

that the book did not sit well with my father's Armenian colleagues. Now I understand why.

I do not intend to review the book here, but I want to tell you a story about a striking feature on the first page, a clue to Baghdik's life before he married my mother. It is a dedication simply saying, "A present to my dear Kristiné." The puzzling part of the story is that my mom had saved a few copies of the book, all with the first page torn out. When I was a child, I would proudly open my father's book without attempting to read the lofty, complicated contents. And to my innocent question of why the first page was torn out of every copy we owned, my mom would answer vaguely and I never bothered to insist. It was long after my father returned from exile that I laid hands on an intact copy and read that note of dedication. I cannot explain why I never asked who Kristiné was. Perhaps I thought it was unimportant, an ephemeral attachment of my father's. I forgot all about it, but long after my parents had passed, some low-life busybodies had not forgotten, and they took it upon themselves to run down our family. Kristiné was my father's girlfriend or fiancée who followed him to Iran, so they said, but after a while he ended the love affair and sent her back. Regardless, Kristiné was a reality, not an ephemeral attachment. She was an inspiration to my father and undoubtedly helped him in harsh times and she ought to have a place in his life story.

I do not know when their love affair ended and Kristiné returned to Prague. All I know is that my father's love letters to my mom began in late 1932 when