

Armenia and the ideology of freedom it inspired no doubt had a role in shaping his future.

Dashnaktsutiun was exiled, driven from Eastern and Western Armenia, but not incapacitated or deactivated. There was a great need to reorganize the Armenians scattered around the world, to keep the flame of Armenianness burning, to uphold the idea of free, independent and united Armenia in the generations to come, until one day....

One of the projects undertaken by Dashnaktsutiun was to educate and train future leaders to carry the torch. A cohort of high-achieving students was chosen to be sent to European universities, there to receive the highest possible level of education, thence to return and serve the Armenian people. Baghdassar was one of the chosen few. He had graduated from high school in three years as the best student in his class and had demonstrated his skill and capability in leading the ARF student union. When he was accepted to Charles University in Prague (Universitatis Carolinae Pragensis), he began his journey to the heart of enlightenment and education in Europe.<sup>8</sup>

Baghdik chose to major in natural sciences (biology and chemistry as we know today), with a double major in pedagogy. His love of science came from his high intellect, and he had probably developed the intention to prepare himself for a career as an educator under the influence of Karapet Pionian, his favorite teacher and the principal of

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8 Universitatis Carolinae Pragensis, one of the oldest (founded in 1348) and most prestigious universities in Europe, is the alma mater of world famous scientists, statesmen and Nobel laureates.