

grandparents' life in prison or labor camp. Too little, too late, but still better late than never, and I should say a worthy and commendable endeavor. As a nation, we are often late to the show, and always cautious.

As I turn the pages of this newest Armenian documentation of the Gulag, I am exhilarated to finally find a couple of stories about inmates of Norilsk: Samson Martirosyan (from an interview with his son Valodya) and Abel Ordukhanyan (from an interview with his daughter Iren), both exiled in 1937. Martirosyan served his ten-year sentence and came back. Ordukhanyan was given a life sentence but pardoned after the death of Stalin. Both interviews were done by Harutyun Marutyan, one of the co-editors of the book.

It turns out that Samson Martirosyan only spent the last five years of his sentence in Norilsk, but as a “free” worker, not housed in the barracks. He came home afflicted with chronic bronchitis. He was a quiet man, according to his son Valodya. He did not speak of his ordeal in exile and Valodya regrets not having asked him about his dreadful experience.¹⁵ Thus, no reminiscences about Norilsk and no possibility of contact with my father. Valodya admits that he was young and not interested in stories of the past. This is, unfortunately, so common. Wasn't I in the same boat? Couldn't I have learned more

15 Valodya's grandfather and Samson's father Aleksan was arrested and exiled twice, once in 1929 for his ties with Nzhdeh, thus with Dashnaksutiun, and again in 1937, right after he returned from his first exile. That time, he was executed. Aleksan's brother was also executed for the crime of belonging to the Dashnaksutiun. Valodya's younger uncle was expelled from the Red Army for his family ties with Dashnaksakans, and his father was exiled first to Vorkuta and then to Norilsk. What a family history!