

### **“Do You See Them?”**

I don't remember his name – first or last – but, even after more than half a century, I see his face clearly. He lay in a Mediterranean port city of Marseille hospital bed, dying of cancer. The very old open ward held about 100 cheap metal cots, many occupied by tuberculosis and cancer patients.

I visited the “Ataman” (Cossack Chieftain) each week and watched him steadily deteriorate. Although he had a Muslim background, he had, at some point, accepted Christ as his Savior. He was of Turkish decent and had served in the Tsarist cavalry. During the Bolshevik Revolution he was able to escape to France.

I visited him one subsequent Saturday morning. He was small of stature to begin with, but now he was simply skin and bones. However, his sunken eyes were alert. There was a stench of disease and death around him. I pulled up a plain wooden chair closer to the head of the bed, so I could communicate with him better.

After I seated myself, Brother Ataman asked, “Do you see them?”

“Do I see whom?”

“Them. At the foot of the bed. Two of them.”

“No, I don't see anybody.”

“They arrived just before you did. They have shining white robes. They came to escort me to heaven.”

“I'm very happy for you, Brother Ataman! Your suffering days are over.”

After a few more minutes of conversation, I went to visit a Russian-speaking Armenian in another ward. When I returned to Brother Ataman's bedside, he was “gone.” ◇◇