

Even though it was expected and unavoidable, it was a tough blow, really detrimental for me and my family.

Our agents had cautioned me that the local Soviet political agencies had decided to abduct me and Archbishop Melik-Tangian, or to assassinate us if the abduction failed. We advised the Prelate to be extra careful and added guards in and around the Diocese.⁷ During one of Soviet Consul Navasartian's frequent visits to the Prelate, the latter had innocently asked him, "I hear you've decided to arrest Baghdik and me." As usual, Navasartian had denied the rumor and asked, "Who told you that?" The Prelate had replied, "Baghdik did."

I believe that expedited my abduction.

It was January 3, 1944, three days before Armenian Christmas, Epiphany, and my name day which we always celebrated with a lavish reception for friends and relatives at our home.⁸ Before 11:00 AM that morning, I walked out of Davit's café and headed toward my school. After I finished my work in the chemistry lab there, I walked to [Ghazar] Makunts' factory which was located on Pahlavi Avenue, near the Cheka. He was a member of our Central Committee and I periodically visited him and other members of the CC to discuss current issues.

7 My father refused to have any bodyguards accompany him. Had he had a bodyguard, at least the man would have testified as to when, where and how my father was abducted.

8 The Armenian Apostolic Church has dedicated various days of the year to Christian saints. If a person is named after a saint, that saint's day becomes his or her "name day" and is celebrated as such. My father was named after Balthazar (Baghdassar in Armenian), one of the three Magi celebrated on Epiphany. I remember as a young child the lavish dinner party my mother always organized on January 6. I also remember that after my father's disappearance, that day was always a day of mourning for us.