

The ARF lost a valued member, a selfless, dedicated and humble unger who became one more victim of Soviet persecution. We had given him a timely warning of the Soviets' intention to arrest him but he had trusted them and, despite our admonition, he had continued his relationship with them.

The Soviets were in Atrpatakan to stay. In the world of politics, it is a known fact that when a Soviet soldier sets foot on foreign soil, he hardly ever leaves. The Allies had occupied Iran in order to secure a vital supply line to the Soviet Union, among other reasons. But the Soviets had an ulterior motive: the separation of Iranian Azerbaijan from Iran and its unification with Soviet Azerbaijan, that is, the expansion of the Soviet Empire. The political and military machinery they established in Atrpatakan was relentlessly and systematically engaged in open and clandestine activities geared toward that goal.

The only obstacle to these activities was not the Iranian government, which was weak and dysfunctional in Azerbaijan at the time, but the agents of Turkey who were working toward their own goal of joining Iranian Azerbaijan to Turkey. Mind you, they had more sympathizers among Turkish intellectuals than the Soviets did. Obviously, as a political player in Atrpatakan, we were resolutely opposed to any annexation and we stood in defense of Iran's independence and territorial integrity. But in those dire circumstances, our role was inconsequential. Meanwhile, the presence of the Red Army was tipping the scale.

The Soviets were stirring up the educated Turkish