

were going to be new arrests and abductions of the ARF leadership. The intent was to frighten our membership and break our solidarity. And indeed, they succeeded. There was disquiet, impatience, intolerance, and more importantly, protest against our inaction. And there were many cases of defiance and faltering allegiance. The ARF Central Committee in consultation with other Party members decided that I should meet with the authorities and question their conduct in the face of our neutral stance on internal politics and our loyalty to the Allies.

I went to the consulate to discuss the situation and ask for an explanation, particularly about the arrests of Varos Babayan and Khachatur Grigorian. It was December 15, 1943. The two Armenian Red Army officers whom I had already met several times denied having arrested Varos Babayan. "He may be hiding in one of your villages," they said. As for Khachatur Grigorian, they reminded me that "your own government arrested him." I responded by saying that we knew where they were and who had arrested them. But it was useless. The meeting ended in ambiguity, with no result.

Leaving the consulate, I headed straight to Panos Zhamharian's residence where our ungers had gathered to hear my report. We were all very worried and pessimistic about what was coming. As we sat down to dinner, Hayk Ajemian turned to me and said, "Unger Baghdik, this is your last dinner with your ungers, just like Christ's last supper with his disciples."

He was right. It happened. It was inevitable.

I was abducted.