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Homenetmen Glendale Ararat Chapter
Cultural Division

Get to Know...

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LEVON SHANT

April 6, 1869 – November 29, 1951

Born Levon Seghposian on April 6, 1869 in Constantinople, Ottoman Empire, Levon Shant was an Armenian playwright, novelist, poet, and founder of the Hamazkayin National Cultural Foundation. He also was a life-long member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation.

He received his education at the Kevorkian Seminary in Echmiadzin, and continued his higher education at universities in Germany and Switzerland. For years, he was a teacher and educator, as well as a public and political figure and political activist in Armenia and the Armenian communities in the Diaspora.

He was the vice president of the parliament of the first Republic of Armenia, one of the founders of Hamazkayin, and the primary founder of Hamazkayin Djemaran in Beirut, where he was the school principal for twenty years at the same time teaching pedagogy and psychology. Levon Shant created a unique learning atmosphere in Djemaran. He was capable of inspiring the young generation about the importance of education in preserving the national identity.

Since the first years of the Djemaran Levon Shant assigned himself the task of preparing school textbooks. He subsequently published a series of textbooks on Armenian language for elementary and middle schools.

Although he was totally engaged in education and school management, the writer in him was very much active. Levon Shant found time for his creative writing and for the development of the theater. During the period in which he was the principal of Djemaran, Levon Shant completed the play "Oshin Bail." He also wrote a new novel, "Hokinere dzaravi" ("Thirsty Souls") and "The history of Armenian literature," which is a large volume of theories on the history of Armenian literature.

In the first decade of his literary life, L.evon Shant wrote roma novels, such as "Leran aghchige" (The mountain girl) and "Yeraz orer" (Dreamlike days). In the second and third decades of his literary years, he proved himself as a playwright. His first play "Yesi marte" (The ego man) was published in 1901, followed by "Ourishi hamar" (For others), "Jampuo vra" (On the road) and "Hin asdvadzner" (Ancient gods) in 1912. That same year his shortest, but most literary play, "Gine" (The woman) was published. In 1916 the play "Gaisre" (The Caesar) and in 1922 "Ingadz berdi ishkanouhin" (Princess of the fallen fortress) were published.

Levon Shant passed away on November 29, 1951.

