

2/18/94

Memorandum

To: Dr. Agbabian
From: Virgil Strohmeier
Re: The Parliamentary Course: Final participants

As you know we have been teaching the Parliamentarians for a week and all the guidelines previously set have been followed although there were last minute changes due to certain developments here and the finalizing of the Parliament's schedule.

There are four classes with approximately 20 students each. The classes are being generally taught by two teachers (one American and one local in two cases; one class by Mhaer alone, and one class by myself and Carl Ulbricht). A list of the classes, students and instructors is attached.

No class has had full participation so far: the figure has hovered around two-thirds at any one class. The students' abilities were ranked into three broad categories by our testing before Christmas. We have four groups because the largest cohort had little or no English and four of the Parliamentarians could not read the Latin alphabet. Patricia and I are responsible for these, having divided them into two groups.

1. Patricia is teaching (four hours) with Gayane Zavarian (four hours), who received AUA/UCLA training with us last year and who has been an Armenian teacher at the U.S. Embassy (her English is close to native in fluency).

2. Carl Ulbricht and I are also teaching a similar group. Each of us has them for four hours during the week. Carl has taught at the Brusov Institute before and is here on a grant from the British Government to develop an English/Armenian Legal Dictionary. He was thrilled to have the opportunity to work with the Parliament and has agreed to accept the local rate of compensation (this both because he is fully funded by the Foreign Office and because he will be teaching using my curriculum and under my instruction). (We only disagree over the pronunciation of 'laugh'.)

3. Raffi Bandazian (who has proven an excellent teacher in every way, and whose journalistic skills are adding a high note to the writing program) is teaching with Sona Sahakian (a Brusov Institute graduate who lived for twelve years, from the age of seven, in Australia). She is a specialist in the training of students in the pronunciation of English. They are also each teaching four hours per week. Their group has some proficiency in written English, but grave difficulties with the spoken language. They are also using a curriculum that I designed.

4. Mhaer has taken the group with the most accomplished abilities, and he has designed a course for them in diplomatic English. He is so enthused with the entire project that he has asked to work all eight hours per week alone.

There is little to add. The language lab that we hoped to use is not available to us. We will have to take a video monitor to Parliament rather frequently.

We will also have to take our Russian tape recorders to use for listening and speaking lessons.

We have no dual deck recorders, despite the fact, that I have asked for one many times through the years (valuable tapes have been lost because we have had no way to copy them; of course, the language lab would give us that capability immediately).

We need at least a hundred 90 minute audio tapes to back-up our present library and to make additional tapes for the Parliamentarians' use. At this point I am erasing my own music tapes and Patricia is using her personal research tape store for the latter purpose.

I spent much of my vacation in Europe's best ESL bookshops looking for appropriate materials. I found quite a few in Vienna and they will be included in the final budget.

We hope that sufficient supplies will arrive soon, and that the language lab problem will be solved before the 10 weeks of the course is over.

cc Sona Hamalian