

in laundry to earn a scant living for her family. To add to her ordeal, Baghdik, her eldest child, was taken by a creditor to serve as a houseboy in lieu of an unpaid debt. When he was eight or nine years old, Hovsep Ter-Hakobian, a rich relative, retrieved him from that house of servitude and brought him to his home in Tabriz where conditions were better for the little orphan boy. He performed chores around the house and ran errands for his patron's shop. "From a young age I was deprived of motherly love and affection," he wrote to his future wife, Paranzem (Parik) Sargsian, in a letter dated February 11, 1933. "My school and university years were turbulent and full of deprivation."

Much like Hovhannes Tumanian's "Gikor," the eldest daughter of this wealthy merchant, named Maro (Baghdik called him Maro Kuyrik—kuyrik meaning sister), noticed the boy's extraordinary zeal for reading and writing and took charge of teaching him both and providing him with all kinds of books to read. Without setting foot in a classroom, but with hard work and perseverance, Baghdik prepared himself for the elementary school completion examination which he needed to pass in order to enter high school.

In an article titled «Մեր Բաղդիկը» (Our Baghdik), published in the commemorative issue of *Alik*, August 21, 1976, the Iranian Armenian poetess Arshi remembered the first day he set foot in a classroom: he was thin and

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during the period between 1900 and 1921. My guess is that the family's misfortune, the confiscation of their house and belongings, may have been caused by those tyrants.