

Well, my mother was not arrested. The situation was different in Iran. The Red Army finally withdrew and the central government regained control over all of Iranian territory. But how would my father have known that? The last news he had read was about the establishment of the Soviet-sponsored Azerbaijan People's Government in Iranian Azerbaijan, in an old copy of *Pravda* he had laid hands on.

Now, the parcel, in the shape in which it reached my father, taught him not to ask for any more parcels. He was in a dangerous environment with rampant crime among the prisoners. He was robbed and abused many times, especially before the segregation of the criminal prisoners in a different lager. They would simply snatch his meager ration of bread or a cigarette, and if he protested, a harsh beating would follow.

According to Vahram Alazan, mixing criminal and political prisoners was a diabolical scheme to increase the hardship of the politicals. He had experienced the heavy hand of the criminal element and he remembered with reawakened pain how, in a dire need of a smoke, he gave his last ruble to a criminal prisoner who snatched it and took off without giving him the promised cigarette. He remembered how often his ration of bread and hot soup were stolen and he didn't dare do anything about it. He remembered how a group of inmates attacked him and almost killed him because they thought he belonged to the same race as Stalin, and how he made every effort