

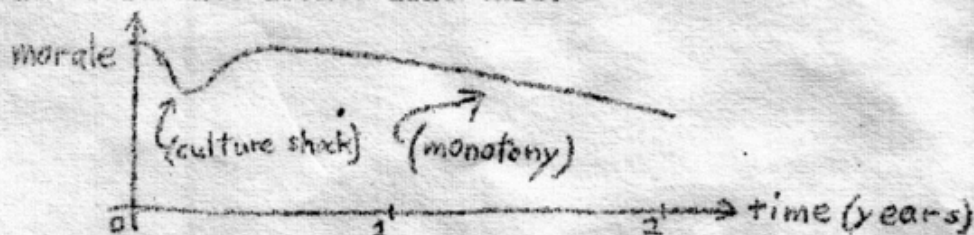
Nevşehir
8 June, 1963

Dear friends, relatives, and colleagues,

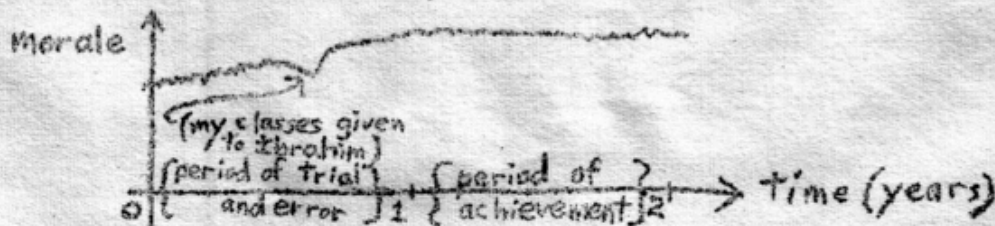
The school year has ended here in Turkey, and I feel like sharing some of my thoughts at this point with those of you who are somehow still interested. Before coming to Turkey, two years seemed like a fairly long time to spend in a small town teaching English, a job with which I was not emotionally involved and which didn't promise to be intellectually stimulating. I predicted that, in spite of my feeling of great relief on getting out of college, I would be yearning again for the academic atmosphere before my two years of intellectual exile wore up. I viewed with favor the idea of switching towns after the first year in the Peace Corps, to get a variety of experience and to spread the effects of one's work to a wider group. And I anticipated that, if I spent two years in one place, the first would be full of the excitement of discovery and the second would be characterized by boredom and hardened routine.

All but one of these predictions has been (quite happily) disappointed. Eight months in Nevşehir have indeed had the effect of nostalgifying my memories of studentdom to the point of making the idea palatable again. And the tremendous handicap of being an amateur and being ignorant has become manifest to me both in my teaching and in my efforts to make some sense of the culture I see around me. So as preparation even for an activist profession I have come to view more education as an absolute necessity.

But my idea that boredom would mark the second year in any town was, I can safely say now, wrong. If, before leaving the US, I had had to draw a curve representing my ~~an~~ expected morale over time, it would have looked like this:



But if I had to draw one now, I would make it like this:



In other words, I am feeling better now than ever before about staying two years here, and nothing would make me sadder than being transferred to another town. The reason is that it has taken a whole school year for me to acquire the teaching skill I will need to be a moderately good teacher; it has taken a year to learn enough Turkish and enough about Nevşehir to begin getting a more than very shallow understanding of the place I'm in; I've needed the whole year to learn what our school's problems are and to think about which ones I want to try to wrestle with next year;

and a year has been necessary to acquaint me with my students and colleagues, the people with whom I'll have to work harmoniously if effective teaching and problem-solving are to result. So this year appears in retrospect as mainly a training ground for real action next year. And my morale is high now in anticipation of a chance not to relax at last but to get down to my real work and to real accomplishment.

In the area of teaching, besides the inevitable increase in skill that comes with practice, I tried during most of the year the experiment of absolutely forbidding Turkish in one of my classes while using it whenever necessary in the others. Although the experiment was far from controlled, the results were quite astonishing. When kids from two classes at the same level (second year) got together for an extracurricular course, the best students from the English-only class outshone the best ones from the Turkish-also class, though my previous estimation of their relative proficiencies had been the reverse. The English-only method also seems to have benefitted students of somewhat low intellect, since it relies more on habituation than on the application of explicit rules. Aside from the question of using Turkish, I've been following a very unorthodox plan all year, and have been wondering when the principal would reprimand me for it. The system involves never opening the official textbook, but only teaching the words and structures of the book in whatever order seems called for (sprinkling in a lot of words the book never teaches), and covering less than half of the amount of material normally covered in a year. The traditional method relies solely on the book and asks the student to memorize lessons, including the answers to questions at the end of each lesson, but puts no value on a student's ability to use actively the words and grammar he has supposedly learned. The other two English teachers here basically follow this method, but also require the student to be able to manipulate the grammar and vocabulary and to answer questions not found in the text. I don't ask for the memorization of any content, just the ability to use the language, not only in answering but also in asking questions, and my standards for correctness are much tougher than the other teachers'. The toleration of sloppy substandard English is the price they pay for teaching so many lessons in a year; and a limited rate of learning is the price I pay for insisting that what is learned be learned well. I believe that this year has vindicated my approach enough to warrant continuing it (in an improved version, of course) next year, especially since the principal is willing to tolerate my eccentricity. The three English teachers form an examining committee to test orally every candidate for a middle school or a lycee diploma (excluding students of French, of course), and so far I have had to lower my standards somewhat to acquiesce to the passing of half of my colleagues' students. The tremendous quantity of cheating that was attempted during the early part of the year has almost entirely disappeared, discipline in class is not the problem it once was, and students who misbehave now face their punishment fairly often without swearing that they are completely innocent.

Thus this year has given me some ideas about how to teach English effectively. But the year has also put my English teaching duties in the perspective of my whole function as a Peace Corps Volunteer. One of the Peace Corps's official purposes is to supply trained manpower where needed: this may be taken as the official, though humorously flattering, description of my role as an English teacher. The other two purposes are to improve American understanding of the world and other peoples' understanding of the United States. During the beginning of the school year I was sacrificing the last two principles to the first, during what I earlier termed "the Great Homework Crisis of 1964". Since then I have, to some extent, been making the opposite sacrifice. But one cannot avoid the conscious decision as to how much time to devote to one of the three goals at the expense of the other two competing ones. I began prejudiced against goal #1, and the more I saw of Turkish culture and learned of Turkey's domestic problems, the less importance I accorded to goal #1 and the more to #2 and #3.

When you see supposedly educated people thumbing through an entire phone book to find a name or searching a minute or more in a dictionary for a word and then concluding, contrary to the fact, that the name or word is not there; or when you see a high school teacher who has been through higher education reading a book to himself slowly enough to form every word on his lips (the same teacher has learned to play backgammon at blinding speed); you wonder whether Turks should not be taught Turkish better before being occupied several hours a week with English, which nine tenths of them will never know well enough to use anyway.

Not being versed in any of the -ologies that would qualify me on the subject, I won't try to comment authoritatively on the differences between Turkish and American culture. I will only repeat what Turks say on this matter and what I think I see with my own amateur eyes. Turks make a big point of their long existence as a people or race, and say that there is, by contrast, no such thing as the American people, i.e. no ethnic or religious unity. This is viewed as Turkey's main strength and the United States' chief weakness. At the same time, Turks characterize Americans (and Germans) as hard-working, and Turks as lazy. They also describe themselves as being spiritual as opposed to Americans, who are materialistic. Turks claim to be tolerant of minorities, whereas Americans manifestly are not. Turks also like to picture themselves as a sub-tropical civilization, whose people mature rapidly, have strong emotions, which they express openly, and make strong friendships quickly. Thus Turks ascribe some advantages to their own culture and some to American culture, with a heavy preponderance on the Turkish side. This is perhaps what gives rise to theory #1 about why Turkey has stayed underdeveloped: "If only the Turkish people would get off their rear ends, leave the coffee houses and card tables behind, and work hard, Turkey would progress with lightning speed." But this theory is an unsatisfactory explanation to many Turks. They adopt the semi-conspiratorial theory #2: "Sure, many Turks are lazy, but many more want to work and are prevented. The problem is that the people in power are not looking after the public interest, but after their own personal profit. Thus, rather than finding a man

for the job, they find a job for the man, i.e. their man. There is so much corruption and public theft that the individual is powerless to act against it; if he tries, he is crushed. The individual cannot even simply do his job well: if he does, his superior suspects him of trying to pass him on the promotion ladder, so he gives him a good kick off the ladder." Those who embrace theory #2 usually have a few stories out of personal experience to illustrate the truth of the theory.

Theory #2 is the expression of what is the worst case of general political alienation I have ever seen, with the possible exception of Massachusetts. The Turk, if he is conservative, thinks the government is in the hands of an atheistic Communist conspiracy, and, if he is liberal, feels that the politicians are all using lies and religion to con votes out of the ignorant traditionalist peasant masses. I have yet to hear a student express the slightest interest in elective politics,* and I've heard very few even say they might major in political science in the university.

*~~coursewise~~, that is.

The pattern among teachers seems to be that they come back to the sticks after higher education in the big city and are full of enthusiasm and projects. Within a year or two, after seeing their efforts squashed from above, they switch from theory #1 to #2 and become cynical and sedentary. I have not been around long enough to observe this cycle, but comparison between new and old teachers points in this direction.

My personal impression of Turkish culture as represented in Nevşehir does not coincide with the Turks' own assessment. The Turks may be more ethnically and religiously homogenous than the Americans, but if you include Ankara, Istanbul, and the like in Turkey you have to make room for some fantastically wide cultural gaps within Turkey itself; and Turkey has plenty of ethnic minorities, like the U.S. Nevertheless, it is important in itself that the Turks view themselves as an ethnic group, and view this group as something to die for if necessary. The Ten Commandments came to Nevşehir the other day and played in the New Theater (a second movie house opened here this year) about five days, more than twice as long as most films do. It was raved about by my friends, some of whom went to see it twice. But I thought it mediocre and phony. These friends had seen other films of the same genre, and in general had seen many more American movies than I; anyway almost every Turk is a movie connoisseur of sorts. So why the discrepancy? My hypothesis is that the film's subject was one very dear to the Turks' hearts: the rescue of a people from the domination of another people. I think that the Turks saw, even if they did not draw it consciously, a parallel between the Jews and the Turks, and between Moses and Atatürk. Even Cumhuriyet, the most highbrow newspaper in Turkey, when reporting the news on Cyprus, throws around such terms as soydaşlarımız (our fellow race-mates) in its headlines. A recent cartoon in that paper showed the Dominican Republic talking to Cyprus: "Well, well, brother Cyprus, the 1400 Americans on me are more important than the 100,000 Turks on you." The Turk finds it paradoxical that the United States should invade the Dominican Republic to protect Americans but keep Turkey from invading Cyprus to protect Turks, because the Turk thinks fellow race-mates are at least as much worth protecting as

fellow citizens. This leads us into the digression on Turkish attitudes toward US foreign policy, which we might as well dispose of while we're here. The "paradox" mentioned above (or the same one between Cyprus and Vietnam) used to be explained mainly by saying Johnson was too stupid to realize he ought to support the Turks in Cyprus. The idea of Johnson's stupidity and the idea that Kennedy would have solved the Cyprus question in the right direction long ago still prevail. By now, however, diligent research by members of the liberal press on the influence exercised by Greek and Greek-American big businessmen on the US government and on Johnson personally, as well as these newspapers' exposés of how the U.S. uses Turkey as a dumping ground for soybean oil while keeping Turkey from marketing its olive oil, how the U.S. takes more from Turkey in rent-free land than it gives Turkey in foreign aid, and how American petroleum companies are exploiting Turkey left and right, have all combined to destroy completely among the liberal educated element the previous image of America the friend, and replace it with America the imperialist, seeking to use Turkey for its own profit just as Turkey's own politicians do, and indeed buying out the politicians to make them represent US big business rather than the Turkish people. Without doubt, the cynicism index among the liberal educated class has risen in the last year, and the cynicism has spread from domestic affairs to international as well, with the U.S. being the chief loser.

Regarding the issue of laziness, there certainly does seem to be underwork combined with complaint about overwork among some groups, particularly teachers, but other groups, e.g. farmers and poor children, seem to work harder than their American counterparts. I can't draw any generalizations one way or another yet. After all, Turkish coffee-house sitting may be the equivalent of American unemployment or underemployment; yet we don't blame our unemployment problem on Americans' laziness for the most part.

I'm afraid I also don't see the justification for labelling Turks spiritual compared with Americans. Americans usually try to play down the topic of money, but Turks ask without any hesitation what your salary is, how much rent you pay, and how much you payed for everything you own. They also ask you to smuggle things from the U.S. through customs for them, just the way Americans do. Granted that such questions and requests can be expected more often in a less wealthy country (they were frequent in Ghana, for example), still the flat assertion that Turks are less materialistic than Americans is perhaps a little bold.

Toleration is also a virtue less than perfectly practiced by the Turks. Such minorities as the Kurds are culturally suppressed, and even from educated people come the kinds of statements about the Kurds, Gypsies, and now Greeks, that you would expect from the grand wizard of the KKK in reference to Negroes.

As far as the alleged tropical, hot-blooded character is concerned, I'll have to go along part way with its claimants. My impression is that Turks generally are emotionally sensitive and excitable. Arguments in the teachers' room reach the shouting and crying stage once or twice a month. The phenomenon of going off speaking terms is alluded to in conversation much more often than in the U.S., and one of our French teachers, for example, has not exchanged a word all year with either of the two art teachers, as a

result of some event last year. Students, too, are rather quick to fight over small objects like pencils. And one often hears a student say, "I haven't studied since K became our teacher: I just don't feel like working for him." Very close friendships are made, but they, and all social contact, seem to develop very slowly, probably partly because of the suspicion which appears to me to be everywhere. It is nothing but institutionalized suspicion that makes bachelors be excluded from the few "cocktails", "concerts", etc., and that makes unmarried males and females afraid even to talk with each other in public. I've come to the conclusion that my female students, particularly the older ones, look on me (and others of my status) first as a young unmarried male, and second as their teacher. I must admit that Turks express feelings of affection and admiration to each other to what in the U.S. would be an embarrassing extent. If a Turk likes you he simply tells you the fact to your face. He does not rely on his behavior to communicate the message, and there is no romantic connotation to it, even when it occurs between a single man and a single woman.

One characteristic of Turkish behavior that strikes me is its formality. There are volumes of taboos, such as putting one's feet up on the table or desk, and smoking or drinking in the presence of one's elders. One must button one's jacket, stand up, and salute when one's teacher walks by in the street; it is in terms of motions like these that a student's respect or disrespect for his teacher is defined. Generosity is regulated by such rules as he who first sat at a table pays for the food and drinks of everyone at the table. One of the most common words in Turkish is ayip; it characterizes any act that goes against these or other mores of the society. The schools, like Harvard, require the formality of a coat and tie, but, also like Harvard, care not how filthy or ragged they are. When a respected colleague leaves to take up work in another city, the going-away party resembles rather the gathering, for solemn reminiscing purposes, of a recently deceased man's relatives and friends. A couple of weeks ago one of our students drowned in the river; the next day some students asked me if I wasn't in mourning, because I didn't have a little black ribbon on like them. Of course, the local children's efforts to have me adopt Islam are a part of the same pattern: they want me to utter a few Arabic words and say I believe, then they will be happy. They pay me the complement that I am already a Moslem in my behavior and morality, but this is not enough for them and not enough, in the opinion of some of my students, to prevent me from burning in the next world. Incidentally, Turks follow Black Muslim events in the U.S. assiduously; Malcolm X's murder made big news. The reason is that they don't distinguish, as white America does, between Black and other Moslems; they don't usually translate the "Black". ~~Everybody~~ Everybody was rooting, predictably, for Clay over Liston, and some of my students attributed his (miraculous?) victory to the power Allah gave him as a result of his becoming a Moslem.

Just for the record let me emphasize that my generalizations are based on very limited experience and on an exposure to only a small part of each of American and Turkish society, and are therefore intended not as statements of fact but as descriptions

of personal impressions.

It's been difficult to get much insight into the social make-up of Nevşehir itself. There is a very strong sense of class identity. The class to which I perforce belong is that of the memur, i.e. salaried white-collar worker, in a sense that includes everyone from the bank clerk to the provincial governor. The members of this class above the clerk level, including for example teachers, bank department heads, judges, and army officers, plus the members of liberal professions like doctors and lawyers, stick together to the exclusion of all others. Members of this group can and do consider themselves as having the privileges of ex officio membership in the Teachers' Association, the Businessmen's and Officials' Club, and the Provincial Tourist Association, each of which has a building or a floor of one, supplied with facilities for drinking and playing cards and backgammon. In other words, these amount to high-class, limited-membership coffee houses. Besides this main function, the Teachers' Association meets once a year and perfunctorily considers some educational problems, and the Tourist Association works especially during the summer to improve conditions for the many tourists who come through to see the ruins of the early Christian cave churches of Cappadocia a few miles away.

It seems to be these memurs and self-employed professionals who provide the main modernizing influence in Nevşehir. The role of the teachers is obvious: modernization of their students is professed as one of their main functions. But a large number of the broader class just mentioned is from places other than Nevşehir or has spent time in school in the big cities. These people have been sent here by the government or big national businesses, which ask their employees where they want to go and then send them where they need them. So, set down against their wish in a cultural desert devoid of the attractions and distractions which most of them are used to, these people try to import a few of the entertainments which they enjoyed where they came from, and at least go on dressing more or less as they did before they came. Thus there are really two civilizations living side by side in this provincial capital, and elements of the modern one are slowly absorbed by the traditional one, perhaps with those who are members of both societies, i.e. Nevşehirians who have gone away to school, become memurs, and been sent for service back to their home town where they continue to have family ties, serving as some of the main carriers in this cultural transfer. Until the transfer is carried out, there is in effect an armistice under which modern civilization rules inside its own institutions, e.g. schools and banks, and traditional civilization dictates everywhere else, e.g. in the streets, restaurants, and cafes. Thus women refuse to walk alone after dark, even though they used to do so when in Ankara, Izmir, etc., and though there is nothing here to be afraid of--except gossip, that is. There are barely one or two dances in a year, and the only reason why unmarried people feel able (which they very rarely do) to dance at them is that the invitation list is carefully restricted to the memur class. But the latest revolutionary dances are excluded for fear of a scandal, so when my roommate Şükri wants to do the twist, of which he is very fond, he has to do it by himself in the kitchen.

This year the English teachers tried a good number of extra-curricular activities. The language lab had some success, but so limited that it was not worth the trouble that went into it, from the English point of view; only if also viewed as an attempted orientation to the use of machines like tape recorders might it be judged worth while. There was also a song group supposed to meet once a week, but it met far more seldom in practice because of one thing or another. Its success was limited by the fact that the school staff had lacked a music teacher and so the students had next to no concept of what a song is and on the average only the rudiment of a sense of pitch. Teaching such kids foreign melodies and words was, speaking mildly, difficult. (The school sings the national anthem twice a week year in and year out, yet the students have not yet learned to sing even that in unison.) English conversation groups and the course on reading an English newspaper worked well enough, but we had to abandon them near the end of the year to make time for rehearsals for the English play.

Unfortunately the latter project began so late in the year and needed so many people that it competed with other activities and gave us much more work than we could do, so it had to be abandoned for this year at least. We did manage to hold a rather successful poetry reciting contest, won in the lycee branch by a senior's well worked out recitation of Annabell Lee. The most promising activity to date is that of the Tourist Club. One of the French teachers and I are acting as advisers. We have gotten the Provincial Tourist Association to agree to turn over its hall to us for the summer as a tourist information bureau. We visited the mayor and the governor (something you have to do in order to do anything out of the ordinary), and with their help we'll have maps of the province to distribute and have street signs put up to show the way to the information bureau. Most important, we're giving courses in "tourist English" and "tourist French" to students who will act during the summer (while we ourselves are gone) as guides. Some upper-class students are competing to be permanent bureau chairman or receptionist, and about fifteen younger students, especially from the second grade of middle school, are training as guides. They are doing well, although they have only two years of English (at three hours a week) behind them.

The experiences of this year will undoubtedly make for a more successful extracurricular program next year. The one big lesson I've learned is not to spurn my young students. At the beginning of the year Türkay hanım, then the only other English teacher, proposed the theory that our main obligation is to the class graduating from the lycee, and that other students will get the benefit of our extracurricular energies when they reach the senior year. I accepted this proposition then, but have now decided to adopt its opposite next year. In previous years the English teaching situation was so bad that many graduating seniors who should have had six years of English have actually had about three, or have had ersatz teachers made of people who had somehow scraped up a smattering of English somewhere. Most of the students in this situation are beyond help, because they began serious English classes so far behind that they have been lost from the beginning. The main reason they can't be helped is that they themselves are

resigned about learning. I held after-school classes and language labs for all who wanted, but only the good students attended. This despair, somewhat analagous to that of the experienced teachers as mentioned above, contrasts utterly with the enthusiastic curiosity and zeal shown by the first and second year students, as in the tourist English course. The other day when I was unexpectedly tied up for exams, I left what I admitted to myself were utopian instructions to my tourist guides for them to conduct the course anyway, by themselves, with a certain advanced student teaching what she had learned to the others. I dropped in for a minute on the meeting expecting to find no-one there, especially in view of the fact that classes had ended the previous week. But lo and behold, there was my prize student at the blackboard, and fifteen or so more of her 12 and 13-year old classmates eagerly taking down in their notebooks what she was teaching. Lycee students under the same circumstances would have, and in fact two of them had, left without trying to do anything themselves.

Already many of my best second year students speak better English than most of the graduating seniors, and I now realize what a difference it would have made if I had devoted some of my time to the first and second year students all year. Next year I will not miss this opportunity.

Of my adult courses this year, the advanced one narrowed down to a small but interested group and can be considered successful and worth continuing next year. The beginners' course dwindled to an average attendance of one-half person per meeting, consisting, near the end, of people with negative linguistic aptitude, i.e. whose knowledge decreased as the course wore on. I have no intention whatever of repeating such a disastrous experiment next year, especially since I suspected from the beginning that it is a mistake for most people to try to begin learning English as an adult. (By way of exception, two people who had had no English before applied so much talent and effort that they skipped up to the advanced course.)

What I want to do with time liberated from unfruitful projects is to apply it to more promising ones, including ones unrelated to English teaching. Already I've begun such projects in a small way: I've played my clarinet in a program of Turkish literature and music put on by the school, and will be doing so again at the senior fairwell party. And I've begun teaching Esperanto to four people, including two high school teachers and a Provincial judge. Next year I may also get involved in the dormitory for poor students, which is very run-down; or in the activities of the Trips Club, which is supposed to plan school trips but managed only one all this year; or in the nascent student-run cooperative school-supplies canteen; or in the organization founded this year, Clapsed Hands, whose aim is community service, and which has adopted a sister village to help; or in a systematic student vocational and higher education counseling service; or in the problem of helping village children to come to the provincial capital to continue their education; or in a musical ensemble; or in who knows what else. There is also the important but touchy subject of intra-faculty collaboration on such questions as discipline and student-teacher relations; if an opportunity to become active in this area opens up, I want to be sure to jump in.

But in such matters a knowledge of the people with whom one is working is essential. This year I have acquired such a knowledge to an elementary extent. Until this letter I have refrained from giving sketches of individuals because I was conscious of how little I knew them and of the fact that even the knowledge I had might, because of deceptive cultural differences, be incorrect. And still any description given here must be labelled as both subjective and tentative.

The English teaching crew: Türkay is an intelligent and forward looking teacher: she knows what it means to have an active command of a language, and she tries to cultivate this in her students, both in class and by extracurricular activities. But she sticks more closely to traditional teaching methods than her knowledge and ideas warrant, and she makes little effort if any to improve her own somewhat deficient pronunciation and general knowledge of the language. At first I took this for apathy, but I've come to understand that a 30-hour-a-week teaching schedule plus a very fussy newborn baby would have left anyone else far less active and interested in his students than Türkay has managed to be. Things look better for next year.

In contrast to her is Ibrahim, the teacher who returned in March from a Fulbright in the U.S. He has the knowledge and the ability to be a far better teacher than Türkay: his English is near-perfect, even to slang words I myself don't know; and he is up on the latest in language teaching techniques. For this reason he made a good impression on me at first and relieved my anxiety about turning my students over to a different teacher. Yet time has shown that he doesn't make anything like full use of his capacity to teach well. He adheres much more closely to the traditional method than he knows is good for the students. He admits that he does not like teaching, and he uses his position as second assistant to the principal to provide excuses for frequent lateness to his classes. Also, the time he spends drinking and card playing in clubs is far out of proportion with what he spends on after-school activities with the students. He is fond of bragging about how scared the students are of him because of his legendary toughness, and indeed he seems to have frightened some students into working who put out no effort under me. Concerning his lack of productive activity, he readily makes the unsolicited admission, "I've been goofing off", but that's as far as it goes. He hopes to quit teaching and be assigned as a school principal next year. In that capacity his six months in the U.S. will probably have an effect, but from the language teaching point of view I think the Fulbright people made a big mistake in sending him; someone like Türkay, who has the makings of a good teacher and regards her profession as English teaching, without any escapist ambitions, would have gotten more out of such a scholarship and would have passed on far more of the benefit to her students.

The administrators: I gave my impression of the principal in my last letter: an enigmatic man who seems to have a thinking head on his shoulders but keeps himself very aloof from the real people and problems under him, and, perhaps for this reason, is capable of acting at times with impulsive extreme irrationality. In general, however, his attitude is, "OK, go do whatever you

want, as long as it doesn't require my help." It is said that the principal's generally conservative approach is due to the fact that he is a Nevşehirlian, and thus has many family friends exerting pressure on him. A dynamic, reforming principal, the argument goes, must be someone, like the principal of the Boys' Trade School, sent in from the outside and therefore freer to do what he thinks best. If this argument is correct, then my hypothesis, stated above, about who contributes most to modernization, is wrong, and, instead of those who are members of both cultures modernizing the traditional one through the family and previous acquaintances, it is mainly members of only the modern culture who spread modernization through institutions like the school. Which theory is correct should have implications for government memur assignment policy.

The (new) principal of the Boys' Trade School seems a much more sensible and innovative man. He is more personable and friendly with the teachers, and he has ideas for improvements which he wants to put into effect next year. For example, he is eager to improve student-parent relations, which are sometimes poor to the point of making the student's success in school impossible. Some parents threaten to take their children out of school, others beat them for bad grades, and others require them to work in the family business or orchard too much to let them pursue their school subjects. Almost any extracurricular involvement of mine at the trade school is likely to be in the non-English realm, because English there is nearly a dead letter, being taught for three years in the middle school section and then dropped from the students' curricula during the last three ~~year~~ grades. The only English activity might be a course in technical English, for students or teachers or both.

The assistants to the lycee principal include Ibrahim, who is an asset in that he can help push through proposals that the principal might be lukewarm to. Ibrahim himself, if he is here next year, wants to organize the counseling service. The Chief Assistant, Ali Osman bey, who teaches Turkish, is quite friendly, sensible, and basically progressive, but he is a Nevşehirlian and usually lets his don't-rock-the-boat instinct rule over his desire for reforms. The third assistant, Erdinç bey, is a first year teacher of science still full of enthusiasm. He has been cautious this year, just as I have, on the theory that this is the year to learn what is going on before getting into action. Next year he wants to start a radio transmitting club and put on a few plays. He is determined to stay in Nevşehir at least five years and to make an impression as a good teacher during that time.

But not all young teachers are as active as Erdinç. Mehmet Şahin, a physics teacher, is thoroughly conservative in his attitude toward his students. He refuses to answer their questions outside of class and does no more for them than required, as far as I can see. He even had the audacity to ask at a teachers' meeting how much his salary would be cut this month if he failed to comply with a summons from a nearby village to go there and help give a middle school graduation exam in his field. I heard him giving the following advice to a bachelor colleague one day: "Don't marry the daughter of a memur, because her father can't give you security or a second home to come to in times of need; so marry the daughter of an established merchant or the like; and, if he is rich, so much the better, because having a rich relative can come in handy if you

should become seriously ill or find yourself in jail." He has also been pestering me for half a year to find some way for his nephew, a student of mine, to pass in English. And he wants to go to the U.S. as a physicist when he graduates from the university, so he can earn more money. You can imagine by now how much sympathy I feel with this particular colleague.

The man he gave the marriage advice to is Faik bey, a beginning teacher of math. He is a liberal with a keen interest in his students, but not very active. Boyhan bey, one of the art teachers, somewhat resembles him but spends much more time on student activities in his area of study. Both of these men are constantly preoccupied with the opposite sex. They engage in avid girl-watching on the streets, make it clear as glass what they would do if they found themselves alone with one of their attractive female lycee students, and express disbelief when I answer that I would do no more in the same situation than talk. They also invite me every day to the local house of prostitution (nicknamed Nevşehir University), each day becoming a little more insistent than the last. Yet it is Faik bey himself who, in positing the relative spirituality of Turkish and the materialism of American society, told me in all seriousness, referring to contact between the sexes, "We play with our soulâ; you play with your bodies."

Is Faik right, alluding to elements of the two cultures which escape my vision, or not? Most of my colleagues here agree with him, but one, Cafer bey, does not. Cafer says there is no basis to this and the other claims of Turkish cultural superiority mentioned above. He holds the view that these claims result from the Turks' inferiority complex about themselves as a people. Cafer is the most detraditionalized and iconoclastic Turk I have met in Nevşehir. He rejects not only Islam but religion completely; he scorns nationalism in any degree; he is unhappy that he was assigned to the Girls' Institute (a sort of trade and home economics high school) because he has few students and little responsibility or work (being a science teacher, he can't very well find many opportunities for extracurricular activities interesting his students); he is sorry he was sent to Nevşehir because it does not offer him the challenge that a schoolless village or an extremely backward town in the less developed East of Turkey would have (in contrast to this, all the other teachers put in transfer requests for Ankara every year). He is working in his spare time to complete the requirements for a lycee diploma (teachers' institute graduates are not counted as lycee graduates, though they often teach in lycees, and they can't therefore attend university), and he devotes in this connection tremendous energy to improving his English, which he has brought up well past the level necessary to pass the graduation English exams. (He is currently reading America America.) Not satisfied with this, he is also learning Esperanto from me, attracted not so much by its simplicity as by the fact that it seems to answer the need he has long felt for the world to have a single common language and by the feeling that he is doing something for world peace by learning it. I can't help marveling at how Turkey can produce two young new high school science teachers so different from each other as Mehmet Şahin and Cafer.

The other teacher who is in both my English and my Esperanto courses is Mustafa Savran. He has twenty years of teaching

experience behind him, during about half of which he was a principal. He has taken an interest in me ever since I came, but at first it seemed to be a predatory one. He would ask about the possibility of slipping American shirts and ties through Turkish customs by the use of my status, and he would promise to show me all around Turkey if I would succeed in teaching him English this year. He also would complain that there was nothing to do in Nevşehir, and would justify his complaint by doing nothing. If I had written you about Savran six months ago, I would have put him in the same class as Şahin and let it go at that. But, if there is one teacher on whom contact with me has had some perceptible influence, I think it is Savran. During the course of our many conversations, our contact in the adult English course, and a trip we recently made together, he has changed. His concern for others and for the things he believes in had gone into hibernation as a result of the enemies on high, punishments, and frustrations that his efforts to be a good principal had won him. Now these concerns have slowly begun to reassert themselves, and the self-seeking attitude that once seemed a fixed part of his character has shrunk to nearly nothing. He is making an effort to be a good teacher, and in the last month he has devoted a lot of time after school to helping individual students with their math problems, even in the last few days receiving seniors into his home every night till midnight to answer their questions in preparation for the exams. This summer he hopes to attend a training course from which he may be selected to spend two years in England, after which he would become a math and science teacher at one of Turkey's English-speaking high schools (kolej). But he says he has so many enemies in the Ministry of Education that he won't be selected; in that case he has offered to give me a room in his home and make me a member of his family next year (he has a wife and four kids).

Among the other middle-aged teachers is Hacı bey, a philosophy and psychology teacher who knows more about educational theory and psychology than the rest of the teachers put together and whose views are liberal, but who has been thoroughly spent in his battles with the powers that be. He is respected as a good teacher and puts out some, but not exceedingly much, effort on student activities (he is the one who has advised the Clapsed Hands organization). If anyone could have taken the lead to mold an effective team out of our now undirected teachers, it is he; but the effort is not forthcoming, and, like a dying patriarch, he solemnly confides, "Jonathan, I am escaping from all this next year: I'll be going back home, and it will be your turn to take over what I worked on. Be alert this year and find what needs to be done; next year your projects can begin." Hacı, and similarly to a lesser extent Savran, look older than they are. Their tribulations have apparently worn them out mentally, with physical side-effects.

Then there is Ahmet bey, in a class by himself. He is very well educated in his field of geography, and is contemptuous of students who do less than perfect work. He treats the slightest violators of discipline with violent outbursts of arm-waving, shouting, and swearing. Everyone else agrees that he is mentally ill. In addition, he is a socialist who expresses in the teachers' room and in class his hatred of American banker imperialists and other exploiters of the Turkish proletariat. During the fall his opinions

were very unorthodox, and he never expressed them in more than a whisper; by now, however, the center of opinion has shifted markedly in his direction, and he is much bolder in his advocacy, since, after all, many others are saying things quite similar to what he thinks and says.

Of somewhat the opposite views is Yusuf bey, the religion teacher who, as I reported in my last letter, was put in jail and tried for anti-Ataturk propaganda. Though the case is not yet decided, he was let out of jail after spending three weeks there, and he is once again teaching here. He claims he was framed by enemies of religion, and that he is not at all a reactionary. But his opinions and tastes do seem to point conservative. He enjoys Arabic music, something which I have yet to hear another Turk admit about himself. He ridicules those who distinguish between Ottoman Turkish and present day Turkish (Ottoman is full of Arabic and Persian words and syntax). And he denies that the Latin alphabet is more fitting for Turkish than the Arabic one. But he is, though conservative, also libertarian, accepting with equanimity my irreligiousness, as others more "liberal" than he do not, with the explanation that "God" is a concept that makes sense to some minds and not to others, and there is no superiority in belief over non-belief. Incidentally, he has been coming to my advanced adult course since his release, and has even sat at the same desk and shared a book with another course member, the judge who is trying him! No unpleasant effects resulted.

Though there are other teachers and many non-teachers worth describing, either I feel still incompetent to present them or they already seem to fit into one of the types so far outlined. To end on a hopeful note, let me state that, while most of those left undescribed fall into the liberal-but-passively-so category, a few display a concern and perseverance that would make any country proud. Occasionally one person seems to accomplish enough to compensate for the inactivity of all the rest. Our newly arrived literature teacher Afife hanım is such a one. In her short time here, she has not only taught her subject in a way (unusual for Turkey) that solicits rather than dictates ideas (I audited ~~her~~ some of her classes). She has also worked day and night and on weekends, and somehow commanded the loyalty of the students in a way to get them to do the same, so that a long and difficult presentation of Ottoman Turkish dramatic and other literature was presented to the public, a long play was prepared (but, like our English one, could not be gotten into final shape early enough to be presented this year), a senior farewell party with music, poetry, etc., will be put on, a prose and poetry writing contest was held, and the first grade lycee classes actually wrote and published under her direction the first issue of a literary magazine to be published at our lycee and printed in Ankara for national circulation.

This has been a year of apprenticeship, one of absorption. I have learned something about a society, its problems, its people, the language it speaks, and the job I was sent to perform in it; and in the process--it needs not saying--about my own society, my own language, and myself. I have learned enough about Turkey to reject the idea of the "good" Peace Corps Volunteer who does his designated job in a non-controversial way that is not offensive to

the host society. This society is split into factions of progressivism and stationarism, and the members of each faction, by their ideas and behavior, are already offending the members of the other faction every day. The practical choice that I faced—and that is faced, I imagine, by most PCV's in places like Nevşehir—was whether to align myself with that element of the progressivists that braves reprimand and revenge to keep working for what it believes, or to line up with (or rather sit down with) the element which, finding the progressivists outnumbered, concludes that there is nothing they can do and, on this basis, retreats from activity and hope into a giant sulk. True neutrality is impossible. So, between the activists and the pessimists I have made my choice.

This summer will offer me both a change of pace and a broadening of experience, since I am scheduled to work for two months in a community development project in one of Turkey's most modern and progressive villages (Hasandede, near Kirikkale). Next fall I expect to return to Nevşehir with the tools, the ideas, and the energy necessary to throw myself in with the activists team and help give it a little shove ahead. And I'll be much better prepared if I get your ideas, suggestions, comments, criticisms, and news at the addresses below. Many thanks in advance.

Jonathan Pool

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