

My mom quit her job at Singer. She had a more comfortable life now and she could devote herself to the well-being of her working husband, helping him to overcome the past, to adjust and find his way in the new environment and even within the circle of friends and relatives, some kind and some not so kind. My Uncle Alexan was so kind to us and to my dad in particular. When he died in 1957, my dad, only three years a free man, lost a true friend and supporter.

My father managed with some difficulty to resume his position as a state high-school teacher. He also began to contribute political analyses to *Alik*, the local Armenian newspaper. My mom would help him with his articles, taking dictation while he composed his thoughts, pacing back and forth in the room. The idea was to spare *Alik's* typesetter the task of reading my father's unintelligible handwriting. It was a pleasant scene I will always remember.

I also remember my parents' favorite card game, *belote*, which they played with Uncle Alexan and Aunt Manoush. While they laid their cards on the only table in the living room of my uncle's apartment, we cousins loved to deal out our own cards on the floor and play the game as we had learned it from them. It was always fun for our parents because the mischievous ladies partnered against the men, and they cheated and laughed and their poor opponents could never catch them out. My dad used to say to my mom, "You haven't changed. You used to cheat at backgammon too." He once confessed that during his lonely hours in exile, when he tried to