

## The Rectors of Yerevan State University

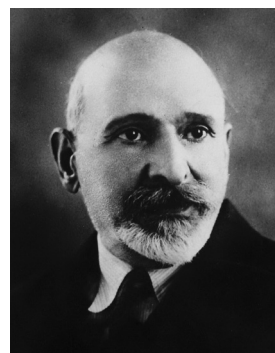


*Youriy Ghambarian,*

As already stated above, due to the tense political situation in the country, the University was reopened only in December, 1920 after having been moved to Yerevan. Yerevan University was officially established in the Soviet period. This is the reason why the two periods of the University have been separated. As a result, the true founder and the first Rector of the University, **Youriy Ghambarian**, a professor of law, was somehow forgotten. Unfortunately, no archives on his activity have been found. He died in 1926. The exact date is unknown. There are no records of the place he was buried, either.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January, 1921, **Hakob Manandian**, a well-known scholar, was appointed Rector of the University. Instead of the former two, five faculties were opened – oriental studies, natural sciences, the faculty of pedagogy, technical and Soviet construction. Being a well-bred and reserved individual and a brilliant scholar, Manandian was concerned about the universal and aesthetic education of students.

During his one-year tenure Hakob Manandian managed to demonstrate his ability of an organizer by creating a sound teaching staff, enriching the University library, solving the problem of textbooks and manuals. After the



*Hakob Manandian*



*David Zavrian*

most important problems had been solved, Manandian left the rector's position and became the Dean of the Faculty of Oriental Studies simultaneously heading the Chair of Armenian History. He was granted the professor's title in 1926. A few years later, in 1931 Hakob Manandian retired from teaching but actively went on with his research in the sphere of history. All his works are sealed with the prudence of a philological and the unerring logics of a historian. Manandian died in 1952.

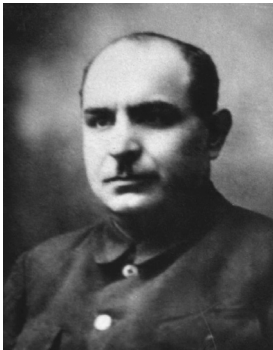
In October, 1921 **David Zavrian** became the rector of the University. Some time later he went to Moscow on business. However, he didn't return to Yerevan after this trip. He began working in the field of chemistry at Tiflis Road



*Hakob Hovhannisian*

author of the first textbook on organic chemistry in Armenian. But, unfortunately, Hakob Hovhannisian fell prey to the Stalinist regime in 1937. He was exiled to Kazakhstan, but on his way there he passed away.

**Tigran Musheghian**, a well-known biologist and philologist has a respectable place in the history of Yerevan University. He held the office from 1933 till 1935. He was the author of numerous scientific articles and textbooks.



*Vram Kostanian*

**Michael Yengibarian**, an economist and philosopher, was appointed rector in January, 1937. But he was not to hold the office long. He was to become one of the numerous victims of the regime. Only three months after his appointment, Yengibarian was accused of High Treason and was sentenced to death.

Constuction Institute. Thus, in 1922, on the 14<sup>th</sup> of February a new rector was appointed.

This time it was Professor **Hakob Hovhannisian**, Doctor of Biology. His name is closely connected with the origin and spread of bio-chemistry in Armenia. Hakob Hovhannisian headed the University until the 9<sup>th</sup> of July, 1930. Due to his efforts, a number of new faculties and laboratories were opened. These years also saw the establishment of a research centre attached to the University. A post-graduate course was opened, as well. After leaving the rector's position Hakob Hovhannisian headed Yerevan Medical Institute. He was the



*Tigran Musheghian*

He died in 1935. In the same year on the 16<sup>th</sup> of July a new rector was appointed.

It was **Vram Kostanian** who had been teaching financial and economic policy at the University since 1929. But Kostanyan, too, fell prey to the Stalinist regime. In 1937 he was exiled to Kolima where he died in 1941.



*Michael Yengibarian*



*Henry Gabrielian*

In the same year of 1937, from April till August, the rector's office was held by Professor **Henry Gabrielian** who was also doomed to find himself in prison by the end of the same year. Luckily the court acquitted him and he was able to return to his work. Professor Gabrielian dedicated himself to teaching the students and carried on researches in the sphere of philosophy. He headed the YSU chair of philosophy. For more than 10 years he was the president of the scientific council awarding Doctor's Degree of Philosophy. Professor Gabrielian guided a large number of specialists on their way to the world of science.

Henry Gabrielian was proceeded by **Anushavan Arzumanyan**, who held the office for only two months (September – October). Arzumanyan specialized in political economy. He also fell victim to the regime of the time. He was unjustly accused of having disseminated nationalistic ideas. Arzumanyan was also blamed for having supported Aghasy Khanjian (the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia). He was sent to prison, but fortunately, he was acquitted shortly afterwards. He started lecturing at the University again. Then Arzumanyan joined the army during the Great Patriotic War. In the post-war years he displayed his talent of a theoretician in economics publishing about a hundred scientific articles. He was a well-known expert in world economics.



*Anushavan Arzumanyan*



*Norair Dabaghian*

In 1934, following Anushavan Arzumanyan, Professor **Norair Dabaghian** held the office for two months (October - November). But his predecessor's fate awaited him. Norair Dabaghian was a specialist in literature. The terror that was raging in the country, struck him when he was making plans for improving the system of the University.

**Kamsar Arakelian** held the University rector's office from November 1937 to June 1938 as he was also doomed to be exiled to Siberia.



*Kamsar Arakelian*



*Garegin Petrosian*

In the year of 1938 **Garegin Petrosian** was appointed rector of Yerevan State University. He had been teaching theoretical physics at the University since 1934. He combined the responsibilities of the rector with those of the head of the theoretical physics chair. In 1965 he became a member of the International Academy of the History of Natural Sciences. In 1941 Petrosian joined the army to defend our Motherland.

Yerevan State University was ranked among the best universities in the USSR.

The next rector was academician **Hrachia Buniatian** (1942, August-1946, May) who was the founder of the Armenian school of biochemistry. He played an immense role in “upbringing” specialists in the field of biochemistry.



*Hrachia Buniatian*



*Hovhannes Poghosian*

**Hovhannes Poghosian**, a philologist, held the rector’s office from January 1947 till December 1948. He did not spare his efforts to train future specialists in the sphere of social studies. His inborn talent of oratory made his lectures exceptionally interesting. And by a strange coincidence death struck him when he was making a speech at the general meeting of the University.

Academician **Gagik Davtian** was appointed rector in 1957 and held the office till May, 1961. Gagik Davtian was the founder of agro-chemistry in Armenia. The theory of industrial hydroponics was developed and it found practical application on Davtian’s initiative. He also took an active participation in compiling the Armenian Encyclopedia.



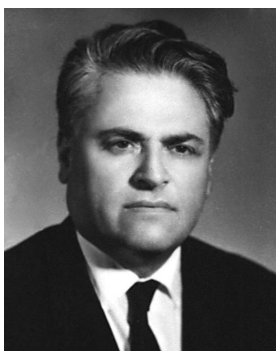
*Gagik Davtian*

*Nagush Harutyunian*

In 1961 the post was taken by **Nagush Harutyunian** who was one of the founders of the Armenian school of mechanics. The period when Nagush Harutyunian held the office (1961, May-1963, April) was one of dynamic changes. The work, done previously was evaluated in a new way. The University, being the major educational establishment in the country was also a powerful centre of initiative as far as changes and innovations in public life were concerned. Due to Nagush Harutyunian's efforts new chairs were opened at the University - those of Biophysics, Nuclear Physics and Economic Cybernetics. Among the newly-established laboratories that of radiation-related problems should be singled out. Harutyunian's contribution

to the sphere of the mechanics of solid substance is immeasurable.

**Hrant Batikian** (1963, June-1966, April) the successor to Academician Harutyunyan, spent his most fruitful years at the University. In 1948 he initiated the foundation of the chair of genetics at YSU. He twice headed the faculty of biology at YSU (1950-1963 and 1968-1978). Professor Hrant Batikian did a lot to improve the working and studying conditions at the University. The new premise of the University was built under his direct supervision.

*Hrant Batikian**Mkrtych Nersisyan*

One of the outstanding representatives of the Humanities was **Mkrtych Nersisyan** (1966, April-1977, May) who had been educated by a galaxy of talented scholars such as Hakob Manandian, Manuk Abeghian, Hovsep Orbely, Hrachia Acharian, Stepan Malkhasiants, Grigor Ghapantsian. This generation of scholars carried the burden of developing scientific thought in our country. Mkrtych Nersisyan was their worthy successor. He did researches in Armenian history in general and in the history of Western Armenia in particular.

A considerable part of his scientific legacy deals with the problem of the genocide perpetrated by Abdul Hamid and the Young Turks in 1876-1917. Academician Mkrtych Nersisyan's contribution to the investigation of the root-causes leading to the Armenian Genocide cannot be overestimated. He will always be remembered as an eminent figure in the sphere of Armenology.



*Sergey Hambartsumian*

Mkrtich Nersisian was followed by Academician **Sergey Hambartsumian**.

Being one of the founders of the school of mechanics in Armenia, Academician Hambartsumian held the office from May, 1977 till February, 1991. In this period Yerevan State University became not only one of the leading Universities in the USSR, but also a scientific research centre. The University went on growing. New faculties were opened - mechanics, mathematics, mathematical cybernetics and research automation, philosophy and sociology, etc. It is beyond doubt that this eminent scientist's fruitful researches and discoveries are outstanding achievements which have enriched the present-day trends and branches of mechanics.

In the years when the Soviet Union collapsed (1991-1993) the University was headed by **Norayr Arakelian**, who managed to consolidate the efforts of the University staff and direct them to the realization of the main task of the educational establishment. The University faced new challenges because of the changes in the socio-political structure. Due to Rector Arakelian's efforts the University not only overcame all the difficulties but also underwent certain improvements. The first steps towards the three-cycle education were made in this period. Yerevan State University got the status of an independent educational establishment. This independence required certain prerequisites, the realization of which was undertaken by the University staff under Rector Arakelian's supervision who had his own approaches concerning the development of University education. There was a great need for new methods and new equipment which would promote the process of individualization of education. Special attention was paid to the scientific and cultural contact and cooperation with the universities abroad. Dedicated sponsors were found who supported the University to overcome the hardships and initiate improvements. Academician Arakelian held the office for 2 years and 8 months, a period when the sons of Armenia were fighting for the liberation of Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh), when University students and graduates were killed in action, and the country seemed to be in a deadlock. In spite of all this, the University succeeded in regaining its reputation. The process of improvements in the University education was already underway.



*Norayr Arakelian*



*Radik Martirosian*

The policy of educational reforms at the University was continued by Academician **Radik Martirosian** who held the office from October, 1993 to May, 2006. The three-cycle education system was implemented. The academic plans and discipline programs were reconsidered and amended. The educational reforms were meant to restructure Yerevan State University into an integrated educational system providing multifaceted quality education thus contributing to further international integration in the fields of education and science. Academician Martirosian's supervision of the researches carried out in the sphere of radio-physics and electronics was invaluable. The international ties of YSU were growing wider and wider. And every year more and more members of the University participated in joint scientific projects.



*Aram Simonian*

The present Rector of Yerevan State University is **Aram Simonian** who has been holding the office since May 15, 2006.

After graduating YSU Faculty of History in 1977, he defended his PhD in 1983 and the thesis for doctor's degree in 2000. He also heads the YSU Armenological Center.

Being a historian by profession, A. Simonian has greatly contributed to the investigation of the Armenian past. He is the author of over 60 scientific and educational works and three monographs. The scientific articles concentrate upon the core issues of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Historical statistics, as well as problems related to the history of Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh) and Zangezur in

1917-1921 are issues of main concern in his works.

The University has witnessed years of further improvement since 2006 becoming a window to the world of science and instruction. At present it bridges the country with about 150 educational institutions in the world. Under the supervision of Prof. Simonian YSU realizes student exchange programs every year with the sole objective to boost the development of science through direct contacts and exchange information.

With the objective to enter the European higher education area by making its academic standards more compatible and comparable with those existing in Europe, the University, along with other educational institutions in the country, has found itself in the complicated but promising Bologna process. (Armenia joined the Bologna process far back in 2005). This process has recently been accelerated under the direct supervision of the current YSU rector who is quite consistent in bringing the level of education at Yerevan State University closer to international standards.