

individuals. Our organization certainly owns weapons. We have owned weapons for self-defense in Turkey and Russia and we have never turned them in to the authorities. It's the same here. We will not surrender our arms. But you are in control of the situation. You can confiscate them by force, and let me tell you, it will be over our dead bodies.”

At that moment, the red curtain at the back of the room drew open and a tall, slender Armenian officer came through and approached me with a theatrical gesture. He shook my hand and said, “I salute your position.” Agaronov offered me a ride home but I refused. I wasn't sure whether the driver might not change direction and take me to Julfa and [cross the border] into the Soviet Union. Instead, I asked to have a soldier accompany me to deal with the street patrols.

I reached home safe and sound. My wife was sitting on the bed, praying and crying. She was in a state of high anxiety. Right after I had left, she had heard shooting in the street and presumed that I had been shot. The wives of ARF leaders have miserable lives. They suffer, they panic, they are distressed, but they take it all with patience, heroically. They are the real heroes.

The situation in the occupied regions was deteriorating. Soviet planes were dumping propaganda leaflets, inciting the mob against Dashnaktsutium, the only force defending the Armenian quarters. The local authorities were on the run. Governmental institutions had all shut down. Most of the officials had fled to Tehran. Only the secret police remained, closely observing the scene and