

the Soviet Armenian CP, declared that Khanjyan and his collaborators had always been “conciliatory toward dashnaks and nationalists” and were “paving the way for the dashnaks.”²⁸

Needless to say, Aghasi Khanjyan was not a member of Dashnaktsutium as he was accused of being, but he knew the history. In fact, he was quoted as having said to Drastamat Simonian, who was reporting to him about Dashnaktsutium's stance against the Soviet regime, “Of course, if something happens, you and I will run away and Dashnaktsutium will remain as the proprietor of the Armenian nation.”²⁹ According to Vahram Alazan, one Khachik Mughdusi, Lavrentiy Beria's henchman in Armenia, proudly announced in the October meeting that 700–800 Khanjyan sympathizers had already been incarcerated or executed.³⁰ Over the next two years, thousands were arrested, imprisoned, exiled or executed. Those were the years of Stalin's Great Purge.

My father recalled conversations with some of the Armenian inmates at Norilsk. He said they had been close collaborators of Aghasi Khanjyan and were arrested and exiled after his assassination, but unfortunately, my

28 Amatuni's remarks were quoted in Gabriel Lazian, «Հայաստան եւ Հայ Դատը Հայեւոյս յարաբերութիւններու լոյսին տակ» (Armenia and the Armenian Question in the light of Armeno-Russian relations) (Cairo: Housaper, 1957), p. 337. The use of the lower case initial letter in “dashnak” was a Soviet Armenian practice signifying contempt for the Dashnaktsutium. Ironically, many of those who attended this meeting and who made accusatory speeches were themselves imprisoned or executed not very long afterwards.

29 Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 336. This remark was published as an indictment in *Khorhrdayin Hayastan*, October 30, 1936.

30 Alazan, «Տառապանքի ուղիներով» (Through the roads of suffering), p. 5. Khachik Mughdusi was later imprisoned when Stalin was getting rid of Beria's collaborators. Those people had served their purpose and were no longer needed.