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Homenetmen Glendale Ararat Chapter
Cultural Division

Get to Know...

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AVETIK SAHAK ISAHAKYAN

OCTOBER 19, 1875 — OCTOBER 17, 1957

Avetik Isahakian, famous Armenian poet, writer, academician, member of the Armenian Academy of Sciences and a prominent public figure, was born October 19, 1875, in Kazarapat, near Alexandropol (present day Giumri), Armenia.

Isahakian began his formal education at St. Etchmiadzin Gevorgyan seminary (1889-92). In 1893 he attended classes at Leipzig University as a non-matriculated student. He started his literary as well as political careers in his early youth.

Upon his return from Leipzig in 1895 he entered the ranks of the newly established Alexandropol committee of the Armenian

Revolutionary Federation; through his activities supported armed groups and financial aid sent to the Western Armenia. He was arrested in 1896 and spent a year in Yerevan's prison.

Upon his release from the prison he published first compilation of his poems "Songs and Wounds", however soon was arrested again for his activities "against Russia's Tsar" and sent to Odessa. The lyricism, emotional charge and melody of his poems earned him immediate popularity. His best works are filled with sorrow and lament meditations about the fate of the humanity, injustice of life. Later Isahakian went abroad, where in Zurich University attended Literature and History of Philosophy classes. He returned to his homeland in 1902.

Between 1899-1906 he wrote "The Songs of Haiduks", a compilation of poems that became the first creation within the classical Armenian poetry dedicated to the Armenian freedom struggle. In 1908 Avetik Isahakian, with 158 other Armenian intellectuals, was arrested and after spending half a year in Tiflis's Metekha prison (just like H. Toumanian) he was freed on bail. Staying in Caucasus was not possible any longer and by 1911 Isahakian had emigrated.

He returned to the Soviet Armenia in 1926 where he published a new collection of his poems and stories.

Between 1946 and 1957 he was the Chairman of the Writers' Union of the Republic of Armenia. Isahakian's works have been translated in many languages and his poems have been used as lyrics for new songs.

Avetik Isahakian died October 17, 1957 in Yerevan.

