

youth against the central government, accentuating Tehran's wrongful policies in Azerbaijan and convincing them that their only deliverance would be the separation and independence of the province. That was the Soviets' way of rousing the nationalist Turks. But it was merely a cover for their ultimate goal, the annexation of the province of Azerbaijan, and in order to realize that goal they were preaching communism. After laying the groundwork, they established [in the fall of 1941] the Tudeh Party of Iran [*tudeh* meaning "masses" in Persian]. Then they began to manipulate the Tudeh to their advantage. Aside from the mass demonstrations and full cooperation with the Soviet authorities, the high point and grand achievement of Tudeh actions in Atrpatakan was the short-lived, Soviet-sponsored Azerbaijan People's Government in Iranian Azerbaijan [November 1945], with Tabriz as its capital and a puppet government in place. By then, I was already in exile, toiling in a Soviet labor camp. I read about it in *Pravda*. According to the paper, the "patriots" of Azerbaijan were exalted by their victory.

Needless to say, the de facto separation of a portion of Iranian territory and the Soviet refusal to withdraw their forces from Iran contravened the promises the Allies had made at the Roosevelt-Stalin-Churchill conference in 1943. They clearly broke the covenant. But that is and always has been how the Soviets operate.

Azerbaijan had indeed become a hub of Soviet propaganda and a prelude to Soviet expansion in the East. Tabriz functioned as a window to the outside world.