

Dashnaktsakans were not severely tortured. Aramyan wrote that Soviet interrogators—masters of torture no less than their Turkish counterparts—“would beat up the Trotskyites, the ones who leaned right or left. On the whole, animosity toward Dashnaktsutun was less intense because Vyshinsky had declared that the real, the most virulent enemy of the people was Trotsky and his followers.”⁴²

If Dashnaktsakans were generally not subjected to intense physical torture, their situation was not any better. Added to the uncertainty of one's fate and the fate of one's family left behind were the humiliation, the degradation, the dehumanization, the loss of identity and personal dignity and the denial of contact with the outside world, all psychological tortures to which my father and others who shared his fate were subjected from the first moment of their incarceration. Then there was the lack of hygiene in the common prison cells, the filth and the insect infestations, and being forced to relieve oneself right there in the common cell. This, of course, is evidence of the government's indifference to human beings and contempt for those men and women who lost their humanity the minute they were arrested as anti-revolutionaries. It is also evidence of the economic policies that affected the prisoners, of the budget being cut to the minimum while the number of detainees grew out of all proportion, beyond even Stalin's sick imagination. However, the end result served a definite

42 Aramyan, «Կոլիմա» (Kolyma), p. 13.