

transportation for the army's movements, so people had hidden their vehicles in order not to surrender them to the authorities. After a long search, I found two carriages in a remote corner of the city and rented them for several times the usual rate. I started off toward Vasminj, a few kilometers down the road to Tehran.

The Armenian vacationers had all gathered together and were anxiously waiting for help to arrive. I was the first to reach Vasminj. Seeing the situation, I suggested we load all the children into the two carriages and move toward the city, with the adults going on foot. My suggestion was turned down, and strangely, one of our older acquaintances, whom we addressed as Joj-Agha [Big Sir], suggested that all the men take the carriages and go back to Tabriz and hide. He thought there would be no danger to the women and children if they remained in Vasminj. That was outrageous. I finally decided to take my family and as many relatives as I could fit into the carriages and get on the road. Just past Shibli, where the panorama of Tabriz came into view down below, an incredible scene spread out before us. The people of Tabriz were exiting the city in a long and disorderly line. Terrified people had left their homes and belongings and were fleeing the chaotic situation, some on foot, others in various forms of transportation. That was the first time I witnessed the bitterness of mass migration, the somber exodus of desperate people, a horrifying beast that has destroyed Armenian homes and possessions so many times in history.

I was devastated. Did this mean the Red Army had occupied the city? Did this mean the city was being