In the “Principles of Turkism”¹ by Ziya Gökalp² and a number of articles by the same author³ an appreciable place is dedicated to the

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¹ The references in this paper are indicated after the following edition: Ziya Gökalp, Türküliyünün Esasları, Dördüncü Basılı, Varlık Yaynevi, sayı: 825, İstanbul, 1961 (further on: TE).
² Mehmed Ziya (Gökalp) was born in 1876 in Diyarbakır. Largely circulated in the scholarly literature is the question of his being a Turk or a Zaza. Meanwhile, it is a fact that it was the emphasized Turkish national feelings that stipulated his entire political and scholarly-pedagogical activities. Mehmed Ziya studied at a military establishment in the Diyarbakır area; his training included Islam (ilm-i kelâm) and Sufism (tasavvuf), while the lessons of Arabic and Persian were taught to him by his uncle. Subsequently he continued his studies at the higher veterinary school (Baytar Mektebi Aliisi), to be arrested upon graduation for illegal political activities. He studied French first from Ismail Hakki, then by himself. In the future, he wrote in the article “Babamın Vasiyeti” (“My Father’s Testament”) about the story of his self-education. One year prior to his father’s death an acquaintance in Diyarbakır proposed to send him, Ziya, to Europe to study, whereupon father answered: “The young men going to Europe to study can only learn the European sciences, while our national knowledge will remain misplaced. The medrese entrants, if they find a good teacher, can to some extent master our religious and national knowledge. However, they will remain devoid of the European sciences. Our young men have to learn French on the one hand, and on the other learn Arabic. They will thus master the Western science and the Eastern knowledge to perfection. It is through their combination that revelations are going to be made of the great truths of our nation” (see Küçük Mecmuas, birinci cilt, sayı: 18, 2 Ekim 1922; see also Ziya Gökalp, Terbiyenin Sosyal ve Kültürel Temelleri, İstanbul, 1992: 9). One of the biographers of Ziya Gökalp remembers another detail of the same story. Seeing the young Ziya’s zeal to study, friends and relatives advised to send him to Europe, however his father used to say: “If he goes to Europe, he will become a gâvur (infidel), but staying will make a donkey out of him”. Gökalp used to say: “In order not to become a gâvur, I stayed out of Europe, but to avoid becoming a donkey, I learned French” (Gâvur olmamak için Avrupaya gitmedim, fakat echef kalmamak için de fransızca öğrendim) (see Ziya Gökalp-Hayatı-Eseri, Hazırlayan Ali Nüzhet Göksel, İstanbul, 1949: 10).
³ About half-a-century after the original publications (in İslam Mecmuası, Genç Kalemler, Muallim Mecmuası, Yeni Felsefe, Yeni Mecmuası, Küçük Mecmuası), the articles by Gökalp on education and related matters were gathered in a single collection by Riza Kardaş (Ziya Gökalp, Terbiyenin Sosyal ve Kültürel Temelleri, see above, f. n. 2). In these papers, Gökalp is stepping forward mostly as a sociologist, highlighting the practice in the teaching of sociology. In the domain of the ideology of Turkism, the problems of recreation and development of national culture and upgrading the Turkish state and society, as well as Gökalp’s views on Islamic upbringing and education are described in “İslâm Terbiyesinin Mahiyeti” (first published in İslam Mecmuası, birinci cilt, sayı: 1, 1330: 14-16, and with partial modifications and under the title “Terbiye” in Türkçümek, İslamlaşmak, Muasırlaşmak, İstanbul, 1918). With the purpose of propagating the ideas of Turkism Gökalp mostly wrote didactic fiction published in “Kızıl Elma” (1915), “Yeni Hayat” (1918), and “Altın Işık” (1923). Most of Gökalp’s poetic writings are truly qualified as rhymed political injunctions, which is obvious from their very titles: “Tu-
problems of education and scholarship in Turkey from the position of Turkism (Türkçülük).

The westernisation of Turkey Gökalp prioritises to the point of leaving unresolved the “problem of education” (maarif meselesi) and the “problem of upbringing” (terbiye meselesi) in the Ottoman Empire; since the “problem of upbringing is a sub-problem of civilisation”, the problem of education is dependent upon the resolution of the civilisation problem, which is fundamental per se. From the vantage-point of civilisation and education Gökalp discovers the division of the Turkish society into three differing layers or strata (tabaka): the ordinary people (halk), the medrese students (religious school students), and mektebe or secular school students. From them the first one has not yet been fully severed from the inherent Far-Eastern civilisation, the second one lived within the system of Eastern values, and only the third one could reap some benefits of the Western civilisation, so that, according to Gökalp, a substantial part of the Turkish nation was living in prehistoric time (kurunu ülâda), one part in the Middle Ages (kurunu vustâda), and one part in Modern period (kurunu ahirode). Then the Turkish writer asks the reader a rhetorical question, whether it is normal for a nation to live “in three faces”. Gökalp differentiates the educational principles confessed by these social strata stating that provided only there is an ability to get integrated within one civilisation system the Turks will be able to acquire a consolidated system of education and teaching, to become a conjoint nation both spiritually and intellectually (ruhanı, fikren mütecanis bir millet olmuß olacaÿz).

Generally speaking the Ottoman educational system in the course of centuries and up to the eventual collapse of the empire, indeed, remained manifestly underdeveloped and very regressive. All attempts...