

admonished him not to criticize the Soviets so harshly.

My father's writings, his editorials in *Alik*, his political analyses raise the question of what the reaction would have been to his book if he had had the chance to complete it and publish it in the late 1970s, if he had had the chance to shed light on the diabolical Soviet judicial system, the harshness and inhumanity of the methods of punishment kept hidden behind the Iron Curtain. The world outside knew very little, preferred not to know, pretended not to see. Glowing Soviet propaganda disguised the reality. Soviet ideology—social justice, equality for all—continued to attract the naïve. The world praised the changes Khrushchev had introduced and his criticism of Stalin's "personality cult."⁴² My father did not believe in that. It was impossible to hold one person responsible for all the atrocities committed in the course of thirty years, for the millions of victims who were cycled in and out of the Gulag. Silva Kaputikyan was right to call "Stalin's personality cult" a Khrushchevian euphemism to cover the magnitude of Stalin's terror.⁴³ Indeed, the great and the petty executioners were guilty of inflicting unimaginable tortures on innocent people and spreading terror across the land. Stalin was blamed and Beria and a few other butchers were executed, but the hundreds and thousands of National Security agents were left free, unpunished and unharmed.

42 "Personality cult" was an epithet for the worship of Stalin and the era of his authoritarian rule. It was popularized during Khrushchev's time when the trend was to blame all the brutal persecutions of that era on Stalin and the cult built up around him.

43 Kaputikyan, «Էջեր փակ զգրոցներից» (Pages from locked drawers), p. 35.