



Journal of Universal History Studies

Red Terror in Azerbaijan: The Case of the “Reserve Rightwing Trotskyite Center of the Counterrevolutionary Nationalist Organization” (1938-1956)¹

Azerbaycan'da Kızıl Terör: “Sağ-Troçki Karşı Devrimci Milliyetçi Örgütün Yedek Merkezi'nin” Tarihi (1938-1956)

Submission Type: Research Article

Received-Accepted: 02.04.2021 / 01.05.2021

pp. 54-66

Journal of Universal History Studies (JUHIS) • 4(1) • June • 2021 •

Aydın Alizade

Azerbaijan National Academy of Science, Baku, Azerbaijan

Email: aydinalizade63@gmail.com

Orcid Number: 0000-0002-1137-947X

Cite: Alizade, A . (2021). Red Terror in Azerbaijan: The Case of the “Reserve Rightwing Trotskyite Center of the Counterrevolutionary Nationalist Organization” (1938-1956) . Journal of Universal History Studies , 4 (1) , 54-66 . DOI: 10.38000/juhis.908368

¹ This article is analyzed by two reviewers and it is screened for the resemblance rate by the editor/ Bu makale iki hakem tarafından incelenmiş ve editör tarafından benzerlik oranı taramasından geçirilmiştir.

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Abstract

This article explores the history of one of the investigations of the Red Terror period into the “Reserve Rightwing Trotskyite Center of the Counterrevolutionary Nationalist Organization” (1938-56) in Azerbaijan. More than 300 people were convicted in this case, including members of the senior leadership of the Azerbaijan SSR and deputies of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. Therefore, this case was one of the largest cases of that period. However, it was subsequently proved that the case was fabricated, and all convicts were rehabilitated. In connection with the sequential presentation of events, a narrative method of investigation was used in the article. The scientific novelty of the work is that this research is conducted for the first time. The main conclusion is that this political case was fabricated from the very beginning, and the investigation was conducted by illegal methods. In the work on the article, archival materials, as well as studies by other authors on the theme of the Red Terror in Azerbaijan were studied.

Keywords: State Terror, Rightwing Trotskyites, Counterrevolution, Repression, Rehabilitation, Stalinism.

Öz

Bu makalede, Azerbaycan Sovyet Sosyalist Cumhuriyeti'ndeki (SSC) “Sağ-Troçki Karşıdevrimci Milliyetçi Örgütün Yedek Merkezi” (1938-1956) olarak adlandırılan Sovyet Kızıl Terörü dönemi soruşturma dosyalarından birinin tarihi incelenmiştir. Burada, aralarında Azerbaycan SSC'nin üst düzey yönetiminin üyeleri ve Sovyetler Birliğinin Yüksek Sovyeti'nin (parlamentosunun) milletvekilleri de dahil olmak üzere 300'den fazla kişi mahkum edilmiştir. Bu nedenle, bu dosya o dönemin en büyüklerinden biriydi. Aynı zamanda not edilmelidir ki, bu ceza davası uydurulmuş ve gelecekte tüm hükümlüler rehabilite edilmiştir. Olayların sıralı sunumuyla bağlantılı olarak, makalede anlatsal bir araştırma yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Eserin bilimsel yeniliği, bu araştırmanın ilk defa yapılmasıdır. Araştırmanın sonucuna göre, bu siyasi dava Azerbaycan SSC'nin ulusal ekonomisinin liderlerine ve SSCB Yüksek Sovyeti milletvekillerine yönelik yıpratmaya dayalı önceden tasarlanmış bir olaydır. Bagirov başta olmak üzere bu planda yer alanlar ve işkenceleri uygulayanlar mahkum edilmişlerdir. Bu süreçte özellikle İsgandar Aliyev'in rolü fazladır ve makalede de öne çıkmasının nedeni budur. Hazırlanan makalede arşiv materyalleri ve yanı sıra diğer yazarların Azerbaycan'da Kızıl Terör konulu çalışmaları da kullanılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Devlet Terörü, Sağcı Troçkistler, Karşıdevrim, Rehabilitasyon, İşkence, Stalinizm.

Introduction

The state terror of 1937-1938 in the Azerbaijan SSR was part of the general process throughout the USSR. One can consider Lavrenty Beria's article “Destroy the Enemies of Socialism Completely” published in newspaper “Pravda” on 19 August 1936 as a signal to mass repressions in Azerbaijan. According to the article, organized groups of Trotskyites, nationalists and other groups that were in opposition to the Bolsheviks allegedly operated in Azerbaijan and prepared a coup d'état and various kinds of sabotage against the central government. Therefore, it was planned to begin an uncompromising struggle against all these groups.

After that, mass arrests were carried out in Azerbaijan in 1937-1938, including among the country's leadership. It went so far that “from the beginning of the summer of 1937 to the autumn of 1938, Azerbaijan actually ended up without governance” (Baberovski, 2010, p. 775-776).

The April 1, 1954 decree of the Presidium of the CPSU Central Committee said that the repression in Azerbaijan was carried out by the highest political leadership of the republic headed by Mir Jafar Bagirov with the aim of “completely exterminating the leadership of Party and Soviet workers in Azerbaijan and putting their close workers on the leading posts” [The Politburo, 2012, p. 572-576).

“The Reserve Rightwing Trotskyite Center of the Counterrevolutionary Nationalist Organization” (RRTCCNO)

One of the most significant episodes of political repression in the USSR in 1938 was the case of the “Anti-Soviet Rightwing-Trotskyite bloc”, of which Bukharin and Rykov were announced the leaders. According to the judicial report on the case of the “Anti-Soviet Rightwing-Trotskyite bloc”, they aimed to overthrow the existing socialist public and state system in the USSR, restore capitalism and the power of the bourgeoisie in the USSR, dismember the USSR and alienate Ukraine, Belarus, Central Asian Republics, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Primorye from it (Vishinski, 1955, p. 485).

Figure 1. Azerbaijani Deputies at the First Session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of the First Convocation (the House of Nationalities), January 1938. In the First Row, Stalin, Molotov, Kalinin and Other Leaders of the USSR. Isgandar Aliyev is the First on the Left in the Third Row.



Source: Aliyev's family album. Published with permission his family.

After the trial of Bukharin and Rykov, the search for rightwing Trotskyites began in all regions of the USSR, which led to a new round of political repression throughout the country. Large-scale repressions were also carried out in Azerbaijan in connection with this case, which was called the case of the leaders of the

RRTCCNO under the leadership of four deputies of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR: First Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Azerbaijan SSR Khalil Manafov; People's Commissar of Internal Trade of the Azerbaijan SSR Ibrahim Asadullayev; People's Commissar of Agriculture of the Azerbaijan SSR Abulfat Mammadov; People's Commissar of Light Industry of the Azerbaijan SSR Isgandar Aliyev (Investigation case No 25910, v. 4, p. 289).

According to the investigation, the RRTCCNO was a union of Azerbaijani nationalists with rightwing Trotskyites, who were mostly represented in the case by all persons of other nationalities. Therefore, subsequently, the representative of the USSR People's Commissariat of Communications for the Azerbaijan SSR, Yefim Rodionov (also a deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR), and the secretary of the Council of National Economy of the Azerbaijan SSR, Boris Lyuborsky-Novikov, were also called leaders.

According to the investigative indictment of August 31, 1940, this organization was called "reserve" because it was allegedly created after the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs / *Naródnny Komissariát Vnútrennikh Del* (abbreviated NKVD) destroyed the previous (main) center of this organization, which operated in 1936-1937; and those involved in this case were in the "reserve" in the event of this defeat and revived the activities of the previous organization (Investigation case No 25910, v. 4, p. 285).

Documentary evidence allows us to say that this case was fabricated from the very beginning. The matter is that on 25 November 1937, the secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of the Azerbaijan SSR, Mir Jafar Bagirov, began to collect compromising dossiers on the deputies of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR from Azerbaijan (Bagirov's Name, 2016, p. 85). This suggests that the arrests of many deputies were planned at the highest party and state level and were included on special lists long before.

Arrests and the Course of the Investigation

It all started with the fact that several workers of the light industry testified at the NKVD that an anti-Soviet organization operated in the light industry system and was led by the People's Commissar of Light Industry of the Azerbaijan SSR Isgandar Aliyev.

On the basis of these testimonies, on June 1, 1938, the acting head of the 3rd State Security Department of the NKVD of the Azerbaijan SSR, Captain G. B. Meshcheryakov, issued an arrest warrant for Isgandar Aliyev, who soon pleaded guilty to all the charges against him. Later in the same month, Aliyev "confessed" during an interrogation that there were cells of his organization in several other cities of Azerbaijan (Investigation case No 25910, v. 4, p. 83). This was later "confirmed" by other arrested members of the RRTCCNO.

Further, Isgandar Aliyev "confessed" that during his presence at the first session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of the first convocation on January 12-17, 1937, he had a meeting with other deputies from the Azerbaijan SSR, Manaf Khalilov, Abulfat Mammadov and Ibrahim Asadullayev, in a Moscow hotel where they all "admitted" to each other that they were opponents of the Soviet regime (Investigation case No 25910, v. 4, p. 89). Thus, they created an organization there, which allegedly was headed by Manaf Khalilov.

Exactly the same testimony was later given by A. Mammadov (Investigation case No 25910, v. 4, p. 271) and M. Khalilov (Investigation case No 25910, v. 4, p. 183), who confirmed Aliyev's "confessions" about the establishment of a certain organization in the Moscow hotel. Asadullayev supplemented these

“confessions” with the fact that in Moscow they decided to establish ties with Moscow rightwing Trotskyites. He also “confessed” that they contacted the former secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of the Ukrainian SSR, Kosior, who was also accused of anti-state activities and was sentenced to execution. (Investigation case No 25910, v. 4, p. 286). At the same “hotel” meeting, it was decided to establish contact with rightwing Trotskyites, Brener (head of the Trade Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan), Kulkov (Secretary of the Baku Committee of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of the USSR) and others (Investigation case No 25910, v. 4, p. 285).

Figure 2 Investigative Case No 25910, v. 4.



Source: Archive of the State Security Service of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Thus, the “counterrevolutionary nationalist organization” of light industry, “headed” by Isgandar Aliyev, from that moment became part of a larger organization set up at the “counterrevolutionary meeting” in a Moscow hotel.

The names of I. Aliyev, I. Asadullayev and A. Mammadov were included on the “Stalin lists” (The list of persons, 1938) of the first category dated September 25, 1938. However, already in October of the same year, repression in the USSR began to weaken relatively, and most of the prisoners were no longer executed, but sentenced to long prison terms. Apparently for this reason, they were not executed.

Goals and Objectives of the RRTCCNO

The goals and objectives of the RRTCCNO, according to the protocols of interrogations of the accused (Investigation case No 25910, v. 4, p. 248) consisted of the following items:

1. Preparing an armed uprising against Soviet power with the aim of alienating Azerbaijan from the USSR;
2. Preparing terrorist attacks against the leadership of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of the Azerbaijan SSR;

3. Establishing links with countries hostile to the USSR;
4. Assisting the intervention of world fascism against the USSR;
5. Creating parallel structures of power to come to power after the defeat of the USSR;
6. Economic sabotage and wrecking in factories and enterprises of the Azerbaijan SSR with the aim of weakening public confidence in the central government;
7. Conducting propaganda among the population in order to discredit Soviet power;
8. Recruiting new members for the organization.

Subsequently, the investigation “found out” that the RRTCCNO had established links with counterrevolutionary groups in Uzbekistan, Ukraine and other republics of the USSR and contacted the Iranian intelligence service through the Iranian consulate in Baku.

During the interrogations, A. Mammadov, like Isgandar Aliyev, said that the members of the anti-Soviet organization expressed their indignation at the fact that the rights of Azerbaijanis were infringed and they were not masters of their country since it was dominated by other nations.

These statements were “supplemented” by Ibrahim Asadullayev. According to his testimony, the rightwing Trotskyites whom they contacted (for example, responsible party workers of the AzSSR, Ostashko and Kvyatkovsky) agreed that after the overthrow of Soviet power, national states should be formed (Investigation case No 25910, vol. 4, p. 283).

After that, the investigation, based on the testimony of the leaders of the RRTCCNO, established the names of the rightwing Trotskyites with whom it was necessary to establish contacts. There were many responsible party and economic workers of the Azerbaijan SSR.

Torture and Beating of Prisoners

All such confessions were taken by the investigators through torture and beatings. The note of the USSR Prosecutor General R. A. Rudenko to the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU dated March 15, 1954, says:

“In 1937-1938, Bagirov, in essence, led the Chekist authorities, using them for mass beatings of those arrested with the aim of falsifying criminal cases, getting rid of undesirable people and destroying honest Party and Soviet personnel” (The Politburo 2012, p. 428-431).

One of those arrested, Isgandar Aliyev, later told the trial against M. J. Bagirov in 1956 how those arrested specifically in this case were forced to give “sincere confessions”.

“As follows from I. Aliyev's testimony, he was beaten with a rubber truncheon and forced to kneel on glass shards. On the fourth day after his arrest, he was taken to the office of the People's Commissar for Internal Affairs, where Bagirov, the secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Azerbaijan, used obscene language and began to ask Aliyev why he was not testifying about his membership in the RRTCCNO? Since he did not plead guilty, Aliyev explained, Bagirov ordered that he not be allowed to sleep. Borshchev (former Deputy People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the AzSSR)

confirmed in court that Aliyev, Khalilov, Mammadov and others were beaten” (Smimov 2014, p. 123-124).

In addition, in an explanatory note to the investigation on August 20, 1940, Aliyev named Babenko and Meshcheryakov, investigators of the NKVD of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic, his tormentors who forced him to testify by using physical repressions (Investigation case No 25910, v. 4, from. 279).

Figure 3. Isgandar Aliyev's Photo While Under Arrest, 1938.



Source: Archive of the State Security Service of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Even the protocols of official interrogations testify to the fact that the prisoners were under pressure. During interrogations, they were constantly told in a threatening manner to “supplement” their testimony with more and more “counterrevolutionaries”. The accused answered by confessing that they had really covered someone up. Thus, more and more names were revealed, as a result of which the number of arrested persons grew.

Refusal of the accused to testify

“In August-September 1938, an epoch of changes began in the leadership of the NKVD at the same time as the scope of repressions began to somewhat decrease ... And in December 1938 a short period of review began” (Mel'chin, 1994).

Apparently after that, the pressure on those arrested in the case of the “Counterrevolutionary Nationalist Organization” in Azerbaijan began to weaken. Therefore, they began to refuse the testimonies they had given earlier. In addition, in the leadership of the NKVD of the Azerbaijan SSR was replaced.

Thus, during the interrogation of September 14, 1939, Isgandar Aliyev said that his past testimony about himself was false and fictitious, since he gave them under strong physical and psychological pressure. Therefore, he refuses them. (Investigation case No 25910, v. 4, p. 240)

The indictment of September 17, 1939, mentions that all other defendants in this case also declined their previous confessions. In this regard, their case was referred to a special meeting of the NKVD (Investigation case No 25910, v. 4, p. 250).

However, these statements of the accused were rejected by the investigation. A new indictment of August 3, 1940, said on this occasion:

“We consider that this refusal is not consistent and is a deliberate maneuver on their part with a view to misleading the investigative bodies when analyzing their cases” (Investigation case No 25910, v. 4, p. 288).

Moreover, after this statement in the investigative order of 8 August 1940, the investigators accused the convicts of being the leaders of a terrorist organization that had individual terror against the leaders of the CPSU (B) and the government as one of the means of combating Soviet rule (Investigation case No 25910, v. 4, p. 269).

Accusations of Wrecking in the National Economy

After the defendants abandoned the previously given testimony in 1939, the position of the prosecution visibly weakened, the case was cracking at the seams and threatened to collapse. In the same year, the case was referred to the Special Meeting of the NKVD of the USSR because the examination of the case is difficult in a court session (Investigation case No 25910, v. 4, p. 251).

Later, on April 24, 1941, the Military Board of the Supreme Court of the USSR found the charges against Isgandar Aliyev and other persons under investigation insufficiently substantiated, so they returned his case to the NKVD of the Azerbaijan SSR. However, the NKVD could not close this case, since it was ordered not only by the top leadership of the Azerbaijan SSR, but also by the Kremlin (Investigation case 1938-56, v. 4, p. 297).

Therefore, in order to salvage the situation, the further charges were mainly based on the accusation of “wrecking” in the national economy and economic sabotage. It was much easier to build the charges on “wrecking”, since all the accused held high posts in the system of the national economy of the Azerbaijan SSR. And to find shortcomings in the work of their enterprises was quite simple, because in any case they exist even with the best management. In this case, these shortcomings were specifically identified in order to give them a political coloring. To this end, commissions to identify deliberate acts of “wrecking” with the aim of inflicting a blow to the Soviet regime were sent to enterprises and people's commissariats headed by the accused earlier. At the end of the work of these commissions, relevant acts convenient for prosecution were drawn up. (Investigation case No 25910, v. 4, p. 382).

Termination of the Investigation and the Verdict of the Court

By the decision of 7 August 1940, the cases of M. Khalilov, I. Asadullayev, I. Aliyev and A. Mammadov were combined into a single file, and on August 31, according to the indictment, their cases were referred to the Military Board of the Supreme Court of the USSR. After that, Isgandar Aliyev was sent to Moscow, where he was held in Butyrskaya prison. But then he was transferred to Baku again.

On August 30, 1941, a trial of members of the “Reserve Rightwing Trotskyite Center of the Counterrevolutionary Nationalist Organization” was held in Baku. It was held in a closed session of the Military Tribunal of the Transcaucasian Military District in an away session chaired by brigade military lawyer Novikov and military lawyers of the 3rd rank Vetukh and Kviray. According to the copy of the Court's Verdict No 00497:

“The preliminary and judicial investigation found that in 1937-1938, the NKVD opened and liquidated an underground bourgeois-nationalist insurgent organization. However, in Baku, the remnants of members of the counterrevolutionary organization represented by Khalilov, Mammadov, Asadullayev and Aliyev continued their anti-Soviet activity. At the same time, for the success of their counterrevolutionary work, Khalilov, Mammadov, Asadullayev, and Aliyev, while in Moscow, in January 1938, established contacts with the rightwing Trotskyite organization at their illegal meeting. The practical counterrevolutionary activities of Khalilov, Mammadov, Asadullayev and Aliyev are expressed in the recruitment of new persons for the counterrevolutionary organization, and in addition, Khalilov gave instructions for sabotage, and Aliyev, Asadullayev and Mammadov, who carried out the sabotage in their fields of work as members of the organization... The defendant Rodionov was recruited for the rightwing Trotskyite organization in 1936 ... was engaged in wrecking in the communications bodies. In practice, Rodionov's job was limited to the recruitment of new members and wrecking in the field of communications ... Defendant Lyuborsky-Novikov was recruited for the counterrevolutionary organization in 1937 by Mammadov (convicted) and established a counterrevolutionary relationship with Khalilov” (Investigation case No 25910, v. 6, p. 186-188).

According to the court ruling, Khalilov was sentenced to 15, Mammadov, Asadullayev, Aliyev and Rodionov to 10, Lyuborsky-Novikov to 8 years' imprisonment in forced labor camps with the confiscation of property. Of them, only Lyuborsky-Novikov was given the right to appeal the sentence within 5 days.

Prison Life

Isgandar Aliyev was serving his term in a labor camp in the Karaganda region (Karlag). However, even after the end of the term of imprisonment, the prisoners were not allowed to be released (Ismailov, 2010, p. 194-205). Therefore, he was imprisoned for 18 years, from 1938 to 1956.

It is known that during the last years of imprisonment he was exiled and lived in the Karaganda region. In 1953-55 he worked as an agronomist-economist at the Koyandinskaya motor and tractor station of the Kuva district of the Karaganda region of the Kazakh SSR.

As for the other convicts, Khalilov (in 1944), Asadullayev (in 1946) and Rodionov (in 1942) perished in correctional labor camps. Mammadov returned to Baku after rehabilitation, but died a year later in 1957. Only in relation to Lyuborsky-Novikov was the case dropped in 1943.

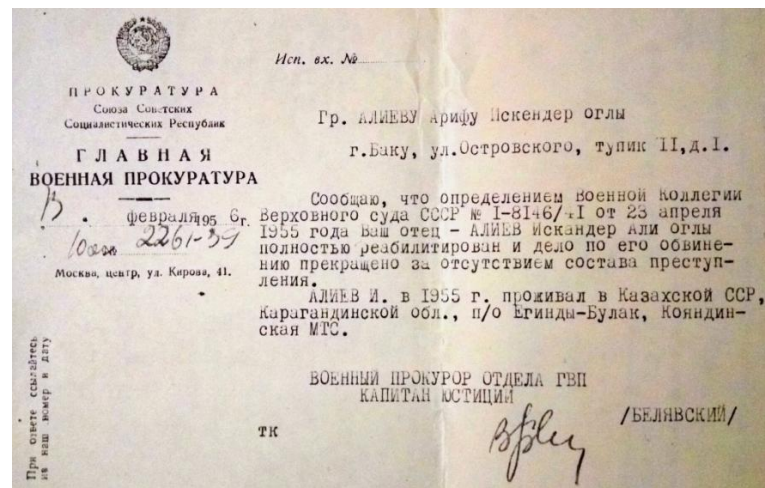
Rehabilitation

After the death of Stalin, the situation in the USSR began to change. It was time for the “Khrushchev thaw”. On March 5, 1953, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (B) Mir Jafar Bagirov was dismissed from his post. And in May 1954, the Central Commission was established to review the cases of convicts for “counterrevolutionary crimes”, headed by the USSR Prosecutor General R. A. Rudenko, who was closely involved in the investigation of the cases of victims of political repression in Azerbaijan. The case of the heads of the RRTCCNO in Azerbaijan was also reviewed by this commission on the basis of the appeal filed on 11/11/1954 by Isgandar Aliyev (letter from the USSR Chief Military Prosecutor's Office to I. Aliyev No 326 of April 25, 1955) and all those charged in this case were rehabilitated.

According to the copy of the ruling of the Military Board of the Supreme Court of the USSR No 18146/41 of April 23, 1955:

“The investigation conducted by the prosecutor's office on the complaints of the convicts established that the basis of the charges against Khalilov, Mammadov, Aliyev, Asadullayev and Rodionov is their personal contradictory testimony at the preliminary investigation and testimony of witnesses - previously convicted in other cases ... the testimony of the convicts and the abovementioned witnesses were obtained by the preliminary investigation with illegal investigative methods, while both the convicts and witnesses subsequently refused their testimony. There was no other objective evidence in the case. The indictment against the convicts was fabricated by the preliminary investigation authorities by applying unlawful investigative methods to the convicts in the case”. (Investigation case No 25910, v. 6, p. 343-345).

Figure 4. I. Aliyev's rehabilitation document.



Source: Aliyev's family album. Published with permission his family.

Thus, the verdict of the military tribunal of August 30, 1941 concerning the accused in this case was canceled based on newly discovered circumstances and the criminal prosecution of these persons was stopped for lack of corpus delicti.

The Case of the RRTCCNO in the Trial of Mir Jafar Bagirov and His Accomplices

Isgandar Aliyev was rehabilitated back in April 1955. But he did not return to Baku. It is known that in mid-February 1956 he was still in Kazakhstan. It is possible that even then the USSR Prosecutor's Office was preparing him to participate in the trial on the case of Bagirov and his accomplices. It is possible that the investigating authorities found his early visit to Baku dangerous for the witness.

Immediately after his return to Baku, Isgandar Aliyev was involved in the trial of the former secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks), Mir Jafar Bagirov, which was held in Baku in April 1956. At this trial, the case of the leaders of the RRTCCNO was one of the charges against Bagirov and his accomplices, which was brought against them by the USSR Prosecutor General R. A. Rudenko. I. Aliyev participated in this process as a victim of repression and a witness of the prosecution.

The trial of Mir Jafar Bagirov proved that I. Aliyev and all the other accused in the RRTCCNO case were arrested on a fabricated charge and forced to give false testimony personally by the former secretary of the Central Committee of the CP (b), Mir Jafar Bagirov, and his accomplices.

The text of the verdict of the Military Board of the Supreme Court of the USSR of April 26, 1956 on the case of M. J. Bagirov, T. M. Borshchev, R. A. Markaryan, Kh. I. Grigoryan, S. I. Atakishiyev and S. F. Yemelyanov says:

“In 1938, also on the orders of Bagirov, the deputy chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Azerbaijan SSR, M. Khalilov, People's Commissar for Agriculture A. Mammadov, People's Commissar of Trade I. Asadullayev, People's Commissar of Light Industry O. Aliyev, the commissioner of the People's Commissariat of Communications, Rodionov, an employee of the Council of People's Commissars of the Azerbaijan SSR, B. G. Lyuborsky-Novikov, were arrested, and Bagirov's accomplices fabricated charges against them as the leaders of the so-called “reserve rightwing Trotskyite center of the counterrevolutionary nationalist organization”. After applying beatings and torture to these persons, Bagirov's accomplices obtained forced false testimonies from them about a large number of innocent people, as a result of which more than three hundred leading party and Soviet officials were illegally arrested and sentenced to death or to long prison terms, including: 32 secretaries of district party committees, 28 chairmen of district executive committees, 15 people's commissars and their deputies, 66 engineers, 88 commanders of the Soviet Army and Navy, 8 professors and other leading officials” (The Politburo, 2012, p. 881-892).

Conclusion

Thus, after many years, the RRTCCNO case reached its logical conclusion. The people guilty of unleashing the red terror in Azerbaijan were punished in a trial, and this case figured among the main ones in their conviction. This case has its own distinctive features from the numerous trials of the Red Terror period in the USSR. Many repressed people ended their lives tragically: they were executed or died in forced labor camps. There are even fewer investigative cases in which the defendants not only lived to be rehabilitated, but also participated in the trials of those guilty of unleashing state terror in the USSR.

Figure 5. The Head of the Fruit and Vegetables Trade Enterprise of the State Agroindustrial Committee, Isgandar Aliyev, on Holiday in Sochi After Rehabilitation With His Son Arif, 1958.



Source: Aliyev's family album. Published with permission his family.

This is what makes the case of the RRTCCNO leaders different from many other cases of the Red Terror period in the USSR. This case was directed against the leaders of the national economy of the Azerbaijan SSR and the deputies of the USSR Supreme Soviet. However, in the end, one of the convicts Isgandar Aliyev managed not only to survive in the harsh conditions of Karlag and to get all the defendants in the case to be rehabilitated but also to return to Baku after an 18-year prison life and act as a witness of the prosecution against the former secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of the Azerbaijan SSR, M. J. Bagirov, and his accomplices, who were guilty of fabricating the RRTCCNO case and extracted evidence in illegal ways, including by torturing and beating up prisoners. Thus, Isgandar Aliyev's testimony contributed to the conviction of Bagirov and his accomplices.

It is also interesting that after a long prison life, Isgandar Aliyev returned all his confiscated property, rejoined his family and took leading positions in the national economy of Azerbaijan again.

In 1956, he was appointed head of the Fruit and Vegetable Enterprise of the State Agroindustrial Committee of the Azerbaijan SSR, and in 1959 he became head of the Jewelry Trade Enterprise of the Azerbaijan SSR. In 1964 he retired. He was a pensioner of all-Soviet significance. He died in Baku on January 30, 1972.

Thus, Isgandar Aliyev not only managed to pass all the trials of fate, but also to take revenge on his tormentors, and then regain all that was taken from him - up to the leading posts in the system of the national economy of Azerbaijan. This is one of the exceptional examples of the history of repression in the Red Terror period in the USSR. Perhaps even some comparison of this man with the legendary character of Alexander Dumas' novel, the Count of Monte Cristo, who also was imprisoned for many years, but then returned, took revenge on his tormentors and restored his good name and position.

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