

the front of the train that took those families away there was a huge portrait of Stalin, indicating that they had all volunteered to work in Siberia. Having seen all that, Armenians thought there was always the possibility of similar persecutions occurring again, even in independent Armenia. It would be normal to think that it is up to the descendants of those victims to seek the justice their ancestors were denied and to remove the blot on their family history. But again, Armenians are either cautious or indifferent. The organization—still in existence—responsible for all the calamity is off the hook.¹⁹

Sometimes ex-prisoners did not have the money to travel home. They would stay on and continue as free workers if, for instance, they had lived in exile for a very long time and no longer had close family waiting for them in their hometown, or if they were able to find a paying job and shelter or a nice local woman to take them in.

In Valter Aramyan's «Կոլիսա», Yan finally returned home after long years in the hellhole conceived and built by the diabolic architect Stalin. When he was first discharged, he was advised to get married and make a family, but was forbidden to set foot in Armenia. After Stalin's death, however, the rules changed and now he was in Yerevan with his Russian wife and children, gifts

«Հայրենադարձների բռնաճնշումները ստալինյան ժամանակաշրջանում» (Yerevan: S.p., 2010), published in English translation as *The Repression of Armenian Repatriates during the Stalin Era* (2012).

19 As a positive gesture in this regard, the Armenian Parliament in 1999 designated June 14 as the annual day of commemoration of the victims of the 1949 persecutions.