

***Petre Melikishvili -
The First Rector Of The Javakhishvili State
University***



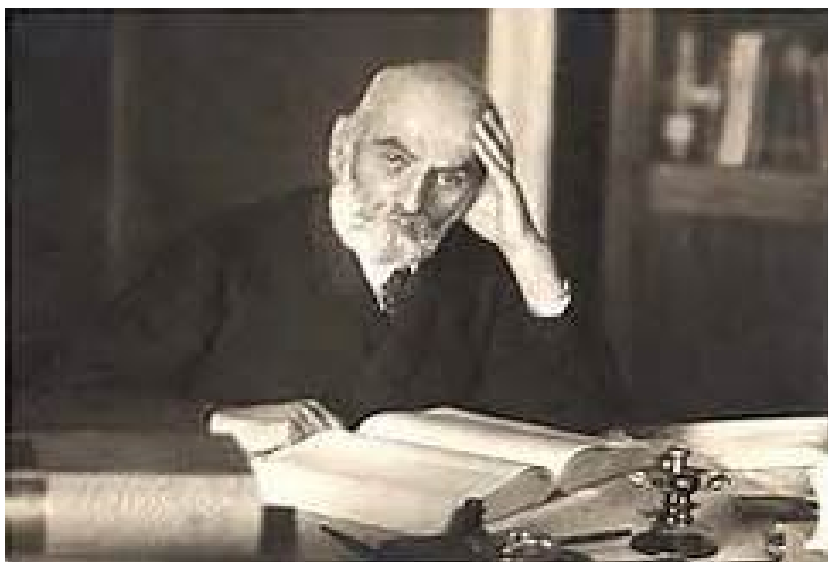
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The First Rector of the Ivane Javakhishvili State University



Establishment of the first University in Georgia was one of the most important events in the history of our country. This fact was preceded by the devotion of many people, among whom Petre Meliqishvili was one of the most prominent personalities. Therefore I would like to tell you on the role, Petre Meliqishvili had played in this remarkable event and on the life he had passed.



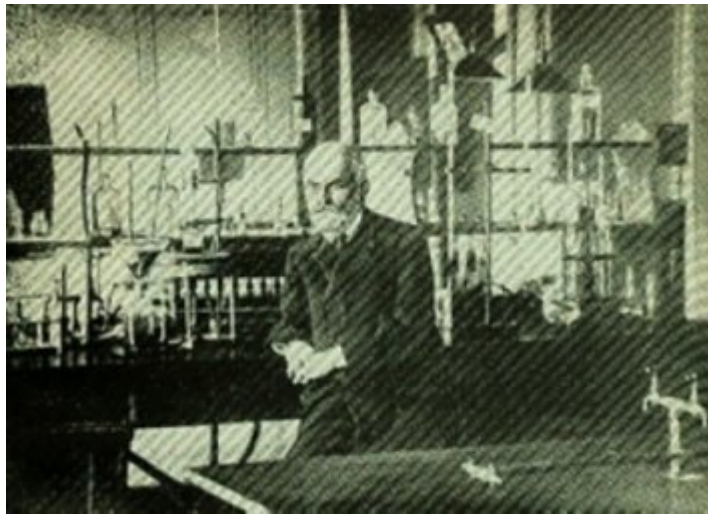
In 1918, the first National University was opened in the Caucasus, which laid the foundation for the European-style high school in Georgia. In the 1860s, there appeared a new creative and resourceful generation in Georgia, headed by the great Georgian public figure Ilia Chavchavadze, whose name is related to a new period of the spiritual rebirth in the history of our country.



In those years the fight for the establishment of the university became particularly active. Real opportunities to create a high school were even more defined after the Nobiliary Manorial Bank was established in Tbilisi. It was the only Bank in the Russian Empire that spent its profits on the interests of culture, education and economic of the nation.



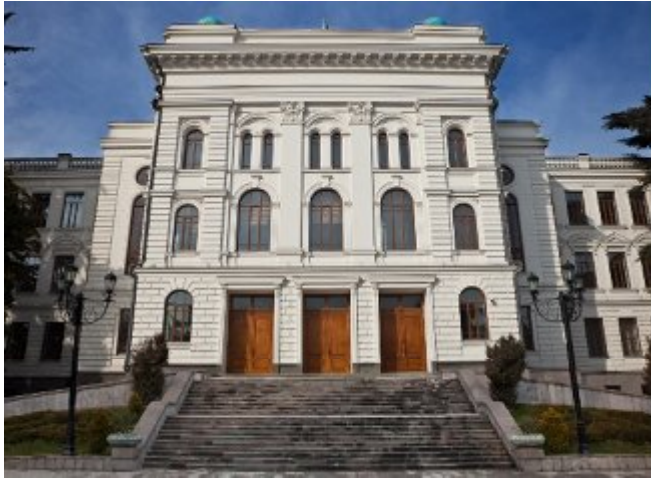
Since the early XX century Ivane Javakhishvili, the St. Peterburg University graduate and its privatum-docens, began organizing the establishment of the Georgian University. Since the first days of the 1917 February Revolution Ivane Javakhishvili lived in St.Petersburg and he launched preparations for the opening of the high educational institution.



On May 12 in Tbilisi, the first meeting of the University Society Founders was held in Petre Melikishvili's apartment in Tbilisi. This meeting was headed by Ekvtime Takhaishvili. The "Georgian Free University Society" was founded that day and played a great role in the founding of the University. In the late December the intake of the students to the University was advertised in the press.



The first National University in the Caucasus was opened on 26 January, 1918 (according to the new style – on February 8), on the day of remembrance of the Georgian king, David the Builder. The professors' Council, on Ivane Javakhishvili's proposal, elected Petre Melikishvili as the first Rector of the University. Ivane Javakhishvili, himself, became the Chair Dean of Philosophy. In the newly established university lectures were given by Ivane Javakhishvili, Justin Abuladze, Giorgi Akhvlediani, Philippe gogichaishvili,, Ekvtime tayaishvili, Cornell Kekelidze and others.



In 1989 the University was named after its founder – Ivane Javakhishvili. At present Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University is one of the advanced scientific-research institutions of Georgia. It is, in its scope, one of the largest in Georgia. Today TSU 7 at 22 thousand students study at the 7 faculties of the Tbilisi State University. There are carried out short and long term certification programs, besides the Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral (degree) educational programs in the Tbilisi State University.

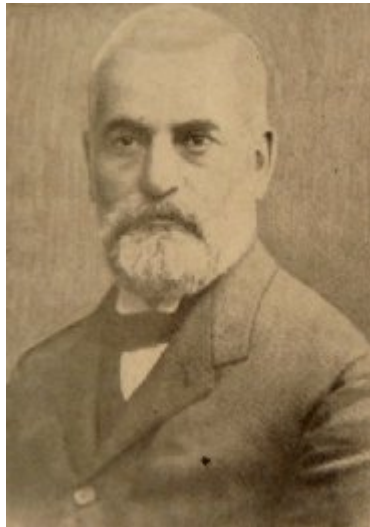


A lot of public figures, together with Ivane Javakhishvili, participated in the establishment of the Georgian University. Petre Melikishvili made his contribution In this business by taking upon himself a very hard responsibility and by giving his

consent to become the first Rector of Tbilisi State University. I would like to remind you the biography of this distinguished man.

Petre Melikishvili (1850 -1927)

The first Rector of the Tbilisi State University, Petre Melikishvili, was born on 11 July, 1850 in Tbilisi to the well-educated family, where everybody tried to observe Georgian traditions. Ilia Chavchavadze, Akaki Tsereteli, Niko Nikoladze, Giorgi Tsereteli, Sergi Meskhi and others often gathered there. Obviously, it should have a great impact on the future scientist, and it was confirmed by his subsequent activities.



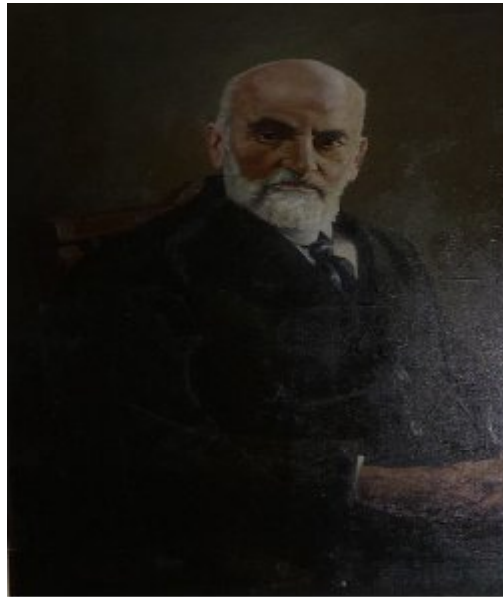
Peter's Father Grigoli was a progressive person. It is noteworthy, for example, Grigoli's activities to establish a printing house in Tbilisi. Ten-year-old Petre Melikishvili was taken to the First Tbilisi Gymnasium, where he was distinguished for his excellent studies. After finishing the Gymnasium he continued his studies at the Odessa University on the department of Natural Sciences under the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics.



Those professors, who had democratic ideas, assembled at that Faculty and it left its mark on the formation of the future scientist during that time. In 1872, Petre Melikishvili, graduated from the University with honors two years earlier; in 1873 his first scientific work was published. Soon, he was sent abroad, from where he returned in 1875 and began working for the University of Odessa. In 1881, he defended successfully his academic degree.



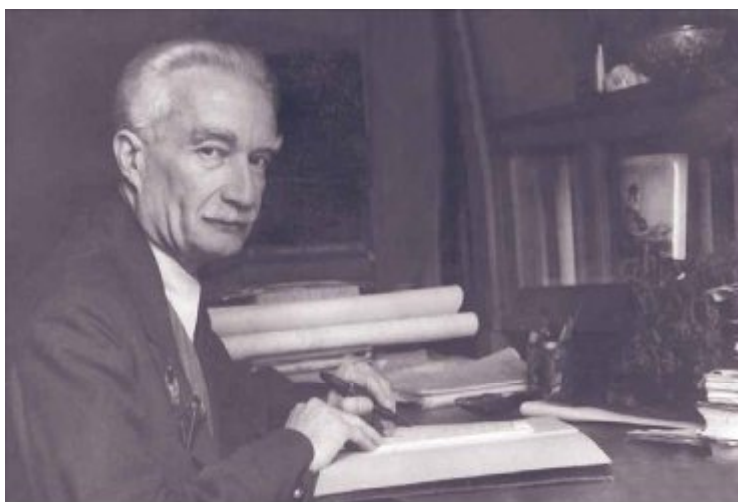
A year later he defended the Doctoral Thesis and it was confirmed Petre Melikishvili's appointment as the Professor of the Theoretical Chemistry Chair. In 1899 he was awarded the Lomonosov Prize. Petre Melikishvili's scientific work was marked with a great diversity. He created more than 80 works on different aspects of chemistry. Petre Melikishvili was one of the initiators of establishing the Georgian University.



On January 13, 1918 he was elected at the first official meeting of the Professors' Board of the Georgian University as the first Rector. Initially, Ivane Javakhishvili's candidature was nominated in the agenda, and nominated Petre Melikishvili, an honored Professor of the Odessa University, a scientist of the worldwide standing.



Ivane Javakhishvili clarified his proposal by saying the following: "Petre Melikishvili is a famous scientist not only in Russia, abroad as well, and his election will enhance the prestige of our University". But Petre Melikishvili withdrew his candidature because of a verbal incident with one of the professors.



On December 17, 1919, Petre Melikishvili became an elected University Rector. Later, exemption from the liability of a Rector, Petre Melikishvili's scientific-pedagogical activities expended even more. Georgian people celebrated prominent patriot's fiftieth anniversary of his scientific-pedagogical activities.



The Jubilee became a great festival. It was Petre Melikishvili's - a great scientist's and citizen's - overall acknowledgement. Petre Melikishvili died on March 23, 1927, at the age of 77. He was interred at the yard of the TSU.