

On the Way to Yerevan State University

On November 20, 1920 the Soviet rule was established in Armenia. The population of the country totaled 720, 000 at that time, making the two thirds of the population of 1913. In 1919 there were only 166 schools in Armenia with their 18.600 pupils against 459 schools with 34,739 pupils in 1914-1915. It was necessary to initiate an economic and cultural development in the country.

On December 6, 1920, the Armenian language was announced the official language of the country. The government did take all possible measures to realize the task of educating and upbringing the younger generation.

One of the priorities of the government was the restoration of the high school in the country. The further development of economy, as well as education needed top specialists who could receive their education only in a higher educational institution. This made the role of the University of Yerevan unique and exceptional.

The reopening ceremony of People's University of Yerevan was held on January 23, 1921.



The University Building in Astafian Street

The reopening of the University was a great event in the life of Armenians. The Armenian intelligentsia spread all over the world were given a chance to work in their country and assist the scientific and spiritual growth of the country. Armenians had a chance to receive education in Armenian.

The People's University of Yerevan was founded in very difficult times and this circumstance could not but affect its activity. However, even in most unfavorable economic situation the government did everything to secure the university's regular work. As a result, some people considered the reopening of the university as "luxury". Moreover, some even suggested that it should be closed down. The issue was considered at the national parliament. In the end it was decided that the university was to enhance its position and expand the scope of subjects taught.

Initially the university had only 2 faculties - social sciences and natural sciences. Both faculties had a considerable number of students willing to learn and improve their knowledge.

However, the People's University of Yerevan stopped functioning after only 18-20 days because of civil fights broken out in the country. Though the fights ended in April, it was not possible to restart classes at the University until October 10, 1921.

Year after year the number of students at Yerevan State University was increasing. It provided the country with qualified engineers, architects, doctors, economists and lawyers. Its former graduates took the "light" to the remotest corners of the country.

One of the challenges the University faced during the initial period of its foundation and activity was the problem of the highly qualified staff. The graduates of Russian or other foreign universities did not return to Armenia because of the lack of a wider sphere of activity. The top



The Administrative Board of the University (1926)



a University auditorium (1922-1930)

Armenian specialists were not only out of Armenia but very often were unaware of its doings. There were two ways to enroll the University staff. First, it was necessary to engage old and experienced specialists in these efforts. Second, the problem could be solved by training a new staff which would

take rather a long time. The task was successfully carried out with the help of the government. A great number of lecturers were invited to give a lecture here. Among the newly formed staff there were also local specialists who, prior to lecturing at the University, had worked in Gevorgian Academy and Nersisian School. As to those invited from abroad, they had graduated the



a University laboratory at work (1924)

popular universities of Germany, France, Switzerland, Russia, etc. They were internationally-renowned scientists, scholars and pedagogues of Armenian origin fluent in several foreign languages, who returned to Armenia to participate in the rebirth of the Armenian University.

Based on the decision of the government issued on October 20, 1923, People's University was renamed the State University. In the coming years the number of the University's faculties grew yearly to meet the increasing demand for specialists in the fields of education, economics and culture.

From 1960-1990 the Alma Mater experienced an unequalled period of development. This was a time of change and large-scale reforms, one of the most significant achievements of the period being the establishment of the Armenology Center.

In 1995-96 the new educational process was launched at the University. Aiming at bringing the University education closer to international standards and making it competitive with the renowned universities abroad, Yerevan State University, together with a number of other higher educational establishments operating in the country, adopted the two-degree system of education.

Today, Yerevan State University is a modern research center and does its best to inject new content into education. Studies in diverse fields of science and the Humanities are carried out by highly qualified scientists and scholars of the University who bring their invaluable contribution to the further development and expansion of science in the country.

The professional staff of YSU totals to 213 professors, 475 associate professors, 386 assistant professors, 460 instructors who see their mission in the indefatigable service to the country's scholarship, science and culture. Presently, Yerevan State University hosts 13.000 students at the 21 faculties mentioned below:

Faculty of Physics includes theoretical physics, mathematical physics, modeling of physical phenomena, astrophysics, nuclear physics, optics, optoelectronics, solid state physics, laser physics, macromolecular physics, acoustophysics, quantum electronics. The research conducted in the chairs of the Faculty in the fields of super-dense bodies, non-linear optics of statistically ungovernable media, the dependence of solid-state are widely recognized as most valuable scientific achievements in the field of physics.

Faculty of Radiophysics trains students in the fields of radiophysics and electronics, physics of semiconductors and microelectronics and telecommunication and signal researches. The Master's Program of the Faculty includes UHF radiophysics and telecommunications; Physics of semiconductors and microelectronics; theory of wave processes and cosmic physics and ultra-large scale integral schemes. Various researches are conducted in the two laboratories of the Faculty. Presently about 500 students, future radiophysicists and physicist-engineers study at the Faculty.

Faculty of Mathematics and Mechanics offers a wide scope of specializations in mathematics, actuarial mathematics and mechanics. The Master's Program of the Faculty takes in mechanics of deforming solid state, differential equations, applied algebra and geometry, methods of optimization, theory of functions, theory of

probability and mathematical statistics. Research areas of the Faculty include the analysis of the contact and mixed problems on elasticity theory; the problems on deforming atmospheres and the interaction of physical-mechanical fields, etc.

Faculty of Informatics and Applied Mathematics is made up of separate departments specializing in mathematical methods in the natural sciences; computers and programming, algorithmic languages; mathematics of computers and applied analysis. The Faculty provides its students with in-depth knowledge in computer engineering, theory of algorithms and programming, computer mathematics, mathematical models of processes in the natural sciences, optimization and applied analysis, etc

Faculty of Chemistry certifies chemists, environmental chemists and chemistry teachers. The following chairs function in the Faculty: Inorganic Chemistry; Organic Chemistry; Analytical Chemistry; Physical and Colloid Chemistry; Pharmaceutical Chemistry; Ecological Chemistry and Chemical Physics. In addition, chemical experiments are performed in three laboratories. The key areas of research include; synthesis and research of environment-free, biologically and catalytically active complex combinations that are widely applied in medicine; synthesis of saturated and unsaturated lactones, chemical substitutions, structure and biological activity, purposeful syntheses, chemistry of peroxides and a lot more.

Faculty of Biology. Training is conducted in the fields of biology; biophysics; biochemistry and bioinformatics. The Faculty realizes its educational programs through 12 departments: Zoology; Biochemistry; Genetics; Biophysics; Ecology and Environment Protection; Medical Biochemistry; Biotechnology; Human and Animal Physiology; Bioinformatics, Botany, Nutrition Biology. The research carried out in numerous fields of Biology has brought the Faculty an international recognition. Among them are the study of the impact of hormones, the botany, the flora and fungi of Armenia are to be singled out. Graduates of the Faculty are certified biologists, biochemists, biophysicists who are employed in investigating-centres or engaged in different agricultural or industrial activities.

Faculty of Geography and Geology. Here the students receive a wide background in geography and geology. The subjects taught include physical geography, conservation and rational use of natural resources, cartography, meteorology, mineralogy, historical and regional geology, methods for the exploration and investigation of mineral resources and many more.

Faculty of Philosophy and Psychology. The academic work at the Faculty is shared by five chairs: Theoretical Philosophy and Logics; Social Philosophy and Ethics; History of Philosophy; Theory and History of Psychology and Applied Psychology. Students are trained in philosophy, ethics, medical psychology, age psychology, social psychology, the problem of man in the history of Armenian philosophy, etc. The Faculty does not spare its efforts to boost the development of psychological services in Armenia.

A number of researches in the field of philosophy have received wide recognition in academic circles and resulted in establishing academic contacts with renowned philosophers in Finland, the USA, Belgium.

Faculty of Theology provides the students with fundamental knowledge on the History of Religions and the History of Armenian Church and Church-Related Studies. The Faculty, the number of whose students currently exceeds 200, has found its respectable place among the long-run ones due to the high level of education it provides.

Faculty of International Relations. The specializations of the Faculty include international relations; political science; public management. The students get detailed information about the long history of international relations and political science. In recent years democracy and globalization-related subjects and those dwelling upon the prospects of Armenia's integration to the world community have been of special appeal to Armenian students.

The graduates find their respectable place in the society serving as diplomats, employees in various fields of public sector, thus exercising their knowledge in practice.

Faculty of Law has 7 departments; Theory and History of the State and Law; Constitutional Law; Civil Law; Civil Procedure; Criminal Law; Criminal Procedure and Criminology; European and International Law. Being relatively a new department the latter already enjoys great popularity among students as with respect to recent changes in the Armenian political life and due to Armenia's membership to a number of international structures, more attention is devoted to such issues as Human Rights, their protection and abuse, etc.

The Faculty trains future judges, lawyers capable of bringing their contribution in areas as diverse as the government, the court system, prosecutor's offices, Ministry of Home Affairs, law enforcement bodies, etc. The Faculty is doing its best to train specialists-to-be to assist the further establishment of the Institute of Law; to overcome the challenges of the developing Armenian jurisprudence, to eradicate corruption and to help establish rule of law and lawfulness in the young republic.

Faculty of History was one of the first faculties established at the University. It conducts its activity through the help of its chairs of Armenian History; History of Armenia's Neighboring Countries; Archeology and Ethnography; History and Theory of Armenian Art and Culture Studies. The basic areas of study of the Faculty embrace the political history of Armenia; Armenian historiography, history of the Armenian culture, historical ethnography and geography. The problem of the Armenian Cause and Genocide-related issues are of central importance. Special attention is paid to foreign language teaching such as English; French; Russian; Latin; Turkish; Persian; Arabic; Ancient Greek, etc.

Faculty of Sociology that currently has over 500 students, masters in sociology and social work. It trains students in the fields of social work, conflict resolution, sociology and methodology of sociological researches and PR. Among diverse subjects taught at the Faculty, topics related to social reforms and national identity are to be singled out.

Faculty of Economics is one of the leading traditional faculties at the University. Students are trained in economics and management. There are six chairs at the Faculty: Finance and Accounting; International Economic Relations; Economic Mathematical Modeling; Management and Business; Theory of Economics and Mathematics. After the independence of Armenia the Faculty started to focus its attention on the problems

related to Armenia's economic state; its economic relations with other countries. The Faculty has long been seriously concerned with seeking ways to promote the rise in the standard of living in the country. The recent happenings in the world economics and namely the notorious economic crisis was not left unnoticed by the department. A series of researches are being conducted to trace the root-causes of the economic crisis booming in the world. Analyses on its possible effect on the Armenian economy and market are underway.

Faculty of Journalism specializes in the art of journalism. There are two chairs at the Faculty: History and Theory of Press and Radio and Television Journalism. Here the students get insight into the fascinating world of radio and TV broadcast secrets. In addition, they are given a chance to get acquainted with diverse methods of information delivery that are so important nowadays. The Faculty cooperates with a number of radio and TV companies, editorial houses of newspapers and magazines, various news agencies operating within the country. Currently the number of the students in the Faculty reaches 280.

Faculty of Armenian Philology has two divisions – Armenian Language and Literature; Management of Education. Being one of the first departments of the University, the Faculty has long been trying to foster the further development of the Armenian language and culture. The Faculty has always played a decisive role in the study of Armenology. Here, the students are given an opportunity to get thorough and sweeping knowledge in the History of the Armenian literature; modern Armenian literature; world literature, theory and criticism, etc. The Faculty helps the students to uncover the secrets of the art of translation. It works in close cooperation with the centers of Armenian Studies in various countries.

Faculty of Oriental Studies was founded far back in 1968. The faculty comprises three departments: Iranian Studies, Arabic Studies and Turkish Studies specializing respectively in the Persian, Arabic and Turkish languages and literature. Due to the Armenian translations of a vast amount of Oriental literature, the Armenian readers are given a chance to have access to the works of medieval and contemporary Oriental writers.

Faculty of Russian Philology became a separate faculty in 1976 and soon was considered to be one of the most prolific centers of Russian Studies in Armenia. The Faculty has four chairs; the History of Russian Literature; Theory and Methodology of the Russian Language; Russian for the Humanities Faculties and Russian for the Faculties of Natural Sciences. The subjects taught at the Faculty cover the whole period of the development of the Russian language and literature. It provides the students with most valuable information on the history of the Russian language and literature; Slavic philology; theory and practice of translation, etc. The department was on the peak of popularity in 1980s. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, it seemed to have lost its reputation.. However, recent statistic investigations prove the opposite. Every year more and more students express willingness to enroll in the Faculty, thus demonstrating the interest of the Armenian society towards the Russian Language and Russian literature.

Preparatory Faculty for Foreign Students was established far back in 1961 taking into account the growing number of foreign students in the country. So far about

6000 foreign students from 55 countries of the world have taken preparatory courses at the Faculty. During their one-year-long studies, foreign students are given lectures on general subjects - mathematics, chemistry, biology, geography, foreign literature, etc.

The core objective of the Faculty is to enhance the knowledge of foreign students of the Armenian language and help them integrate into the Armenian society and facilitate their contact with the University students.

Faculty of Romance and Germanic Philology. In 1935, i.e. 16 years after the foundation of YSU, the department of foreign languages was opened at the University.

The department, the number of whose students initially totaled to 25 only, had more than 300 students in 1980s and over 1000 in 2005.

The Faculty of Romance and Germanic Philology, established in 1991 on the basis of the department of Romance and Germanic languages of the Faculty of Armenian Philology, is presently viewed as one of the biggest educational and scientific units of the University and enjoys immense popularity among other faculties.

Since 1991 the Faculty has succeeded in receiving wide recognition not only in the country but beyond its borders as well, skillfully and successfully overcoming the challenges it meets in its way, reforming educational programs, introducing new and more efficient methods of teaching to meet the modern requirements of science, economy and culture.

The activities of the Faculty are shared by its 8 chairs (the Chairs of English Philology, German Philology, Romance Philology, French Philology, Translation Theory and Practice, Foreign Literature, English Chairs No 1 and No 2. The staff of the Faculty totals to over 200 lecturers with 6 doctors and professors, and over 40 PhDs. Guest-lecturers from the USA, Great Britain, Italy, Spain, Brazil are regularly invited to read lectures at the Faculty. The latter help provide the students with high level FL teaching.

Currently, along with its traditional departments of English, German and French, those of Spanish, Italian, Translation Studies and Intercultural communication have found their place under the roof of the Faculty. Apart from languages, the students take courses in foreign literature, FL teaching methodology, introduction to Germanic philology, theoretical grammar, theoretical phonetics, fundamentals of linguistics, FL history, lexicology, stylistics, theory of translation, theory of intercultural communication and many more. The department of translation studies, indispensable for any specialization of the Faculty, aims at developing both translation and interpretation skills.

The basic scientific trends the Faculty specializes in are; semantics, text linguistics, text interpretation, contemporary methods of FL teaching, the study of contemporary problems of foreign literature, etc.

The Faculty of Romance and Germanic Philology successfully cooperates with a number of celebrated universities in the world, namely with those in the USA, Great Britain, France, Germany and Russian Federation, as well as with AUA (American University of Armenia), Russian-Armenian (Slavonic) University and State Linguistic University after V. Brusov in Yerevan.

The lecturers of the Faculty are given a chance to take part in regular training

courses in France, Belgium, Italy, Spain, Germany, the USA and the UK. In addition, the Faculty is a good friend to many foreign embassies to Armenia and international organizations functioning in the country. Among them AASE (Armenian Association for the Study of English) should be singled out the latter being a member of ESSE since September 2003. Together with the Association the Faculty periodically holds conferences, seminars related to the English language, literature and culture, thus promoting further exchange of information and experience between home and foreign scholars, simultaneously enhancing cooperation with foreign higher educational institutions and scientific organizations.

Every year international examinations of Spanish are held in the Faculty based on which the students are awarded internationally acclaimed diplomas after Servantes.

Among the noteworthy achievements of the Faculty is the foundation and publication of a number of scientific journals; “Astghik” – a translator’s journal, “Foreign Languages in High School”, “FLSP” (Foreign Language for Specific Purposes), “Context” and “Journal of Romance Philology”. In the field of English the Faculty most efficiently cooperates with “Armenian Folia Anglistika”- an international journal concerned with English-related researches. Being delivered to more than 50 countries of the world, it “exports” the scientific achievements of Armenian scholars.

Currently, the Faculty trains more than 1700 students most of whom are sure to find respective jobs in different companies, organizations, foreign embassies and occupy a high position in the administrative sphere and elsewhere.

One of the most remarkable accomplishments of Yerevan State University was the establishment of **Yerevan University School of Translation** in the 70s of the 20th century against the background of seven famous schools of translation:



The Testament (miniature)

- The School of Classic Translation (5th cent.)
- The Greek School of Translation (5-8th cent.)
- The Cilician School of Translation (12-13th cent.)
- The Unitarian School of Translation (14th cent.)
- The Late Medieval School of Translation (17-18th cent.)
- The Mekhitarist School of Translation (18-20th cent.)
- The Smyrna and Tiflis School of Translation (the second half of the 19th cent.)

Always bearing in mind the ancestral traditions Yerevan State University School of Translation is carrying out the honorable task of transmitting literary pieces from one culture to another.

Actually, translation in Armenia is as old as original authorship. The first sentence to be translated into Armenian “*To know wisdom and instruction, to perceive the words of understanding*” (Prov.2) was done just after the invention of the Armenian Alphabet.

The history of University learning in Armenia dates back to the Middle Ages. The creation of the Armenian alphabet by Mesrop Mashtots in 405-406 AD after the adoption of Christianity as state religion in 301 opened up new vistas in the development of the Humanities and the Exact Sciences in Armenia and a great number of centres of higher education were established in different parts of the country. This naturally had a very favorable influence on the further development of Armenian thought.



“Astghik”

In 1988, actually for the first time in the Armenian History of Translation the Faculty initiated the publication of a translator’s journal - **Astghik** (named after the pagan goddess of Love and Fertility). Here not only translations from different languages into Armenian and from Armenian into other languages are published but also articles on the Theory and Art of Translation. The 20th anniversary of the journal was celebrated in October 2008, on the day when Armenians commemorate the Holy Translators.

In the last decade of the 20th century there sprang up a new Shakespearean Center at Yerevan State University, Faculty of Romance and Germanic Philology (being the follower of the first Armenian Shakespearean Center founded in 1965 at the Armenian Academy of Sciences).

In 1992 the Faculty set forth the specialization of a translator and in 1999 the Department of Translation Studies welcomed future translators whose talents are from above. Here the future translators study the works of world-famous authors in the original and in translation. Term papers, diploma papers, final papers and theses are written and defended. The problems of adequacy, the translation of stylistic devices, imagery, word play, versification and exactitude are studied here.

In 1997 the first conference devoted to the University School of Translation proved an encouragement to the endeavor of scholars - home and foreign, to study the realms of beauty through Translation.

Conferences followed one another: *Shakespeare through Time and Space (1998)*, *Lewis Carroll – Friend and Teacher (1999)*, *20th Century Art of Translation (2000)*, *Shakespearean Days (2000)*, *Bible Studies (2001)*, *The Blessed Translators (2003)*, *Again Those Blessed 5 Translators (2005)*, out of which the 2 being international. The conferences are dedicated to the links existing between different countries to bridge time and space through translation.

From 2005 on annual conferences are accompanied with the Vow of Translators (it started together with the opening of the Department of Translation Studies).

The Department is involved in compiling dictionaries, proverb books, textbooks, manuals on the theory and art of translation, publishing monographs and articles. The University School of Translation, the Department of Translation Studies, the University Shakespearean Center will never know rest until they realize their dreams and desires, until they are sure that the coming generation of Armenian translators will achieve better results contributing to the development of intercultural communication.