

- The foreign prisoners are all packed into a cargo train and taken to Krasnoyarsk where they are grouped according to country of origin and sent on by train to their destinations, to China, Japan, Mongolia. Germans, French, Italians and Balkans are sent to Moscow. Iranian citizens are sent to Ashkhabad in Turkmenistan.
- Some 500–600 Iranian citizens are gathered in the Ashkhabad camp. Most are escapees from Iran who had secretly crossed the border on their own free will to live in “paradise.” Others had taken part in the Kurdish movements in Iranian Azerbaijan. They had come to the Soviet Union with great expectations, only to be labeled political prisoners. They too are victims of Soviet hospitality.
- We wait in uncertainty for a long time until Iran's pro-Soviet Mossadegh government is overthrown on August 19, 1953.⁸ We are told that, under the circumstances, we will not be handed over to the Iranian government. Instead, those who have yet to serve out their sentence will be taken back to their camp or prison, and those who have finished serving their time can

8 Iranian Armenian readers of my generation will certainly remember Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh (1951–1953), a reformer and modernizer whose greatest achievement was the nationalization of Iranian oil. That was a tremendous blow to British interests, and Mossadegh's internal reforms and his foreign policy, as well as the political orientation of the supporters he mustered, were altogether perceived as Iran's alienation from the West and its rapprochement with the Soviet bloc. The CIA and the British Secret Intelligence Service organized a coup that overthrew Mossadegh's government on August 19, 1953 (28 Mordad 1332).