

which had grown tense after the fall of Prime Minister Mossadegh's government the previous summer? I know my poor mother could not have taken another blow of disillusionment. Looking back to that day, I can see that it was a turning point in our lives. Nothing remained the same afterwards.

That evening we all gathered at my Aunt Almast's house (Almast was my father's older sister). There was exhilaration and celebration, but also doubt and suspicion. The story in the paper could not be fully trusted, so it was decided that my mother's brother, Uncle Alexan,¹ and Aunt Almast's two sons, Vachik and Babken (Baboush), should go to Mashhad where the discharged Iranian POWs were being quarantined and verify the news.

The three left the next day and we waited to hear from them. They were not allowed to see my dad, but the security officer in charge of the camp showed them his file and a photo taken at the border. It was him, no doubt about it, looking so old and frail in his fifty-second year.

The detainees were not discharged right away. Surely, the Iranian government looked at them with suspicion. How many of them were Soviet spies slipped into the country this way? Intensive checking was necessary. They would be released gradually and sent to Tehran.

We had no further news of my dad for a long time, until one day at *Alik*, which was also the meeting place of Dashnaktsutun, Unger Tigran Baghdassarian called me

1 My Uncle Alexan Sargsian was a dedicated ARF and community leader. He was also fond of the theater and as a young man he had organized theatrical troops and performances in Ghazvin and Hamadan. He and my mother, a young and lively girl at the time, were the stars of those performances.