction. We had to stop relying on foreign aid and become independent.

— Yu. Tsedenbal — Giving bribes to the young people led to bad and crafty ways and did not encourage honesty and independence.

— Yu. Tsedenbal — A secret plot was organized in the CC/MPRP to slander, dismiss and exile D. Tömör-Ochir and L. Tsend. Yu. Tsedenbal—Why have there been so many steps taken to strengthen the Ministry of Internal Security when so much bad was done in 1937-1938?

— Yu. Tsedenbal — The intellectuals worried about the future of the Motherland, and the youth were oppressed or banished for such rebukes as “the Mongolian-Soviet friendship is harmful” or “An ultranationalist policy!” or “It's just a lot of chatter.”

— Yu. Tsedenbal — Your personal deficiencies infected everyone in high office in the MPRP and the government. Some people close to you embezzled State property and figured out ways to officially advance themselves.

— Yu. Tsedenbal — This country's money and power became your personal weapons. You were only concerned with your own position.

— Yu. Tsedenbal — You were the Party leader but did not talk to the Party because for many years there was a “cult of personality,” and our Party suffered. It was urgent to deal with this issue.

— Yu. Tsedenbal — In the interests of the MPRP, I criticized you, Yu. Tsedenbal, in order to correct your errors. I had spoken of these mistakes many times, and the time had come to correct them. We were not afraid of what the punishment would be after the Khural was over.

These were the main points of my criticisms. Perhaps my entire speech was in the MPRP archives. Perhaps it wasn't. Before the All Khural, Yu. Tsedenbal concluded that “if our work had been bad, the supervision must have been lax, and so there was even more reason for stricter control.”

However, this was a wrong conclusion. There was a great deal of supervision, and the work was poor. The inspection process was not lax, but many people had become lax in their work and could not be encouraged to be more active.

The economy had always struggled to move forward, even though it seemed that work had become automatic. It was important to create new sources of profit. However, the leader of the MPRP could not face either of these issues. New ideas led to slander and exile to the countryside. Many of those who tried to solve our problems were not supported and were discriminated against. Their suggestions were met with “what useless chatter” so they began to think to themselves that they would not attempt to offer new ideas. Thus, in time, the economy lagged because of these obstacles and a slavish adherence to the advice of foreigners. Our Mongolian situation was certainly different, and foreigners had little understanding of it. The MPRP leaders themselves began to lose their initiative and fall behind in pursuing and organizing things. At the All Khural, Yu. Tsedenbal came to the conclusion that “we must improve at improving supervision!”

“The economy will not improve under the supervision of a ‘dictator’.” The more severe the government becomes, the less support it gets and the more antagonistic is the climate for its policies. This has, alas, been proved by our recent history. We need a clear direction in our economy, and the activities of many people must be encouraged.

And how can this be done? It is now the time for people to pull themselves up in life. But saying “you must do this and that” does not energize people. Many people do not accept this, and no ‘dictator’ can direct the economy this way. This was my critique of Yu. Tsedenbal in the All Khural.

IL: The All Khural met in 1964 and not so long before that the Ministry of Rural Economy’s *negdels* had been organized. What sort of life did the *negdel* members have?

TsL: These *negdels* were organized to win over the herders. Thanks to collectivization, there were huge herds, and these *negdels* were set up to help the herders.

At the end of the 1950s, the Ministry of Rural Economy *negdels* were a direct continuation of the *kolkhozes*, which had been set up, by force, in 1930.<sup>22)</sup> At that time, people mutinied and ran away because of the hurried collectivization which, for many, was deeply harmful and left scars. At the end of the 1950s, there was a warning against forming the *negdels* since in the 1930s there had been repeated mutinies caused, in part, by this experimental and hasty program. It was claimed that people joined the *negdels* voluntarily but following the regulations, they had to collectivize their goods and belongings.



How was this compulsory collectivization on the *negdels* organized? In a socialist society, work was organized on “Lenin’s Plan,” and the economy followed Marxist-Leninist theory. The four stages of socio-economic stages in the history of human development were: (1)communal (2)slave (3)feudal (4) socialist-communist. There were three major factors which were related to this socio-economic development: (1) the means of production (2) the relationships of production (3) the connection between these two factors and society. The essential and decisive factors for society were the means of production and whether they were privately or communally controlled. Before socialism-communism, all the means of production and a society’s economic development were in private hands. There was a great difference between the rich and the poor in a society, social classes arose, people were exploited, and there was no equality. Permanent class conflict developed within each society, and human history became the history of the class struggle, which ultimately led to social revolution. The goal of any revolution is to decide issues of private property, and the means of production and the State are necessarily involved. In the seventeenth century, there was a revolution among those who owned property in England. By the end of the eighteenth century, this revolution had resulted in the transformation of economic capital and had given the workers and the peasants the weapons to mutiny and take over the property and power of the State. When workers took over the property and power of the State, they could set up a dictatorship of the proletariat. The powerful motor of the proletariat spurred on the socialist revolutions in these times. Thus the “dictatorship of the proletariat” came into existence with its central goal of abolishing private property, taking over the means of production, and socializing property. It was a time when it seemed that the difference between rich and poor would disappear, and social equality would emerge. There would be no more oppression of man by man and, as Marxism-Leninism shows, honesty would prevail in society.

In October, 1917 the Socialist Revolution was victorious in Russia, and after that the means of production and private property were forcefully taken over. Industries and factories, roads, and bridges and all necessary communications equipment became State property. A huge number of economic enterprises also became the property of the State. Most peasant holdings remained untouched, though some private holdings were seized. Then the question arose on how to proceed on this issue.

V. I. Lenin created this so-called “collectivization plan” which called for “peasant co-operatives and other enterprises leading to socialism” as well as the “collectivization of all property.” In the 1930s “Lenin’s plan for the co-operatives” was implemented in Russia with tragic results. Land was captured

and then collectivized, resulting in misery and even death for several million peasants. The well-off agricultural workers forcibly resisted this collectivization, and I.V. Stalin crushed them and spilled their blood. Thus there ceased to be a peasant class with private land.

What was the situation in Mongolia? There was one very troublesome question relating to the Mongolian theory of private property. Were the herds the Mongolian means of production or was the land the means of production? This issue had to be decided. For one group, the land was the means of production which caused a debate, though the theoretical issue could not be decided. Finally, it was decided to collectivize the herds. At the end of the 1950s, the herds of many people were collectivized, which led to strong and secret resistance. People did not wish to voluntarily collectivize their animals even though it was written in “The Rural Economy Model Regulations” that they were to do so “on a voluntary basis.” In the 1930s, the *kolkhozes* were established, and by force the herds were collectivized.

And so the Mongolian nomad became a member of the rural economy *negdel*, animal husbandry was forced onto the collective, and the word “nomad” lost its meaning. Following the “Rural Economy Model Regulations,” the *negdel* members could have fifty head of animals in the Khangai zone and seventy-five head in the Gobi zone. Each year the private herds in the rural economy *negdels* and the State Farms were counted. By this count and by the “Rural Economy Regulations” excessive or superfluous animals were collectivized. Norms were developed for the production of meat, milk, and wool. For example, each *negdel* member had to fulfill a norm for milk during the summer which often left him without milk for his own tea.

The herders on the rural economy *negdels* could not change pastures at will, and the “*Negdel Council*” decided when to transport the herds to other *khashaas*. The establishment of the milking period for the herds, organizing the work of insemination, delivering the young, shearing the sheep for wool, and migrating with the herds were all controlled by the State. The herders themselves made none of these decisions.

So these herds on the *negdels* were called “criminal herds,” and the animals were like the “prisoners” of the *negdels*. Letting the herds die or destroying them, so the norms could not be reached could lead to punishment or even prison for the herders. The livestock was referred to as criminal, and therefore the person taking care of the herds was also criminal, which led to a difficult situation. Before long the *negdel* children, on the pretext of going to school, left the countryside and went to the city, and eventually only the old people were left behind with the herds.

Those people with the “criminal herds” were eager to escape from these

*negdels* as life grew worse for them. Those herders whose animals had been collectivized had no private property. The Mongolian wives gave their new born sheep soup to drink to give them strength and though there were many sheep outside the herders' *gers*, they owned none of them. The herders had to get permission from the *negdel* leader to use the *negdel* facilities, which they could only use by paying some of his wages. If the herder incurred a debt which had not been repaid and the herds showed a shortfall, the herder could land in prison. Such was life for the *negdel* members.

IL: It was said at the 1964 All Khural that "the loan and debt system was a mess." Can you talk a little about this?

TsL: Yes. At the time there was a mess concerning the debt and loan issue. The question which had to be considered was why did we always run up such a debt? Could measures be taken to limit the possibility of such a large debt? At that time, industry, the rural economy, health care, and education and culture drew heavily on the finances and budget of the State. How could the State bear this weight? It was clear that it couldn't. So more talk about the debt continued. In fact, our debt grew because we did not make full use of our resources. Our greatest revenues came from the rural economy, and the newer financial branches in our society could not count on such income. High profits from industry would have been welcomed but the factory output was small, and there was no connection between industries due, in part, to all the foreign trade and the great economic losses it incurred for Mongolia. The goods from the USSR were more highly priced than our goods, so that imported products were more expensive and insufficient. In addition, the Soviet products sent to Mongolia were often "rejects," which should have been refused.

For example, we could not grow tea, so Mongolia had always imported tea from the USSR. Our tea was called "square-cornered brick tea;" the corners of the "rejects" were so eroded that the brick became round. Nobody would buy the poor quality Russian tea, so earrings and rings were inserted into the packages, which were then purchased and the tea was discarded. Sometimes the Russians would repaint old machines to look like new, and we were even forced to buy high priced stuff which we didn't even need. We did have trade in animal products with the USSR, which included cashmere, camel wool, skins, and horse hair, but their price on the world market was way below their worth. In exchange for these Mongolian products, the Russians sent children's toys like "rubber sheep" and our foreign products, like these children's toys were, in fact, more expensive than real sheep. How can these "rubber sheep" lead to our economic growth? Yu. Tsedenbal, an "economist" by profession, could not answer this question. We were directed by this "economist" and by endless talks about "Mongolian development." People's

patience was wearing thin. How could people understand this mess of a debt that we were in? At that time, Altanbulag, Erentsav, Khövsgöl, Khankh, and the western side of Tsagaan Nuur were transfer bases for the animals going north, and the eastern *aimags* from Erentsav and the central *aimags* from Altanbulag, and the northern *aimags* from Khankha sent their herds to the western side of Tsagaan Lake.

During the Manchu era, the Mongolian herds were driven along a southern route. Our western Altai and western steppe were the borders. This southern route followed the Shar Road and Khovd's Black Lake, the Khuis Gobi and the Shar Gobi. The southern frontier was in the Biger Valley, which was also called the Western Valley. The middle roads were there — one went west, and was central, and the one ran from the center of the Khalkh people, and at the time the boundary ran north and south near the Tamir junction and the Tovsrulekh Orkhon steppe, the winding Khoshigh Valley, the Kharkhorin Orkhon Valley and south to the Zuil Valley, passing through the Dombon Zeereng Gobi. The Kherleng steppe began at the winding Nokhoi boundary line of the Tsangakh steppe, then to the Dornod right/western steppe, and to the Sükhbaatar steppe. During Manchu times, these three valleys became suitable for the herds with good pastures and drinking water. In those days, the herds were driven across the border to pasture. Now only the Dornogov western steppe valley is in use. South of these valleys the story of herding has not changed.

In the future these three roads, one in the mountains and two in the steppe lands, would be of importance in our relationship with our neighbors. At this time, a railroad passed through the valleys, and a road for cars was being built. These low valleys presented no obstacles to the camel caravans which, for centuries, had traversed the Shar Road and the Khar Nuur of Khovd.

In 1950, the railroad joining Moscow, Ulaan Baatar, and Beijing was ready for use since the Chinese side had joined the Mongolian side. Yu. Tsedenbal was selected by the government to be in charge. A meeting was organized with the Chinese about the junction of the two railroads, and I joined the Mongolian representatives with my friend, S. Deleg who was editor of “Unen,”<sup>23</sup> in a big celebration. The two tracks met, and the four rails combined into a big silvery road. The railroad now had the ability to go to both our northern and our southern neighbors and offered the great possibility of extending our relations with other countries. S. Deleg and I participated in the ceremonies representing the area called “the thirsty dog side”. We deliberately made ourselves famous and wrote about our wonderful broad steppe land in “Unen.” For many centuries, loaded camel caravans crossed the steppe, and now our impressions were of interest.

At the time, the Party cadre never showed initiative on the problems of the budget deficit or profits. Many people, especially the intellectuals, criticized this lack of leadership in their conversations and in the news. Popular worries were reflected in the serious atmosphere of the 1964 All Khural meeting, which became a turning point for Nyambuu and me. To prevent disputes with the USSR and China, production had almost stopped at the small factories, which had made profitable and necessary items. This caused a blow to our economy.

IL: Yu. Tsedenbal was the general secretary of the MPRP when the All Khural met, and his methods of selecting his cadres were criticized. Can you explain this?

TsL: Over the years, Yu. Tsedenbal had begun to build his authority by appointing people he valued to official positions. Generally, all the people, including the leaders, who were appointed to high office were from Uvs *aimag*, where Yu. Tsedenbal was born. I knew that the mistakes of these local appointees were ignored since everybody protected their friends. To correct this situation, there were changes at work and those who were discriminated against began to be concerned. There was even a joke at the time: “A Dorvod is not a man, and four shins are not meat!”<sup>24)</sup> In this way the Mongolian nation stood up to the question of nationality. Mongolia is not a country of many different nationalities — we are really all quite similar, although the Mongolian nationality did include many smaller identities, with no one clear distinction between them. Speech, conversational customs, and local disparities were similarly described. However, at that time, there was the concern that there could be a dispute dividing the Khalkh and the Dorvod.

A little later, people who had studied in the USSR were appointed to official positions, and having a command of the Russian language was an aid to advancement. Knowing Russian well became the main criterion for eligibility for an official job. Perhaps those people who did move up could not even do their work. When they were sent abroad, they had high salaries, low living expenses, and many privileges. They shopped in the so-called “stores for the elite” where all of our ministers were taken care of. The CC/MPRP set up a secret arrangement by which the Politburo CC/MPRP member enjoyed the rewards- or “perks”- from the leaders in the area. These stores were not for the ordinary person. It could be said that these high officials praised Yu. Tsedenbal, defended their stay in the USSR, and thought rather highly of themselves.

At the time it was said “A Dorvod person is the pillar of the government, and four feet are the pillar of the herd.” For many years it was well known that people rejected hard work, and official service declined. Some government

people were disgraced and banished to their own locale. These events were very dangerous to society, impeded the fundamental development of the nation, resulted in reliance upon fawning and flattery, and made it harder to develop a strong government apparatus.

IL: Were the work methods and mistaken policies of the General Secretary, Yu. Tsedenbal, criticized at the 1964 CC/MPRP All Khural and was the intent to relieve him of his position?

TsL: Yu. Tsedenbal received me very well and listened to my questions when on several occasions I met with him to talk about his policy mistakes and his errors at work. When I had managed the State Farms and worked as a leader for six years, I met with him several times. I was responsible for the very important work of advancing the socialist economy in Mongolia for the Ministry of Rural Economy. We did not want this venture to fail.

I did not know why Tsedenbal emphasized how serious these responsibilities were.<sup>25</sup> In 1956, I, as the Party Secretary in the Gov-Altai *aimag*, was urgently summoned by the CC/MPRP to Ulaan Baatar where Yu. Tsedenbal received me in his study, and we chatted a bit about the local work situation in the country before moving on to talk about the “Virgin Lands Plan.” He said:

“You were appointed to direct the State Farms — can you do this?” Since we had already discussed this possibility, I was taken aback and answered honestly.

“I can!” He looked at me and without getting up I vaguely heard him ask as he was leaving:

“Ah, yes! Can you really do all of that?”

These words sounded almost like a threat, but perhaps Yu. Tsedenbal really intended to give me the great responsibility for this serious new work, which he seemed to think I could carry out with ease. However, success would take a while.

It was possible that I could get this new enterprise a hundred per cent on its feet, and my hopes were not in vain. The Ministry of Rural Economy supported this new venture, and for the first time in Mongolian history agricultural production was so abundant that we exported some products. The efforts of the Mongolian people produced these results. I often drove in the countryside with the General Secretary of the CC/MPRP Yu. Tsedenbal. The General Secretary and I talked in the car [instead of in a room] because of the demands upon him at work.

Before the start of the Virgin Lands movement, there was a problem with the technology used for planting. The tractors and combines did not work because of a lack of spare parts, and I spoke directly about this technological

delay. I also flew to the collective farms and used the radio connection on the plane. Once the new combines had arrived, the harvesting could begin. However, there were no spare “hydro-belts,” so the combines were idle and could not work as needed. I discussed this situation by phone with Yu. Tsedenbal, and he spoke directly with Moscow. He told our ambassador in Moscow, S. Lavsan, that “urgent steps had to be taken” and five days later a helicopter dropped off the hydro-belts at the Darkhan State Farm. Thanks to this, the harvest proceeded without delay and finished promptly. This is how we [Tsedenbal and I] worked with the collectives.

But Tsedenbal’s work methods were based on the wrong policies which needed correction, and although I advised Tsedenbal to change, nothing happened. Therefore I said to Yu. Tsedenbal: “the reality is not understood, so I must resign. Someone else can do this work, and we must think of the future prosperity of the country. You, yourself, Yu. Tsedenbal are surely considering this!”

B. Nyambuu who was with us had a somewhat different criticism and said: “It is useless to dismiss Yu. Tsedenbal. No one can lead the country now — neither the MPRP nor the government! With his talents and abilities, Yu. Tsedenbal stands out from all the others.”

And there is no one else to promote to this official post. He was selected to be General Secretary of the CC/MPRP at a delicate period in Mongolian history when there were serious problems. In 1937-1938, our educated, professional, and cultured people were almost all rounded up. Some were imprisoned, and others were executed. Because educated people were in short supply, Yu. Tsedenbal was chosen to be General Secretary of the MPRP, even though he hadn’t prepared himself in the social sciences for this job and was only twenty-four years old. He himself could not be successful in this work.

Geopolitically Mongolia was located between the great world powers, the USSR and China, and had to maintain good relations with both of her neighbors. In 1940, we had no relations with China, which was experiencing internal chaos. Our foreign policy vis-à-vis the USSR had taken a different course, and our government leaders realized how vital it was to know the Russian language although few among us did. At the time, Yu. Tsedenbal had finished college in the USSR, and even though he knew Russian poorly, he still stood out. There is a Mongolian proverb that states “One hundred old women compete in a race, and one is bound to win!” Yu. Tsedenbal was selected as General Secretary of the MPRP, which eventually might work with vigor.

However, it was soon clear that the MPRP and its unlikely leader of the Mongolian government were abundantly deficient in taking responsibility. He

quickly changed and lost all his initiative as D. Tömör-Ochir stated at the CC/MPRP All Khural. Personally, I was not on bad terms with Yu. Tsedenbal, though I criticized his policies.

People respected Nyantaisüren Lkhamsüren, Bazaryn Shirendev,<sup>26)</sup> and Kh. Choibalsan, and I actually thought that the policy was beginning to change. Yu. Tsedenbal urged Kh. Choibalsan, who was ill, to go to a doctor in the USSR, but Kh. Choibalsan said that he was reluctant to visit a Moscow doctor, which might have been true. That was a bad time for Kh. Choibalsan to deal with I.V. Stalin. Perhaps each of these men was waiting to be the first to take the government podium. In the opinion of Nyantaisüren Lkhamsüren, Kh. Choibalsan was very ill with stomach pains, and through a spy Yu. Tsedenbal had learned of this. Choibalsan and Lkhamsüren had been talking and so Tsedenbal wanted to purge Lkhamsüren, who was a member of the Politburo of the CC/MPRP.

The wife of N. Lkhamsüren, Namsraijav, was in the educated class and was clever and very nice, as were their children. Yu. Tsedenbal, however, had a falling out with both of them. Yu. Tsedenbal and Lkhamsüren had studied together in Moscow and since Yu. Tsedenbal knew no one in Ulaan Baatar, and his home was far away in a western *aimag*, he spent the summer holidays at N. Lkhamsüren's *ger*, where the family maintained a very good library. They both spent the summer reading many good and interesting books. He and Yu. Tsedenbal wore the same clothes and ate the food N. Lkhamsüren prepared. Thus it seemed that the two men had grown up together since childhood. N. Lkhamsüren became a professional agronomist, and when he went to do his research in the USSR, a conflict arose between him and Yu. Tsedenbal.

At the beginning of 1990, N. Lkhamsüren gave a talk on his childhood and mentioned Yu. Tsedenbal's childhood name, which was Tsedenpil, and this was the first time that many Mongolians had heard that name in public, perhaps because Yu. Tsedenbal had kept it secret. It came out in this talk that though Yu. Tsedenbal had worked with many people over the years, his real name was not known.

After Yu. Tsedenbal dismissed N. Lkhamsüren, he appointed B. Shirendev to organize work on the Politburo of the CC/MPRP. B. Shirendev was very capable and had a vast knowledge and a fine mastery of the Russian language. Kh. Choibalsan did not speak Russian, so when Kh. Choibalsan met with I.V. Stalin, B. Shirendev would often be the interpreter, and he mentioned that "I.V. Stalin valued my knowledge of the Russian language and raised his glass to me!" Yu. Tsedenbal and B. Shirendev were good friends when they studied together in the Soviet city of Irkutsk. Shirendev did work for the Minister of



Education and then became first Vice Chancellor of the Mongolian State University and then first President of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences, all of which made the headlines in our country.

Actually, only once in every ten years was there a man with such leadership qualities. During the time of Kh. Choibalsan, both N. Lkhamsüren and B. Shirendev stood out. In a later decade, D. Tömör-Ochir and L. Tsend distinguished themselves. It was said that the new General Secretary of the CC/MPRP Yu. Tsendenbal declared “I have not prepared my people because only I can do this job, and so I will continue to do the work I have been doing.” In Mongolia, people were pushed out, chased away, or exiled if they were over-confident or boastful about working for their country. People did not like such talk. Yu. Tsendenbal initially supported the very capable people like N. Lkhamsüren and B. Shirendev, but he later dismissed them, and they were unable to make a life for themselves. Somewhat later, D. Tömör-Ochir and L. Tsend were favored and then exiled, and it became hard for many to work and make a good life, which led to serious problems for society. On top of all of this, it must be said that Yu. Tsendenbal was a man of mediocre qualities and that people were exploited and then simply thrown on the rubbish heap. D. Tömör-Ochir and L. Tsend were both very capable and good men who worked energetically, and all the work was in their hands. They were both rotating members of the Politburo of the CC/MPRP. Yu. Tsendenbal could do little but participate in celebrations and award ceremonies.

It was said at the time of the Russian-German war that the opening of Khan Temür’s tomb had started the war.<sup>27)</sup> The Georgian, I.V. Stalin, was influenced by this although he said little. When the war was over, it was stated that the Mongolians had been treated with great respect, and I.V. Stalin made clear that “Mongolia and Russia had both become powers on a world scale.” The Second World War finished in February, 1945 when “the alliance of the three leaders of the United States, England, and the USSR against Hitler organized a meeting at Yalta to discuss the world situation. Although I.V. Stalin defended Mongolia’s attendance at the meeting, he had to accept the “status quo.” I.V. Stalin was a person who treated the Mongolians well.

In a speech Yu. Tsendenbal said “I was born a Russian!” Here is the reason for this. During the sixties, he created quite a stir by trying to ingratiate himself with the Soviet Union by giving away the “red district” in the area of his birth. Yu. Tsendenbal came from Davst *sum*, Uvs *aimag*, where the north side of the *sum* adjoined the Soviet border. Yu. Tsendenbal had spent his childhood on the southern side of Davst mountain, which had a great abundance of rock salt. There were negotiations with the USSR about extracting this salt, and even some talk that the USSR was going to take over

the far side of the mountain for the salt industry.

V. M. Molotov was appointed Ambassador to Mongolia, and discussions were vigorously pursued during this time. V.M. Molotov was an experienced man and together with I.V. Stalin had arbitrarily divided up the world. His one goal as Ambassador was certainly to structure the talks about Salt Mountain to his own ends. So began the discussions about the Soviet-Mongolian border with our government. Sodnom Avarzed worked, at the time, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and did not accept V. M. Molotov's demands to hand over the side of Salt Mountain. "From olden times, Salt Mountain has been a part of the Mongolian territory, and it will stay that way. It is the homeland of our General Secretary of the MPRP." V.M. Molotov answered that the area belonged to the USSR, but he was not able to throw his weight around because the Soviet-German War had started with attacks in the Baltic Sea. Therefore Salt Mountain and its surrounding area remained Mongolian. It was asked: "If Salt Mountain had been in Russian territory, which country would Yu. Tsedenbal have come from?" These negotiations encountered many obstacles and wasted weeks and months, and Molotov later told N.S. Khrushchev that Avarzed was a tough negotiator.

Yu. Tsedenbal was on a holiday in the USSR at the time, and when he returned to Ulaan Baatar, he dismissed Minister S. Avarzed from the MPRP. So there were no obstacles in discussions with V.M. Molotov over this border dispute, and Salt Mountain and its surrounding territory were transferred to the Soviet side. With the end of World War II and the meeting at Yalta, our problem was not discussed. Yu. Tsedenbal was a man who did strange things from time to time. People did not like this affair at all. Why couldn't anyone speak for the Mother country? Many Mongolians asked why this man didn't pay greater attention to Mongolia and asked how he could give away some of his own native territory just to ingratiate himself with foreigners. Minister S. Avarzed was dismissed from his job, ousted from the MPRP, and had no work for many years. Sometimes he was even seen driving a taxi. In the 1990s, this very sad man died in mysterious circumstances. Several youths on a street in Ulaan Baatar had assaulted and injured him, and he did not recover and died. The police at the time did not even try to find out who had attacked him.

Mr. Sürenjav was the deputy to Marshal Choibalsan who had died in 1952, and the great question was who would be appointed Prime Minister of the country. The public was not behind Yu. Tsedenbal, and since Mr. Sürenjav had worked with Kh. Choibalsan, it was thought that he should be the next Prime Minister. Strange as it was, Yu. Tsedenbal became Prime Minister, and in the early 1990s, Mr. Sürenjav was killed by a car while crossing a street in Ulaan Baatar. Not long after his death, L. Tsend, who had been exiled to

Tosontsengel *sum*, came to Ulaan Baatar and “suddenly” died. Many people stressed that he had been in very good shape, but he had caught a cold and had been admitted to the hospital.

Ts. Namsrai, a secretary of the Politburo of the CC/MPRP, also “suddenly” died. He had been the General Secretary and a leader of the MPRP for many years and had been helpful to many. Yu. Tsedenbal had dismissed him in 1984, and the question arose about his replacement. The Democratic Union went on a hunger strike in 1990 in Sükhbaatar Square and presented demands to the Politburo of the CC/MPRP, and all the personnel resigned. There were two groups in the Politburo at the time. One accepted the demands of the Democratic Union and also resigned, but the other group absolutely refused to accept them. The hunger strikers were forcibly removed from Sükhbaatar Square and dispersed. Perhaps in a small way, this was a repeat of 1989 in Tiananmen Square in Beijing. Ts. Namsrai accepted the demands of the Democratic Union, and some Politburo members stepped down and held fast to their opinions. At the next meeting of the CC/MPRP at the All Khural, they captured the attention of the Mongolian public. Many complications arose for the Mongolian government, and there were demands to create a multi-party system. People were encouraged to present their opinions, and there was openness or “glasnost” in these discussions and approval for all the different opinions.

The Deputy Minister of the Interior at the time was General S. Jamsranjav, and he “suddenly” died. General S. Jamsranjav had served on the Control Committee of the CC/MPRP and had kept tabs on D. Tömör-Ochir, L. Tsend, Ts. Lookhuuz, B. Nyambuu, and B. Surmaajav and was responsible for the questions and the fabricated accusations of the Ministry of Internal Security. At the end of his memoir, B. Nyambuu said: “I did everything for the sake of the Motherland.”

There were two incidents of homicide which caused all of the Mongolian public to tremble. In 1985 D. Tömör-Ochir was murdered, and in 1998 S. Zorig was killed. “The government organized these intended murders,” and it is said that an investigation had not been organized. There was evidence which has caused suspicion. Both of them were killed on October 2, which was a “dark day” in Mongolian history since on October 2, 1937, the Ministry of Internal Security arrested and executed many people. D. Tömör-Ochir spent many of his days in Darkhan city and when his sentence was over, he petitioned the CC/MPRP to move back to Ulaan Baatar. The Control Committee granted him permission, and D. Molomjamts gave him the news by phone, and the word spread. D. Tömör-Ochir’s wife Sanjmiatav Ninjbadgar had already come to Ulaan Baatar. She was an educated, learned, and well-

organized woman who was an astronomer and the first Mongolian woman to defend her Sc. D thesis from Moscow State University. In 1962 D. Tömör-Ochir was slandered and banished to his home area by a decision of the Control Committee, which decreed that “S. Ninjbadgar had to stay in Ulaan Baatar since she was an astronomer for the country and had to complete her work!” She responded that she was married to D. Tömör-Ochir and not to the CC/MPRP and that she would follow her husband into exile and do manual labor. Thus they both went into exile and together withstood many insults, difficulties, suffering, and misery. S. Ninjbadgar returned to Ulaan Baatar to seek permission from the MPRP for her husband to return, and in her absence her husband was murdered while alone in their home.

Colonel Dashdorj, from a branch of the Ministry of Internal Security, had checked on D. Tömör-Ochir in Darkhan, recording when, where, and with whom he met, and for how many days and minutes. However, “unknown people” supposedly went to Tömör-Ochir’s house on the night of October 2, 1985. This was understood by the Mongolian people. In 2000, Enkhbayar again won the leadership of the State and the MPRP, and when he was in Darkhan, in front of a crowd which was recorded in photographs, he congratulated Colonel Dashdorj for helping his country.

In 1998, the leader of the Mongolian Democratic revolution, S. Zorig, was murdered. Many people repeatedly claimed that he was killed because of “the strong participation of the organization!” At the time, Colonel D. Moron, a young lawyer who was well honored in the country, was the head of the Mongolian Police. Colonel Moron was a good lawyer and a fine investigator who had often investigated serious crimes. He was much admired and the youngest person ever to lead the police. A day after the assassination, the shocked public read in the press that there had been a meeting in which Colonel Moron stated that the Police Department was looking into the murder. In the election of 2000, names of the candidates were put up for election to the MPRP State Khural. People decried the fact that there had been little light shed on the matter. Colonel Moron had a hand in the overwhelming victory for the MPRP of 2000.<sup>28)</sup> The freedom of the press also played a decisive role. Those who had supported Zorig, however, demanded that the leader of the Democratic movement identify his killer. Many people had been deluded, and the public knew that the words of Colonel Moron were intended to calm them psychologically.

Natsagiin Bagabandi was elected President from the MPRP and stated firmly: “I am going to study this investigation with great care.” These words are not forgotten in Mongolia today. Bayar was the leader of President Bagabandi’s banner office, and he gave an interview to the press in which he

said he knew everything about what Sanj Zorig did on October 2, 1998. He explained what Zorig had done minute by minute for every hour of his work day. Did he engage in thoughtful conversation? Did he act on an impulse? Was there a criminal element involved? Who knows? When will they find the killer and how will he be punished? The Mongolian people are waiting for answers to these questions.

## 14. My Family

YuK: Now let's talk about your family.

TsL: My wife is named Jambal Buyanjargal. Her father who was well known in his region gave her the nickname "Difficult Jambal". Her mother was named Namdag. They both lived past their late eighties. My wife's mother was born when her mother was fifty years old, and she had two older brothers and two older sisters. Our *sum* was Naran in Gov-Altai *aimag*. We became acquainted in 1955 when I had been appointed to work as the First Secretary on the MPRP committee in the Gov-Altai *aimag*. I had heard about the successful calving of the herds in Naran *sum* and visited on a very cold day when there was a snow storm. To warm up, we stopped in on a family with a youngish woman and her mother. The father was not there and was evidently outside with the herds, and no one else was inside. This woman made us milk tea, and we drank it and I sat a while with the mother. By the time the father came in and we had talked about the calving in Naran *sum*, the storm was over and I left. I was attracted to the woman, enjoyed this pleasant family, visited them again and again, became well acquainted with the father and the mother, and so decided to join the family.

My father had urged me to "get a wife and get married!" since I was over thirty years old. He raised the issue of the difference in our ages, but that did not matter to me, and he was also concerned about her family background. I was familiar with the father's ancestry, and the mother's lineage was most interesting. Her father was of a noble or *taiji* background, which in our area meant that he came from the Bodi *taiji* and was related to the Bodi people. My father gave us his permission to marry, and we were wed in the Gov-Altai city center with the wedding feast organized by the MPRP committee. We both registered our marriage officially in 1956, and now forty-nine years have passed. We have four children — two are our own, and two are adopted.

My wife's brother had a son whom we adopted in the same year we married and soon after we moved to Ulaan Baatar for my work. Since we did not know anyone there, we decided to take the baby with us. Until our son was five, we had no other children. Working with us was my childhood friend Dashzeveg, from whose family we adopted a daughter, so then we had both a

little boy and a little girl.

My wife was thirty-five before another son was born and forty when the next daughter arrived, which made four children in our family. My wife finished the third class in our local primary school. She finished the eighth class in evening school in Ulaan Baatar. In one year, she took a course in pharmacy, since there was not sufficient time to study in the more desirable college program. She worked as a pharmacist in the biochemistry laboratory at Ulaan Baatar's second hospital. My wife had bad lungs so she went to Beijing for surgery, but she continued to work as a pharmacist as she grew older. Though she is now retired, she did not work continuously all the years when I criticized the CC/MPRP at the Sixth All Khural and was pushed out of the MPRP and exiled to the countryside.

### **15. The Beginning of the Virgin Lands Reclamation Plan**

IL: Was there some sort of ceremony when work on the Virgin Lands began, and the first tractor ploughed the land?

TsL: The responsibility for the Virgin Lands rested with the State Farms, where I was the leader and worked for six years. In 1957, 1958, and 1959 the CC/MPRP at the All Khural raised the issue of planting. L. Tsend was the representative to the State Planning Commission, and we both prepared plans for the All Khural. In earlier times, the near side of the Altai range had been planted, as had the Kharaa and Eroo River basins at the beginning of the twentieth century. The Chinese people did most of the planting work at that time in Mongolia, but cultivating the land had little effect on the nation's economy since it produced only a few benefits. The national plan, however, was essential in reaching the goal of providing for the country's needs, and all of our work in this area was completely new.

In the first year, the amount of growth was small, but it increased nicely in the second year, and soon the domestic flour trade began for the first time and was among the first new agricultural enterprises. More than three hundred professionals came to Mongolia from the USSR to work in the rural economy including agronomists, soil and irrigation experts, and animal technologists to work on improving the breed of the herds. All the work was focused on the State Farms, and there were difficulties relying on the Ministry of Rural Economy to supply us with fuel, mechanics, spare parts, and a repair service. There were few mechanical specialists, and the State Farms and the Ministry of Rural Economy needed to set up garages with mechanics and repair stations. Our mechanics studied with the Soviet specialists, and even though we often had many questions, we made our decisions quickly without losing time. We were encouraged by these principles at work, and we made rapid

progress. The State Farms provided the residences for the Soviet specialists, and we were responsible for their wages. This meant full wages for good work and reduced wages for poor work, which was also the system for paying specialists in the USSR.

Our first plowing began in the fertile black earth area in the forest zone of the Orkhon Selenge pastureland. There was not much plowing in the first year in the western *aimags*, the Gobi *aimags*, and the eastern steppe *aimags* because there was less fertile land. Such was also the case in Khentii and Dornod *aimags* where there was little black soil land. The Soviet region bordered on a small area of the Ereentsav State Farm. We planted a little on this side of the Kherleng State Farm and the Bayan Uul State Farm. Measures were taken to plow the Virgin Lands in Khövsgöl aimag on the Tarialan State Farm, in Arkhangai *aimag* on Tovshurlekh State Farm, and in Övörkhangai *aimag* on the Kharkhorin State Farm. A great deal of effort was also put into plowing the land in Selenge *aimag* on the Zelter State Farm, the Tsagaan Nuur State Farm, the Tsagaan Tolkhoi State Farm, the Altanbulag State Farm, the Eroo State Farm and the Darkhan State Farm, and finally in Töv *aimag*, the Jargalant State Farm.

The first time we plowed the land was in Darkhan on the State Farm on Tsaidam plain where there was a ceremony, and the first plow was used. The Politburo members Yu. Tsendenbal, J. Sambuu, and N. Jagvaral all came.

Mr. J. Sambuu, the representative from the Great Khural, had often come to the State Farms and knew about our work. I came to know him while working on the State Farms where I also met with workers and talked to them. I went with him to the countryside and was appointed to speak with him. J. Sambuu spent many years outside of Mongolia representing the country, and this man of exemplary habits was a genuine Mongolian.<sup>29)</sup> He did everything in the Mongolian manner, including what he ate and drank. Only his Soviet cigarettes “Kazbek”, which were known as “Khar Mort” for the picture of the black horse on the box, were foreign. At the time, the abundant profit from the herds was intended for improving and organizing industries. The learned group of animal technologists was headed by the scholar S. Ayozan. They introduced a foreign strain of sheep to produce the “Orkhon” breed, with its very fine and popular wool. There was little demand for the meat of this sheep. Our own specialists had tried doggedly for many years, but had not succeeded in producing this new breed of sheep, so this was surely a great event which we celebrated by inviting the President.

We set up a tent and prepared to receive him along with our leading scholars, college teachers, aspiring students, and others from the Ministry of Rural Economy. One “Orkhon” sheep was slaughtered, and the meat was

cooked. We went to the *ger* with the President and sat around the table, drank tea, and offered greetings. Then the meat was cut and eaten. Sambuu took two slices and stopped eating and asked if he was eating dog meat. I was embarrassed but knew that we called foreign hybrid sheep “dogs’ tails” because the hybrid sheep’s tail hangs down like a dog’s tail, so perhaps that is where the name came from. It is well known that the tail of a Mongolian sheep is like a big round dish, and our newborn babies suckle and grab onto it. Healthy children need nourishing food with protein. Anyone given a sheep’s tail to suck on would grow up with a strong and robust physique and a bright intelligence. There is no Mongolian person who has grown up without sucking on a sheep’s tail. But children never suck a hybrid sheep’s tail because the meat is tasteless, and we don’t like it. Hybrid sheep cannot compare in taste with sheep raised in Mongolian pastures. For many hundreds of years, Mongolian sheep have adapted to their pastures and maybe that is why they taste so good and are considered the best. Mutton or sheep meat is the tastiest food Mongolians eat, but the Chair of the People’s Presidium’s words still made me unhappy, even though they were said thoughtlessly. For many years, we had hoped that this new work in breeding would turn out well, but everyone seemed to lose their enthusiasm on hearing Sambuu’s words. I worried about this for several weeks, and there was one event in relation to this.

Sambuu himself was a keen chess player. When living in Ulaan Baatar, he called me on many weekends to come to his house and play chess with him. At his house, Mrs. Nyamaa gave us boiled Mongolian milk tea, and we spent the day playing chess. Mrs. Nyamaa was a very nice and simple person. During the time when “steps were quietly taken” to bring the Party under the strict control of the Ministry of Internal Security, I was herding in Övörkhangai *aimag*, Sant *sum*, and Mrs. Nyamaa made and sent me a velvet and silk *deel*.

At the beginning of the Virgin Lands Plan, a Mongolian specialist gave the Politiburo members a lesson on this special work and on the places that were going to be planted. There were few Mongolian specialists in agronomy in Mongolia at that time, so a learned specialist came from the USSR to teach us, and I sat in on his lesson. Warm and cold weather, high altitudes, and good and poor soil conditions were all found in the planting areas. Because the soil had not been used for planting, it was rich and nutritious.

There was rain in the beginning of spring and in the summer. After Naadam,<sup>30</sup> the rain really started. In the Khangai belt, there was a lot of rain. In September growth was completed, and it was time to harvest the crops. At the time, the SKA3 and the SKA4 combines came from the USSR, and the Ministry of Rural Economy updated all the mechanisms of these machines so



they worked well. We had resolved the problem of the shortage of spare parts, and the machines of the Ministry of Rural Economy were not deficient.

In 1959, the College of Rural Economy graduated early its first class in agronomy, and it went directly to work on the Virgin Lands of the State Farms. Few of our people finished the Soviet Rural Economy Academy called the Temeriazov, and there were not the necessary seven or eight specialists working on the State Farms. As a result, the leaders had some difficulties since there were few people with the ability to manage workers, and some of those who were knowledgeable were the State Farm leaders themselves. The older people were the most experienced workers, so they were appointed to this work. The Soviet agricultural experts helped us with our harvesting of crops.

All the sowing and harvesting in the planting areas followed a cycle in which fields were planted in alternate sequences so the soil could rest. Thus wheat was planted in one soil area, which was alternated every two or three years. After growing wheat in some fields, oats were planted to feed the herds, the soil was fallow, and the crops did not decline. However, such a regimen was hard to follow. We did use chemicals sparingly because the weeds had to be killed in the planted areas. In one hectare, there were ten centners or five hundred kilograms of growth. In some areas with good soil, there were twenty to twenty-five centners or one thousand kilograms of growth, and the country averaged eight to twelve centners or four hundred to six hundred kilograms.

It was said that the Virgin Lands Plan would be a revolution on the Mongolian State Farms. Our country had a great demand for flour, and the Virgin Lands Plan pleased everyone and changed our lives. Settled and semi-settled people worked in the planting areas, which was a new way of life for most Mongolians. The Division of Collective Farms gathered people into centers in the herding areas, where there was the opportunity to promote culture and education in schools, kindergartens, crèches, medical clinics, communication systems, and cultural palaces, all in one big development. Many things flowed out from the rural economy which influenced other branches of agriculture. Leading workers were awarded the “Red Star of Merit.”

In 1999 in democratic Mongolia, the “Virgin Lands Plan” had its fortieth anniversary, and it was suggested that I be awarded the title of “Mongolian Labor Leader.” The work we did at the time was still necessary and continues to contribute to society, so getting the title was not necessary because the work was reward enough. I should have gotten the award if it had been given to a hard working person, but often these honors involved too much bureaucracy as they do now. President N. Bagabandi did not decide on this award.

The director of the State Farms was close to the Ministry of Agriculture,

whose Minister was Nyam Jagvaral, and I was the First Deputy Minister. He strongly supported all sorts of agricultural work, from fish farming to raising geese and ducks. We organized a “chicken factory” and bought the equipment from the USSR. There were some amusing incidents connected with our trying to get permission from the Khural and Yu. Tsedenbal to set up a “chicken factory.” When we met, I was afraid that Yu. Tsedenbal would be up to his old tricks, so I asked Mr. Sergei Ivanovich Elizarov to come with me to the meeting to help me persuade Yu. Tsedenbal who knew about our proposal and stated: “This Lookhuuz is said to have organized a “bird factory” which could produce a million eggs. Who is going to buy all these eggs? This is not only unprincipled but excessive, and this project should not go ahead.” Each Politburo member sitting in the Khural remarked that indeed it was true that such a factory would produce too many eggs. So I figured it was just my bad luck to have my project defeated, but I saw Mr. S.I. Elizarov sitting next to me and pushed his elbow and said “get up!” and get up he did. He then went on to talk about boiling these eggs and other methods of cooking them. Yu. Tsedenbal listened because the Soviet specialist was speaking, and it looked as if I would be given permission. I added: “My Leader! Our champion Demuul at one sitting ate one hundred dumplings, and there are many other wrestlers like him! One hundred eggs would be nothing, I bet!” Each member of the Politburo laughed heartily and with all this joking my project was approved. The “chicken factory” is still working in Mongolia.

We organized “Karakul (or astrakhan) sheep agriculture” on a large scale with ten to twenty thousand Karakul sheep. These very nice skins were prepared for export abroad to make winter hats for military leaders. The Soviet military generals wore hats and clothes made from the hides of the Karakul sheep. These were really good hides which were prepared in both black and grey. Our own military leaders also wore clothes from the Karakul. Sable and rabbit skins were also exported to the USSR, and our own internal needs were met.

At the time, I went to work with the specialists in the USSR and was interested in reading everything that was published. I became well acquainted with the Siberian agricultural areas and Siberia’s similar weather conditions with its cold winters. We considered broadcasting about our own work to Siberia.

There was good communication with the socialist countries, but not all of the Siberian experience was studied. Once the Bulgarian Minister of Agriculture, Ivan Primov, invited me for a holiday on the Black Sea coast. He gave me a car to drive, and I went from sunrise to sunset all over Bulgaria learning about the work of the Bulgarian Department of Agriculture. The whole of Bulgaria

is about the size of my Gov-Altai *aimag*. The country was well promoted by its Department of Agriculture, and we were well received by Mr. Primov who asked “What is your wish?” I answered that I was interested in the development of pig farming and wanted his help. He told me to send our plans to his specialists. The most essential aspect in the organization of a pig farm is the food for the animals, and I thought our pig farm could be established near a flour Kombinat in Ulaan Baatar. Our plan was sent on to Bulgaria along with our specialists, who bought one thousand suitable pigs and brought them back to Mongolia. It was absolutely correct to put the pig farm near the Flour Kombinat in Ulaan Baatar, and our pigs grew quickly. The work was a great success, and soon there were ten thousand pigs.

Meanwhile, I went to China quite a few times where I saw interesting experiments in the agricultural department. As in the USSR, huge rivers were used to irrigate planting areas. A channel was dug which carried the water to the area to be seeded. The Chinese used to absorb the water from the Blue and Yellow Rivers in huge ropes, and we studied these intricate methods. We Mongolians said that “The Russian is intelligent, but the Asian is resourceful!”

Fermented sewage produced gas for fuel. I went to the southern area of the Guangzhou region and was very interested how each family used this gas. I wished to introduce this technology to Mongolia, so before returning I went to the Beijing All Chinese Energy Ministry and was given a folder with many plans of the technology and began to work on their translation. Then I assembled the Mongolian specialists who studied the designs, and we discussed how to build the equipment. It was decided to set it up on the Amgalan State Farm, and a work group was appointed to start the construction. Families began to use the fuel, and in the warm summer season the equipment worked well. However, when the cooler weather began, it was hard to get the mechanisms going because of the decrease in air temperature. By the end of October, it was inevitable that the equipment could no longer be used. All of this should be described in the archives of the State Farms.

## **16. We Are Right**

There was never a period in our country when most of the crops spoiled and could not be used. Some State Farms determined the amount of crops that were collected, how much was lost, and what seeds were lacking. When one farm lost crops, another could replace them. The difference in weather in our huge country was a determining factor. For example, during the summer, in the western *aimags* there was little rain while there was abundant rain in the eastern *aimags*. In the southern *aimags*, there was drought, while the northern *aimags* were nice and rainy, which all goes to show that the crop growth was

bound to vary. At the end of the fifties, L. Tsend and D. Tömör-Ochir had worked hard in the MPRP and because of their support our new work was successful.

At first D. Tömör-Ochir and L. Tsend were libeled for “going against the MPRP,” and then they were dismissed from their work and exiled to distant places. This occurred at a time when the Politburo was intending to eliminate its members who had new ideas while increasing the number of cronies and sycophants. Many people were disgusted when our work was no longer supported. I needed to promulgate new initiatives for the State Farms relating to raising revenue and organizing new branches. Yu. Tsendenbal was elusive about overcoming obstacles, and the influence of the flatterers weakened my own interest in this work.

Thus, in the fall of 1962, I finished the harvest, and I went to tell Yu. Tsendenbal I had decided to resign. The work in the planting fields was running properly, and it was time to do something else. I had often criticized Yu. Tsendenbal at the CC/MPRP All Khural. He treated me in an aloof manner, and we could not trust one another, but I knew that I had to deal with him, and I believed that he would accept my resignation. He asked me if I was planning to return to school, and I told him I was. I knew that when Yu. Tsendenbal did not want to work with someone he either sent them to school or to the countryside or to an appointment in a faraway country, and in this way got rid of them. My original plan was to study sociology because, I said to myself, after two years on the MPRP committee in Gov-Altai *aimag*, six years as Director of the State Farms, and almost eight years doing economic work, I needed to load myself up with the social sciences. Yu. Tsendenbal said to me “you worked for many years on the State Farms! You now need more specialized study, and you must attend the Agricultural Academy called the Temeriazov!” Thus I started to do directed research at the Agricultural Academy called Temeriazov and could not pursue my true interest in sociology. My research was directed by Professor Sergei Lazo. I read translations of German and French books.

There was a library at Temeriazov Agricultural Academy where I was guided in research methods and the books to read on the national economy. This course of study was not difficult since I had studied economics for many years. My dissertation, which focused on the State Farms and the profits from Mongolia’s rural economy as well as on income growth and increasing the production of goods, was finished in one year.

However, rather than defend it, I attended the CC/MPRP All Khural where the Party “took steps” because I had criticized Yu. Tsendenbal, so I never received the diploma. People who studied in Moscow criticized CC/MPRP’s

backward leadership and inferior methods. There were no new ideas. The young and energetic people were not supported or were even discriminated against, and their suggestions were met with the disparaging words “that is just nonsense talk.” Mongolian development was slow, and our future was cloudy because there was no coherent plan to follow. Such was our situation as the days passed into weeks. The people lived badly. We talked between us about the condition of our country, but the leadership ignored the economic and social demands, and so the country lagged behind.

At the time, B. Nyambuu was studying at the Communist Party College, and we met each week. There were many people among us studying in Moscow who were members of the CC/MPRP. We played chess, which offered us the opportunity to talk about our country’s development, and we said that our work goes badly because of Yu. Tsedenbal’s mistakes, and the highest people set a bad example for those under them. This situation must be corrected, and Yu. Tsedenbal must do better work. “If some of the water is clear, the stream is clear” was a popular saying. The All Khural began before I finished my exams, so I spoke to the administration of the Agricultural Academy before I returned to Ulaan Baatar, and I was free to go. I gathered a lot of information about the financial situation from people I knew and prepared what I would say to the All Khural in Ulaan Baatar. Jamba and Togtokh were aspirants studying in Moscow, and they were well versed in economics.

Before the meeting of the All Khural, the Politburo of the CC/MPRP held its own meeting where it was asked if Ts. Lookhuuz and B. Nyambuu were preparing to raise criticisms and if they were, how should this be handled? Some Politburo members suggested forbidding them to speak. Others pointed out that all members of the CC/MPRP All Khural are authorized to speak and could not have this right restricted. Thus it was decided that we could speak, but it was agreed we would be criticized. D. Tömör-Ochir and L.Tsend were not notified and many people from all sides were suddenly critical and frightened that they were going to treat us this way. And the MPRP spread news of our criticism in Ulaan Baatar and throughout the countryside. Many people supported us, and the whole country waited impatiently to hear the radio or read the newspaper to know just what had happened. Yu. Tsedenbal and his “close committee members” in the Khural got to work in such an atmosphere trying to turn this to their own advantage. People might have been afraid of giving the impression that they supported us, but there were those who were with us even though they could not speak out. We were not a strong opposition, and the Khural ended. Our MPRP membership cards were collected, and the CC/MPRP chased us from the All Khural.

My MPRP card was accepted, and I spoke my final words: “Our MPRP has retreated from the ideals of the founders. In due course, our Party will be restored but until the moment when the original ideals of D. Sükhbaatar and Kh. Choibalsan are revived, my card will stay “safely deposited” in the archives.”

As a result, my life as “counter-revolutionary Lookhuuz” began. In the 1920s and the 1930s, when there were critiques of the MPRP, people who did not agree with the Party were called “class enemies” or “counter-revolutionaries” and were arrested and executed. There was danger in those days, but now I was considered even worse because I was thought of as a traitor. A campaign was started to make me look bad, and my name was only cleared after twenty-five years.

IL: The CC/MPRP passed a resolution against Ts. Lookhuuz, B. Nyambuu, and B. Surmaajav at the Sixth All Khural “for having gone against the General Party line! The talk is unfounded about changing our victorious socialist Party into a petty capitalist party.” Was there an explanation for this?

TsL: At the time I thought that the MPRP had actually lost its ability to lead. It followed no intelligent theory; there was no direction for the people who wished to work, and there was no support for innovation. Party members who had sound ideas were ignored while flattering toadies won support. It was clear that the Party was moving backwards, not forward, and so we bravely spoke up.

I was not criticizing the MPRP regulations, and if I contradicted I did so unintentionally. For forty years everyone had followed the Party line but was anyone happy? What had happened? It was impossible to count up all the suffering. When things were this bad and there was so much pressure to follow the rules, should the leadership further tighten its control? Does that make sense? Yu. Tsedenbal responded that “if the dictatorship slackens, we slacken.” Everything that had gone wrong was considered to be my fault, and I was punished by an old law that was no longer legal. Thus I was exiled and sent to prison.

IL: How many people criticized Yu. Tsedenbal at the All Khural? Were there others besides the two of you?

TsL: Before the All Khural, B. Nyambuu and I directed most of the criticism of Yu. Tsedenbal. Though there were no others, the resolution named Ts. Lookhuuz, B. Nyambuu, and B. Surmaajav as the antiparty group. By the MPRP regulations and a resolution of the All Khural, a poll should have been taken, and the majority opinion accepted. However, there was no discussion, no vote was taken, and no resolution was ratified before we were expelled from the MPRP. Only several days later did the members of the All Khural

ratify the vote and publish the resolution. This action was not valid according to the MPRP regulations. The “gang” was mentioned, but was it an antiparty group? No! We were not a “gang” and said what we thought. We were made, however, to appear to be plotting to bring down the MPRP: “There is great danger to our country from this powerful gang, and it must be stopped!”

In identifying this so-called dangerous and powerful group, did the leaders of the country save the good people? In fact, there was no list of names of those who purportedly were in this “gang.” In many countries a “gang” is made up of at least three people but “this very dangerous and powerful group which had to be suppressed” was composed of only two, which created a problem for the MPRP, and B. Surmaajav was added to our “gang” to make three. There were connections between the three of us. Through her mother’s brother, the wife of B. Surmaajav was related to B. Nyambuu, and thus the two men were considered to hold “the same opinions,” making it easy to include B. Surmaajav in our “gang.”

Other reasons were found to slander B. Surmaajav. It was a tradition that Yu. Tsendenbal meet with the Soviet government when it had new leaders. At the time, N. Khrushchev had been General Secretary when “a palace revolution,” was staged, and many Soviet ministers were relieved of their posts, and the old conservative L.I. Brezhnev was made General Secretary of the Soviet CC/MPRP. So Yu. Tsendenbal met with L.I. Brezhnev who pointed out that “The USSR has a well developed industrial sector and can provide Mongolia with what it needs, since the Mongolians have not built up their own industries. But we need to continue the trade in products from the herds.” After that, Brezhnev’s policies were adopted by Yu. Tsendenbal and the MPRP. Yu. Tsendenbal had stopped supporting the leader of the industrial department, B. Surmaajav, who had taken the initiative in developing small and medium sized factories with high profits and low expenses. Special attention was paid to boosting the yield of the products from the herds. Soon Yu. Tsendenbal and the CC/MPRP fired him from his position as leader of the department of industry, and he was later appointed to the National Statistical Office. B. Surmaajav spoke critically at the Sixth All Khural in 1964 and stated “that it was a double mistake giving Yu. Tsendenbal, alone, the official appointments of General Secretary and leader of the Council of Ministers. Two different people should hold these official posts. It is damaging for one person to take on the great responsibility of this work which requires two appointments.” He decided that here we were a “gang” along with B. Nyambuu, but we were not a “gang” when we were studying abroad and in so doing, he presented a fictitious case which underscored his poor thought.

YuK: During the 1920s and 1930s, the policy of the MPRP was to refuse to

implement the policies of those people who had been criticized, and they were arrested or executed. Did you encounter this, and was this decision harmful?

TsL: In the 1930s, the MPRP followed the policy of arresting those who opposed decisions, criticized, and refused to agree. Execution was certainly inevitable! But the time came when we did begin to offer our criticisms. At the MPRP Great Khural, the “cult of personality” was severely criticized, and the government later began to exonerate some of those who had been framed and executed. The phrase “you are arrested” was later understood to be from the faraway past, so we thought that there was the possibility of getting away with our criticisms, and we thought we were being careful. But our arrest had already been discussed in the Ministry of Internal Security. Some of the leaders of legal organizations protested and said “these men were arrested outside the law,” and we certainly had not broken the law at that time. It is within the MPRP regulations to give a speech at the Khural.

When we both voiced criticism, however, the Party said that we had not “followed Party guidelines,” which really was only a pretext for removing us from our positions and exiling us. Yu. Tsedenbal was a poor leader who would not consider discussing certain policies which placed the MPRP and the country in danger. But it was necessary to talk about some of the things to help repair the damage! But because of our criticisms, the Party chased us away. Never mind being chased away! Having talked about such serious issues we might be sent to work at the Nalaikh [coal]mine. We were forty-one and forty-two at the time and were “still young and very strong.” The Party “had taken steps” at around this time, and someone had been sent to the Nalaikh mine, so we thought “here comes our punishment!” However, the punishment was quite different than what we thought it would be. With no explanation, we were condemned to exile for an indefinite period, which meant we would suffer for being considered strange and different.

## **17. Counter Revolutionary Lookhuuz**

IL: After the All Khural, did the Control Committee of the CC/MPRP make the decision?

TsL: It did so. S. Luvsanravdan was the leader of the Control Committee, and he tried hard to find even a trace of criminality in us. He asked us what kind of people we met and where did we meet and wondered once we had overthrown the MPRP who would we put in various positions. He interrogated us before the Control Committee of the CC/MPRP for almost a month, but he discovered nothing so the questioning ended and the decision was exile.

We were sent to places far from one another in vast and spacious Mongolia so we could not meet. I was sent to work as a shepherd in Sant



*sum*, Övörkhangai *aimag* in the Gobi zone. B.Nyambuu was sent as a cowherd to the Erentsav State Farm in Dornod *aimag*, and Surmaajav was treated rather gently and appointed accountant at the Berkh mine. Such were the decisions of the Control Committee of the CC/MPRP.

We opposed these decisions, stating that because we were no longer MPRP members the decisions of the MPRP did not apply to us and that as free citizens of Mongolia we could decide for ourselves where to live. Some members of the MPRP realized their mistake in depriving us of Party membership so fast. Soon the Council of Ministers drew up a resolution related to us which made our departure inevitable. We went to the office of the leader of the Control Committee and asked S. Luvsanravdan how long we would be exiled. He answered three years to begin with, to be followed by another decision. We knew that we would have to work for three years in the countryside before there would be any change in our situations. Then we left his office.

We departed in January, which is considered the coldest month in Mongolia. This cold period lasts for eighty-one days — the eighty-one days after the winter solstice. Mongolians divide this time into nine by nine days with the coldest time after the first three sets of nine days, called the “young” nine, which is, in fact, January. It was so vigorously cold that we said it was cold enough to freeze the horns off a three year old bullock! During that period the herders could not move around the countryside, and all of Mongolia was weighed down by daily snowstorms and deep snow.

In our Sant *sum*, Övörkhangai *aimag*, questions were asked of the Ministry of Agriculture, and a loading truck was prepared. At the time, one of our children was eight years old, and the other was two. My older sister and my stepmother, both seventy years old, came with us all to the countryside. We had lived in a three room flat in Ulaan Baatar. I had many books, and there was no chance that I would leave them in the city. I was, however, being “urgently” chased from the building with pressure put on us by the MPRP and the government, which owned all apartments. None were privately owned.

The Ministry of Internal Security kept strict control over what this “counter-revolutionary Lookhuuz” was doing. Where, when, and who did I intend to meet? Whom did I talk to? This information went from the Ministry of Internal Security to the Control Committee to Yu. Tsendenbal. When the All Khural was over, the entire country paid great attention to the news in the press about “the counter-revolutionary gang of Ts. Lookhuuz, B. Nyambuu, and B. Surmaajav” and the danger they posed to the country, which necessitated knowing their whereabouts and whom the MPRP would appoint to replace them.

The news media printed untrue information which stated “Lookhuuz, the leader of the counter-revolutionary gang is a Chinese mongrel! His father was a Chinese from the Xinjiang Uyghur area who came to Mongolia.” All of this was false. Another falsehood was that “Lookhuuz is a Japanese spy!” Thirty years ago labeling someone a Japanese spy was surely the worst slander! Two of our Prime Ministers were slandered as Japanese spies and were killed. The Ministry of Internal Security worked as hard as it had done in the past cooking up all this talk.

It was necessary to quickly find free living space for those sent to work in the countryside. I borrowed a *ger* with a poorly insulated cover from someone I knew. We prepared by having winter clothes, which came in handy. Mongolian *gers* and *deels* were not sold in the stores in Ulaan Baatar, and if you made them yourself you were sent to prison, thus people made most of their necessities. There was actually nothing to spare, which explains why there were no *deels* and winter clothes in the State stores. The European style winter clothing worn in the city was not worn in the countryside, since Mongolian clothes were more suitable. I knew many people from my work on the State Farms, and my friends helped us out with warm clothes. I was well acquainted with the leader of the Amgaland State Farm technical supply base, S. Chuluun, who belonged to the College of the Ministry of Agriculture. He and my nephew accompanied us to Sant *sum*, Övörkhongai *aimag*, and my nephew drove the truck from the Department of Agriculture to take our belongings to our *ger*. S. Chuluun secretly picked up my wife and children in his YA3-469 official car and drove them out of Ulaan Baatar. The leader of Övörkhongai *aimag* was an old friend, and I had previously called him on the phone from Ulaan Baatar. He said: “I have heard about you! Come here! I will be in charge of getting you to the Gobi district” and he really helped us. Thus we arrived at our place of exile in Sant *sum*. Beyond Sant *sum* lay Bogd *sum* and Togrog *sum* — both in the Gobi zone. Before we left, my wife, because she had worked in Ulaan Baatar, received permission from the Övörkhongai department to work in the Övörkhongai hospital, and she took this permission to the *sum* and *aimag* centers. Permission was again granted, and so we decided to place our *ger* in the *sum* center. We certainly had to find a herding area — so much for going to the countryside.

The question of school for the children arose. Since there were no dormitory schools, nor family that the children knew in the *sum*, something needed to be done so they would not miss school. After talking with people in the *sum* administration, we were allowed to find a family for the children to live with and so moved our *ger* to the countryside, and I became a shepherd of the first brigade, second rank in Sant *sum*.

At the time, the norm was one person for a hundred sheep, and so I had a hundred head of sheep. Herding was not difficult for me since everybody, at some point in their life, had herded sheep and been responsible for the increase in the sheep and the lambs before going onto school or settling down in the city.

However, after a long absence from the countryside, it was nice to be there. The “camp boss” made us both responsible for minding the sheep, and it was easy for me to return to herding.

After a month of caring for the sheep, the Mongolian Tsaagan Saar<sup>31)</sup> approached. We had spent a considerable amount of money preparing to move from the city to the countryside, and we were only paid for watching the sheep after we had worked for a month. However, the wages owed us were late, and we had to wait for weeks to get paid. After a long delay, I was paid seventeen *tugriks*, fifty *mung* for one month of herding one hundred head of sheep — that was all. The Mongolian government bore the responsibility for paying the herders, and I was given very little money.

Since olden times, the Mongolian people had engaged in pasturing their herds in this great land-locked country in Central Asia with its dry and extreme climate. We managed to earn our livelihood and even at one time were powerful and dominated world affairs. Always we possessed our beloved pastures and water. The herds are mentioned throughout the *Secret History of the Mongols*,<sup>32)</sup> and mention is made of “the smell of the Mongolian steppe.” However, this herding which has held such a prominent place in our lives for so long has become something that people long to escape from — or at least this is what a wise man thinks.

Whoever criticized Yu. Tsedenbal’s work ethic became a herder. Aren’t all of us Mongolian herders? Wasn’t Yu. Tsedenbal himself a shepherd? But now herding became a punishment, and the situation of the Mongolian people had not been helped by this dictator who only wanted to tighten up control and supervision and thus had strengthened the Ministry of Internal Security ten fold.

At the time we did not have our own herds, and we lived only on the money from our salaries. I wondered to myself how we could live on this with so many people in our family. For more than ten years, I had been paid 1500 to 1700 *tugriks* a month and never gave a thought to spending money since there was always enough. However, my present salary of seventeen *tugriks* fifteen *mung* a month had to last until the next pay day, and I had to carefully consider every bit I spent and seriously think about what to buy. There was very little meat since the herds were used for milk, and we used the small change in our wages for flour. We did not want to run short of the essential tea

for our elders who had come with us. We could use millet since it was abundant, cheap, and lasted a long time. It would have been dangerous to catch cold or get sick in this new place, especially for the older women, and so we decided to save five *tugriks* a month from our wages to buy medicine if necessary. At the Sixth All Khural of the CC/MPRP, the membership cards were safety-pinned in the members' pockets. I had kept my card in a cloth pouch, which I now used to keep my money in. If you lost your MPRP membership card, you created a major problem, and one was sternly reprimanded: "A Party member has violated Party discipline!"; "Steps have been taken by the Party"; "By the regulations, the MPRP members..."; and "Strong Party discipline..." There was an effort to regulate the lives of the Party members and the people by these rules.

For many years, a joke had circulated among us "as long as the MPRP exists, we will never divorce." At the time, regulation of the family was outside the civil law of the Mongolian State, and family issues were decided by an MPRP committee. A divorce was regarded as an ethical issue, and it was stated in MPRP regulations that "The Party members were generally of a higher morality!" Therefore, if a wife divorced her husband or a husband divorced his wife, the person "was regarded as unethical." The actions of a Party member who divorced his wife were considered both unethical and as leading to "weaker Party discipline."

Such a person could be dismissed from the Party, and his life would be over, and he could never again occupy a reputable position. He would have to become self-employed, would always be looked down on, and would live permanently oppressed with little hope of improving his life. Therefore wives and husbands tried not to divorce. The propaganda stated however that "all Party members had the highest morality!" so the question of MPRP members who did divorce was a forbidden one. When an MPRP committee began to discuss the issue of what to do about a person wishing to divorce, it decided not to grant permission because it stated that "all of us on this MPRP committee are not comfortable with divorce!" Thus the "MPRP regulations tried to control the private lives of the members."

The MPRP committee did not just control family issues for the MPRP members. Party members tried to reveal "violators of Party discipline" amongst themselves and report this information to the Secretary of the MPRP committee. Many people who were exposed as violators were praised as "exemplary MPRP members." The leader of the MPRP committee burdened those members who were seen to have violated "strong Party discipline." In this way, all of our society was controlled and regularly oppressed. This was how we lived.

It could be stated that a person who was not a Party member did not have the same life as a Party member who received an education and became a skilled worker. Those outside the Party wished to have those same advantages especially because society looked askance at them. Leaders discriminated against their promotion to official positions, and the first chances at new positions in the State industries and public offices were given to MPRP members. These were the difficult conditions under which we lived and worked.

Let me return to the discussion of how I divided my month's salary from herding. I paid five *tugriks* for medicine, and all the rest of the *tugriks* was divided among the following: ten kilograms of millet, two kilograms of the less well bleached flour, half a round cornered brick tea, and a box of lump sugar. The remaining change sufficed to buy only a few things. We went to the *sum* center shop, which had an assortment of things. One day there was little white food like cheese or *esgii*, which was the milk product made from boiling curdled sheep or goats' milk — for the family with whom the children lived. I rode a camel to our *sum* center, which was twenty-five kilometers away around 11 a.m. when everyone was working, and on my return home I met a young woman on the road. She asked me if I was going home, and if I found it difficult not knowing anyone. When she invited me in for tea and something to eat, I eagerly accepted, and we went together to her comfortable *ger*. She was making a *deel* out of a small white skin. I asked her if she was making the *deel* for Tsaagan Sar, and she replied that she was making it for her husband, but the lamb skins were poorly dressed and fitting them was difficult. I asked her the price of an untreated lamb skin, and she told me it cost one to three *tugriks* and mentioned that there was no one to treat the skins, which, if properly treated, would sell for fifteen *tugriks* a piece! I asked her if she really would buy a nicely treated lamb skin for fifteen *tugriks*, and she replied that she certainly would, so she could put it into the *deel* she was making. I then found out that her husband worked as the *sum*'s main bookkeeper and learned that it was his job to pay out regular salaries. Even though my father had been a good tanner and my mother and older sister along with my father had studied tanning carefully, I knew only the general technique but not everything about the process. I believed what this woman had told me and promised to bring her treated lamb skins, taking a small piece with me so I could match it and replicate its softness. I took this swatch of the lambskin to the *negdel*'s inventory keeper and told him I needed such a skin. He opened a door, and I saw skins stacked to the ceiling. He pulled out a skin from the edge of the pile and gave it to me and told me to keep it if I wished. Since I didn't feel I could just take it, I gave him the five *tugriks* I had saved

for medicine. He didn't want to take the money, but I pushed it on him and mounted my camel letting it run home. In a very short time the skins were ready; one treated skin equaled a month of herding one hundred sheep. My wife immediately washed and soaked the hides, which were treated in three stages: Dalkhakh, Tsulguilakh and Ongolokh. The skins went through all three stages, and the last stage made them soft as silk. A day later when my skin was ready we were drinking a boiled water and milk mixture and economizing on tea. At about 10 in the morning we had finished this drink, and we went to sell the treated skin to the woman, and I hid it from people along the way. When I gave it to her, she remarked how beautifully treated the skin was and said that it would make a nice *deel*. She also wished that all skins were like this and gave me fifteen *tugriks*, which I used to buy three more lambskins from the *negdel's* inventory keeper. He was very excited with this money because it was generally hard to come by such a sum. I took those three lambskins, treated them, sold them to the woman, and returned to the *negdel* inventory keeper for nine more skins. In this way, in twenty days of treating lambskins, we made eight hundred *tugriks*.

## 18. The Mongolian Tradition

TsL: Although there certainly were expenditures when we lived in Ulaan Baatar, we had no concept of economizing. Now we were very economical and had developed sound policies for spending money. We studied how our neighbors lived and what was necessary to them. Since they all rode horses, it was essential that they saddle their horses so as not to fall off. Then I saw that a saddle cloth was necessary. Such cloths were not sold in stores, and no one worked at making these. So I realized that this could be a good way to make money. Since a saddle cloth tears easily, another had to be bought, and local people were eager to buy elegant saddle cloths. It was interesting how the local people bought such beautiful saddle cloths. Mongolians like riding horses that are beautifully decorated with a handsome saddle, bridle, and saddle cloth. I realized that there was a demand for these saddle cloths, which could not be found anywhere. Long ago they were made from calf skin, which is now a rare item, and only now and again can be found in the *sum* store. Two saddle cloths could be made from one such skin, which cost about one hundred *tugriks*. Long ago my Economic Industrial Kombinat processed this calf skin, and recently a few were bought from China. An ordinary saddle cloth cost six hundred *tugriks*, and those decorated with a spiral pattern sell for 1,000 *tugriks*. The price is set by the exchange rate of the country.

If one wanted to make a saddle cloth, one had to find a person in this area who knew how. Renchin came to mind, and our *gers* were set up close to each

other. One full calf skin remained for sale in the *sum* store, and so I went to Mr. Renchin and asked him to teach me to make a saddle cloth in exchange for winter food. In this way I became a student of this man who wanted to help me. Mr. Renchin cut two saddle cloths from the calf skin. I was taught to make the spiral patterns on the borders, as well as learning all the methods of sewing. I borrowed tools to make these saddle cloths, which insured my making them.

For many years I had worked at a high salary and had not used my hands to make things. Therefore I had no tools or implements for this sort of work. Mr. Renchin came and taught me to make two saddle cloths by myself, and this was the first thing I had ever made. People asked me if they could buy these saddle cloths and how much they cost. I told them to just take one for about six hundred *tugriks*! And right there people bought these saddle cloths that I had made. One hundred *tugriks* grew into twelve hundred *tugriks* as I sold them and made a ten fold profit. Such enthusiasm! Such happiness! The whole family was involved in sewing these four or five bundles of saddle cloths. And, with practice, making them became easier. We continued watching the sheep, cutting out the cloths, sewing and playing, and, we made money. In one month, we made ten to twenty saddle cloths, which we sold to lots of people. We had many acquaintances. My income from watching the sheep also grew ten fold.

There was then no shortage of money, and my life had improved. We had a *ger* with a warm felt covering and a white cloth to go over it. At the time three wheel "Ural" motorcycles were imported from the Soviet Union, which the Mongolians called "Shaakhait". During the war, the Germans used these motorcycles for military purposes in their attempts to conquer Europe. These were very good motorcycles with excellent technology. After the war, the Russians built up this industry themselves. A year later, one could buy from the Russian embassy a Polish made car called the "Varshav" or "Warsaw." I had many herds of my own, and I had come from Ulaan Baatar destitute and empty-handed. In a year, there were fifteen mares to milk, around two hundred cows and more than one hundred sheep; I bought only female sheep so I could rear lots of lambs. From our herding and our pasturing, the sheep increased in number to three hundred and gave me a good profit. When we satisfied what we needed, we sold the rest at a market price. I filled the need for one hundred saddle cloths in Sant *sum*, and people in Bayan-ondor, Bayangol, Olziit, and Burd *sums*, which were close to Sant *sum*, knew me personally and bought my saddle cloths.

The test was passed when this beautiful saddle cloth brought in twelve hundred *tugriks*. This elegant saddle cloth and a silver saddle cost six thousand

*tugriks*. For the same amount, it was possible to buy the Czechoslovakian motorcycle “Yava,” which was ridden in both the city and the country. Children inherited the family property from their father and mother. Mongolians wanted the best for their children so bought the silver saddles, and the orders came in. There were two, then four by the end of the year. And two were made in both winter and summer. I had even more practice since there always were orders. Four saddles came to twenty-four thousand *tugriks*, and so we had income for many years from the twenty-four thousand *tugriks* from the saddles. A handsome saddle is made on a saddle frame, and the silver fittings are made by a tool called an “arvan tsagaan”. The saddle frame could be bought, and the “arvan tsagaan” had to be ordered from a smith. Each was specially made, and I paid money, so more silver was demanded. The smith made quite a profit.

I decided to learn the work of the smith since few people could do that work. There was one very old smith who lived near the *sum* center, and I went alone to visit him. Since there was no one helping him, I helped him, and we became well acquainted, and I learned something about the work of a smith. I watched him work with each of his tools and studied every one, so that little by little I could do what he did. His work method was to “beat the metal into shape.” In the *aimag* center, there was a man called Green Damba who knew how to cast metals, which was a more efficient method. I came to know him and studied his craft with him. I learned how to pour a mold correctly and how to decorate it. The method was simple, and I made nearly all the patterns. I earned annually forty thousand *tugriks* from making these saddles.

At that time, a Soviet car — the “Volga” — cost thirty thousand *tugriks* and the *tugrik*/ruble exchange rate was five *tugriks* to the ruble or four *tugriks* to one American dollar. There were no real market relations at the time, and few people had a “Volga” or any other privately owned car. Government leaders and ministers, however, only rode in black “Volgas.” When I was a State Farm leader, I drove a “Volga,” which was praised as a fine car. Now it is used to load up meat from the Khuchit Shonkhor market.

At the time it was customary for drivers to come to our *ger* to eat and drink *airag*<sup>33</sup>, and I had made friends with many of them. In the winter they ate white food (dairy). Once I moved with the herds by camel, and the rest of the time the drivers came from Ulaan Baatar to move us. At that time, in the *aimag* there was an auto transport base. Between fall and spring, I moved ten or fifteen times so that the herds could grow nice and fat. Staying in one place did not lead to fattening up the animals. It took less work in summer than in winter to fatten up the herds, and they gave birth in summer, became ill less often, and died less frequently. In the summer pastures they didn’t become



skinny or sick, which could lead to fewer offspring. If the mothers could not feed their young, the yield from the herds decreased. Thus moving the pastures was “the golden rule” of the herding economy, since the fattening of the herds was dependent on selecting good pastureland. If there were only poor pastures near the *ger*, one had to go further away to graze the herds, which did not like to eat grass that had been crushed under foot. However, pasturing the herds far from the *ger* could adversely influence their fattening. A five to ten kilometer distance from the *ger* was suitable for herding since if one was too far away, it was difficult to check on the animals. It is easier to do this difficult work near the *ger*. It is, then, important that the herds do not have to go far from the *ger* to find a new pasture to fatten them up. I asked the drivers to help us move and they did.

I made the saddle cloths from the rare calf skin which was called “rawhide.” The stores in Övörkhangaï and Arkhangai seldom had these skins in the store, so I asked the drivers to bring them to me, since they often bought things for people in the far *aimags*. The drivers drove great distances, and N. Nyambu and B. Surmaajav in Dornod and Khentii *aimags* heard about this. Since the phone system worked badly at the time, the drivers brought the news.

Auto transport was not a unique form of transportation at the time in Mongolia. Depending on the distance, the car could be used whereas in the old days the camel caravan handled the work of far distant transport. Small horse carts were used in some places, and a family in the old days would rely on an ox cart. In the Gobi *aimags*, camels were used. Later, as the State Farms grew richer, cars were used to travel and now the camel and the ox are not in demand because of the wide expanses of Mongolia.

At this time, B. Nyambu and B. Surmaajav knew about the regulations of “permission” from the Ministry of Internal Security in Ulaan Baatar, which came out of the Control Commission of the CC/MPRP. The General Secretary of the Control Commission of the MPRP wished to become acquainted with us, but I did not want to be under his regulations. I had gone to the city several times in a month with a driver who took me in his car to Ulaan Baatar on a Saturday. On Sunday, there was the Black Market where I carried out my work, and another driver drove me back. If someone came to the *khashaa* when I was away they were told: “The herd has gone! The herd is lost!” It was not known that I had gone to the city, and the drivers kept my secret. In this way I met with people.

But some people had been informed about me from the Ministry of Internal Security, so it was best not to be seen. There were many “secret informers” living in the city or working in the banner administrations who

were in league with the Ministry of Internal Security, and they knew about me. Actually, at this time, many people were being watched by these “secret informers” from the Ministry of Internal Security who reported on when, where, and with whom people met, as well as on what each person was wearing. The big issue for me was there could be trouble if what I made was too beautiful or expensive. The question would be where and when did a person get such expensive things? When did this person get the money? All this would be checked. Thus there were many “secret informers” checking on all of this.

The herds were the largest from spring to fall and were milked to make white food or dairy. At the time when I lived in Ulaan Baatar, children were summoned to help. The girls learned to milk the cows, and the boys herded the sheep. Seven to eight children — sometimes even ten — came by car. The children were given white food or dairy when they returned. During that time the children were taught how to milk and herd, which was most useful for the children to learn. Many of these children now say that these visits taught them to work, which comes in handy in today’s economy.

IL: How was “Counter-Revolutionary Lookhuuz” first received by the people in the countryside?

TsL: The country people treated us well and regarded me as an honest man who had been criticized by the State for things which were wrong and had come to nothing. Though many people were supportive of us and opposed the practice of exile, they did not completely open up to us. And I never believed that I had done anything wrong.

It is my belief that people should stand up for their opinions, and I felt my “words were necessary to the MPRP. And because I have done nothing wrong, I feel that I will be exonerated.” I took good care of the *negdel* herds and did not feel down. The *negdel* had about two hundred and fifty sheep, and the members of the Khanghai zone *negdel* had around fifty animals per person. In the Gobi zone, each person had about seventy-five animals. Everyone had their own herds. For the *negdel* members, the regulations were relevant, and the order was that “it was necessary to follow the rules.”

At the time, the number of herds for each person was regulated, and if a person had a surplus, the extra animals were under someone else’s name. We had four to five hundred animals, and the surplus was counted under the name of the person who tended these herds.

I was in Sant *sum* for six years. My children finished the eighth class in the middle school and then studied in the ninth class, but there was no tenth year high school. Thus we had to move our *sum*, and my two year old daughter had to start school. The two eighty-year old women had died, my

wife was pregnant, and I could not manage the *negdel* herds by myself. So we sent out our wish to move our *sum* for the sake of schools for our children to the Control Commission of the CC/MPRP. A leader met with us, and we argued about our demands. Permission was slow in coming, so I went to meet with the leader and after a long wait I was informed that we could move to Kharkhorin.

In the Khangai zone, I was permitted to keep fifty head of cattle, so I sold the rest, which brought in quite a lot of money. So we moved to the Kharkhorin State Farm, where my wife worked as a pharmacist in the pharmacy. The older children went into the ninth class, and one of ours was in the first class. I worked as a statistician on the pig and chicken brigade for a salary of three hundred *tugriks* a month. Two young pigs were sold, and I herded the rest. A pig brought in a much higher profit, and in the end I was happy with the many pigs I had. I read many books about the care of the pigs in order to be able to make a profit. There was a flour industry or mill on the Kharkhorin State Farm as well as a meat factory. So I took the waste from the flour mill, which was free and made very good food for the pigs. This flour waste had never been used before, and there was no place for it so we took it by car. A pig had a litter of ten to fourteen piglets in two to three litters a year. All the little pigs fattened up on this waste, and two pigs were kept behind in the fall to be slaughtered. The meat was then sold. At that time, a Soviet military squadron took up quarters in Övörkhongai near Kharkhorin State Farm. I sold one kilogram of pork for eight *tugriks* to this military squadron. The reason the Soviet military squadron liked this meat so much was because they did not have any, and the Russians liked pork. In 1969, the Soviet military squadron began to be quartered in Mongolia. There were many such squadrons in place, and they were invited by our government but they were called back under Mr. Gorbachev's "Perestroika".

When I went to Kharkhorin State Farm, I had one new thing to learn, and that was the Mongolian boot. Long ago, Erdeni Zuu was a large lamasery full of Mongolian Buddhists. Buddhism was Mongolia's official religion in the sixteenth century and was the last period of its celebrated scholars. The Khalkh Abtai Khan made the decision to build Erdeni Zuu monastery. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Buddhist religion had a compassionate influence on Mongolian society. At that time, there were seven hundred temples and functioning monasteries and many thousands of lamas on the ecclesiastical estates. In each Mongolian family, it was compulsory for one child to become a lama. At the beginning of the twentieth century, there were more than one thousand lamas at Erdeni Zuu. In 1937-38, during the "Great Purges" the Ministry of Internal Security arrested or shot all the lamas. At this

time, the Erdeni Zuu monastery and the Mongolian temples were destroyed or burned and its lamas killed. For many years, the Mongolian people had created a cultural heritage, which was destroyed. The Communists endangered this religious ideology in Mongolia. For many years the lamas at Erdeni Zuu were in prison and later they were freed, and I came to know some of them. They wore the Mongolian boots which few people knew how to make, though one man knew how to make them. I came to know him, and he taught me the methods of boot making, and it was interesting learning this skill.

Sewing a boot was similar to sewing a saddle cloth — it was pretty much the same method. One bought the calves' skin or rawhide for the boot and made the boot, which was not an easy task. With the old man's wife and my wife, we sewed boots. I studied how to sew them in my room. Many of us made these boots, and in one month we made one pair. There was a lot of difficult work as the old man cut out the soles and the rest of us set to work sewing. In another month we made three or four pair of boots. He told me how to trim the edges of the patterns. Previously the old man had made these boots by himself, but now neither of us could have made them alone, so we worked together and produced many boots a month.

At the time there was an issue whether our personal cooperative [which was not a *negdel*] was forbidden by law. Private industry was forbidden by law, and if it was determined that our work was illegal, prison could be next. However, selling Mongolian boots in Kharkhorin and Khujirt *sums* could bring a permanent income since one pair of boots sold for three thousand *tugriks*. Even though boot makers were rare, these Mongolian boots were very popular.

Such was my life in Kharkhorin for five years. I personally had a car, a motorcycle, and a large *khashaa* with a building and many animals. Certainly life was comfortable. This situation did not please the leader who directed the State Farm. By this time the leader of Kharkhorin State Farm had begun to follow an oppressive policy and how we lived was known to the Ministry of Internal Security, which had to deal with us. Perhaps I made the mistake of being comparatively unfriendly and having bitter relations with them. The conflict had sharpened into a feud between us, and I well understood that this man regarded “Counter-Revolutionary Lookhuuz” harshly as he tried to dwell on my reputation. This man supported the policy that “private industry and brokering” was the basis for our file's examination by the Procurator. This issue was transmitted to Yu.Tsedenbal, who gave us a strict punishment. The Procurator examined “my case” and decided that “brokering had taken place since many herds had been sold through private industry!” Thus my case was brought before the courts.

## 19. Prison

TsL: They passed down a six year prison term. I had no lawyers at the meeting, having decided to defend myself. I thought that I could do that well since at this time there were few court lawyers, and their practice of law was poor.

Then there was the decision to confiscate all of my property for State revenue — my *ger*, house, car, motorcycle, herds, and all my pigs. I had no right of appeal to stop this action, and in reality a person had no right of appeal at all. So I was sent to Zun Khara and Berleg prison where I was forbidden to go outside on work assignments with the other prisoners. Thus, for five years, I alone was held behind a barbed wire fence which flowed with electric current. The prison regulations were very strict, and people were brought together only after they were checked and permission was granted. Such was the harsh system that a State prisoner encountered. Once I came down with hepatitis, and the prison doctor said that I needed to be treated at the central hospital. However, the Ministry of Internal Security did not agree. Certainly, Yu. Tsendenbal participated in this decision. Even though I had not been officially condemned for committing a State offense, I was still treated as a prisoner.

I knew how to follow the criminal code very well. In prison there generally was the possibility of finding all sorts of things to do and since I, myself, had done all kinds of things I thought that “perhaps I could take advantage of this and get to work in prison.” I set about carefully studying the law. The Procurator came to the conclusion that I was involved in “brokering” which I was not. I had been involved in the work of making and selling things which people needed and which could not be bought anywhere. It was a rare person who could make these things, and the State did not set a price for what I made. I agreed to sell my goods at the going rate or to exchange products with the local people. This practice was not regarded as “brokering.” By our law, the price of something was determined by the State, and “brokering” was really what people spent their money on. I determined the price without orders from the State, and I was accused of “selling my many herds” which I had raised by myself. I was exiled from the territory bounded by Ulaan Baatar, and first went to an area where there were no herds and by myself I raised many sheep. I worked very hard for these private herds and earned many *tugriks* from them. Therefore there was no exact law that I had broken, and legally they could not imprison me.

I was questioned for seventy-six days in Ulaan Baatar’s famous prison, “Gantz Khodag”, which had been built by the East Germans, and I was put in solitary as well. At the time of World War II, Germany had a great deal of

experience building many prison camps, and the East Germans inherited this expertise. Auschwitz and Buchenwald were famous fascist prison camps which held many people, especially masses of Jews who were incinerated. Our prison was harsh but did not reach the measures of those camps. An inspector who came to check out the prison was called Tokhontomor (Iron Pot), and I became acquainted with him, and we talked freely and frankly. He said that “the State sets very strict prices for goods so they do not sell! Lookhuuz, did you sell goods at a higher price?” This investigator, Tokhontomor, had come to Övörkhongai *aimag*, and all the places I had lived to check on me. Although he talked with many people, he could find no proof of “brokering.” I was always determined to use the things that I had made, so I took the sheep that did not belong to anyone else and stated that these were my herds. Thus under the law I was not punished which baffled me. Tokhontomor stated that “you will not be punished since there is no legal clause detailing a punishment!”

However, the situation changed when the Ministry of Internal Security said to me “we have to punish you.” Just after the war, between 1945 and 1950, there was a law which came from the Russians and was in the papers. It was an interesting resolution at the time. I hadn’t read it carefully but the intended purpose of this resolution was that it was forbidden to sell what was made for the import/export trade. Both rough leather and Russian leather were imported, and many hides from the herds were exported. Any person involved in this activity, therefore, could be sent to prison. There was nothing a Mongolian person could do since this law, in fact, forbade all trade in animal goods. Based on this harsh resolution from long ago, I was again going to be punished. This was certainly unjust because no one remembers this law, and it cannot be used. This was a punishment without appeal, and I was sent to prison which was one way to die.

At the prison I was classed as a cook. I also studied to be a nurse and gave the sick prisoners their injections. My prison section worked in the wood shop with prepared timber from trees they had cut down. I spent my days in prison as productively as possible. My cousin, D. Tangad, was Deputy Minister of the Treasury. After the Sixth CC/MPRP Khural, “the accomplice and counter revolutionary Lookhuuz” was discharged from work and relieved of his MPRP membership. Generally at the time, “Ts. Lookhuuz and B. Nyambuu were in the group against the Party, and many people connected to them also suffered. The whole of Mongolian society was shaken by great changes” and “the accomplice of counter revolutionary Lookhuuz” had also been slandered, expelled from the Party, prevented from working, and had to endure much suffering. D. Tangad worked as the leader in the timber industry for the railroads in the East. There were Russian specialists in this industry, and D.

Tangad kept in touch with me and gave me the Soviet press and books to read. I had a transistor radio which I listened to, and such was the pattern of my life for five years. We all had broken the law, were imprisoned for criminal offenses, and had not been legally punished. Although we all were imprisoned for the same crime, I was the only one sent to jail by that resolution.

Periodically, I was allotted a time after dinner to give talks about science and the achievements of technology, which these weary prisoners enjoyed. They also liked my pointing out how bad the food and drink were, and that I took the initiative in doing something about it. I cooked up some “blood pudding,” which was good when mixed with millet, and the prisoners liked it. For these exhausted people, good food was nurturing and relaxing. In the Eroo River, there were many fish and in the fall we caught a lot of them. There were huge taimen from the Eroo River, which we caught in a sack and took back to the prison where I persuaded people to make a cold cellar to preserve these fish. When they were preserved, these poor prisoners could have fish soup. “In lean times, even fish can assuage misery” the Mongolians say. As the cook, I had time to read a serious book, which described many different cooking methods. I studied all sorts of other foods too. Besides reading books and cooking, I also made rings. The prison forks and spoons were made from stainless steel, as were the plates. Though these implements were needed in the prison, they were thrown out when they broke, so I used them to make stainless steel rings. I ordered iron shears, a soldering hammer, and acid and white lead for soldering. I cut the metal with the shears and made two figures of swans joined at the neck. I put in a blue background, and when the stainless steel was polished it was as shiny as glass and one could see one’s face in it. When the rings were finished, they sold for twenty-five *tugriks*, and people whose term was ending bought them.

Since the prisoners earned wages, the better their work, the higher their wages. There were many orders for these rings, which the prison guards made with me. In this way, I did not run out of money while I was in prison. My wife was given permission to visit me twice, but no one else was allowed to come and see me. Each time my wife visited, I gave her one thousand *tugriks*.  
YuK: How did your wife and children live while you were in Berleg prison?  
TsL: At the Sixth Party All Khural, I criticized the General Secretary’s failure and his erroneous policies, so the “Party took steps” and punished me with exile. This led to great suffering in the lives of my wife, children, family, and many other people. I myself did not suffer even though my freedom was limited, and the Ministry of Internal Security was permanently in control. Although I was oppressed, I still lived among my people. The court decided on my punishment and confiscated all my property, which is why my wife and

children went to Ulaan Baatar to have a *ger* and a *khashaa* again.

It was necessary to enroll the children in a school in Ulaan Baatar, so I had to go before the CC/MPRP Control Commission to obtain “permission” for the children to attend school. At the time, my children were regarded as special and distinct from ordinary children. It was forbidden for the children of the “counter revolutionary Lookhuuz” to go to high school with ordinary children. Thus I had to go to the Control Commission of the CC/MPRP. The children were given permission to attend school in the military building of Bulgaria, which was well known to the Ministry of Internal Security. At the time, there was great rivalry among the government workers to find out the most information about “counter revolutionary Lookhuuz” which could be passed on to the Ministry of Internal Security. Our children were behind in school, and people would not send their children to my children’s school. One group was afraid to send their children with the children of “counter revolutionary Lookhuuz” and in another group many ran from my reputation. Thus my children were victims of being left behind in school. The children were included in one high school group of “allies” who were suspicious of such dangers. But the Ministry of Internal Security was suspicious of them, and their lives could have been ruined. My son could not go to school and was called up for military service. He did his time in the military and was discharged and then worked at the third electric station in Ulaan Baatar for twenty years.

By Mongolian state law, when a person reaches sixteen he has the right to a civil passport. But my children were not generally given these passports when they became sixteen. One daughter was a student in the tenth class. The exam committee made the decision that without a civil passport one could not go abroad. My wife decided to join the teachers, and my children began to change the written document, which was difficult. Since this sort of work is usually doomed, the teachers collaborated on a new document and changed the written surnames. So, with a different surname, they got a passport for going abroad. One child finished her degree at the State University in Lvov in the Soviet Ukraine where she studied geology. My daughter finished her school in secret.

Neither of my daughters could go to high school, and the daughter who finished her geology degree went to work in the countryside. Later she married and had four children, and now she is the manager of a labor division. Her first child has finished the Mongolian State University, and two others are attending a private high school, where they study Japanese and English. One of my sons is a craftsman who does carpentry work, and he is very good at it. He also makes excellent Mongolian boots using white silver.



IL: How many years were you in Beleg prison?

TsL: I left the prison in 1982, but I was almost sent back for criticizing the prison itself. There was one event in particular which almost landed me back in prison again. It was like this. As my release approached, and I was going back to my family, there was an order for “a beaver hat, a cotton cloth *deel*, and a spiral pattern pair of Mongolian boots for me to wear in the future!” There was a wish for my very nice winter beaver hat, thick spiral patterned boots, and *deel* made from German cotton cloth, all of which I had worn when I had been entertained for two days with good food and the meat of a fat sheep. The head of the prison performed the farewell ceremony, and I was to leave the next morning. But soon there was talk and the trouble began. “Lookhuuz is not a worthy Mongolian with his pricey hat, spiral patterned boots, and *deel*. He has treated the other prisoners to that food and is generally showing off and insulting this socialist prison.” Where would all this talk lead? Who knows? The beaver hat, those thick spiral patterned Mongolian boots, the German cloth *deel* — all these things were expensive and rare in our country, and it was time to name these high valued things. Even a well off leader could not afford these nice things. As the Mongolian saying goes “it is all beyond our means.” Even if this is just so much talk, it still weighs one down. Henceforth I paid careful attention to what I said and did.

When I first left prison, I could not go to Ulaan Baatar. The court decreed that on being released from prison, I was to go to Kharkhorin for three years. This was certainly the work of the government. The leader of the Kharkhorin State Farm was responsible, through the Ministry of Internal Security, for having me sent to prison. He was honored by Yu.Tsedenbal who awarded him the “Mongolian Hero of Labor” medal. After I came out of prison, this leader was afraid of me and refused to see me, stating “I will not receive Lookhuuz in Kharkhorin!” Then the Ministry of Internal Security and the court decided to send me to Khövsgöl *aimag*. “The court decision could not be changed arbitrarily!” nor could my resistance be overcome.

So I went off to Bayanzurkh *sum* in Khövsgöl *aimag*, which was the source of the Selenge River, where I helped the brigade leader in his agricultural work. I also participated in the budgetary work on revenue from the timber, which was to be used for a restaurant and a hotel. I was there three years and from time to time spent time with my family in Ulaan Baatar, where I went on holidays. I lived like this for three years.

I became acquainted with some very nice people in Khövsgöl. The Darkhad people lived there. They had a good character and worked hard. They are good to talk to and joke around a lot. It is well known that it has been a tradition in Mongolia to preserve the countryside. The area is very mountainous,

and there are many yaks. There is also a lot of good dairy food. The people are also good carpenters and wood carvers. In fact, all the men are wood carvers.

I opened a bathhouse that could serve twelve people. I heated the warm water with the motor from a Japanese Honda, and a Yugoslav put in a shower. I also opened a workshop called “saw frame,” based on the plans of a wood factory in Tosontsengel. We made tables and chairs for the middle schools, hospitals, and palaces of culture in the *sum*, and they commanded quite a high price. Thus Bayanzurkh *sum* participated in great budget revenues. The *sum* gained quite a reputation as so many new things were introduced.

We were greeting 1985, and it was the period of my release. It was also the year when again the Ministry of Internal Security began to take notice of me. They made an attempt to give me a passport in Khövsgöl, but if I had that Khövsgöl passport, I could not live in the city. At the time, a person living in the countryside was not given permission to live in the city. If a country person decided to live in the city, the regulations required that he gain special permission. Any member of the MPRP who wished to move was carefully examined. The system was very strict. There was no way for a country person to obtain the documents for living in the city. As I worked, I opposed all these things and said that “where I live is up to me. This can’t be denied. I will decide where I live.” The struggle was on, and when my period of exile was over, I would go to Ulaan Baatar.

But I was not given permission to live in Ulaan Baatar. At the time the General Secretary of the MPRP was J. Batmunkh, and D. Sodnom was the leader of the Council of Ministers. They said to me that “surely you must live in the countryside!” So I presented the situation to them: “I am alone in the countryside, and my wife and children live in Ulaan Baatar!” None of us had civil passports, and it seemed we would not receive permission to get them. So my wife told them that we had officially annulled our marriage, and in this way my wife and children could move. We both wished to present this legal petition for the annulment of our marriage, which would take the court quite a time to consider. Thus could we really depart? Why not? We thought about all of this as we studied the situation. Then both of us said: “Really, we are separating!” It was difficult to explain this annulment under which the children would legally be transferred to my wife. I then spoke to the Ministry of Internal Security to express my wish to remain in Chandman *sum*, Gov-Altai *aimag*, and the Ministry of Internal Security consented directly. Thus at the end of 1985 I went to Chandman *sum*, where I was born, to live a life alone. I could earn money by herding and other things. At the time I made silver buttons for *deels*, which people lacked at the time. I had many orders, and

people came to buy these buttons from me. I was also studying ways to make sheepskin boots. Dyed sheepskin was popular at the time, and people were interested in the boots I had once worn in Ulaan Baatar and paid two hundred and fifty *tugriks* for them. Thus I lacked nothing. I had a set number of herds and sent my wife and children in Ulaan Baatar money to pay for their food, which in winter was white food or dairy, and there was still money left over.

Mr. Gorbachev began to change things in the Soviet Union in 1985. I was interested in the news and read and listened to everything I could, and I began to feel that “this could lead to an important change in my life!” So as the first structural changes began, and the storm began to rage, in 1989 I returned to Ulaan Baatar.

## **20. A Year in Prison after the Replacement of Yu. Tsedenbal**

IL: You were in Khövsgöl *aimag* in August, 1984 when the Eighth CC/MPRP All Khural met. The decision was made to remove the General Secretary Yu. Tsedenbal from office. You heard the news of this All Khural.

TsL: At the time, I was the leader of an agricultural work brigade. The people in our brigade were very good and comical and so there was much jollity. One day we stopped at a building where there was much applause and handshaking, and I did not know what was going on. I asked in amazement “why all this celebration?” The answer was that Yu. Tsedenbal had been removed from his job. I was a little cautious because of the secret informers who spied on me. We then listened to the official news from the All Khural on the radio. Yu. Tsedenbal had been removed from his position, and the General Secretary of the MPRP was now J. Batmunkh. Even the primary students had an opinion about this, and one after another added their two cents, and everyone listened to all the talk in the room. “There won’t be much change with J. Batmunkh replacing Yu. Tsedenbal! That’s what they say anyway. Let’s celebrate the removal of Yu. Tsedenbal and get the champagne!” friends said. One of my friends in the brigade went to the *sum* store and bought champagne, opened it, and shared it with the brigade. Thus Yu. Tsedenbal who had built up a “clique of cronies” was now removed from office. I was reminded of my speech at the All Khural in 1964. This decision had come too late. The people in the countryside expressed little regret about Yu. Tsedenbal’s departure from office. And there was no change in people’s lives. When Kh. Choibalsan died, the situation was very different, and people expressed their sorrow that there was no one to lead the country. My Mongolians have a good attitude, and they drew the right and necessary conclusion at that time.

In 1985, our children had no passports, and that was why they were dismissed from work. My wife was also dismissed because of no passport. In

1989 I returned to Ulaan Baatar, got a small *ger*, and did smith and casting work. One had to work to live. I made Buddhist accessories like lamps, bowls, Buddha prayer wheels, and incense burners which were sold in the hotel shops. Each cost fifty to one hundred *tugriks*. This is the way I greeted 1990 when the Democratic movement started.

In the beginning of March, 1990, the youths in the Democratic movement went on a hunger strike in Sükhbaatar Square. In the second half of March, there were demands for the resignation of the entire Politburo of the CC/MPRP. The pressure from the Democratic movement and its demands began to change the government. The leader of Parliament and the leader of the Council of Ministers changed, and the government resigned. The Chairman of the Presidium of the Great People's Khural participated in these changes, and as stated in the Constitution, the People's Great Khural called an election. My name was put forward in the election to the Democratic Great Khural.

At that time, there were four places to be filled in the People's Great Khural. I was elected from the Gov-Altai in an election, which went off successfully according to plan on July 29, 1990. This was Mongolia's first democratic election. I was victorious in my constituency, and I became a deputy to the Democratic Great Khural. Thus, after twenty-five years, great changes began to occur in the country and the government.

YuK: What happened to the punishments the MPRP inflicted on you?

TsL: In March, 1990 there was an MPRP Special Great Khural. At this Great Khural, D. Tömör-Ochir was exonerated "for his work against the Party" and Ts. Lookhuuz, B. Nyambuu and B. Surmaajav were also exonerated for "their anti-Party group." Our MPRP membership was restored. At the time, Mongolia's highest court met and condemned the resolution, and we were pardoned and compensated for the destruction affecting us from these false charges. By a decision of the law and of the Procurator, my property should have been restored, and I should have been paid since while I was in prison my belongings had been sold. My car was brought down by about six thousand *tugriks*. The law had been broken. These things had been sold on the cheap. A three wheeled "Ural" motorcycle sold for one thousand *tugriks*. At the time, the official government had to handle a great loss of morale. Only a few responsible people loyally performed their government work. Much of the government work included issues of cronies, brothers, land and water, and relatives. Finally, the Procurator decided I would collect on my things, which had been revalued.

IL: Until recently there was an interesting topic of discussion. Mr. S. Luvsan, the first deputy from Övörkhangaï *aimag* to the People's Great Khural, said "counter revolutionary Lookhuuz was a kulak<sup>34</sup>) who you could meet on the

road on his very expensive three wheeled motorcycle.”

TsL: In the history of the MPRP, “kulak” has been a term known since the end of the 1950s, when the property and herds of the people were collectivized on the State Farms. Those with property who were comfortably off were called “kulaks,” and they were strongly opposed to collectivizing their herds. They were so named because they were so fiercely against the implementation of this policy. At the time, I had property and many herds. People disliked the kulaks and didn’t want to be involved with them. But they had worked hard and figured out for themselves how to acquire their own property. People who did not work as effectively did not have their own property. It has always been that way.

I did not meet S. Luvsan. While I was in Dundgov, I did run into Tsagaanlam Dugersüren. At that time, most official people were afraid to meet with me because one could be seen as an “ally of the counter revolutionary Lookhuuz!” So everyone avoided me. I was in Sant *sum*, Övörkhongai *aimag* for six years and could not be transferred without permission. I could not just desert the livestock that I was responsible for.

At this time, there was the election to the People’s Great Khural, and the name of Tsagaanlam Dugersüren was put forward from the Dundgov *aimag* district. I went to listen when the voters met in his district. Since it was quite far, I rode my three-wheeled motorcycle. I had made leather rope, which I sold or exchanged on the far side of Dundgov *sum* for a cow hide, which could make 50 ropes, the length of each is twelve unit [one unit is 160 centimeters]. Five leather ropes could be exchanged for a mare and a foal and two for a camel. I knew that Ts. Dugersüren was coming to visit D. Pürevjav, the giant herder, so I waited there.

D. Pürevjav and I sat and drank milk spirits until Ts. Dugersüren arrived followed by many people and the *aimag* director. More than ten YA3-469s arrived, and all went to meet D. Pürevjav’s family. I did not go out. We sat cross-legged on mattresses made from the white bellies of sheep. Then Ts. Dugersüren came into the *ger* and asked angrily: “Why are you here? This is not your place!” We had studied at the Communist Party College in Moscow and knew each other well, but we had not met for some time.

I told him that I was none of his business, but that I had been “appointed” as herder to the CC/MPRP, was a friend of herders, and was visiting another herder. I went on to say that I was none of his affair, and I questioned if a person with so many cars could really know what went on in the countryside. I also told him that he could do nothing there! Dugersüren retorted “Don’t judge what I can do. I will soon be a deputy to the People’s All Khural. The electors are going to meet, and I am not going to meet them with you! This is

none of your business!” We both argued and exchanged gruff and prickly words while people were gathering in the *ger*. When the herders had gathered in the *ger*, Ts. Dugersüren began to propagandize for his election and stood up and lectured us saying: “Do you all know Lookhuuz? As the leader of the anti-Party group in our country, he spoke out against our Mongolian-Soviet friendship and did not significantly value the great help given us by the Soviet people. He has also disclaimed the guidance of the MPRP and has rejected and been disappointed in the success of socialism that has been built in our country.”

I stood up and answered that “People have read many interesting books and listened to the radio about me and the herder Ts. Dugersüren. Thus I can’t teach you much that you don’t already know. But I will tell you a few things. In Moscow at the Communist Party College, we studied from our teacher’s book and became well acquainted. We also ate Russian food from the same pot. I ate Russian food while my good friend — who had not learned Russian — kept to his Mongolian spirits and wine. Once he went to the home of a Russian woman, drank too many spirits, and passed out with his head in the toilet, I changed his clothes. Today this person is a member of the Politburo of the CC/MPRP and is said to be conceited and will say anything to get votes. To you, he may look like a big shot, but he really isn’t much.” The assembled people wondered what was going on, and Ts. Dugersüren blushed and turned red. So this meeting was not a proper meeting, and Ts. Dugersüren is a nice and innocent man who asked me what I wanted to talk about. I told him that I was waiting to talk to him about initially receiving a term of exile for three years. However, after six years, I still had not received an answer to my petition. Dugersüren told me that he would go to Ulaan Baatar to talk about my situation with Yu. Tsedenbal. We then shook hands and left. So Ts. Dugersüren went to Ulaan Baatar to talk with Yu. Tsedenbal, who did not grant me the permission I sought.

## **21. The Democratization of Mongolia and Its Renewal**

TsL: On September 3, 1990 the work of the Democratic Great Khural began in Ulaan Baatar. The issue of who would be the first President of the Democratic Party came up.

The name of Punsalmaa Ochirbat was raised. Each party in the country put forward a name, and my name was put forward, so we two competed for the Presidency. At the time I had many thoughts: “The Presidency is possible. The leader of the Mongolian government has been a herder. I am now seventy years old. I have had a herding life for many years and was in prison for many years. My present life is in society. The old MPRP was very strong, and it still

has an influence. I had gone against it for twenty years, and it is now clear that I could not demolish it. In the beginning of this change, it was not clear if there were events that were irreversible. One does not know how the wheel of history turns. A younger person is needed for this vigorous work.” So I decided not to compete, and P. Ochirbat was elected President. At the time, social psychology was very different, and perhaps I would have struggled as President. There was a ceremony and congratulations when Punsalmaa Ochirbat took the Presidential oath.

Immediately after this meeting of the State Small Khural, the government organized its work. I was permitted to act as a deputy leader to the Democratic Khural under the new Mongolian Constitution confirmed on January 13, 1992.

Democratic Mongolia went along a new and decisive path. My life in my country changed enormously after 1990, and things were going well for me but I greeted 1996 with confusion. Could democracy and the so-called market create the best life for a person? Those in the MPRP did not know. Even though people had read about the theory of the democracy movement, it was necessary to confront its difficulties. Those who opposed the MPRP and said “do this” or “don’t do that” muddled everything. For more than half of those five years, there was confusion. In 1996, the State Great Khural elected the Democratic Union, and a victorious alliance was organized to build up the power of the State. At that time, decisive measures were necessary for democracy and a market economy. The State Farm *negdels* were dissolved, and the herds were given to their owners, which was the correct thing to do. After that, living quarters were privatized, which was also the correct move.

I first went to Sant *sum*, Övörkhangaï *aimag* for the *sum* planting, which had not been done. The *negdel* members were herders, there was no industry in the *sum*, the accounts were always in the red, and the State grant was to end in days. In addition, there was little private trade and business. Generally, the rural economy *negdels* were based on a single plan. I worked to carry out a successful experiment in the *sum*, which entailed drivers filling orders for onions and potatoes to go to Ulaan Baatar. In the *sum*, the Tsarg brigade chose a place with good soil and water to build a *khashaa* and began to plant vegetables. They did this by themselves and without the assistance of the *negdel*. I, myself, carried forty cans of lukewarm water for the newly planted seeds. The onions grew very well. I was the leader of my *sum* MPRP committee, and I knew the work that the *negdel* leaders did. They spoke well about how they intended to do the work. While the onions were planted and began to grow well, the lambs and the kids and dogs in the unoccupied areas began to trample down and eat everything that was growing. I tied the door to the *khashaa* tightly, but they still got in. It was therefore a marvel to see the

leader of the MPRP committee organizing this work so purposefully. I thought that I could help with all of this, but I realized that I was doing the opposite, and that society was not ready for my ideas.

Thus I worked for myself. The attitude in our society was generally “Lookhuuz is a counter-revolutionary! Each counter revolutionary is an outsider in a revolution.” On the other hand, the State Farm *negdel* itself had improved the economy and its own finances as well as fulfilling demands, without really studying what it should do. At that time there was little work for profit built into the *negdel* system, and there were always State subsidies. Economic accounting, profit, and income were generally unknown. The ideology had to be learned.

I went to Sant *sum* after I did one thing which I had been thinking about. This was a way to preserve vegetables in winter. I dug a hole under the stove, where in a Mongolian *ger*, a person attended the fire. I made a hole into a cellar to preserve potatoes since they froze when they were put outside. When the potatoes were put in the hole under the stove, they did not freeze so there were potatoes to eat throughout the winter. When families in the countryside burned dung, ashes were created. If the ashes were not poured out, the fire did not light. Before building the winter *ger*, I used to dig a hole in front of the stove so the ashes would fall into it. Once the hole was full of ashes, I would then throw them out through the tent flap which was a lot of work. But this new method improved the heating system of the *ger*.

There was a tradition in Sant *sum* of making a lot of white felt by hand. At the time there was a need for felt, even though little was made by hand, and it was hard to find industrially made felt. The question arose about where to find the felt necessary to insulate the herders’ *gers* in the countryside. All of the wool from the sheep was ordered by the State, with none left over to make the felt. Felt making was good work, but the State generally commandeered the wool from my four hundred sheep. However, I did have a little wool left after fulfilling the State’s order. The herds had been fattened and no time was lost in shearing the sheep, so I could have more wool. Most families had just a little wool over the State norm, but some families fell short of reaching the plan and couldn’t fulfill the norm. Thus they bought a little wool that had been left over to reach their norms, so there was little remaining for felt making. However, I was able to collect the wool left over from some families to make felt and made quite a lot of it in one year. People who made this white felt by hand earned about five hundred *tugriks*.

So the talk was now about “Daddy Lookhuuz of the Saddle Cloth” as I began to learn to make a “leather saddle cloth.” Deep in the Nalaikh coal mine there was a leather belt which was widely used. It had a rubber surface with a



canvas interior. I thought of a good method of peeling the belt from the rubber by heating the belt on a stove and collecting the rubber after stripping off the leather. Then I could make the leather into a saddle cloth and cut a spiral pattern into it with a sharp knife. I painted spiral eyes onto the pad for a beautiful saddle cloth! Herders in the *sums* had the ability, therefore, to make saddle cloths, which were used everywhere in Mongolia.

White silver patterned buttons were used in Övörkhangai. In 1985 in Chandma *sum* in Gov-Altai, I made such buttons, which in the olden days were extremely necessary and were needed now for our national dress. The MPRP, however, had stopped regarding such handsome ornaments as necessary. In the 1920s, in both the city and the countryside, men and women were imprisoned for using beautiful ornaments made from gold, silver, coral, or pearls, which had been part of the Mongolian tradition. However, with the freezing weather and the *zud*<sup>35</sup>, herds were often reduced and so these things had to be sold to buy animals. Mongolia is so huge that there was always a *zud* in some area that reduced the herds while in another more fertile area the herds increased over the winter. A snuff bottle, a jade pipe, a gold or silver set of tinder pouch and knife, huge silver buttons for a *deel*, a coral headed snuff bottle, the silver or gold setting for a stone, or a large silver tea bowl were, at the end of the 1920s, requisitioned from the oppressor class as revenue for the State. Thus it was considered pointless to use these precious materials to fashion beautifully styled ornaments since they would just disappear or be destroyed. Some people said these things in secret while children played with some of them, so they were not preserved. Some strings of coral and pearls became children's toys. In this way, some of the traditions of the Mongolian people were destroyed, which opened the way to the weakening of Mongolia's heritage. There were few smiths and craftsmen to make these beautiful ornaments, and the technique and methods of making them had been forgotten.

Thus in the 1960s and 1970s, some people began to be interested in a few of the ancient designs, but there was little attention paid to the buttons. If someone sported expensive buttons, there would be questions from the Ministry of Internal Security, which was the country's watch post. There were branches of the Ministry of Internal Security at work in all the *aimags*.

After the new Mongolian constitution was approved, elections began to the new Great Khural. I again did not put my name forward for the Great Khural. I was granted a pension, and I was old. The first steps toward market relations had been taken, and the rate [of the *tugrik*]changed from day to day. It was becoming impossible for the elderly to live. My property had been primarily in my cars, which had been legally confiscated, and I was left with one ancient car. At the time almost no one had a private car.

At that time, many Mongolians had begun to go abroad whereas before 1990, such travel was forbidden. Going abroad, let alone living or working there and meeting and talking to foreigners were not permitted. The Ministry of Internal Security strictly controlled this issue. I began 1990 by going by train or plane to Beijing and Moscow, and I carried goods back. Big bags to carry all the stuff in were called “Gakhai” (pig).

At this time, I went to Dambadarjad. Everything was cheap, but permission was necessary from the city administration. I got permission to build a *khashaa* and a building inside it. This was a very precious green square in Gov Altai *aimag* where I had more than one hundred animals. I worked half the time there and half the time I went to Ulaan Baatar. In the city near Bayantsog *sum*, there were many herds and herders. I knew that the area around Ulaan Baatar was most unsuitable for the herds since they fail in that area. Food was needed, which was very expensive.

Recently, people with herds have moved to the city, which is generally a mistake. Herds should be out of the city. Money would be better spent on pigs and chickens. But people don't know about these animals, and the State does not regulate how to raise them. No one talks about this and after recent mistakes there should be better understanding of the issue. I do know about all of this because I have crossed this road myself.

In 1990, I had many acquaintances at the “Chicken Factory” so I sold my more than two hundred chickens there. There were many eggs. The Russian white chicken produced many eggs and at the time an egg was rare. It was said that two hundred chickens could produce one hundred eggs a day. One egg sold for one hundred *tugriks* but the big restaurants bought them wholesale for seventy or eighty *tugriks*. After two years, the chickens were slaughtered to produce lots of meat before the fledglings were bought. Restaurants liked chicken meat.

Finally, there was fierce competition in the markets to freely sell eggs and chicken abroad. My government could not protect the market. There were essential things for the pig and poultry economy. There was the important issue of food for the pigs, which had to be resolved to yield a profit. Pork was made into sausage. Other countries had a special industry to make food with many kinds of vitamins in it for pigs and chickens.

My little business had to deal with all these difficulties. First, I went to China on the cheap in 1990 to buy shoddy goods, and then sell them in Russia. This type of business was not, however, profitable. Finally, I made the right decision and tried to set up my own business. People had to find all sorts of things to do, so some set up restaurants or shops, and there was a lot of competition.

The little business called “Urbanek” imported salad greens from Poland, which the Mongolians called “mixed greens,” and they were very tasty. During the socialist times, we had trade with Poland, and the families in the Darkhan-Selenge area knew about the technology for planting and growing “mixed greens.” I now have a *ger* there, where I also grow these salad greens. There was one main difference between our domestic greens and the imported greens. The “Urbanek” salad had a lot of salt while my greens had little salt; otherwise they were similar. Salt was used in the Polish export trade to prevent spoilage which worked quite well, but we did not need any salt for preservation. I chose to put my cell phone number, my name, and my wife’s name and home address on the product. I finished the day at the food market. People also ordered on my cell phone. I put very little salt in my salad, which people liked, and the price was low.

Mushrooms grow in some areas of Mongolia. They are gathered and made into “mushroom conserve” and “meat conserve.” In making these items, certain conditions must exist which could be put into effect in every home, which would be good. The first thing to pay attention to is the hygiene of the cooking utensils. There must be a decision on this, but there are always difficulties with technology.

Our Kazakh people in Bayan-Olgii like to eat horsemeat. I was given it in Bayan-Olgii when I was young. At the time, it was regarded as “kaz” (or Kazakh) food. It is very tasty, and I now cook “kaz.” The Kazakhs themselves have traditional ways of cooking. They put salt, onion, pepper, red pepper and vegetables in water, which is boiled and left to cool for a tasty meal. After cooking, put a flank of horsemeat to marinate overnight or for twenty-four hours. Add some other onions, garlic, vegetables, and salt to permeate the horsemeat flank. The day after, this is very tasty. To make horse intestines, cook the large intestines and then smoke them, which is difficult, but dung is the best for smoking. Quality horsemeat is generally very delicious. Dung is the best fuel for smoking. The Kazakhs smoke their meat and hang it from the top of the *ger*’s forked rafters. From there it is eaten directly. At the market, one kilogram of this “kaz” fetches five thousand *tugriks*. And one kilogram of horsemeat costs from eleven to twelve hundred *tugriks*. This is a little business with a big profit. Finally, more consumers will arise — both Kazakhs and Mongolians. And Mongolians living abroad will also buy this meat.

In the olden days, the Mongolians traditionally dried milk to make dry milk. My mare’s *airag*, the milk from a camel older than five years, camel *khoormog* (a mix of *tarag* [fermented milk of sheep, goats, or cows] or *airag* and milk) are all delicious and contain many types of vitamins which have a good influence on people’s health. These natural qualities were preserved in

traditional foods and should be put into foodstuffs at the market. The new technology needs to draw on these traditional methods. Now and again I read about this in books. People can also learn about these issues.

I went to Khövsgöl *aimag* where I could study how to salt and dry fish. Our Lake Khövsgöl has very clear water, like the water in Lake Baikal, and is very rich in fish. On the edge of Lake Baikal, however, the Russians have built a celluloid factory which releases a great deal of effluent. Lake Khövsgöl has no industry near it.

IL: How well acquainted were you with the leaders of the Democratic Party (AN)?

TsL: I was somewhat acquainted with all the members of the Democratic Party National Committee, and I had a connection with all the leaders. I spoke up critically at the last two meetings of the Democratic Party. I spoke my mind about the necessity of clearing out the AN: “There are people with all sorts of interests in the AN. The immoral and irresponsible people must be made to leave since such people could subvert the serious reputation of the AN. Some people will find it profitable to be in a high official position, but our Party will largely benefit from national measures rather than from a person’s own private goals. The AN should be cleared of such people, and then our Party will keep its name! But, to do this, the AN must admit its mistakes, and many were made in the 1990s. Now the Party has admitted its mistakes and needs to ask the people for forgiveness. To begin with, ordinary Party members should make no mistakes and from there one can reach out to the leaders with greater force.”

It was also necessary for me to speak with the AN leadership because their methods were wrong. Along with the freedom to speak out, there was great confusion. Although criticism is important to the internal workings of democracy, the correct words that some heard were not listened to by others, and there was little order.

One person can offer the right criticism which itself is criticized so that the value of that criticism is lost. This should not be the case. One must listen patiently when the right things are prudently criticized. I was elected to the Great Khural in 2000 and spoke up at the meeting. Then the AN was badly beaten in the election and again I spoke out critically: “In earlier meetings about the elections no one wanted to listen to what I had to say and, as I expected, we were defeated. Now we must study why we lost so we can rid ourselves of what we lacked. To do so could be the foundation for a future victory. If we can’t put right what was lacking for a victory, I don’t think we can ever win.”

Generally, the AN lacked a strong leader. All are the same — the same

education, the same abilities, and the same experience. No one is better than another. But my words were not heeded, and there was no strong leader. It was necessary, then, to wait for the permission to develop methods of finding a “leader.” It was necessary to listen to and study his words since this person could make mistakes. All sides had to co-operate and help regain what was lost. Nor could the leader decide everything alone. He needed to listen to all sorts of ideas. The time now was critical to this situation, and the internal struggle in the AN had to be stopped since the people did not trust this Party, which was always defeated.

I had sat through many AN meetings and knew all about this. There was, by and large, no procedure at an AN meeting, and the meetings were very chaotic and not like a big party meeting. They seemed more like a “Black Market” bargaining session.

I criticized, by name, D. Dorligjav and R. Gonchigdorj. I said to the AN leader that D. Dorligjav was a dealer for the “Black Market” and knew well the exact market rate. If his policies did not work, it was inevitable that competition would defeat him. Though he needed to discuss this matter, he didn’t know much about this market rate!

I spoke to the new AN leader, R. Gonchigdorj, and said: “You are a good scholar and mathematician. A scholar is needed for our country. It is essential that you engage with the country resolutely so things are satisfactory for both you and the nation. There are strict rules in the government game, and even though you have loaded your head with the social sciences, you look at everything with the eye of a mathematician. Things are not like that. Society and the government confront many issues that require decisions.”

The AN itself organized many changes. From the time of Chinggis Khan, it was said that “a soldier who could not select a wife could not rightfully lead the military.” And if you can’t decide about a wife, how can you lead the military or manage the business of society? “If you cannot decide about one woman, how can you decide social issues?” was truthfully stated. Our recent history confirms what we have witnessed. At election time, there are major social issues for the AN to debate which are aired and fought over. People who were nominated to run on the AN ticket had to have a common goal of governance, and everyone needed to join together in working toward that goal.

Although people were eloquent, there was no success in the elections. As a matter of fact, N. Bagabandi himself did not make it. P. Ochirbat and N. Enkhbayar won. A number of things were discussed among which that there was no system. This was alright to talk about but not to devote full sentences to. Although it was necessary to discuss policy, educated people did not like chattering and mumbling. Finally, of the people who were elected, few were

strong. I talked to President P. Ochirbat about this and said: “The election which built the Party was decided on correct democratic principles. There is, however, the danger that it does not matter to the people in high office who runs for election. This was of no importance to the MPRP because people did not know the policy, and it was not understood that people in high office were elected by the Party.”

This could be very harmful to the future of Mongolia. For several recent years, the strengths of the MPRP have shown no evidence of declining, and the power of the State seems unchanged. For this reason it is important to quickly abolish the Party. If there was a new party, all the bad old people would be gone, and one could move away from the old ideology. The Party should be organized anew, like all parties that participate in the elections. My words, however, were not heeded, but life today confirms what I have said. This Party causes trouble for the Mongolian people, and it is irrelevant that a person from the Party wins an election because the government has already made appointments to high offices. Without a clear policy, people will do dangerous things in trying to win an appointment. Sometimes a large payment is necessary or one is “summoned to invest” in the mineral riches of our Mother country which are often controlled by foreign traders and others involved in such work. Members of the Party itself are asked for payment, and those people with wealth are made new members of the Party. Even the elections can be bought, which is dangerous.

Some people do not manage their businesses successfully, and some of them are going into the government. This is an issue that must be considered even though the government may not support them or their businesses. Is the government going to gain if they do not like the State and do not support the government itself?

Thus it is necessary for big business to clearly explain its social ideas. People are cautious about handling some issues, and compromise is needed. Without that, support is lost. A person in business achieves profit for himself and has a hostile attitude towards society. The APU Company (an abbreviation for Spirits, Beer, and Drinks) is the name of a big company. In socialist times, this was a State industry. Soon afterwards, it was privatized, and there was a big argument over this privatization. The new owner updated the equipment and built a new and bigger factory with German technology. The company gained a reputation throughout society and was a leader in social policy. Those who ran APU organized help for the weakest groups in our society outside of taxes and the State budget, which was appreciated.

“Narantuul” is a large company. It works at a great profit. Its leader, Saikhansambuu, is a far sighted man. The national standards for businessmen

are very important and have to be developed quickly in order to encourage better work from people. It appears that people generally work so they can move forward.

Yu. Tsedenbal, to me, was someone who did not personally watch and understand what workers said and did. This doesn't just apply to workers in companies but to our nation as a whole. Someone who has not worked does not know the problems work entails, so it is easy to just say "do this or do that." A leader must be a person who can work on his own and who knows how to do things.

People demand difficult things from their leaders. They must be honest and able to build the power of the State by themselves. Chinggis Khan was proclaimed by UNESCO "a man of genius and the man of the millennium." What is it about the leadership of Chinggis Khan that appeals to the world today? Perhaps it was his just national policies and because he was so honest his name has lived throughout the centuries. Now, however, no one can compete with him. But there must be honest people involved in affairs of State who do not include friends, brothers, wives, close relatives, children, and local acquaintances. The work of the State should be far removed from all of these people as it was, perhaps, in the time of Chinggis Khan.

We Mongolians have a special existence. The weather in Central Asia is very dry for planting, which adds a special feature to our lives. In fact, the yield from our planting is sparse but what is grown is very tasty and of a higher quality than what is grown in a hot and moist climate. I think that today's Mongolians have become accustomed to a life that has an excess of the good qualities of the well-educated. But having such a temperament is not good and can lead to softness. People must have more resolute and fierce characters to create sharp and intelligent policies. Though we are not yet there, with intelligent policies we can be first among many. To do this we need supporters.

Nowadays, Mongolians go abroad to America, Russia, and Germany, and this is wrong and a mistake. Toughness is required as our people progress in their lives and move toward the right kind of State. We are a great nation with millions of people, but the population growth is necessarily regulated. We don't pay special attention to mothers and children. Where is our traditional nomadic civilization going? The number of people who become herders is decreasing. What will we do in the future? What can we accomplish? Now in Mongolia it is the rare person who has not shifted to a settled life. It is essential that the State stop this big and disorderly movement to the city.

## Notes

- 1) *Toin* is a religious title, equivalent to the secular title of *taij*.
- 2) Or the Jebtsundamba Khutukhtu, the spiritual leader of Mongolian Buddhism.
- 3) *Khoshuu* was an administrative unit during the Qing dynasty rule over Mongolia. See Jigjidiin Boldbaatar and David Sneath, "Ordering Subjects: Mongolian Civil and Military Administration (Seventeenth to Twentieth Centuries)" in David Sneath, ed. *Imperial Statecraft: Political Forms and Techniques of Governance in Inner Asia, Sixth-Twentieth Centuries* (Bellingham: Center for East Asian Studies, Western Washington University, 2006), pp. 296-303.
- 4) Guomindang was the Chinese Nationalist Party and eventually led by Chiang Kai-shek.
- 5) These men were all purged and executed. Bawden's *Modern History* offers a guide to all these purges.
- 6) Arvaikheer is the current capital of Övörkhongai *aimag*.
- 7) For a comprehensive study of this war, see Alvin Coox, *Nomonhan: Japan Against Russia, 1939* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985, 2 vols.).
- 8) On the alleged discrimination suffered by Chinese in Mongolia during this time, see Ma Ho-t'ien, *Chinese Agent in Mongolia: A Report on the Mongolian People's Republic* (John De Francis, trans. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1949), pp. 18-20 and 75-76 and Robert Rupen, *How Mongolia Is Really Ruled* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1979), pp. 39-40.
- 9) Millennium Road is a road linking Eastern and Western Mongolia.
- 10) Nalaikh is a small town about 35 miles southeast of Ulaan Baatar and the site of an important coal mine at that time.
- 11) On this film, see R. Barnett, "Tsogt Taij and the Disappearance of the Overlord: Triangular Relations in Three Inner Asian Films," *Inner Asia* 9:1 (2007), pp. 41-76 and T. S. Enkhjin, et al., *Nyam Osoryn Tsultem* (Ulaan Baatar, 2005), p. 31. Tsultem, one of the most prominent Mongolian painters and art critics of the twentieth century, was in the early stages of his career and designed some of the furniture and props for the film. He also mentions Tsogzolmaa's beautiful voice.
- 12) A *khashaa* is a fenced-in yard for animals.
- 13) Mary and Morris Rossabi are preparing to write a biography of this renowned commander.
- 14) The autobiography of this prominent intellectual, educator, and political figure is in Onon, trans.
- 15) A *bag* is the administrative unit below the *sum*.
- 16) Naadam was and is an annual festival held each July. Wrestling, archery, and horse racing are emphasized.
- 17) Czechoslovakia and Hungary had experienced revolutions in those years.
- 18) For one evaluation of the Soviet Virgin Lands policy, see Martha Brill Olcott, *The Kazakhs* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1987), pp. 224-240.
- 19) A *zud* is characterized by droughts in summer or heavy snows and ice covering over the pastures. An *ovoo* consists of a pile of rocks or wood near a mountain and is a site of shamanic worship.
- 20) The best study of Chinggis Khan is Paul Ratchnevsky, *Genghis Khan: His Life and Legacy* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1991). Also see William Fitzhugh,



Morris Rossabi, and William Honeychurch, eds. *Genghis Khan and the Mongol Empire* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009).

- 21) The explanation may be that the USSR ordered Tsedenbal to stay in his room.
- 22) *Kolkhoz* were the State collectives devised during the collectivization movement in the USSR. Here Lookhuuz is using the term to describe the abortive Mongolian collectivization effort of 1928 to 1932.
- 23) “Unen” was the leading newspaper in the country and was the equivalent of the USSR’s “Pravda.” “Bot” meant “Truth.”
- 24) Tsedenbal was a Dorvod man who recruited flatterers and sycophants from his own region. Thus “Dorvod man” became a laughing stock.
- 25) Lookhuuz assumes that Tsedenbal was laying a trap for him in emphasizing the importance of this task. If he failed, he could be purged.
- 26) Nyantaisüren Lkhamsüren had received a doctorate in agronomy in the USSR in 1959, and Bazaryn Shirendev had been President of the National Mongolian University, Minister of Education, and Chair of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences.
- 27) Temür is better known in the West as Tamerlane. His tomb in Samarkand was opened during World War Two, and archeologists discovered that he was indeed lame — justifying his name of “Temür, the Lame.”
- 28) Colonel Moron had asserted that under the Democratic Party the case would not be fully investigated and that only with a MPRP victory would the case be truly resolved.
- 29) See the translation of Sambuu’s autobiography in *Herdsmen to Statesman: The Autobiography of Jamsrangiin Sambuu* translated by Mary Rossabi, with introduction by Morris Rossabi (Lanham: Rowman Littlefield, 2010).
- 30) The festival takes place on July 11 and 12.
- 31) Mongolian New Year.
- 32) The *Secret History of the Mongols* is the most important Mongolian primary source on the early history of the Mongolians. It has been translated into numerous languages. The latest and most scholarly translation in English is Igor De Rachewiltz, *Yuan chao bi shih, The Secret History of the Mongols: A Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the Thirteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2004, 2 vols.). A fine popular translation is Paul Kahn, *The Secret History of the Mongols: The Origin of Chingis Khan* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1984).
- 33) *Airag* is a liquor made of fermented mare’s milk.
- 34) “Kulaks” was a term used in the USSR to refer to “rich peasants,” who were considered class enemies during the collectivization period which started in 1928.
- 35) A *zud* is horrendous winter during which there is too much snow or an ice covering over the pastureland, which prevents the animals from getting to the life-saving grass. Many animals perish during these catastrophes.