

Memorandum of the Meeting of Departmental Heads
with the President, February 17, 1934

Hussein Bey spoke very strongly on the wisdom of dismissing a Turkish teacher (Shekip Bey in this instance) and distributing his work among non-Turkish teachers of Balkan nationality, (The proposal of giving Mr. Diacoff a class in English in addition to teaching Bulgarian having raised the issue). He said that we were very dilatory in carrying out our professed purpose of making Robert College a Turkish-American institution and that the dismissal of several Turkish teachers, as long as we retain on our Staff men who are neither Turks nor Americans, would seem to the Government officials and the public a violation of our promise. He stated that the retention of men of British, German, Swiss or French nationality was not open to the same objections. He implied that Greeks and Armenians of Turkish nationality could continue to serve on our staff. (He has, however, expressed the opinion privately on more than one occasion that the presence of Greeks and Armenians - even of Turkish nationality - is resented by the Turkish public and that we should supplant such men - especially those in administrative offices - by Turks as soon as possible). He stated that it would be quite all right for Mr. Diacoff to teach Bulgarian.

Hussein Bey then expressed himself most emphatically as to the danger of stirring up unfavorable sentiment by dismissing Turks in any number. To dismiss Shekip Bey, Shevket Bey, the drawing teacher, and Ihsan Bey, the woodwork teacher, in addition to Selim Bey and Refik Bey would have, he asserted, most unfortunate repercussions. If we are to prevent our enrolment dropping still lower we must avoid stirring up ill-will and creating the impression that our foundations are shaky. He indicated that we are within our rights and within the range of practicable and safe measures in insisting on the withdrawal of Selim Bey and Refik Bey, and that the services of Salih Murat Bey can be dispensed with if we can arrange otherwise for the "baccalaureate physics" 1 hr. weekly.

In connection with the national question mentioned earlier, Hussein Bey said that the government officials would understand and accept an out-and-out American institution with Turks teaching the Turkish subjects only, and they would accept an American-Turkish enterprise with Americans and Turks working together. They would not, however, be favorably disposed towards the retention of the mixed staff of Americans, Turks, Greeks, Armenians and Bulgarians which we now have. Is there any more reason, he said, why we should have a Bulgarian teaching general subjects here than the American College in Sofia should have a Turk on their staff?

As to the opinion of other members of the group as expressed in this meeting, I think I can say that Professor Moore and Scipio feel as I do, i.e., that the dismissal of the drawing teacher, the woodwork teacher and Shekip Bey would do more harm to the morale and prestige than the saving of their small salaries would justify. Moreover, as a result of a re-examination of the assignments by Prof. Moore and myself it is apparent that Shek' Bey's time can be fully

and usefully utilized.

Another question that came up at the meeting was the question of Mr. Mihran Djedjizian. The opinion was voiced that whether he is actually retired or not he should have stipend enough to enable him to live with some decency. In view of the fall in the dollar it would seem that \$700 over and above taxes would be the minimum. The opinion was voiced that Mr. Djedjizian, who has served 41 years, is as much entitled to benefit by the proposed restitution of salary for next year as any other member of the Staff.

The above represents my impression of the opinions expressed by Hussein Bey on the questions he discussed, and the general sentiment of the majority of those present on certain other questions.

Respectfully submitted,

H. L. Scott
Principal of the Academy

1. We are very rapidly reducing the "Balkan" elements in our teaching and administrative staff. Last year four or five such individuals were eliminated and this year six more will go. We are thus moving rapidly towards a personnel of Americans, Western Europeans and Turks.
2. Hussein Bey is unquestionably very sincere in his feeling that too drastic a reduction of Turkish personnel would jeopardize the possibility of recovering our former satisfactory figures of enrolment. After many years of close association with him I can say with conviction that he wishes to promote the best interests of the institution. His position as an intermediary between the College and the Turkish officials and public is an exceedingly difficult one, and we should make allowances when he seems over-cautious or timid.
3. I believe we should not be unduly pessimistic over the Turkish attitude on the personnel question. Let us be satisfied with a moderate reduction in the numbers of the Turkish staff this year, which the Turks can not but help recognize as reasonable and right. It is, however, absolutely necessary to "stick to our guns" when once the decision is made. We should resist possible pressure from the outside for the reinstatement of the two or three who are dropped even to the point of closing the College. Giving way would make any attempts at independent decisions an impossibility in the future.
4. I am very decided in my conviction that the continued existence of Robert College depends on the state of mind of the people of our constituency. It is vital to our future to maintain intact as far as possible the prestige of the College as a going institution. The confidence of the people of the country in our ability to continue our work successfully has already been severely shaken by the various measures of retrenchment already taken, which were, of course, necessary. We should, however, give very serious consideration as to how much further we can go without irreparably damaging our reputation and sowing seeds of uncertainty in the minds of parents so that they will feel unable to take the risk of sending us their sons.

We are reducing "till it hurts" in several departments next year. We are adding substantially to individual teaching loads. The Trustees are generous in their offer to make further financial sacrifices in order that the teachers may be more adequately paid. Let us not run the risk of having these sacrifices rendered fruitless by over-reaching ourselves in the matter of dismissals. There is a great danger of producing an unfortunate moral effect on the staff and public just at the moment when morale and confidence need strengthening. Without dropping Shekip Bey or Shevket or Ihsan Beys we are reducing the teaching and administrative staff by 15! (Fisher, Miles, Blaser, Popoff, Shukri, Trosch, Menzel, Pimenides, Shirinian, Sarafian, Selim, Refik, Thompson, Mihri Hanoum and Salih Murad). This is a very substantial cut, especially when it is in addition to the reduction of 20 made last year.

If by maintaining confidence we increase the number of new students next year whatever slight slack, there may still be here and there

will soon be taken up. If, despite every effort, feeling is unsympathetic and enrolment drops below that of this year, we shall have to face the major issue of whether it is worth while carrying on. This is an ugly thought to have to entertain, but it would be a foolish policy to continue our work at the risk of seriously depleting our financial resources in the face of an unsympathetic and unappreciative government and public. There are probably other places where the money and effort expended would invoke a friendly and appreciative response. Another year of trial may clarify the situation and simplify the issues. It may well be that we shall find that the heritage of past relationships between Turks and foreigners is after all too formidable an obstacle to overcome even by every means which good will can devise. Then we should with perfect friendliness announce that we can not carry on an American institution under present conditions. Whether the Trustees would care to contribute to an institution under Turkish control would be for them to decide. Probably they would prefer to use the income elsewhere. Let us, however, for this coming year, - while making every possible economy - adopt tactics which will inspire confidence and counteract the prevailing impression that we are in a bad way and about to close up.

5. We shall next year find ourselves shorthanded for the program of extra-curricular activities, as we depend chiefly on Americans for this work. It is possible that a young man or two might offer his services in return for board and room as did Mr. Trosch this year. Such men would not have to be used for teaching, perhaps, but they would be exceedingly useful for surveillance work, helping in the organization of games, programs, assisting in the Social Hall activities, coaching, debating teams, leading hobby clubs, coaching plays etc. We would use their services to very good purpose. Perhaps Mr. Staub could be on the look-out for such possible volunteers.

H. L. Scott
Principal

February 19, 1934.

Boğaziçi Üniversitesi

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