

Iran's territorial integrity and promising the withdrawal of Allied forces after the war.¹⁵

Although the Allies withdrew their armies from Tehran, Iran was effectively divided between the Soviets in the north and the British in the south of Hamadan.

The province of Azerbaijan was under the absolute control of the Soviets. Iranian government agencies were dysfunctional and total chaos prevailed. Untethered and unchecked, the Azeri Turkish mob set about stealing, robbing shops and committing petty crimes in the street, and the targets were mainly Armenians. Under the circumstances, many Armenians, even those in the ranks of the ARF, took their families and fled to safer places. That was not an option for my dad. He vehemently refused to leave. He would not abandon his position as representative of the ARF Central Committee of Atrpatakan. He would not desert his people.

It is ironic how some members of the ARF, even those in higher positions, shifted their allegiance, resigned from the Party and adhered to the Soviets, certainly not for any ideological reason but to play it safe and save their own skin. (In order to prove his allegiance

15 The Tripartite Treaty of January 1942 provided for the withdrawal of Allied troops no more than six months after the end of hostilities. Upon its declaration of war against Germany in January 1943, Iran was recognized as one of the Allies. At the famous Tehran Conference in November–December 1943, Winston Churchill, Joseph Stalin and Franklin D. Roosevelt reaffirmed the commitment to Iran's territorial integrity. The deadline for the withdrawal of Allied troops was later set at March 2, 1946, but the Soviets did not leave Iran until December 1946. Meanwhile, they strengthened their influence in the country, establishing the Tudeh Party (*tudeh* meaning "masses" in Persian) and inciting people to rise against the government. Stalin was on the verge of realizing his goal of detaching Iranian Azerbaijan and annexing it to Soviet Azerbaijan.