

Ironically, even during the relative thaw at the beginning of Khrushchev's rule, when the people of the Soviet Union found the courage to speak out, self-censorship was comparatively more severe in Armenia, as discussed earlier: people were still afraid to touch on that sore subject. "The leaders of Armenia during that period were extremely subservient vis-à-vis the Անդրերկրկոմ [Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic] and the Center," writes Armenak Manukyan, referring to the absolute obedience they showed toward Beria, Stalin's right-hand man in Transcaucasia.<sup>32</sup> But that subservience and that caution lingered on long after the destalinization period and it was only in the late 1980s and the 1990s that the shackles came off.

Thus, when the partially implemented course of destalinization came to a halt, Soviet Armenia was ready to cringe. In a closed-door meeting, the Communist faction of the Armenian Writers Union decided not to publish anything on the subject of 1937, and the manuscript memoirs of Armenian survivors of Stalin's Gulag were routinely rejected for publication.

Nayiri Zaryan's «Հարթագողի ճամբան» (The Milky Way), an autobiographical novel written in 1963 that only briefly touched on the purges, was suddenly put on hold, even though it had already been greenlighted for publication after several sessions of cutting and censoring.<sup>33</sup>

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32 Manukyan, «Քաղաքական բռնաճնշումները Հայաստանում» (Political persecutions in Armenia), p. 56.

33 Nayiri Zaryan's novel was published in 1989. However, an excerpt alluding to the horrors of 1937 was published under the title «Ծանոթ պողոտա» (Familiar