



STALINIST TERROR IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS

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It is worthwhile to note that an important part of the standard accusation of nationalism in Armenia was cooperation with the "anti-Soviet" organizations of the Armenian Diaspora, even though this co-operation was sanctioned by the Soviet authorities; and moreover, in the case of the Relief Committee of Armenia (HOK), even initiated by them.

. In this new phase of eliminating their real or imaginary political opponents, the authorities began to consider any connections with the Arme-

nian Diaspora, irrespective of form and content, as a political crime.

In Yerevan, the trials were held along scenarios developed during the Moscow trials – the former leaders of the Soviet Union were accused of collaborating with the secret services of foreign countries, with the only difference being that in the Armenian version intelligence services were replaced with the political parties Dashnaktsutyun and Ramkavar Azatakan active in the Armenian Diaspora. With this very purpose, the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs invented the myth that the overseas center of the Dashnak-Ramkavar parties supposedly cooperated with the Trotskyite-nationalist center in Armenia. Now, all that was required was to exert the right testimony from the accused. Under torture, the defendants supplied more and more "information" about the anti-Soviet activities of Armenian Diaspora organizations. On November 13, 1937, at a regular meeting of the Bureau of the Communist Party of Armenia, a resolution was adopted to shut down the Armenian branches of the HOK and the AGBU, which led to the cessation of all contacts with the Armenian Diaspora. By that time, the chairmen of HOK during all previous years, including Grigor Vardanian, Shahverdian, Yesayan, Aram Manoucharian, as well as an AGBU representative in Armenia Haikaz Karagheusian had already been arrested and shot.