

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Foreign Medical Professionals at Istanbul University Faculty of Medicine: Insights from the Documents between 1950 and 1973 of the Turkish State Archives of the Republic Archive




Abstract

During the 1930s, a significant number of physicians, nurses, and scientists sought refuge in Turkiye as they fled the oppressive regimes in Nazi Germany and its neighboring countries. They were employed in educational and health institutions in Turkiye, especially at Istanbul University. Although the number decreased in subsequent decades, foreign physicians and specialists continued to migrate to Turkiye even after the 1950s. This qualitative study analyses the documents and materials available in the Turkish State Archives to shed light on the experiences of these foreign medical professionals. According to documents examined, from 1950 to 1973, the Faculty of Medicine of Istanbul University employed a total of 18 foreign physicians and specialists: four in the Department of Pediatric Surgery and Orthopedics, three in the Department of Histology and Embryology, three in the Surgery Clinic I, two in the Internal Medicine Clinic III, one in the Department of Physiology, one in the Department of Experiential Research, one in the Department of Biophysics, one in the Department of Orthopedics and Traumatology, one in the Department of Pharmacy, and one in the faculty staff. Then, it is reasonable to assume that the contributions of these foreign physicians and specialists played a significant role in the development of the departments they were associated with at the Istanbul University Faculty of Medicine.

Key words: Turkiye, Istanbul University, Foreign physician, Archives, History of medicine

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Introduction

With the University Reform in *Turkiye*, Darulfunun was closed and was replaced by Istanbul University on August 1, 1933 (Namal, and Karakok, 2011, p. 33). The university consisted of faculties in law, literature, science, and medicine (Ince, and Keskinbora, 2022, p. 268). In addition to the faculties, various institutes and the Translation Board were established to translate foreign works into Turkish (Gunergun, and Kadioğlu, 2006, p. 140).

During the transition from Darulfunun to Istanbul University, out of 151 faculty members 59 were appointed to positions at the newly established university. In addition, it was planned to employ students who had been sent abroad for their education upon their return to *Turkiye*. Furthermore, foreign professors were recruited to join the faculty (Erdem, 2012, p. 382).

Coinciding with the University Reform in *Turkiye* in 1933, the rise of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi regime in Germany (Cetinkaya, 2019, p. 92) created a repressive and tyrannical environment for Jews and dissidents. Hence, many professionals, including physicians, scientists, nurses, and specialists, sought refuge in *Turkiye* to escape the German dictatorship (Ince, 2020, p. 347). Many physicians, and numerous distinguished medical experts, started to work at the Istanbul University Faculty of Medicine (Widman, 2000. p. 119-143; Yildirim, 2019, p. 161-182). Some of these physicians left *Turkiye* before World War II (WW II) and most of them left *Turkiye* after the war. However, some of these these foreign medical professionals chose to remain in *Turkiye* (Ince, and Keskinbora, 2022, p. 268).

In addition to those who came to *Turkiye* before WW II, Archival documents reveal that foreign physicians and specialists continued to work at Istanbul University after the war. Of course, compared to the pre-war period, the number of foreign specialists reduced.

The main objective of this study is to present information gathered through the analysis of archival documents about the foreign physicians and specialists working at the Istanbul University Faculty of Medicine from the period between 1950 and 1973.

Method

The article, which is a qualitative research study, has employed document analysis as its primary method. It has scanned and examined the documents of the Republic of *Turkiye* State Archives Presidency Republic Archive. A total of 18 documents on the subject were identified as a result of the study conducted between October 2023 and January 2024. The Republic of *Turkiye* State Archives Presidency Republic Archive catalogue, incorporated into the study, was meticulously examined.

Results

All of the documents in the Turkish State Archives are Government Decrees. These decrees were officially signed and approved by the presidents of the period, namely Inonu, Celal Bayar, Cemal Gürsel, and Cevdet Sunay.



Decree During the Inonu Period

The first archival document examined within the scope of the study is decree No. 10988 dated March 30, 1950. It is documented that Max Clara, a German citizen, was appointed as a professor at the Institute of Histology and Embryology of Istanbul University's Faculty of Medicine (Inonu, 1950) (Figure 1).

T. C.
BAŞBAKANLIK
MUAMELÂT UMUM MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ
Kararlar Müdürlüğü

KARAR

Kavim sayıs:
5

10988

Alman uyruğundan Dr. Günther Schiemann'ın İstanbul Üniversitesi Fen Fakültesi Sınai Kimya Enstitüsü Profesörlüğünde, Dr. Max Clara'nın, Tıp Fakültesi Histoloji ve Embriyoloji Enstitüsü Profesörlüğünde ve Franz Heske'nin de aynı Üniversitenin Orman Fakültesi Orman Amenejman Profesörlüğünde çalıştırılmaları; İğigleri ve Maliye Bakanlıklarının uygun görüçlerine dayanan Millî Eğitim Bakanlığının 2081 sayılı ve 8/3/1950 tarihli yazısı üzerine, 788 sayılı kanunun 5 inci maddesine göre, Bakanlar Kurulunun 30/3/1950 tarihli toplantısında kararlaşdırılmıştır.

CULHURBAŞKANI

İsmet İnönü

Başbakan <i>P. Güneşli</i>	Devlet Bakanı Başbakan Yardımcısı <i>M. K. K.</i>	Devlet Bakanı VE Diğigleri B.V. <i>A. S. V.</i>	Adalet Bakanı <i>K. K.</i>
Millî Savunma Bakanı <i>M. K.</i>	İçişleri Bakanı <i>E. B.</i>	Diğigleri Bakanı -----	Maliye Bakanı <i>B. A.</i>
Millî Eğitim Bakanı <i>T. B.</i>	Bayındırlık Bakanı <i>S. K.</i>	Ekö. ve Ticaret Bakanı <i>J. K.</i>	Sa. ve So. Y. Bakanı <i>L. K.</i>
G. ve Tekel Bakanı <i>D. K.</i>	Tarım Bakanı <i>V. K.</i>	Ulaştırma Bakanı <i>J. K.</i>	Çalışma Bakanı <i>R. K.</i>
			İçişleri Bakanı <i>M. K.</i>

30 10 01 82 122 30 7

Figure 1. Archive document about Max Clara (Inonu, 1950)



Decrees During the Bayar Period

The decree dated October 4, 1950, is on the employment of Klaus Boeltzig of German nationality as a specialist in the Internal Medicine Clinic III of Istanbul University Faculty of Medicine (Bayar, 1950).

A document from 1952 was identified. The decree dated November 27, 1952, relates to the employment of Else Meyer, a German national, as a specialist in the Internal Medicine Clinic III of Istanbul University Faculty of Medicine (Bayar, 1952).

During the archival research, three documents from 1953 were identified. The decree dated January 30, 1953, concerns the employment of Adelheid Kupke, a German national, as a specialist in the Surgery Clinic I of Istanbul University (Bayar, 1953a). The decree on the employment of Hans Herman Loschke, a German citizen, as a professor at the Physiology Institute of Istanbul University Faculty of Medicine is dated June 20, 1953 (Bayar, 1953b).

The third archive document from 1953 is dated December 25, 1953, and concerns the appointment of Meidi Marteus, a German citizen, to the Department of Pediatric Surgery and Orthopedics of Istanbul University Faculty of Medicine (Bayar, 1953c).

The document dated February 4, 1955, is the only archival document from 1955, concerning the employment of Helmut Kottmeir, a German citizen, as an expert at the Galenic Institute of the School of Pharmacy, Faculty of Medicine, Istanbul University (Bayar, 1955).

The first of the 1956 archival documents is dated February 3, pertaining to the appointment of Gisale Starke, a German citizen, as a specialist in the Pediatric Surgery and Orthopedics Clinic of Istanbul University Faculty of Medicine (Bayar, 1956a). The second document is dated August 24, 1956. The document reveals that Irmgard V. Chamier, a German citizen, was authorized to work as a specialist in the Surgery Clinic I of Istanbul University Faculty of Medicine (Bayar, 1956b).

The decree, dated September 6, 1957, states that Lisolore Zinkernagel, a German citizen, is allowed to work as a specialist in the Surgery Clinic I of Istanbul University Faculty of Medicine (Bayar, 1957).

The archive document dated October 10, 1958, concerns the appointment of Hanna Leisner, a Danish citizen, to the Istanbul University Faculty of Medicine, specializing in pediatric surgery and orthopedics (Bayar, 1958) (Figure 2).

Decrees During the Gursel Period

The decree, dated October 20, 1962, authorized the employment of Melitta Graffe, a German citizen, as a specialist at Istanbul University Faculty of Medicine (Gursel, 1962).

Another decree, dated November 19, 1965, pertains to the employment of Charlotte Hausman, a German citizen, at the Istanbul University Faculty of Medicine, Department of Pediatric Surgery and Orthopedics, from her employment date as a specialist (Gursel, 1965) (Figure 3).

Decrees During the Sunay Period

By the decree dated March 11, 1967, it was decided to employ Helma Struck, a Ger-



man citizen, as a foreign specialist in the Department of Histology and Embryology, Istanbul University Faculty of Medicine (Sunay, 1967).

The decree, dated November 27, 1969, is on the approval of the employment of Gertraud Holzer of Austrian nationality in the Department of Histology and Embryology, Faculty of Medicine, Istanbul University (Sunay, 1969).

T. C.
BAŞVEKALET
KANUNLAR VE KARARLAR
Tetkik Dairesi

Karar Sayısı
4
10840

KARARNAME

Danimarka tebaasından Hanna Leisner'in, İstanbul Üniversitesi Çocuk Cerrahisi ve Ortopedi Kliniği Uzmanlığında çalıştırılması; Dahiliye ve Maliye Vekâletlerinin muvafık mütalâalarına dayanan Maarif Vekâletinin 19/9/1958 tarihli ve 266.2/08163 sayılı yazısı üzerine, 788 sayılı kanunun 5 inci maddesine göre, İcra Vekilleri Heyetince 10/10/-1958 tarihinde kararlaştırılmıştır.

REİSİCUMHUR
C. Bayar

Ekl

030	18	01	150	51	19
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Başvekil	Devlet Vekili	Devlet Vekili	Devlet Vekili ve Mınakalat V. V.	Devlet Vekili ve Çalışma V. V.
<i>C. Bayar</i>	<i>C. Bayar</i>	<i>C. Bayar</i>	<i>C. Bayar</i>	<i>C. Bayar</i>
Adliye Vekili	Milli Müdafaa Vekili	Dahiliye Vekili ve Milli M. V. V.	Hariciye Vekili	Maliye Vekili v.
<i>C. Bayar</i>	<i>C. Bayar</i>	<i>C. Bayar</i>	<i>C. Bayar</i>	<i>C. Bayar</i>
Maarif Vekili	Nafia Vekili	Ticaret Vekili ve Hariciye V. V.	Sih. ve İc. Mu. Vekili	Güm. ve İnh. Vekili
<i>C. Bayar</i>	<i>C. Bayar</i>	<i>C. Bayar</i>	<i>C. Bayar</i>	<i>C. Bayar</i>
Ziraat Vekili	Mınakalat Vekili	Çalışma Vekili	Sanayi Vekili	Baş-Yay. ve Tuz. Vekili
<i>C. Bayar</i>	<i>C. Bayar</i>	<i>C. Bayar</i>	<i>C. Bayar</i>	<i>C. Bayar</i>
İmar ve İskân Vekili	Koordinasyon Vekili ve Sanayi V. V.			
<i>C. Bayar</i>	<i>C. Bayar</i>			

Dosya No :
27-9/2
1132

Figure 2. Archive document about Hanna Leisner (Bayar, 1958)



DEVLET ARŞİVLERİ GENEL MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ
CUMHURİYET ARŞİVİ

T. C.
B A Ş B A K A N L I K
KANUNLAR VE KARARLAR TETKİK DAİRESİ

Sayı : 6/5526 KARARNAME

Eki

Alman uyruklu Charlotte Hausman'ın İstanbul Üniversitesi Tıp Fakültesi Çocuk Cerrahisi ve Ortopedi Kürsüsünde Uzman olarak işe başladığı tarihten itibaren çalıştırılması; Dışişleri ve İçişleri Bakanlıklarının uygun mütalâalarına dayanan Millî Eğitim Bakanlığının 10/11/1965 tarihli ve 266.2/20056 sayılı yazısı üzerine, 788 sayılı Kanunun 5 inci maddesine göre, Bakanlar Kurulunca 19/11/1965 tarihinde kararlaştırılmıştır.

[Signature]
CUMHURBAŞKANI

Başbakan	Devlet Bakanı	Devlet Bakanı	Devlet Bakanı
<i>[Signature]</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>
Devlet Bakanı	Adalet Bakanı	Millî Savunma Bakanı	İçişleri Bakanı
<i>[Signature]</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>
Maliye Bakanı	Millî Eğitim Bakanı	Bayındırlık Bakanı	Ticaret Bakanı
<i>[Signature]</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>
Güm. ve Tekel Bakanı	Tarım Bakanı	Ulaştırma Bakanı	Çalışma Bakanı
<i>[Signature]</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>
Enerji ve Tabii Kay. Bakanı	Turizm ve Tanıtma Bakanı	İmar ve İskân Bakanı	Köy İşleri Bakanı
<i>[Signature]</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>

Dosya No :
27-3
1572

00 18 01 02 190 69 18

Figure 3. Archive document about Charlotte Hausman (Gursel, 1965)

The first document discovered in 1972, dated April 6, pertains to the employment of Friedrich Reiman, a German citizen, as a foreign specialist at the Istanbul University Faculty of Medicine Experimental Research Institute. Based on the provided information, Reiman's monthly salary was set at 6.350 liras (Sunay, 1972b). The second document, dated June 21, 1972, is about the employment of E. J. Hoffman, an American citizen, at the Department of Biophysics within the Istanbul University Faculty of

Medicine, with a monthly salary of 6.000 liras for one year, beginning from the date of his employment (Sunay, 1972a) (Figure 4).

T. C. BAŞBAKANLIK HUKUKİ ARŞİVİ

T. C. BAŞBAKANLIK KANUNLAR VE KARARLAR TETKİK DAİRESİ BAŞKANLIĞI

KARARNAME

Sayı: 7/ 4590

Eki

Amerikan uyruklu Dr.E.J.Hoffman'ın, 5000 (beşbin) lira aylık ücretle işe başladığı tarihten itibaren bir yıl süre ile İstanbul Üniversitesi, Tıp Fakültesi Biofizik Kürsüsünde, sözleşmeli olarak çalıştırılması, İşleri, Dışişleri ve Maliye Bakanlıklarının uygun görüşlerine dayanarak Millî Eğitim Bakanlığınının 31/5/1972 tarih ve 266.2/16811 sayılı yazısı üzerine, 657 sayılı Kanunun 1327 sayılı Kanunla değişik 4 üncü maddesinin (B) fıkrasına göre, Bakanlar Kurulunca 21/6 /1972 tarihinde kararlaştırılmıştır.

CUMHURBAŞKANI

Devlet Bakanı Devlet Bakanı Devlet Bakanı Devlet Bakanı Devlet Bakanı

Adalet Bakanı Millî Savunma Bakanı İşleri Bakanı Dışişleri Bakanı Maliye Bakanı

Millî Eğitim Bakanı Bayındırlık Bakanı Ticaret Bakanı Ssg. ve Sos. Y. Bakanı Güm. ve Tel. Bakanı

Tarım Bakanı Ulaştırma Bakanı Çalışma Bakanı Sağlık ve Tur. Bakanı En. ve Tab. Kay. Bakanı

Turizm ve Tan. Bakanı İmar ve İskân Bakanı Köy İşleri Bakanı Orman Bakanı Genç. ve Spor Bakanı

Dosya No: 27-3 1053

030	18	61	0	283	48	10
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Figure 4. Archive document about E. J. Hoffman (Sunay, 1972a)

The last archival document examined within the scope of the study is dated March 23, 1973, and concerns the employment of German citizen Richard Zirbel as a contractor at the Istanbul University Faculty of Medicine, Department of Orthopedics and Traumatology. The decree indicates that Zirbel's monthly gross salary was first set at 4,500 liras



and later rose to 5,325 liras. (Sunay, 1973)

Table 1: Foreign physicians and specialists, their departments and archive place information

Date	Person and Nationality	Department	Archive Catalogue Fond / Box-Folder-Sequence
30.3.1950	Max Clara, Germany	Histology and Embryology	30-18-1-2/122-30-7
4.10.1950	Klaus Boeltzig, Germany	Third Internal Medicine Clinic	30-18-1-2/124-79-1
27.11.1952	Else Meyer, Germany	Third Internal Medicine Clinic	30-18-1-2/130-89-1
30.01.1953	Adelheid Kupke, Germany	First Surgery Clinic	30-18-1-2/131-5-17
20.6.1953	Hans Herman Loschke, Germany	Physiology	30-18-1-2/132-49-3
25.12.1953	Meidi Marteus, Germany	Pediatric Surgery and Orthopedics	30-18-1-2/134-103-3.
4.2.1955	Helmut Kottmeir, Germany	Pharmacy	30-18-1-2/138-114-19
3.2.1956	Gisale Starke, Germany	Pediatric Surgery and Orthopedics	30-18-1-2/142-9-12
24.8.1956	Irmgard V. Chamier, Germany	First Surgery Clinic	30-18-1-2/144-71-6
6.9.1957	Lislore Zinkernagel, Germany	First Surgery Clinic	30-18-1-2/147-45-6
10.10.1958	Hanna Leisner, Denmark	Pediatric Surgery and Orthopedics	30-18-1-2/150-51-19
20.10.1962	Melitta Graffe, Germany	The department is not written in the document	30-18-1-2/166-49-11
19.11.1965	Charlotte Hausman, Germany	Pediatric Surgery and Orthopedics	30-18-1-2/190-69-18)
11.3.1967	Helma Struck, Germany	Histology and Embryology	30-18-1-2/204-21-19
27.11.1969	Gertraud Holzer, Austria	Histology and Embryology	30-18-1-2/242-79-1
6.4.1972	Friedrich Reiman, Germany	Experimental Research	30-18-1-2/280-29-1
27.6.1972	E. J. Hoffman, USA	Biophysics	30-18-1-2/283-48-10
23.3.1973	Richard Zirbel, Germany	Orthopedics and Traumatology	30-18-1-2/296-25-20

Discussion

Of the 18 foreign physicians and specialists who worked at Istanbul University Faculty of Medicine between 1950 and 1973, 15 were of German nationality while the remaining three were citizens of Denmark, Austria, and the United States of America. Four worked in the Department of Pediatric Surgery and Orthopedics, three in the Department of Histology and Embryology, three in the Surgery Clinic I, two in the Internal Medicine III Clinic, one in the Department of Physiology, one in the Department of Experiential Research, one in the Department of Biophysics, one in the Department of Orthopedics and Traumatology and one in the School of Pharmacy. Unfortunately, the departmental information for one of these professionals was not specified.

The medical doctors, scientists, and other specialists who sought refuge in Turkiye



before WW II were Jews and opponents (Erichsen, 2016, pp. 42-46). However, there is a lack of information regarding the backgrounds of those who arrived at Istanbul University after the war. Those who came to Istanbul University after the war worked mainly in the Department of Pediatric Surgery and Orthopedics, the Department of Histology and Embryology, the Surgery Clinic I, and the Internal Medicine Clinic III. It is assumed that the reason for the concentration of foreign physicians and specialists in these departments may be attributed to established cooperation between these units and counterparts in Germany.

After WW II, the Austrian nurse, Gertrud Sieber, the American nurse, Frances Bavons, and German nurses, Aenne Messer, Hedwig Pfannes, and Karin Duve worked at Istanbul University Faculty of Medicine. (Ince, 2020, p. 305-311). Just like nurses, physicians also continued to work at Istanbul University Faculty of Medicine until the 1970s. However, this number gradually declined over time, as reflected by the decreasing availability of archival documents on the subject.

Conclusion

It's reasonable to argue that physicians and specialists who come from abroad to work at the Istanbul University Faculty of Medicine contribute to the development of the units they work in.

However, it is considered that the positive developments in both pre-graduation and post-graduation medical education in Turkiye have reduced the need for foreign medical professionals in the country. Nevertheless, maintaining international ties and fostering collaborative relationships through faculty member and student exchange programs, as well as joint activities, remains essential. This can utilize the potential of modern globalization to enhance the quality of both medical education and healthcare services.

Authors' Contribution

Fuat Ince prepared the concept and the design. Acquisition of Data is done by Fuat Ince and Gamze Ozbek Guven. All the authors analyzed and interpretate the data together. They also read and approved the final version of the work.

Conflict of Interest

None.

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sity Faculty of Medicine. [Manuscript] Collection of Kararlar Daire Baskanligi. No. 30-18-1-2/131-5-17. Held at: Ankara: Presidency of the Republic of Turkiye Directorate of State Archives (BCA).

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