



ՀԱՅԿԱՆՍՏԱՆԻ ԳԼԵՆԴԵԼԻ ԱՐԱՐԱՏ ՄԱՍՆԱԶԻԻՂԻ ՄՇԱԿՈՒԹԱՅԻՆ ԲԱԺԱՆՍՈՒՄՔ

Homenetmen Glendale Ararat Chapter
Cultural Division

Get to Know...

Volume 2, Issue 3

March 2009



YEGHISHE CHARENTS

MARCH 13, 1897 — NOVEMBER 29, 1937

Yeghishe Charents (Yeghishe Soghomonian) was born in March 13, 1897 in Kars, currently located in North-Eastern Turkey. Born into a family of tradesman, he became one of the legendary figures of Armenian art and anti-Soviet activism. His works have fostered generations of patriotic Armenians and have been translated and read by peoples as diverse as the subjects on which he wrote. One of the leaders of the literary elite of the Soviet Union, his poetic dynamism and musical modality set him apart as one of the most inspired poets—not Armenian poet, but poet—of the twentieth century.

Charents spent 1924 and 1925 as a Soviet diplomat, traveling throughout the Armenian Diaspora urging Armenian writers to return to Armenia, and continue their literary work there.

After returning to Armenia, in 1925, he and a group of other Armenian writers founded a literary organization called the Association of Armenian Proletarian Writers. Unfortunately, many of his colleagues were either deported to Siberia, or shot or both, under Stalin's regime. During the years following 1925, Charents published his satirical novel, *Land of Nairi* (Yerkir Nairi), which rapidly became a great success among the people. Later on, Charents became the director of Armenia's State Publishing House, while he continued his literary career, and began to translate, into Armenian, literary works by various writers.

Charents also published such famous novels as: *Rubayat* (1927), *Epic Dawn* (Epikakan Lussapats, 1930), and *Book of the Road* (Grik Chanaparhi, 1933).

In one of his most famous poems, more infamous probably, called "The Message", written in *Book of the Road*, Charents, supposedly praising the greatness of Stalin, transmits a hidden message to the Armenian people by stringing together the second letter of each line: "Oh! Armenian People,

Your Salvation Lies Only in Your Collective power"
(Ov Hye Zhoghovourd, ko miak prkootyune ko havakakan uzhi mej eh). The message, deemed "nationalistic" by the Soviet regime, was banned and earned Charents heavy criticism and ridicule in the communist Armenian press.

Shortly after the release of *Book of the Road* Yeghishe Charents was arrested and later died on November 29, 1937.

