

Chapter Two

A brief biography: A life of poverty and deprivation

I think I owe it to my readers to offer a brief account of my father's life and work before his abduction by the Soviets, in order to put his memoir in perspective.

Baghdassar (Baghdik) Minassian was born on December 10, 1902, in Voghan, a small Armenian village with a history going back hundreds of years.¹ This idyllic village was nestled in the heart of forest-covered Gharadagh in Iranian Azerbaijan (ancient Roman Atropatene, modern Armenian Atrpatakan) which geographically and historically corresponds to the mountainous region of ancient Armenian Parspatunik, a part of Vaspurakan province in the kingdom of Metz Hayk.

¹ In the mid-nineteenth century, Voghan was relocated to safer and flatter terrain five kilometers to the west of its original site. According to the Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church of Atrpatakan, the village had one church named after Sourb Martiros, one school and a population of ninety-five. The majority of the Armenians of Voghan repatriated to Soviet Armenia in 1946, and the few remaining families migrated to Tabriz and Tehran in the 1960s.