

## We are very much like each other

Despite all the improvements/transitions Turkey has gone through, universities have always been managed by the rules and manners that reflect the position of ruling governments. While such parallel entities have always existed in all government agencies, they were markedly evident in the universities. "At the convenience" of someone, a highly-qualified scientist, a faculty member (he was the Dean at that time) could be retired by a signature alone. The reason was simple: during the faculty's opening ceremony, he advised the students "not to play ball". Should our faculty members be grateful for the current conditions? No. The great Atatürk also told that "it is not enough". Later on, when I joined the faculty in 1957, I remember a group of students were chanting slogans against "Autonomy" and I supposed this had something to do with our village headman, uncle Hasan. I was wrong, a student was shot by accident and the usual events followed.

During mid-1960, while I was preparing my associate professor's thesis in Erzurum Atatürk University, we were on the outs with the deceased Professor Yavuz Aksu who had later on in the next decade helped and tremendously supported me to examine the mice in Ege University. I was officially being investigated as a student and he, Professor Aksu, was the chief of the commission. We had shared a very informative dialogue - one I still remember after half a century. With the intention to tease with the Professor, I told him "Professor, I have heard you are running for the dean's office but you should know that not everyone will vote for you!" His response was very simple and educational: "Am I an idealess person who should satisfy everyone? Who agrees with me votes for me and the rest does not". I suppose, his honesty was awarded with being the dean. He also did not expel me out of the school.

In 1974, Professor Kemal Bıyıkoğlu was the acting Rector of Atatürk University and he had certain conflicts with the university senate, therefore the senate could not meet and 5 new faculty members, including myself, were not staffed as associate professors. Together with another respected professor he, being the rector, visited me at my room and congratulated me for my success in the associate professorship exam. From this conversation, I still remember his following words "I would rule this University much better if this senate was not there".

In 1975, Atatürk University had the first Rector elections. At that time, Karadeniz Technical University, Middle East Technical University and we – as Erzurum Atatürk University – were not

associated with the Board of Education, as opposed to the other universities. Other universities had otonom, but only we associated with Minister of Education. I remember the most two powerful candidates, the deceased Professor Rükmettin Öğütman and Professor Hurşit Ertuğrul, were walking around, arm in arm. Possibly because they believed that "they are finally free". Professor Ertuğrul won the elections. Do you know why? One night, Professor Öğütman had received a phone call and he was asked about his political views. He was a very serious, hard working, less concessive, honest, systematic, less tolerant, highly scientific and a very respected professor - and his response was "I will follow Atatürk's path". Guess who was elected? Professor Ertuğrul - as he was a peaceful gentlemen getting along with everyone, and he was an honest, smart and wise friend. Furthermore, he was from the Black Sea Region - a native of Çamlıhemşin!

During the first years of Eskişehir Anadolu University, before it was merged with (taken down by) Eskişehir Faculty of Economics and Commercial Sciences by YÖK in 1983, some of our faculty members were from Hacettepe University Medical Faculty as per 40-a (b?). As a senate member, I joined a meeting of Anadolu University at Hacettepe and there I had an intensive discussion with Professor Yunus Müftü, regarded stand-in son of Professor İhsan Doğramacı. All the faculty members were rather old, and I had been a professor for five years: We were having a lunch altogether (1980-1981?). From my back, one of the older faculty members very gently put his hands on my shoulders and he advised to the other faculty members (not to me) to "Follow their elders' advice". All faculty members (but me) stood up and I realized that Professor Doğramacı had arrived. Apparently, he was notified right away. I gently turned back and said "Dear Professor, we carefully listen to our elders, but we still have our own way."

In conclusion, the stories I have told do not involve the ruling presidents of republic, prime ministers or any political party. Considering the history, you can draw the parallelism. History represents the laboratory results before us and based these results, we [do not/cannot] decide on our fate.

**Bilgin Timuralp**  
**Editor in Chief**  
**Eskişehir-Turkey**

