

distribution center in Krasnoyarsk which was the last stop before he was shipped to the labor camp in northern Siberia. It contained a brief description of the situation in Tabriz during the Soviet occupation, my father's abduction in Tabriz by the Cheka (*Chrezvychaynaya Komissiya*, meaning "Extraordinary Commission") or the Soviet NKVD (forerunner of the KGB), his transportation to Yerevan and his solitary confinement in the Cheka prison there, his interrogation and indictment, and his journey toward exile.

My father had started working on his memoir only about a year before his passing. Prior to that, he simply could not speak about his ordeal. The subject was too painful. The memories were so dreadfully alive in his imagination that talking about them or writing them down meant reliving that agonizing period. On occasion, when he tried to talk about those formidable years, his face would turn red and a blue vein would puff up on his broad forehead as if ready to burst. It was quite clear that he had become momentarily unaware of his actual surroundings and was as if transported back to the place and time he so dreaded. Alarmed and worried, we would beg him to stop lest his blood pressure, already very high, rise even further and cause a stroke.

During the first years after his return from exile at

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eventually join the province and the republic in one large independent country. The independence of the three Caucasian republics was short-lived as they were Sovietized within two years. The idea of uniting the two Azerbaijan, however, was readily adopted by the Soviet leaders; it was also consistent with the Tsarist Russian policy of moving the frontier toward the warm waters in the south. Subsequent political processes as well as the occupation of northern Iran by the Red Army during World War II demonstrated the persistence of that policy line.