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# History of Turkish Education

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Bozkurt Güvenç

Turkish Education Association

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TÜRKİYE CUMHURİYETİ'NİN YETMİŞBEŞ YILI

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## A Note on Turkish Historiography

According to a concept of history held in France but prevailing in the contemporary world the writing of history, in the proper sense of the word, may be divided into four principal ages:

- 1) The Classical (First) Ages: BC 3000-AD 476  
(From early writings to the fall of Rome)
- 2) The Middle (Dark) Ages: AD 476-1453  
(From the Fall of Rome to the Fall of Byzantium)
- 3) The New Ages: From 1453 to the French Revolution (1789)
- 4) The Recent or Near Ages : From 1789 to the Present

According to records of Chinese archives, the Turks' appearance on the historical stage took place about BC 220. By this date, Turks may be considered as late comers to world history. Hence, like many nations of the East, Turkish history followed a road of development markedly different from the pattern established in the West. Following the criteria of western historiography, Sina Akşin has recently proposed the following chronology:

- 1) The *Classical (first) Ages* (BC 220 - AD 1071).  
(From nomadic beginnings to arrival in Asia Minor).
- 2) The Middle Ages (AD 1071-1839)  
up to *Tanzimat* (Reforms)  
(An Islamic and slow transition to sedentary life )
- 3) The New Ages (AD 1839 - 1908)  
(Process of westernisation to a state of law)

- 4) The *Recent or Near Ages*  
(AD 1908 - to the Present).  
(Wide scale migrations, urbanisation and capitalism)

All such chronologies tend to be tailored to suit the diverse purposes of historians. Hence, from the standpoint of educational history, the following scheme may be adapted as the three main titles or parts of the essay that follow:

- 1) From early Beginnings to *Tanzimat* Reforms  
(ca 1850),
- 2) From *Tanzimat* to Modernity: The First  
Hundred Years (1850-1950),
- 3) From Scholastic to Social Education  
(1950-to Present).

## Part I. From Beginnings to *Tanzimat* (ca 1850)

Education of the ancient Turks from early beginnings to the *Tanzimat* (or the Ottoman Reformation) period in the second half of the 19th century is overviewed in three parts:

- Education among Ancient Turks before the Ottomans;
- Schools and Scholars molding the Ottoman Empire;
- The *Enderun* School and Upbringing of *Janissaries*.

### *I.1. Education of the Ancient Turks before Ottomans*

The home of the ancient Huns and Turks, often referred to as “Central Asia”, was actually in the Altai region located to the north of China. Nomadic peoples of this region were engaged in a semi-pastoral animal husbandry. That is, like modern Mongolians, they lived in portable, round tents and moved about, grazing their stock on piedmonts, plateaus and back to the plains. The Great Wall of China separated but did not block them from the fertile lands and basins lying in the south. They frequently crossed the wall and invaded the Chinese territories but, more often than not, fell prey to cultural assimilation with agrarian peoples and became Chinese. After the Huns, migrating to and invading Europe, Turks established their own steppe empire known as the *Gokturk* (AD 552-745). Towards the end of this statecraft, they erected the *Orhon Monuments* with signs and symbols of the early Turkish cosmology in both the Turkish (38-letter Runic) alphabet and the Chinese (*khanji*) characters. After the Gokturks, Uygurs (AD 745-950) in the Eastern Turkistan or *Sin-kiang* (agricultural)



region of western China, living in townships, had commercial relations with neighbors and used a new (14-letter *Sogd*) alphabet, adapted to the agglutinative nature of Turkic languages. After a long practice of Altaistic Shamanism (Eliade, 1964), the Uygurs seem to have become acquainted with, and converted to Buddhism, which had long been diffusing from Northern India towards China, Korea and Japan. Nomadic Turkish tribesmen, migrating further west, also encountered the Islamic conquest sweeping the region to the east of the Caspian Sea and west of the Aral lake, a region alternately referred by Persians as “Turan” or the home of Turks.

This is where Turks, gradually converting to Islam, established their first and important dynasties known as the Karakhanid (AD 940-1211), falling north of the Oxus, and Ghaznavid (AD 963-1186) to the south of the Oxus. To the north of these peoples, between the rivers Syr Darya and Amu Darya, lived the Oghuz (Ghuz) tribes who later founded the Seljuk Dynasty (AD 1038-1157) in Persia and Asia Minor (Anatolia).

Education in the pre-Islamic era was, as expected, mainly by *enculturation*, ie, “mores made everything right.” People believed sons were born to become like fathers and daughters like their mothers. Hence the maxim: “Fathers educate their sons and mothers their daughters.” The first literary culture apart from the imperial Chinese influences seemed to flourish among the Uygurs, who, with their simple (14-letter *Sogd*) alphabet, were, according to archeologist Bossert, forerunners in the invention or diffusion of the printing press, somewhat ahead of the Chinese.

Educational ideas and practices, in transition from a warlike nomadism of massive *hordes* (from the Turkic

word *ordu*) to a more peaceful agrarianism, may be found in, or traced to the epic stories in the “Book of (my) Grandad Korkut” (*Kitab-ı Dede(m) Korkut*). The book depicts twelve stories of Oghuzian narrators (“*ozans*” or travelling folk bards). They appear to be composed in different times and places, starting probably in the lower reaches of the Syr-Darya (from about 9th to 10th centuries), and in north eastern Asia Minor (from 10th to 15th centuries). The stories as a whole reflect the cultural transition from pre-Islamic to Islamic, from the fighting *Alp* to the wise *Sufi* or *Ghazi*, from a nomadic stock to an agrarian way of life. Oghuz tribesmen distinguished themselves not only with physical but also with high moral strength. The brave one would not brag about his own deeds but honor other heroes. Such values as praising morality, bravery, devotion to homeland and respect to ancestors as the highest virtues were handed down from each generation to the next. Korkut, the wise old man, was the tutor of the Khan, princes and common people alike. He was the unchallenged authority, symbol and speaker of the ethos. “Valour is dearer than wealth” he said. He taught the rules of honor, conscience, faith and devotion to ancestors. There is the story about a captive father who was declared dead so that his son would not be ashamed by his father’s disgrace. Children were under the care of the family until they were 15 years old. Childless couples were held in low esteem.

Twelve stories of the epic, tied together around the Grandad Korkut figure, were transcribed into a written text in the 14th or 15th century. They are about the relations of the Oghuz with neighboring Armenians,

Romans (Rums or Byzantines) and Georgians. They provide insight into sacred convictions and practices, family structures, economic life and political organisations. According to Camshidov, the functional purpose of the *Korkut* stories is to defend peace and to order in the land and protect the unity and honor of the Oghuz peoples. Contrary to the “inner” (*iç*) and “outer” (*diş*) *moities* mentioned in the stories, Bayındır Khan living all the way up in north Kazan is the chief of all Oghuz tribes. Wars break out with enemy attacks but end with Oghuz victory. The peace loving Khan emerges as a charismatic leader. The “ego vs others” structures detected are fictive. Rather than antagonism or dichotomy, a spirit of diversity, tolerance, forgiveness, love, affection and conciliation prevails in the land between groups. If the individual takes responsibility for all, the whole community will protect the rights of individuals. A mother’s right is held equivalent to God’s. Women appear to be active, leading and respected heroines in all stories. A son named Uruz, defying or rebelling against his father, declares that he is leaving home for the Abhaza, to adopt Christianity and marry the priest’s daughter. As suggested by Koestler in the *Thirteenth Tribe* some probably converted to Judaism, too.

Another sourcebook of information concerning early Turkish education, and reflecting Islamic influences, is the *Kutatgu Bilig* (“Ethics of Happiness”) by Yusuf Has Hajib (1069) of Balasagun. It was written in the Uygur (*Sogd*) alphabet and presented to Hasan Ibn Suleiman Aslan Khan of the Karakhanid Dynasty. The scenario consists of didactic dialogues taking place between the Khan representing justice, and his three men representing wisdom, rationality and contentment,

respectively. Where knowledge was considered to be the highest good, and honesty the best policy. Humans, become men by education. Parents, therefore, are morally accountable for the proper education of their children: in Section 63 and after, there are pieces of educational advice and wisdom generously offered:

*Train each child yourself    Teach them knowledge, ethics  
Don't trust them to others,    For happiness in two worlds,  
Don't let children wander    Find a good bride for the son  
For they may go yonder    Let daughter be married away,  
Lucky if girls weren't born at all.*

In the last couplet there is a marked prejudice against the female sex which is either attributed to the author himself or the relatively secondary status of women in the newly adopted Islam, which seems like a departure from the nomadic and the transient *Grandad Korkut* teaching of ethics.

Another text of educational significance is the *Divan-ü Lugat-it Türk* A “Cyclopaedic Dictionary of Turkish Languages”) by Mahmut of Kashgar. It was written in Baghdad (1072-74), with the express purpose of introducing and teaching Turkish to Arabic speaking peoples. As in the other books already mentioned, there is no sign of a formal or scholastic education but frequent references to baby training, cultural and informal processes such as the importance of hygiene, tender lullabies from by mothers for putting babies to sleep in a cradle; proper nursing, toilet training, etc. Some ghosts or phantoms are mentioned for scaring and disciplining the child when and if necessary. Also, a

variety of child games were described for correctly identifying the names of animals and plants living in the vicinity. According to Mahmut of Kashgar, the Turkish word *bilig* (as in the title *Kutatgu Bilig* above), means and is used for *science*, *philosophy* and *logos*. This book is also a linguistic introduction to Turkish proverbs: knowledge is an attribute of state existence; listen to the wise and do what you learn from them, etc. Principles for effective learning of the Turkish language are:

- Proceed from sample cases to general rules, *ie. induction rather than deduction* which is also followed in Islamic discourse;
- Use samples, poems and proverbs of daily cycle;
- Approach culture by means of, or through language;
- Repeat generously and use repetitions for effective teaching-learning.

Taking his own advice Mahmut wrote, edited and revised his own book several times. He added to his book a circular map of the world lying around the Old (Asiatic) World which did not include Byzantines whom the Seljuks had just defeated (1071). These were busy consolidating their military victory in Asia Minor (Anatolia).

The Seljuk Dynasty of Iran was a new state founded by the Turkish invaders, descending from the Sasanid Dynasty. They overwhelmed and employed the old Persian bureaucratic language, know-how and tradition in statecraft, surviving the Islamic takeover of Persia. Their education is marked by

- (a) the favorable disposition of statesmen towards the arts and sciences
- (b) the Institutions of formal and informal education and
- (c) the *Atabeks (honorable master / fathers)* who will be discussed below.

Famous Seljuk rulers like Tugrul Bey, Alpaslan, Melikshah, Nizam-al Mulk the author of *Siyasetname* (“Book of the Politics”) and Sancar had all displayed great trust and respect for the *Madrassa* scholars. The organisation of the Great Seljuk State after Ghazali was based on secular separation of the politico-military affairs and the Khaliphate, responsible for religious affairs. They were, however, coordinated by a Grand Vizier or Secretary of State, under but acting on behalf of the Sultan. Their official motto was that

*A true scholar will not yield or bow to the amir,  
[but ] a true amir will always consult the scholar.*

Statesmen serving in all branches of the government were trained in the *Madrassa*. Hence, in Islam, *ulema*, or “scholars”, means priests and pastors. The seljuks tried to establish and maintain the *Dar-al Islam* (Commonwealth of Islam) in Anatolia, for which they fought to the bitter end. After the first Seljuk *Madrassa* founded in Nishapur in 1040 by Tugrul Bey, several *Nizamia Madrasa* were founded by Alpaslan and his grand vizier Nizam-al Mulk in Baghdad, They were soon extended to all major cities like Musul, Basra, Herat, Isfahan, Merv, Amul, Rey and Tus. Several of the functions and purposes assigned to the new *Madrassa* were :

- Defending the *Sunni* (Orthodox) faith against the political *Shia*,

- Training state bureaucrats for service to the empire,
- Ensuring the allegiance of the Oghuz tribesmen to the state,
- Educating the Muslim scholars (*Mullah* or clergy),
- Supervising the education of people in newly acquired lands,
- Selecting and promoting the poor for various state functions,
- Initiating statesmen into science and education for public service.

The instruction was in Arabic, the language of the holy *Koran*. The method of teaching was based on rote learning or memorizing by repetition. Except for the main cities, there was only one full professor (*mudarris / master* teacher or instructor) per institution with several assistants or associates. The student enrolments ranged from an average of 40 to several hundred. In Konia, the capital of Anatolian Seljukids in the 13th century, for example, there were 15 *madrasa* enrolling a total of about 600 students.

Foundations seem to have been instrumental and successful in providing ample funds for the employment of staff for the employment of staff including masters and students, and for the maintenance of the institution including masters, assistants, tutors, imams and students. Salaries, stipends and scholarships ranged from a yearly maximum of 800 *dinars* (units) paid to the master, down to 10-15 *dinars* for the students, in addition to their board and lodging. Madrasa also had special funds earmarked for buying books, lighting and fuel oil, general housekeeping, etc.

During the less than 200 eventful years of their reign in Anatolia, which were marked with incessant fighting, clashes and conflicts between Seljuks of Iconium, Byzantines of Byzantium, native peasants and nomadic Turkomen of Asia Minor, not forgetting the several waves of Crusaders and the Mongolian conquest of 1240's which shook and weakened the Seljuk holdings in Anatolia, the Seljuks built an impressive number of cultural and commercial institutions, such as *madrassa*, hospitals, mosques, *caravanserais*, etc. Despite great odds and handicaps caused by persistent wars, they laid the cultural infrastructure of the Turkish sovereignty in Anatolia, leading to eventual Islamization and Turkification of native and migrant belligerents. All these accomplishments may be attributed to their integrative policies in intercultural education or *acculturation*. In 1277, Mehmet Beg of Karaman near Konia boldly decreed that "From now on, Turkish shall be the official language of the Court and that of the Land", implying obviously that it was not so until then. As the Seljukids of Iconium seemed to be nearing exhaustion the Ottomans on the northwest frontier, bordering and reckoning with Byzantium were getting ready for a takeover to replace the Seljuk Sultanate.

The Seljuks had innovated and developed informal institutions like the *Ahis brothers*. Comparable in many ways to the Free Masonic brotherhood of the West, This received both operational (on the job) and speculative training, consisting of the 3-Rs, the basics of religion, personal and institutional hygiene and an ethical code of behaviour, involving the successive tying and untying of their business aprons. This ritual symbolized the closing



and opening of doors: Close the door to misery, exploitation, greed, torture, carnal desires, talking nonsense or gossiping and that of the satanic temptations; but open the door to generosity, contentment, patience, honesty, trust and reliability etc. The following three should be kept strictly closed: eyes (not to envy others), mouth-tongue (to refrain from cursing), and dress belts (not to commit adultery). In contrast, *Ahis* should have open hands for generosity, open doors for welcoming “God-sent guests” and open tables for feeding the hungry. The traveller Ibn Battuta vividly testifies that *Ahis*, all over Anatolia, earnestly practised what they preached and accommodated their foreign guests, visiting the land.

## *1.2. Schools and Scholars Molding the Ottoman Empire*

By and large this is the educational scene and stage that the Ottomans had inherited from the Seljuks, including the basic ingredients like *mektep* or *kuttap* (school and books). In the Ottoman charters for founding primary institutions they are referred to as, “*mektep, mektephane, muallimhane, darüt'talim and darül'ilm*” etc, standing respectively, for school, schoolhouse, teacher(s) house, drillhouse and knowledge house. Primary or elementary institutions were generally located either in, or near the mosque of the community. People called them either “*Mahalle* (neighbourhood)” or “*Sibyan*” (pupil) *mektep*. They were often established by a *vaqf* (pious foundation), willed by notables of the state or honorables (*ashraph*) of the local society. Expenditures, especially that of the teacher's salary were paid from the endowed income of the *vaqf*. In keeping with Muslim practice elsewhere, *Sibyan* (or parish) schools followed a single track of

simply reading the *Koran* in the original Arabic, without translating, understanding or interpreting the text. Ibn Khaldun (1332-1405), the most African Arab historian, sociologist and a contemporary of early Ottomans had confirmed the importance of reading, revering and loving the *Koran* in early childhood. Arab children were, no doubt, learning the heritage of their culture, Turkish children of the same age merely learned and became *hafez* (deaf and mute guardians of the book).

The charter of the Fatih (Conqueror's) Foundation prescribed the same teaching regime. Though some schools gave higher priority to orphans, others gave equal opportunity to all 5-6 year old boys and girls of the neighborhood. Until they had sufficiently mastered reading, all children shared the same classroom or space under the supervision of a single teacher (*Hojha*). There were no grades or levels. For Sultans' (royal) princes there were special (*shehzadegan*) schools within the palace compounds. Some *vaqf* schools, depending on the degree of affluence in the community, provided clothing, food and pocket money as well. For encouragement of learning or in compensation for the hardship that youngsters had to undergo and survive, the Sultans and high state officials would, from time to time, make token (*ie*, nominal "tenpence") distributions of money. In schools, pupils sat on their knees on the floor covered with mats or *kilm* carpets or on seat cushions they brought from their homes. Books were placed on X-shaped low tables, called "*rahle-i tedris*" (study desk), for reading, repeating and memorizing the lessons assigned by the teacher. Some praying rituals were taught in Turkish. Physical punishment, slapping girls' hands and beating boys' feet,

was the rule rather than exception. At the school opening ceremonies, it was a common ritual to tell the teacher, in presence of the child, “Flesh yours, bones mine!” The teacher, was thus authorized to punish the child in any way he saw fit. In his “Method of Teaching”, (1453), Huseyinoglu Ali (himself a teacher), recommended beating as an effective cure for misbehaviour and laziness. He argued that “Even wild animals could be trained with lashes of the whip.” If not beaten that much, the Sultan’s children too were threatened by the *falaka* (bow and rod) hanging on the wall. The bow was used for tying and holding the feet in position. The motto of the system seems in effect to have been the same “Spare the rod spoil the child” which prevailed in western schools until recent times. However a German traveller of the 16th century observed that physical punishment in Ottoman schools was not as harsh as in the western schools of the times. Teachers of the Sibyan schools, popularly referred to or addressed as “Hojha”, were graduates of the special programs given at the *Madrassa*.

Ottomans as empire builders were interested in learning the practical arts and sciences but not so much in metaphysical speculations. Scholars returning home from the well established *Madrassa* located in Egypt, Iran and Western Asia, brought home an old controversy that was going on among followers of Imam Ghazali and Ibn Rushd, regarding the relationship of rational thinking to faith. Specifically, could the scientific realities of life, for example, be contradictory to the truth of faith (pillars of belief or *credo*)? In 1478, Sultan Mehmet the Conquerer put this crucial question, long over-due, before a select group of Muslim scholars. After weeks of deliberations,

the scholars held up Ghazali's *tahafut* (incompatibility) argument against the counter views held by Ibn Rushd who, by the way, had strongly influenced the Renaissance in the west. The scholarly verdict was that the human mind, vulnerable as it is, must stop right there and yield to the faith in dogma. The Sultan had apparently confirmed this proposition which thereafter became and remained the law of the land. It marked the end of all scientific enquiries and speculations that may have fallen or seemed totally contrary to the established (*sunni* / orthodox) faith. The Ottomans prosecuted many young and talented persons on the grounds of would-be heresy or apostacy.

Soon after the conquest of Constantinople, the Sultan had converted eight churches, including the famous Aya (Santa) Sophia, into *Madrassa*. And during 1463-71 he built a new complex, still known today as the *Fatih Kulliyya*, consisting of a central mosque surrounded by several *Madrassa*, an elementary school, hospital, library, public baths, guesthouses and a public kitchen. Speculations about curricula are not conclusive but initially some rational and natural sciences like math and medicine were probably taught, soon to be discontinued, however, for fear of "incompatibility" with the Sunni faith.

Based on the prototype set by Sultan the Conquerer, Suleiman the Magnificent had his own *Suleimania Kulliyya*, designed and built by Sinan, the chief architect and master builder of the Empire. The *Suleimania* complex consisted of several schools and colleges supported by hostels and services all conveniently located around the mosque court. It still stands erect as the pride

of the Empire. From charters of authorisation and salaries paid to master teachers, these Ottoman *Madrassa*, including those built and dedicated by Sultans themselves, seem to have been established especially for the teaching of Islam. The education lasted one to two years but could be extended if necessary.

Students were classified with respect to the levels (or schools) they attended:

- *Talaba*, at the *sibyan* (or elementary school) level;
- *Softa* or *Suhta* at lower levels, in early years of *Madrassa*,
- *Danishmand*, at higher or advanced levels of *Madrassa*.

The language of instruction in all levels and schools was Arabic which in the long run lead to a dichotomy of the literate (*ulema*, versed in Arabic) versus the illiterate (*juchela*, speaking Turkish) and the inevitable low status of Turk(men)s and their spoken languages. Programs of teaching or curricula seem to have been grouped under three faculties or specialties: (1) *Religion and Law*, (2) *The Natural Sciences*, (3) *Instrumental* (or *auxiliary* for other) sciences.

- 1) *Religion or Law* (the advanced knowlege of Islam) included:
  - a) *Tafsir* (the meaning and interpretations of the Koranic text),
  - b) *Hadith* (the Prophet's sayings and checking the authenticity thereof),
  - c) *Fiqh* (the systematic, historical study of Islamic law),

d) *Kelam* (Islamic philosophy defending faith in *Tevhid* / unity),

2) *The Natural Sciences* (rational sciences, philosophy, mathematics and astronomy),

3) *The instrumental sciences* (logic, rhetoric, eloquence, précis writing and esthetics ).

This last group of useful sciences may be seen as corresponding to the *trivium* and the *quadrivium* of liberal education, innovated by Byzantines (Ostrogorski) just before their fall, with the difference that the fundamentals of western (liberal) education, in addition to the 2-R's, were considered by the Ottomans as secondary. This notion of education in time lead to vitally critical consequences —as will shortly be seen.

*The Sheykh'al Islam* (chief *mufti*), who carried a wide span of responsibilities ranging from religious affairs, to education (*madrassa*) and culture, *vaqf* (pious foundations), to municipal administration and justice, held the highest office, second in rank only to the *Sadrizam* (Grand Vizier). *Mudarris* (masters) of the *Madrassa* who ranked just under the *Sheykh'al Islam*, enjoyed some degree of administrative autonomy and academic freedom or immunity, were subject to court trials but as a rule not given the death penalty. Molla Lutfi's exceptional case is perhaps comparable to Socrates'.

Priest-preachers (*Imam-Hatibs*), state functionaries, and *kadis* (judge-governors) of cities and towns were, as a rule, all *Madrassa* graduates. Teachers of elementary (*sibyan*) schools, teaching mainly reading and some writing, were graduates of special programmes, comprising Arabic, Arabic grammar, literature, rhetoric,

ethics of discussion, didactics of the teaching-learning process, mathematics and geography. Arithmetic was included in geometry while history was part of, or taken up with, geography. Special requirements of the teacher training programmes, namely *ethics* (rules) of *discussions* and *didactics* call for comment. These two seem to be unique and of Turkish innovation. Candidates in the teacher programme were exempted from *fikh* (Islamic Law); Teachers were the accepted and respected members of community. Prophet Mohammad had declared that “Teachers are like candles of this and the world hereafter”. More popularly, education was considered as the road to manhood. Ottomans discerned and appreciated, however, a difference between an educated person and a man, as reflected in the following anecdote :

*Once upon a time, a father told his son that he could never become a man. The son turned out to be a vizier and had his father brought to his office. “Father,” the Vizier said, “you see, I’ve become the Vizier.” “Yes, I see what you have become” said the father, “But, I’d told you that you couldn’t become a man —not the Vizier.*

After 1550, at the height of the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent, *Madrassa* seemed to be in a steady decline, like the state they were part of and serving. Scholars like Kochi Beg (1631), and Katip Chelebi (1656), submitted reports for an overall reform of education, but to no avail, however. *The Madrasa system* just could not prevent its, fall.

Despite serious curricular shortcomings (lack of natural sciences) and anachronistic as well as obscurantist tendencies —looking back with longing

rather than surging ahead—*Madrassa* education up to the 1600 may be given credit for

- 1) The high quality and standards of physical, plant and academic life around the main mosques located at the civic centrum;
- 2) The excellent room and board accomodation either free of charge or within easy means and reach of scholarship holders;
- 3) An educational philosophy comparable to “earn and learn”; students of *Madrassa*, who were expected to take care of themselves, often volunteered for trouble shooting assignments given by the state.

In addition to Huseinoglu Ali’s (1453) *Tarik’ül Edeb* (Ways or Methods of Education), already mentioned, three scholars stand out for their works and ideas about Ottoman education: Kınalızade Ali (1510-72), Katib Chelebi (1609-56) and Ibrahim Muteferrika (1674-1745) whose contributions will now be briefly mentioned. Written in 1564, on behalf of Ali Pasha the governor of Syria (hence the book title), Kınalızade’s *Ahlak-ı Alai* consists of three chapters: *Practical Ethics*, *Ethics of Family Relations* (domestic education) and the *Politics of Statecraft*. On family ethics, Kınalızade stresses the importance of moderate and peaceful parental relations for the developmental psychology of children (or personality) of both sexes. In politics he distinguishes two generic types based on virtue and corruption. The Almighty’s choice and order is just as He is the benevolent administrator, striving for the welfare of his people. The head of the state must (a) treat everybody



equally, (b) distribute with equity, (c) never accept gifts or bribes, (d) know the enemies well, (e) shun decisions taken in fury or hurry. His ideal state model, known as the *Daire-i Adalet* (“Circle of Justice”), seems to be inspired either by the neo Platonist Farabi’s “Virtuous City” or taken more directly from Aristotle’s *Politics*. He somehow managed to escape or survive Ghazali’s (*Tahafut-al falasife*), warning scholars about the incompatibility of philosophy and ideology.

Kâtib Chelebi, who was a self educated man of science, well ahead of his times, strove almost single handedly for an Ottoman Renaissance and Enlightenment. Among his dozens of books is *Kesh-fuz Zunun* a cyclopaedic, annotated dictionary of about 15 000 titles. He distinguished between *rational* politics and the *Sharia*. He stood for a secular state but was careful not to appear anti-*sharia* (Islam). He emphasized the importance of the 3-R’s (including math), natural history and the primacy of original sources in education. In a way reminiscent of Aristotle’s “Golden rule or ratio”, he recommended moderation and conciliation, rather than conflict and extremes. He was critical of *Madrassa*’s “instrumental sciences” (ie. the teaching of Arabic) and recommended going to the basic 3-Rs instead. In studying philosophy, one should know where to stop and not step out of bounds (Islamic teaching) -so shun him who does not know or understand. One should appear as he is and be as he appears; ie, “Know thyself”. Though others cannot duly judge, one should also believe in God. In teaching and learning sciences watch the proper order (sequence), each branch of learning may be a prerequisite for

others. Ahead of his time, he was, probably, visualizing a modern “pyramid of learning” where layers rested one on another.

Ibrahim Müteferrika, was a Hungarian prisoner of war and a unitarian turned Muslim. In 1727 he introduced and operated the first printing press in Turkey. Though the Jews (since 1492), Gregorian Armenians (since 1567) and Orthodox Greeks (since 1627) had their own printing presses, Muslims were denied the privilege. Müteferrika (meaning “carrier of decrees”), believed that obscurantism was the main reason for this delay. After the defeat in Vienna (1689) Ottoman power was in decline and the time was up for some renovation. Müteferrika seized on this favorable spirit known as *Lale Devri* (the “Tulip Era”). He was the first to print Turkish-Arabic dictionaries and natural and social science texts for the *Madrassa* student. The fact that the total number of books printed amounted merely to 180 titles in the first hundred years, will show what a remarkable fellow this prisoner of war was.

Besides these thinkers there are two scientists. The cartographer-Admiral Piri Reis in the early 16th century drew a set of the most accurate world maps. After loosing a sea battle however, he was executed. The natural historian Ibrahim Hakkı of Erzurum (1703-1780), in his *Marifetname* (epistemology, 1756), anticipated Darwin’s evolutionary theory. Ahead of his time, he cautiously noted that “Those who refute such knowledge may actually be committing a crime against their own faith.” The fact that his book was first published in Mehmet Ali Pasha’s Cairo (Egypt) in 1835

shows that he had no impact of consequence on the Ottoman cosmology or *Madrassa* education.

### *1.3. The Enderun and Up-Bringing of Janissaries*

Parallel to the *Madrassa* which educated scholars and state officials in accordance with Islamic tradition elsewhere, Ottomans innovated a special and unique institution of education, the Palace or *Enderun* (the “inner most”) Schools for upbringing the Sultan’s *Kullar* “slaves”, better known as “*Janissaries*” (new-soldiers), who were originally recruited from selected Christian families and called *Devshirme* (“draftees”) or *Acemi-ođlanlar* (“freshmen”). The *Enderun* Schools brought up these freshmen into a professional corps of state guardians. Ottomans seemed to have been fairly successful in this unique experiment of trans-[or forced] cultururation. Many statesmen, who held the seal of authority and fate of the Empire in their hands, were products of this process. It should be mentioned at the outset that the *Janissaries* as the end products, *Enderun* as the school and *Devshirme* as the selection system were closely interrelated. Starting from this last they will now be briefly described.

#### *a) Devshirme Boys*

Every three to five years, the Sultan’s special scouts would come to the field in search of new talent to be drafted. They would look for healthy, strong and handsome boys and youths, aged between 8 and 20. There was yearly total of about 3000 boys but only one boy would be drafted from about 40 Christian families, settled in Rumelia or the Balkans (Albania, Serbia, Greece, Bulgaria and Hungary). Orphans, only children and those

who were married would be exempted, as were the Jews, Russians, shepherd's sons and Turks themselves for reasons which lie beyond the scope of this essay.

The children would be brought to Istanbul, circumcised and initiated to Islam in due process and taught to say the *Shahada* (God is but one and Mohammad is his Prophet). After the ritual, the boys would be sent to live with selected Turkish families for three to five years, learn the language, culture and Islamic practice of praying. After this process of enculturation they would be registered and enrolled in seven *Acemioglan* (freshman) schools, in and nearby Istanbul, for receiving military drill and basic training, along with one-fifth of war prisoners (known as *pentchick*). According to the law and customs they were considered "slaves" (*kullar*) of the Sultan's sword. Those making the grade then would be selected and sent to the *Enderun* School located in the Topkapı Palace (or Campus). Those not qualifying for this high honor would join the field units that constituted the regular, professional Janissary Corps.

#### *b) The Enderun School*

The incoming students called *iç oğlanlar* (the inner boys) would be further educated by (1) working in the Sultan's services, (2) mastering natural and Islamic sciences, (3) developing their physical fitnesses and (4) acquiring some vocational or artistic skills.

1) In-service training in the Palace consisted of going through seven consecutive chambers or gates, for one to two years each, namely:

- The Little Room (learning mainly the 3-R's)

- The Big Room (preparing for promotion to higher room services)
- The hawk (*Doghancilar*) Room (taking care of the Sultan's hunting birds)
- The Wardrobe (*Seferli*) Room ( in charge of clothing)
- The Butler's (*Kiler*) Room (catering services for the Palace)
- The Treasury (*Hazine*) Room (the Sultan's valuables)
- The Private (*Hass*) Room (daily private (valet) services of the Sultan).

Every 5-7 years or whenever a new Sultan was installed in the Throne (enthroned rather than Crowned), the alumni of the Private Room would be appointed to important functions or positions, as qualified public servants of the state.

2) The *Enderun* provided a theoretical (academic) education. In addition to the Islamic sciences taught at *Madrassa*, the *Enderun* offered Turkish, Persian, literature, history and mathematics. The syllabi of courses and scholars invited to teach them lead to speculations that the *Enderun* was in fact a school of liberal arts, well above the level of *Madrassa*.

3) The *Enderun* also required physical training or martial arts suitable to the young men's aptitudes and interests, like *archery, horse-back riding, spear throwing, wrestling*, as well as the fine arts like *music, poetry, calligraphy, miniature, drawing, book-binding* etc. The music school located in Palace was known as *the Meshkhane*.

### c) *The Janissary Corps*

The whole system was popularly known as the *Yenicheri Ocak* (Corps), where the Sultan himself was registered and paid as number one fellow. Slaves of the Sultan were not, before the age of retirement, allowed to get married, hold business or engage in trade. They successfully served the state in peace and war until 1850, and the Corps supplied 79 grand *viziers* (*Sadrizam*), 3 *Sheikh-ul Islam*, 36 Admirals of the Navy (*Kaptan-ı Derya*), along with much greater numbers of officers. Though the ultimate purpose must have been to prevent the corruption of statecraft, according to Gellner the Corps only delayed it for a while until they became corrupted themselves. Although converted to and indoctrinated for the defence of Islam, they were not subject to, or protected by, the Islamic Law. They remained Sultans' "slaves" who had no chance to regain their freedom. The prestige and power of offices held by Janissaries were so high that the policy of isolating and keeping them out of the reach and bribes of profiteers—likely to gather around the absolute authority of the Monarch—and the *Espirit de Corps* gradually vanished and became a State burden instead, resisting all reforms and attempts of renovation. The Corps was finally and brutally disbanded and replaced in 1826 by a new army corps, called *Nizam-ı Cedid* (New Order). While the *Enderun* School survived the *Tanzimat* and somehow lingered on until the young Turks' takeover in 1909, the *Madrassa* proved more stable and durable —as will be seen in the next section.

## Part II. From A *Tanzimat* to Turkish Democracy: A Hundred Years

### II.1. Military Schools: Paving and Leading the Way

In the year 1770, while the steam engine was becoming the symbol of the British Empire, scholars of the French Enlightenment were busy with new editions of the *Encyclopaedia* and the German philosopher Kant was starting work on his *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, a Russian battle fleet, circum-sailing Europe all the way from the Baltic into the Mediterranean and the Egean, burned the Ottoman Navy lying at anchor in the Cheshme base. In confusion or desperation, the Ottomans protested to Venice (presumably) for letting the Russian fleet via the Adriatic. In 1773, the first school of naval engineering "*Mühendishane-i Bahri-i Hümayun*" was inaugurated in Istanbul with a scientific curricula based on geometry (*Hendese*). Since all mathematical subjects were taught under the generic name of geometry, schools of engineering founded thereafter were always called "*Muhendishane*", the "Home of Geometricians". (In modern Turkish, engineers are still known as "geometers".) The philosophical curricula of the *Madrasa* proposed by Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun had apparently been either discontinued or become dysfunctional. No master of the *Madrasa* knew or remembered Euclid any more. Therefore the new school had to begin with the 3-R's, modern languages like French and English and mathematics to be followed by marine sciences. Twenty years later, in 1793 the first Military School of Engineering (*Mühendishane-i Berri-i Humayun*) was opened, to teach military sciences like artillery, military engineering, and cartography. Here too,

as the name suggests, the curriculum was based on geometry, arithmetic, physics and geography. The naval school joined the new program, which was a revolution in Turkish education (see Table II.1.1).

**Table II.1.1 Program of the First Military School of Engineering (1793)**

<i>First Year</i>	<i>Second Year</i>	<i>Third Year</i>	<i>Fourth Year</i>
Calligraphy	Calculations	Geography	Conic Sections
Dictation	Geometry	Trigonometry	Calculus
Technical Drawing	Geography	Algebra	Mechanics
Arabic Language	Arabic Lang	Topography	Biology
Plane Geometry	French	History of War	Signalization
Numerical calculus			Demolition
French			Theory of Drills
			Military Eng'g

*Source* : Akyüz , *Türk Eğitim Tarihi*. 1994: 126.

Students were taken to the field two days a week for practical work, drills, exercises and applications of their theoretical studies. Seniors sent to public works projects were expected to draw and bring back maps of the area visited.

Sultan Selim III, warned and alarmed by the French Revolution and trying desperately to modernize the State, the Army and the Imperial Household, was stopped and disposed by a reactionary plot (1807).

The Greek Community of Istanbul was chartered in 1805 to establish a medical school. The school was —for reasons not quite clear— closed in 1812. The first State



School of Medicine and Urban Surgery (*Tıphane-i Amire ve Cerrahhane-i Mamure*) was opened in 1827. The four year programs included:

*Arabic, Turkish, French, Grammar, Dictation. Writing, Names of Plants and Drugs (Turkish - Arabic), Religion (in free time), Anatomic Atlas and Introduction to Medical Science, Practice of Surgery.*

The language of instruction was French in the Medical and Turkish in the Surgery school. Except for abolishing the *Janissary* “Heart” and shunning the Bektashi Order, which were deemed to be necessary for the establishment of the New Army Corps (1826), the Ottoman *Ulema* (Muslim scholars) opposed and stopped nearly all attempts to restore the Ottoman House. The die-hard resistance —or self defence— of the Islamic world view continued through the *Tanzimat* to Republican Turkey and survives even today as the “political Islam”.

Sultan Mahmut II, who had succeeded Selim, dissolved the *Janissary* Corps and founded a New Army Corps, needed literate officers for running and leading the new army adapted from post-Napoleonic France. The very few graduates of the existing schools of military engineering were inadequate to meet the demand. In the aftermath of the Ottoman defeat by the Egyptian Army in 1827, radical measures had to be taken in a hurry. In 1830 Admiral Halil Rifat Pasha reported to Sultan Mahmud II that “Unless the European (*ie*, rational or *secular*) course is followed, there will be no way left [for Turks], other than going back to Asia.” In 1831, adult *sibyan* companies were formed for teaching the 3-R’s to the non-commissioned officers of the new army. And finally in 1834, *Mekteb-i Funun-u Harbiye* (the School of Military Sciences) or the War College was

established. Soon thereafter, selected cadets were sent to, and in return professors were invited from, European capitals. The school was organized in two levels: (1) a prep section of eight grades and (2) an advanced section for teaching military skills and techniques.

### *Preparatory Section*

- |                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| 1st grade          | : The 2-R's<br>(mastering two letter words)   |
| 2nd and 3rd grades | : The 3-R's<br>(mastering three letter words)   |
| 4th and 5th grades | : The Religion and Foundations<br>of Islam  |
| 6th grades         | : Field Manuals and<br>Military Laws  |
| 7th and 8th grades | : The Novel, elective writings,<br>dictionaries, official<br>correspondence, draft and<br>composition writing |

### *Advanced Section*

(100 students successfully completing the 8th grade, were introduced to)

Engineering Magazines, Map Making, Applied Topography, Applied Geometry and the Science of Geometry.

**Table II.2.3 Courses Prescribed  
by the War College (1834)**

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Geometry	Chemistry (composition of matter)
Algebra	French Language (study of)
Analytical Geometry	Fortifications (light and heavy)
Perspectives	Floating Bridge Construction
Conic Sections	Technical Drawing
Calculus	Map Making Techniques
Mechanics	Gun, Rifle and Sword Drills
Biology	Infantry and Cavalry Drills
Natural History (physics)	Zoology (wild animal)

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*Source* : Akyüz : 1994

The War College prescribed an ambitious program for teaching sciences which was not plausible in 1834. The program was gradually developed and offered after 1847, ie during *Tanzimat*. Army officers who were merely exposed to such sciences, however, became pioneers in transfusing the modern curricula to other institutions of the *Tanzimat*.

### *II.2. The Tanzimat Reforms (1839-1876)*

In the *Tanzimat* Declaration officially known as the “Imperial Gulhane Decree of 1839”, read by the Grand Vizier Mustafa Reshid Pasha in the name of Sultan, there was no mention of public education. It was taken for granted however that such radical measures could only be possible by educational reforms effected by the state. In 1845 before the Imperial Decree of 1856 confirming that European education, science and capital would be

used, Sultan Abdulmecid, who succeeded Sultan Mahmut II, had message read, to top officials of his government. It stated in effect that:

*The Sultan was disappointed that no progress has been made in education.*

*New schools should be innovated—even invented if necessary—for public education, for general and vocational education all over the country and for happiness of the people in this and the world hereafter.*

The Ministry of General Schools, founded in 1846, was incorporated in 1857 to the Ministry of General Education. The Sultan's message also gave the starting signal long needed for substantive reforms and renovations, known as "The 1847 Directives". In compliance with the Imperial Orders, the *Sibyan* school programs were radically revised. The new program included: The Alphabet, Turkish (writing two and three-letter words, ethics (brief, anecdotal stories), Calligraphy and Religious information (about Islam), Koran to be read twice (without memorizing by heart). Arithmetic (four basic operations), the Outline of Ottoman history and an outline of geography. For writing exercises, introduced anew, pupils were to be given slate boards to be supplied by Sultan himself. Schooling was to begin at the age of seven and continue for four years without yearly passes or failures, but terminating with a graduation exam at the end. Those failing the final exams were allowed to remain in school until the age of 13.

This certainly was a bold and brave leap forward. Yet the real revolution of the 1847 Directive was effected in

secondary education. For, as has been shown, there was no institution between the *Sibyan* school and the *Madrasa*, and the first schools of naval and military engineering founded in XVIII century had to set up and run their own primary and secondary school programs.

*Tanzimat* proposed three new schools, namely, *Rushdiya*, *Idadiya* and *Sultaniya: Rushdiya*, a 4-year make-up or maturity school at the primary level; *Idadiya*, a 4-year school for preparation to higher and vocational education; and *Sultaniya* a 6-year secondary school (above *Rushdiya* but including *Idadiya*), which was the first Ottoman lyc ee. Due to the lack of a real university, the first Ottoman *Sultanis* established in Istanbul, like *Galatasaray* and *Darushafaka* (“Datchka”) towards the end of *Tanzimat*, set up the national standards of a *Baccalaureate* degree, which was later taken up and continued by the Republicans. In 1848 the first teacher training school was opened in Istanbul for educating the *Rushdiya* teachers. There were in 1852 only 12 *Rushdiya* in Istanbul while in 1874 some 18. In big cities of the Empire there existed a total of 25 *Rushdiya* in 1853. The *Tanzimat* leaders’ decision to open a university in 1846 came true in 1863 with an impressive list of Ottoman scholars lined up as teachers. The building, constructed of timber, burned down in 1865 with some 4000 books acquired from abroad.

The major educational breakthrough of the *Tanzimat* came with the 1869 “Ordinance of General Education,” (*Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi*) conceived and written by Sadullah Pasha in response to a diplomatic French note requesting the establishment of a modern lyc ee. The 1869 Ordinance was an attempt for a suitable infrastructure, based on the following premises :

- Industry, commerce and business have not developed because we have not trained the necessary manpower;
- This ordinance for contemporary education will train the experts who can develop both culture and industry;
- Industry is possible not by imitation but through science and technology;
- Sibyan schools and teachers are inadequate, *Rushdiya* are not much better off as they follow the same Sibyan tradition.

Hence some of the objectives of the reforms to be undertaken were:

- 1) Compulsory primary (basic) education for everybody
- 2) Renewal and development of all school programs
- 3) A Higher Board of Education for program development
- 4) Sibyan schools in all villages and rural communities
- 5) *Rushaiya* in all townships
- 6) *Idadiya* in all cities
- 7) *Sultaniya* (lycées) in regional (state / *eyalet*) capitals
- 8) Teachers colleges for men and women in Istanbul
- 9) A new university in Istanbul
- 10) *Rushaiya* for girls (*inas*) in suitable (settlements) settlements

- 11) Qualified teachers for translating school books from French
- 12) State inspection of religion courses offered by church authorities
- 13) Science teachers from abroad until native teachers are trained ready
- 14) Rushdiya and Idadiya finances were to be shared by the State %25, and local authorities %75
- 15) Pilot projects tried in Istanbul were to be extended country wide.

**Table II.2.1. Ordinance (Official)  
Programs for *Rushdiya***

<i>Boys</i>	<i>Common</i>	<i>Core</i>	<i>Girls</i>
	Introduction to Religion		
	Ottoman (Turkish) Language		
	Dictation and Composition		
	Arabic and Persian ( <i>Farsi</i> )		
	Line Drawing Exercises		
	Bookkeeping Techniques		
	Geography		
Plane Geometry			
General History			Outline of History
Physical training			Readings in Literature
Local language(s)			Embroidery Designs
French (elective)			Music (elective)

*Source* : Akyüz (1994:144)

The *Sultani* Schools (corresponding to a western lycée) to be established in some important urban centers only, were conceived as six-year secondary institutions, above the *Rushdiya*. In the first three years called the “*Adi*” (ordinary) level, the *idadiya* programs (Table II. 4) would be required. In the last three years, called the “*Ali*” or the higher level, Science and Literature branches were available and optional.

**Table II.2.2.**  
***Idadiya* Programs Prescribed by the 1869 Ordinance**  
(For Boys)

Turkish Writing (advanced)	Natural History
Grammar of Turkish Lang	Algebra
French	Math and Bookkeeping
Logic	Geometry
Wealth of Nations (economics)	Geometry of Areas
Geography	Technical Drawing
General History	Biology
	Chemistry

*Source* : Akyüz (1994: 145)

Notes:

- 1) Arabic and Persian studies were replaced by Turkish and French.
- 2) Religious studies were replaced by Natural History and sciences
- 3) Some course requirements could be changed by the Ministry’s approval.

The positivistic spirit of the 1869 Ordinance is best expressed by the *Terakki* (“progress”) journal, published by the “Society for Sciences” in 1869:

*If the long-haired short-minded women appeared inferior to men, it was due to their inadequate education and limited participation in public life.*



A university in Istanbul, envisaged by the 1869 Ordinance, came to life in 1870 under the able leadership of Hojha Tahsin Efendi. His live experiments about life and his night lectures open to the public resulted in harsh reactions from the *Madrassa* followers.

**Table II.2.3.**  
***Sultaniya* Programs : the Upper (Lyée) Level**  
( A three-year course)

<i>Literature Branch</i>	<i>Science Branch</i>
Art of Turkish Writing	Descriptive Geometry
<i>Précis</i> writing exercises	Analytical Geometry
Readings in Arabic & Farsi	Perspectives
Syntax and Dictionary	Algebra
French Language	Trigonometry (plane and spherical)
Wealth of Nations	Astronomy
Laws of Nations	Biology
History	Applied Chemistry
	Natural Sciences
	Topography

*Source:* Akyüz (1994: 146)

Table II.2.3. merely provides the prescription; how well it was fulfilled is another question.

The University offered three programs for teacher training. See Table II.7.

After another abortive trial in 1872, the second attempt to establish a university failed in 1873 with less than 100 students. A year later, in 1874, the idea was revived and put to the test, a reasonably safe distance away from the conservative *Madrassa* (located in the Fatih region) in the

Galatasaray Sultaniya buildings, located in the Pera Section of the city, across the Golden Horn. According to the Ordinance, this new university was to have three departments (faculties or colleges): 1) School of Arts and Science, 2) School of Law, and 3) School of Natural Sciences and Mathematics. Prescribed Course Programs for each school are shown in Table II.2.4.

**Table II.2.4.**

**University Departments and Prescribed Course Titles (1869)**  
(A Three Year Program, Academics required the Fourth Year)

<i>Arts and Sciences</i>	<i>Law School</i>	<i>Sciences and Math</i>
Human Body	Islamic Law (Sharia)	Cosmology
Bio-Psychology	Methods Islamic Law	Physics
Logic and Meaning	Roman Law	Chemistry
Public Speaking	French Law	Geology
Ethics and Theology	Trial Methods	Mineralogy & Metals
Natural Law	Commercial Laws	Botanics
Science of History	Penal Codes	Zoology
Advanced Arabic	Criminal Codes	Geometry
Farsi (Persian)	Public Adm Law	Analytical Geometry
French	International Law	Descriptive Geometry
Turkish		Perspectives
Comparative Grammar (linguistics)		Calculus
Study of Measures		Mechanics
General History		Natural History
Archeology (Antiquities)		Mathematics
Numismatics		Topography

*Source:* "Ordinance of General Education /1869" ;  
Akyüz (1994 :147)

These were the ambitious programs that the *Tanzimat* had undertaken. Yet the important and pioneering contributions were in areas of technical-vocational, professional and informal public education. The first School of Agriculture in 1857 was followed by the first School of Forestry in 1857. For training foremen or technicians a School of Mining was opened in 1874. For the clerks of Justice or scribes a three-year middle school was opened in 1862-63 along with the first school of translators of modern languages. Between 1864 and 68, Mithat Pasha, a Governor in European Rumelia, opened several boarding schools for delinquent children. In addition to the 3-Rs, children were trained in traditional arts and crafts. He also pioneered establishing vocational schools for girls. A five-year boarding school of industrial arts and crafts was established in Istanbul for children under 13. Graduates were certified as apprentice, associate and master in metal works, machinery, joinery works etc. In 1864 and 1869 new vocational institutions for girls were established for producing supplies, such as military uniforms and underwear.

At the higher or professional level, public officers were to be educated in a 4-year *Mulkiya* (a civilian as opposed to military) school of public administration, which was opened in 1859. The first graduates of this school also served as *Idadiya* teachers established after 1873. By the same token, *Mekteb-i Tıbbiye-i Mülkiye*, which means a “civilian school of medicine” (as opposed to the military school established in 1834), was opened in 1867. Incentives were so high that besides good professionals, this school trained the bulk of *Young Turks* or future revolutionaries.

Leading statesmen of the Tanzimat, Sultan Abdülmecit, Reshit Pasha, Ali Pasha, Fuat Pasha, the “Historian of historians” Ahmet Cevdet Pasha, Ahmet Kemal Pasha, Mithat Pasha, Ahmet Vefik and Saffet Pasha were all interested in the educational reforms. Ziya Pasha (1825-1880), translator of Rousseau’s *Emile*, had been an outspoken opponent and a popular target of the conservative *Madrasa*. Ebuzziya Tefvik (1848-1913) and Ali Suavi (1839-1878), as thinkers, writers and publishers generously contributed to the *Tanzimat* Reforms.

Mustafa Fazıl Pasha, one of the founders of the Young (Yeni) Ottomans, wrote to Sultan Abdülaziz from Paris, in French that “Unless separated, (*ie, secularized*) both the State and Islam will fall or fail together.” Young Ottomans, however, seeing *Tanzimat* as an attempt at secularization and hence a threat to the State, tried to stop such a development or slow it down

A less known *Tanzimat* educator was an engineer Ibrahim Edhem Pasha, whose *Councils to my children* is a unique blend or exceptional compromise of East and West, science and faith. He also translated an excellent geometry text.

In summary, the *Tanzimat* Reforms created a system of contemporary schools of three years each: *Sibyan* schools, *Rushdiya*, *Idadiya* and *Sultaniya*, Teachers Colleges and University, respectively. With few exceptions most of these schools were located in Istanbul. A generation after the decision for *Tanzimat* Reforms, nearly 20 % of the Imperial schools were following the modern curricula, while more than 70% still remained in

the darkness of the *Madrassa* tradition. This dichotomy invited a remark from a minister of education “If not for the schools, he would run the education perfectly.” He was not complaining of schools as such but rather, and ironically, of the ruthless opposition by the *Madrassa* directed to schools. In brief, despite a variety of obstacles, *Tanzimat* succeeded in creating *Rushdiya* and *Idadiya* and in training their teachers in the western tradition. Though University failed or fell short of its objectives, the professional schools filled the vacuum. More specifically, *Tanzimat* was successful in introducing :

- Writing, mathematics, history, geography and some natural sciences
- Modern techniques and aids in classroom teaching and applications
- Teaching of Turkish and modern languages (ie, French) in schools.

Turkish as the language of instruction was probably the greatest asset gained.

Ottomans made history but didn't bother to write it. Ottoman texts of history were, in fact, official state chronologies since the creation, written by official court scribes. *Tanzimat* brought a new consciousness of history: Who are we, what do we do? and a new window to natural history (science).

In all fairness, it should be underlined that if they could not do any better, it was not because they did not know better, but because they did not have the financial means and the political will to support them. Many broad visions of the 1869 Ordinances, are, by and large, valid

models of reforms. *Tanzimat* was further handicapped from the fact, that although there was a Ministry of General Education, *madrassa*, military schools, private or foreign school and vocational and professional (higher) schools were all supervised by different State Ministries of equal rank—without an effective cooperation or coordination between them.

### II. 3. *From Monarchy to Republic (1878-1923)*

One of the political consequences of the *Tanzimat* was that the Ottoman Empire had its first Constitution in 1876. It was however a short-lived, little appreciated experiment. His Imperial Majesty Abdulhamit II, exercising the constitutional power invested in the Sultan, indefinitely dissolved the Parliament until the second *Hurriyet* in 1908. This interim period is known as the “absolute monarchy”. *Tanzimat* education had aimed to save the Empire by creating an Ottoman nation out of its ethnic diversity. More realistically perhaps, the Sultan followed a policy to hold its own and create a Muslim nation. Hence the *Tanzimat* programs displaying positivism and natural history were replaced by technical and vocational schools. Although private schools and colleges were developed, general schools, teacher training programs, books and press came under the strict (and nervous) censure of the Palace. Educational Almanacs were published by the Ministry of General Education. Under pressure from the *Madrassa* lobby, religious courses, subjects and hours were increased. In 1880 the first School of Law was established and in 1883, an educational tax was introduced, in addition to *Ashar* (literally a plus 10% tax taken from agricultural producers). In 1885, the first *Idadiya* out of Istanbul was opened in the Kastamonu vilayet, and in

1891 teachers schools for elementary and secondary levels were incorporated as a Teacher Training College. The Grand Vizier (*Küçük*) Said Pasha speculated (in the 1890's) that a *secular* university could perhaps be founded without risking the fate of the Throne. The same university was opened for a fourth time (1900). In 1904, under Education Minister Hashim Pasha, the program of 3-year elementary (*iptidai*) schools was radically revised (*Table II.3.1.*)

**Table II.3.1. Elementary School Program (1904)**

<i>First Grade</i>	<i>Second Grade</i>	<i>Third Grade</i>
Alphabet	<i>Holy Kur'an</i>	<i>Holy Kur'an</i>
Readings	Religious Rules	Reading <i>Kur'an</i>
Writing	Readings	Religious Rules
<i>Holy Kur'an</i>	Writing	Arithmetic
Religious Rules	Arithmetic	Ottoman History Readings in Ethics

*Source* : Akyüz (1994 : 198).

This revision was not certainly a return to the Sibyan based on readings of the *Kuran*, yet the high key of Islam is still apparent. The same year (1904), the historian Yusuf Akçura, originally from Kazan (Russia), in his epoch making essay "The Three Policies" which appeared in the *Turk*, published in Egypt, summarily concluded that *Ottomanism* of the *Tanzimat* had failed simply because the independence fury infecting the Christian nations had convinced the statesmen that Muslim and Christian Ottomans could no longer live together in peace. The policy of Islamism followed by the Sultan —though perhaps not impossible— was very

difficult indeed. Hence it was implied, or inferred that the only viable alternative left for the Ottoman Turks to follow was *Turkism*. Just a year later, a young graduate of the War College, Captain Mustafa Kemal, who apparently knew of Akçura's essay "Three Policies" which and had read about the final stage which the *laïcité* movement had reached in France (1905), confided to his friends "Time has come, this is exactly what we are going to do." Yet the Young Turks, who succeeded in dethroning the Sultan and declaring the Second *Meshrutia* (1908), soon split into Ottomanist and Islamist camps. . In 1911 the first Girls' *Idadiya* was opened which was followed in 1913 by the first *Sultaniya* for girls. The Regulations for Private Schools, which were effeted in 1915, were still in force in 1960's. The ordinance for the first Ottoman University was finally published in 1919. This date coincided, as the fates would have it, with the fall of the 620-year old empire and the begining of the War of Turkish Independence. Mustafa Kemal, as a war hero from the Dardanelles, had to wait for the fall of the Empire, to have his vision come true.

At the fall of the Empire and the birth of Republic, a mere ten percent of men and less than one percent of women were estimated to be literate. Every three out of four citizens lived in remote, small and scattered neolithic villages. What could be done and how? Ottoman literati—divided as they appeared— had proposed a variety of solutions.

Akcura's cultural or national Turkism did not quite reach the imperial agenda. While in the *Genç Kalemler* ("Young Pens"), Omer Seyfeddin was inviting his generation of writers to write in simple folk language (*ie*,



Turkish), and another intellectual nationalist Tekin Alp (Moiz Kohen, 1912) was reporting to *Mercure de France* that “Turks are searching for a national spirit (“*Ame nationale*”). Some young poets published Gökalp’s famous poem known as “*Turan* “ which in years to come became the prime source of pan-Turkist aspirations. Secular nationalists or Turkists of the 1910’s, who belonged to the *Türk Ocacı* (Hearth) and wrote to the *Türk Yurdu* (Home-land), never gained enough political momentum to be reckoned with. Poet Tevfik Fikret’s call for a secular, humanistic identity in his poem *Prometheus*

*I am I, and you are you  
No God nor slave are we*

just faded away without tangible or traceable effects. In a public debate with Agayev (Agaoglu) Ahmet, another ardent Turkist from Kazan, Suleyman Nazif, a well known Ottoman scholar, proudly declared that

*First an Ottoman then a Muslim and lastly a Turk,  
he would allow his sister marry a non-Turkish  
Muslim, but not a non-Muslim Turk.*

Gokalp, the ideologue of the Young Turks’ Union and Progress Party (*İttihad ve Terakki*) observing that :

*While Turkish people were of a Shamanistic  
civilization,*

*Madrasa scholars were of the Islamic civilization,  
and*

*Modern (school) graduates were of the Western  
civilization,*

had concluded that he himself belonged, simultaneously, to the

*Turkish nation speaking Turkish,  
Muslim (umma) community praying in Arabic, and  
Western civilization communicating (thinking)  
in French.*

Gokalp and Akcura, the two leading proponents of Turkish Nationalism, finally appeared in agreement that “the Nation (*ie, millet*) should be the basis of State.” Gokalp later reflected that prior to the Second *Mashrutiya* (1908) there was no Turkish nation because there was no notion of “Turk or Turkness” in the conscience or language of the people. Professor Karpas (1970:56) critically observed that instead of integrating his views under one, over-all concept or resolution, Gokalp had merely presented them side by side.

#### *II.4. Quest for Cultural Modernity : 1923-1950*

This was the state of affairs when the National Assembly of Representatives convened for the first time (1920) in Ankara, where Mustafa Kemal Pasha, the leader of the nationalist movement, discreetly proclaimed on a mural poster:

*“Sovereignty belongs to the People!”*

—by inference— not to God the Almighty or any imperial [human] dynasty! The early declaration of *Res-publica (Cumhuriyet)* was a signal of things to come, the unfolding Turkish Revolution. The moving spirit of revolution saw the salvation of his “semi-colonised, war-weary, agrarian people” in the creation of a new Turkish

Man, a new Turkish Society and a new Turkish Culture so that it would not fall again to the brink of extinction. How, then, was the cultural (Islamic) heritage to be reconciled with the revolutionary Republic? There appeared two distinct strategies: first, an “Islamic Republic of Turkey”; second, a national culture to sustain the secular republic. Though the first option seemed difficult —remembering the long dichotomy lingering between *Madrassa* and school— the second was not much easier, although there were enlightened Muslim scholars like Mehmet Akif Ersoy who earnestly believed and proposed that “bearded hojhas” could be more effective and therefore should be given a role. “The foundation of the Turkish Republic was [going to be] culture” declared the leader —not the “obsolete culture” inherited from Ottomans but a viable culture to be created anew by the educational policies and purposes of the Turkish Republic :

*The purpose of our revolution is to render the people of the Turkish Republic a modern and civilized society, in every and proper sense of the words, in substance and form.*

Easier said than done certainly; but how?

After the proclamation of the Republic (1923), a series of three laws were enacted on 3 March 1924. They affirmed that the Republic of Turkey :

- 1) Abolished the Ministry of Pious Foundations (*Madrassa*) and Religious (*Sharia*) Courts (Law No 429/1924),
- 2) Placed all educational institutions (except Istanbul University but including all *Madrassa*) under the Ministry of Education (*Unification of Education Act, Law No 430/1924*),

- 3) Shut down the office of *Khaliphate* and exiled the remaining members of the Ottoman Dynasty (Law No 431/ 1924).

The third article of the *Unification Act (430/1924)* gave the financial control of all educational endowments to the Ministry of Education. The fourth article, however, authorised the Ministry to open special schools for educating the *Imam-Hatib* (Pastor-Preachers) schools and a Theology (*Ilahiya*) Faculty at the University for educating enlightened scholars of Islam. *Madrassa* were closed down but 29 new schools were opened for training the *Imam-Hatibs* who suddenly fell out of favor or demand; in the early 30's the new schools were closed.

Bold and decisive steps and measures followed and complemented one another. In 1924, Mustafa Kemal addressed the convention of teachers :

*Teachers! The new generation will be your creation.  
The Republic needs and wants guardians who are  
strong physically, intellectually and spiritually .*

Parallel to this call to arms, the principle of coeducation was introduced to elementary schools. A few months later in Samsun, the leader declared that "Science is the most reliable guide in life!" For the first time Imam Ghazali's, "incompatibility verdict" was publicly challenged. Years later this maxim was engraved on the *façade* of Ankara University. During the same (1924) year, educator John Dewey recommended a Ministerial Board of National Education and the famous policy slogan "A school at each work place and a work place in each school." It sounded convincing but there weren't many schools or any work places in the country. Before

going into action, Turkish educators pondered this “work- school” idea for nearly 15 years.

In 1925, all mystic or esoteric associations and shrines of any religious affiliation (like *tekke*, *zaviye* and *türbe*) were closed.

In two years, all public education at all levels was made free of tuition fees and the civil code was adapted from the Swiss. In *Nutuk*, the “Speech” read before the National Assembly in 1927, the leader for the first time pronounced the word *laïcité* (“secularism”) although all legal foundations of secularism were already laid and much had been done without publicity. In 1928 the Latin alphabet was adapted and accepted. Soon thereafter folk-schools or courses were opened for teaching the nation its new Latin alphabet. Teachers themselves were mastering it with their adult students. Turkish students were required, by law, to attend Turkish primary schools. The Arabic *Ezan* or prayer call was given in Turkish for the first time soon followed by ritualistic reading of the *Kur’an* in Turkish.

The article stating that “The religion of State is Islam” was dropped (1928) from the Constitution. Soon the secularism principle was incorporated into by-laws of the CHP (Republican People’s Party) and the Turkish nationalist Akcura was installed as President of the newly founded Historical Foundation (THK). The Turkish Linguistic Society followed the lead in History, in reviving a forgotten language. In 1931, Peoples’ Houses and Peoples’ Chambers were inaugurated for educating the parents of pupils going to Republican schools. The youth probably benefited more from the novel programs of these culture centers which convened

the community together. The Faculty of Theology was closed because there wasn't sufficient demand (students). In 1933 at the Tenth Commemoration of the Republic, the semi-autonomous Istanbul University was reorganised (with the help of some Academicians running away from Nazi Germany.) and brought under Ministerial supervision. The use of all honorific and titular titles, Islamic or otherwise, was outlawed in 1934. A new nation was coming of age and seemed proud of its accomplishments. Before the death of President Atatürk in 1938, by another amendment to the Constitution, the Turkish Republic was declared to be a "secular state" (Law No 3115/1937). An old dream had finally come true. A year later in 1939 the first Convention of National Education was held in Ankara.

At the start, Republican schools were a continuation of the Ottoman 3+3+3+3 system which was first changed to 6+3+3 and later to a 5+3+3 years model. in which the 5-year elementary schools replaced the 3-year *iptidai* and the 3-year *Rushdiya*, the 3-year *Idadiya* became the middle (*orta*) school and the *Sultani* was now called the "*Lise*". Primary schools concentrated on the 3-R's rather than Holy *Kor'an*, plus life studies, history, geography, science and civics, handiwork, drawing, PT and music, all taught in Turkish. The middle (*Orta*) school and *lise* were considered the first and second levels of the new secondary education. For typical secondary school curricula see Table II.4.1.

**Table II.4.1**  
**Secondary School Programs: Years,**  
**Subjects and Weekly Hours :1937-1938**

<i>Subjects</i>	<i>Middle School</i>			<i>Lycée Years and Branches (Core) Arts* &amp; Sciences**</i>				
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>Years :</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3*</i>	<i>3**</i>
Turkish	5	4	4					
Literature					3	3	5	2
History	2	2	2		2	2	3	1
Geography	2	2	2		2	2	1	1
Home (Civics)		2	2					
Sociology						2	2	
Psychology						2		
Philosophy								3
Logic							2	1
Mathematics	5	4	4		5	4	2	8
Science			3					
Chemistry and Laboratory					2	2	1	2
Laboratory					1	1	1/2	
Physics and Laboratory		3			2	2	1	2
Laboratory					1	1	1/2	1
Biology and Hyg		2	3					
Natural Science			3		3	2	1	1
Foreign Lang		5	4	4	5	5	5	3
Handwriting		2						
PT (Gymnastics)		1	1	1	1	1	1	
Drawing		1	1	1				
Music		1	1	1				
Military Sc. Boys			2	2	2	2	2	2
Girls			1	1	1	1	1	1
Sewing (Girls)		2	1					
Nursing “		1						
Free hour (Boys)		2						
Weekly hours		31	31	30	32	31	32	30

Source : Akyüz 1994

The positivistic character and the secular purposes of the curricula are evident as no *Kur'anic* readings or Islamic studies appear in the official syllabi.

Parallel to the modernisation of public education, the young Republic made serious efforts to develop the programs for primary school teachers. In early years these programs reflected an Ottoman (Islamic) character but in the 1930's they became a corollary of the new secular education. (See Table II.4.2.)

**Table II.4.2.**  
**Primary School Teachers Training Program**  
(Above the 3-year Middle / *Orta* School)

<i>Subjects</i>	<i>Hours per Week</i>		
	<i>First</i>	<i>Second</i>	<i>Third (Yrs)</i>
Literature	3	2	2
Pedagogy		2	1
Psychology		2	2
Education History			2
Teaching Methods	2	7	
Sociology			2
History	2	2	2
Geography	2	1	2
Mathematics	4	4	1
Physics & Chemistry	4	4	
Biology & Hygiene	2	2	3
Foreign Languages	3	2	
Physical Training	1	1	1
Drawing	1	1	1
Handiwork	1	1	1
Music	1	1	1
Military Science (Boys)	2	2	2
Girls' Teacher Schools			
Sewing	2	1	1
Baby Training		1	
<b>Total Weekly Hours</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>29</b>

*Source* : Akyüz 1994 : 331



Such was the character of public education down to the township level. Beyond this boundary lived the eternal peasants, or 75 to 85% of the population (Table II.4.4). During the Second World War years, the Turkish Republic undertook two major projects of educational significance. (1) An “educational mobilisation program for social change”, better known as the “Village Institutes” and (2) Parallel to the general (academic) schools, a second track of “vocational-technical” secondary schools for training the manpower to be employed in industrial productions —or eventual industrialization.

According to the first official program published, the Village Institutes were designed as 5-year, co-educational, boarding, workschools after and above the 5-year elementary schools. Students were selected by examination. For Institute programmes see Table II.4.3.

Village Institutes at long last seem to be designed to fulfill John Dewey’s idea of combining work and education. Graduates were expected to be both school teachers and community leaders at the same time. Students actually built their own schools, homes, barracks, work places etc; and learned by doing and living together. Perceiving education as learning the 3-R’s in a classroom, many parents were shocked to see their children working hard out in the field with pick and shovel in hand. Some parents also objected to the novel but alien “co-educational boarding school” idea. Sibyan schools were coeducational but not for teenagers.

**Table II.4.3.**  
**The Village Institutes Program: Year 1943**

<i>Cultural Studies</i>	<i>Agricultural Works</i>	<i>Technical Works</i>
Turkish	Plantations	Rural Ironsmith
History	Gardening	Horseshoe making
Geography	Transplanting	Motor Mechanics
Home studies	Orcharding	Carpentry, Joinery
Mathematics	Viniculture	Woodworking
Physics	Vegetables	Building Crafts
Chemistry	Industrial plants	Brick making
Bio School Hygiene	Zoo Technology	Quarrying stone
Foreign Language	Poultry Cultivation	Lime making
Handwriting	Honey Harvesting	Masonry
Drawing Handiwork	Fishing-aquaculture	Concrete
PT and Folk Dancing	Agrarian Arts	Girls' Handworks
Music		Sewing
Military Drills		Embroidery
Homemaking, Babycare		Weaving
Educational Sciences		Horticulture
Sociology		
Technology		
Work psychology		
Labor education		
Teaching Methods		
Agricultural Business		
Cooperatives		
<hr/>		
Weekly hours 22 + 11 + 11 = 44 total		

*Source:* Akyüz 1994: 340

According to the law of establishment (1940), only highly qualified, university graduates were to be appointed as Institute teachers. Rumors that there had been leftist infiltrations into the Institutes caused probably more

harm than the leftist teachers themselves, proving the tenet that “rumors are more powerful than actions”.

Resisting all pressures or temptations to enter the Second World War, Turkey maintained her neutrality until the very end. This meant hardship not only for Village Institutes but for the whole country and nation. A huge army mobilised to protect the country consumed the limited resources, causing shortages of basic foods, consumer goods, high prices, blackmarket profiteering and an ensuing general discontent.

Hence, the year 1945, was a turning point in the Republic’s destiny. The Allied Nations notified that, in order to become a founder of the UNO, the Turkish Republic had to qualify as a liberal (western) democracy. Turkey responded without delay and a Democratic Party was formed, in opposition to the People’s Republicans Party in power. The population census gave a demographic profile of the nation in 1945 (See Table II, 4. 4.)

**Table II.4.4.**  
**Demographic Profile of Turkish Society :1945**

<i>Items selected</i>		<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Total %</i>
Language	Turkish	88	Others 12	100
Religion	Muslim	98	Others 2	100
Settlement				
Patterns :	Rural	75*	Urban 25*	100
Sizes :	Village	413	City 10168	(Average)

*Source* : Institute of State Statistics. *Population Census* 1945.

\* Municipalities, *ie*, above 2000 inhabitants were taken as city.

With 98 % following Islam and 88% speaking Turkish, this looked like an ideal profile for a modern nationhood. There was a draw back, however. Three out of every four Turks were still living in small, neolithic villages that the republic had only in recent years been trying to reach by controversial village institutes. And what Turks called “cities” were, in fact, small agrarian townships economically dependent on scarce surplus. Turkey lacked both the urban and industrial pillars of a modern nationhood. The snap elections held in 1946 turned out to be a great surprise. The Republican Government barely managed to stay in power. Not the democratic party, but the anti-republican opposition was very strong indeed. Political analysts gave several likely reasons:

- a) The low price and high social cost of staying out of the War,
- b) The Secularist *laïque* policies followed by the Republican Party governments,
- c) The *Madrassa*, long underground, was re-surfacing for a “democratic” come back,
- d) The continuing peasants’ reaction to the Village Institutes imposed on them,
- e) The Democrats had wisely consolidated all such factors of discontent.

The republican Party and governments revised and geared their revolutionary policies to strategies of winning the next general elections due in 1950.

During the Republican era, there were many statesmen, politicians and educators who served their country with dedication —from Empire to nationhood.

Among them, of course, Atatürk as a leader and master teacher is unique and matchless. After Atatürk's death however, one philosophy teacher turned educator, Hasan Ali Yücel, as the Minister of Education, for nearly a decade towered and outshone the rest. From mobilisation for national literacy, to program developments in primary, secondary, rural, vocational-technical, teacher training, adult and informal education projects (like the translation of the World Heritage of Literature) and finally, to the autonomy of higher educations, he became the legendary minister and unchallenged "Champion of National Education". From time immemorial, he conveyed the message "know thyself". He said, for a nation or individual, "What is important is to know who you are!" In the 1940-1941 School Year, classical branches of selected lycées offered five hours of latin as an elective. Under political pressure this option was discontinued after 1949. With the phenomenal rise of democratic opposition, Minister Yücel yielded to conservative colleagues (1946).

In 1947, some parliamentarians recommended religious courses as a counter or preventive measure to the growing Communist threat. In 1949 the Republican Party Caucus decided that subject to parental request, religion may be taught in only the 4th and 5th grades of public schools, and that Imam-Hatib Courses, too, may be opened by the Ministry of National Education.

## Part III. From Scholastic to Social Education (1950 to Present)

### III.1. *Democracy for Progress or Restoration ?*

After a landslide victory, the Democratic Party came to power in May 1950 with the support of an Islamic (Sunni-Orthodox) reaction to secularism and the agrarian majority (see Table II.4.4.). In June 1950, the Democratic majority cancelled the article of the Penal Code prohibiting the Arabic *Ezan* (call for prayer, five times a day); in effect, ending the Turkish *Ezan* which had been practiced since 1928. The rationale was that republican Governments had misconstrued '*secularism*' as a restriction of the "free exercise of religion." In November of the same year, religious courses were included in the school curricula. The requirement for parental request or consent was changed to a requirement for rejection. Parents who did not want their children take religion might apply for an exemption. In 1953, compulsory religion courses were added to the ninth and tenth grades of primary teacher schools. In 1954, Village Institutes were incorporated to the Primary Teachers Schools. In 1956-57, religion (Islam) and ethics courses were reintroduced to middle schools and in 1966-67, the same courses were extended to lycées, on elective bases. Parents had to tell the school whether they wanted it or not. In 1959, Higher Islamic Institutes were established.

According to the free-lance writer Peyami Safa, transition from the republican to democratic Turkey could be seen, in retrospect, as either a counter-revolution or a democratic restoration of Islam, eventually leading to the Turk-Islam Synthesis of the 1980's. After having defended the Turkish Revolution from Gokalp's (1924)

*Foundations of Nationalism* to Democrats' victory in 1950, Safa had, in the Democratic 50's, turned against it in his "East-West Synthesis" (published 1962). He felt accountable for this change of heart:

*In the 1930's, under State control and discipline of writing, I had to comply with the revolutionary state ideology. Now enjoying fully the freedom of thought insured by the 1950 Democracy, I do express my true convictions.*

Safa was now questioning and criticizing the "historical and philosophical foundations" of the Turkish Revolution, which he had heartily approved in 30's. Here is a sample of the arguments put forward by him:

- No progress is possible without some sense of history
- Denial of the past may be disastrous for national life,
- Nationhood is impossible without dissenting philosophers
- Transition to pluralism is the true criterion of revolutions
- Literacy should be functional (*ie*, serve a useful purpose).

Lack of philosophy was an Ottoman legacy which could not be blamed on the Republic alone. First Gokalp and later the writer Erisirgil agreed that freedom of enquiry was a prerequisite of any philosophical venture. If natural science were tolerated then philosophy would follow. After relevant and valid observations as above, Safa committed himself to the Democrat Party's political platform:

- *After 35 years, we are neither industrialized nor modernized*
- *Secularism cannot be a prerequisite to modernisation*
- *There is no conflict between science (ilim) and religion*
- *There is no civilization which is not based on religion*
- *The Turkish Revolution had no book and republicans have no faith*
- *Revolutions from top down lack the support of popular wisdom*
- *Turkish Revolution is not the work of a single leader [ie, Atatürk].*

This has been the viable manifesto of popular (Muslim) rebellion against secularism in Turkey. Point-blank, clear enough but not fair! Except for Japan perhaps, no nation starting from scratch has become industrialized in only one or two generations. Without secularization, would not the Turkish Revolution reduce itself to an Anachronistic *Tanzimat*? The vital question of revolution was not ideology but survival. To Atatürk, the best defense against western imperialism was western civilization itself. There has always been an unresolved conflict between religion based on dogma and faith and science based on doubt and enquiry.

The real issues, however, behind the Islamic resurgence were rather different. Although Turkish secularism guaranteed full freedom of belief, conscience and conviction, the legal divorce from a powerful state machinery was an open blow —if not an offense— to



Islam. For, Islam was both state and politics par excellence and without the state organizations backing and the support of *Vaqf* revenues, Islam was lame or crippled. Turkish Islam as elsewhere has been trying to regain this power, a power that it utilized until the fall of the Ottoman Empire. Islamists, as democratic representatives of the nation, were now in the parliament which proclaimed "*The sovereignty belongs to nation.*" Thus in this long prelude, the democratic restoration of Islam had begun and made some headway.

### *III.2. Demography of Growing Numbers: Quantity or Quality*

The democratic "Spirit of the '46", using the slogan that "*Laïcité* is not paganism, atheism or enmity of religion", has remained in power ever since, except for interim periods of coalitions and three interventions by the Armed Forces (in 1960, 1971 and 1980), all supposedly on behalf of the "Secular Republic". The democratic platform rose and rode on a "5-point program": water, roads, land, credit and the mosque for peasants. Death rates were going down and life expectancy coming up, from an average of 35 years to upwards of 60. The internal migration was gaining momentum. Roads allowed peasant to discover the city for the first time. Land and credits improved the daily cycle at the homestead. New domes and renovated minarets symbolized the surviving spirit of Islam in the countryside.

Demographically speaking Turkish society was growing and rapidly changing. It was growing at the rate of 2.5 % per year. This rate was enough to double the

national population every two decades or so. More significantly however, due to internal migration, the country was urbanising at the rate of nearly 5%, double the rate of national growth. Riding pretty on the wave of rural push and urban pull, peasants began settling in the city but did not turn urban. With limited employment opportunities waiting for them, they began building their own *gecekondus* (“built-overnights”) on somebody-else’s property. They created new marginal sectors of the city. They became their own employers and employees. Come election time, political parties promised them everything under the sky. Fines and debts would be forgiven, taxes deferred, or refunded, their municipal services like electricity, running water, paved roads and public transit would soon be provided, free of charge. The *Gecekondus* have grown so rapidly that they began outranking, and outflanking the traditional (agrarian / commercial) city, lacking the infrastructure of a modern metropolis. Migrants outnumbered the urbanites. For the first time informal or social processes of education was becoming more effective than the formal schools. That cities were becoming ruralized could be heard in the form of *Arabesque* (melancholy) music playing in the *dolmuş* (collective) taxis (a Turkish innovation for rapid-transport: the cars depart as soon as full). Unable to integrate with the city socio-economically, rural migrants congregated with their own kind from back home. Thus cities became a museum of historical collectivities, representing the cultural diversity of Anatolia. Schools were becoming more crowded by the year. First, they practiced two shifts, then three shifts a day. In a ruralising environment and decreasing school hours and substitute teachers, the quality of education rapidly deteriorated. No

system of municipal administration or government could cope with problems of this magnitude. Industrial projects beginning to take off made things worse by preferring urban or near urban sites. As central and local authorities conceded their inability, new urbanites began attending and solving their own problems as best as they could. The age of post-modernism came to mean “anything comes anything goes”. Economically it was an anachronistic wild capitalism or “*laissez faire*”.

Nearly everybody agreed that the problems encountered could only be solved by education, i.e., by the Ministry of Education. Hence the education ministers were expected to perform “shamanistic” miracles, tricks or wonders. People believed in them and they did not let their pupils down. The fact that the 70 / 30 rural to urban ratio in 1950 will be reversed to 30 / 70 by the year 2000 may give an idea of the magnitude of socio economic problems encountered. In theories of modernisation, this is known as “demographic transition” from rural to urban, from agrarian to industrial services, more technically, from a high birth-high death rates pattern to a low birth-low death rate pattern through which the population growth rate first explodes then gradually slows down and eventually stabilizes. In Europe this transition, beginning about 1650 was completed in 300 years (1650’s-1950’s). With the yearly rate of population growth coming down to 1.5% from 2.5%, Turkey seems to be completing the transitional cycle in 50 years. That is at least several times faster than the average course of modernisation. This increased pace of change also reflects the magnitude of educational problems.

**Table III.2.1**  
**Demographic Growth: Primary School Statistics:**  
**1923-1992**

<i>Students</i>		<i>Teachers</i>			
		(rounded to the nearest thousand)			
<i>Years</i>	<i>Schools</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>
1923-24	4 894	273	63	9,0	1,2
1930-31	6 598	315	174	11,5	4,8
1940-41	10 596	661	294	14,6	6,0
1950-51	17 428	1 017	600	26,7	9,2
1960-61	24 398	1 800	1 066	48,9	14,0
1970-71	38 232	2 893	2 120	87,5	45,3
1980-81	45 507	3 087	2 567	126,1	85,5
1990-91	50 669	3 634	3 236	135,7	98,4

*Source* : Akyüz : 1994 : 304

**Table III.2.2.**  
**Demographic Growth: Secondary School**  
**Statistics:1931-91**

<i>Students</i>		<i>Teachers</i>			
		(rounded to the nearest thousand)			
<i>Years</i>	<i>Schools</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>
1930-31	83	20, 1	6, 9	0, 84	0, 22
1940-41	252	69, 1	26, 2	2, 42	1, 45
1950-51	440	50, 1	19, 0	2, 44	2, 09
1960-61	776	241, 2	76, 9	9. 11	4, 16
1970-71	1842	569, 7	213,7	18, 58	9, 87
1980-81	4103	786, 5	393,7	20, 35	10, 58
1991-92	7078	1497, 7	905,0	32, 50	18, 60

*Source* : Akyuz 1994 : 308

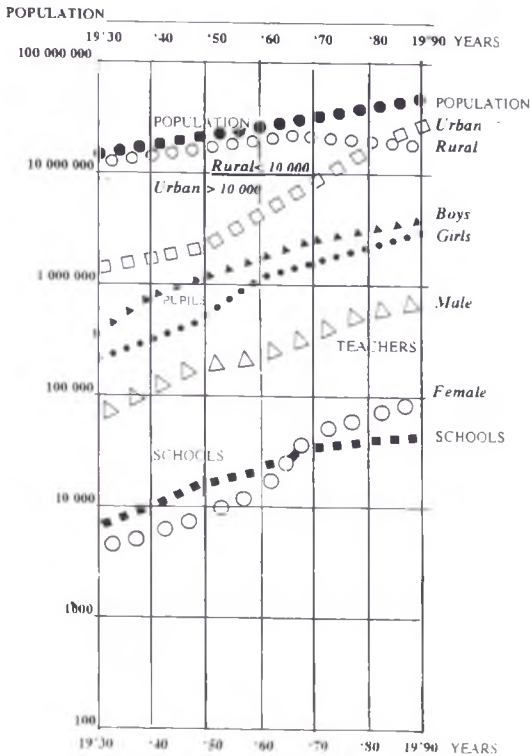
From the mid-twenties to 1990 the national population increased nearly fivefold from 12 to 60 million, and school statistics reflect this incredible explosion. For samples see Table III. 2.3.

While letting the numbers speak for themselves, the following trends may be underlined:

- At both primary and secondary levels, republican education has achieved remarkable results. Even allowing for the natural (demographic) growths, (*ie*, by reducing the virtual growth by five), primary schools doubled, secondary schools increased nearly 17 times.
- While the schooling ratio at the primary level increased five times, the number of girls seems to have increased nearly four times faster than boys. So that in 1990, the sex ratio in primary schools came very close to 1 (= 0.9)
- At secondary levels, achievements are even more impressive —numerically. Student enrolment went up 18 times: boys 15, girls 26 times, as compared to the natural growth.
- Whereas the total number of primary school teachers went up 4,6 times, women teachers increased four times faster than the males. At the secondary schools, the total number of teachers increasing nearly ten times, with numbers of female teachers increased appreciably faster than those of males.
- As for the sex ratios in schools: compared to 1920's the numbers seem to be converging rapidly in the overall student body and among teachers. One noteworthy trend is that while in the 1920's sex ratios varied between one-fourth and one-third; in the 1990's there were 2 girls for every three boys and two female teachers for every two male teachers.

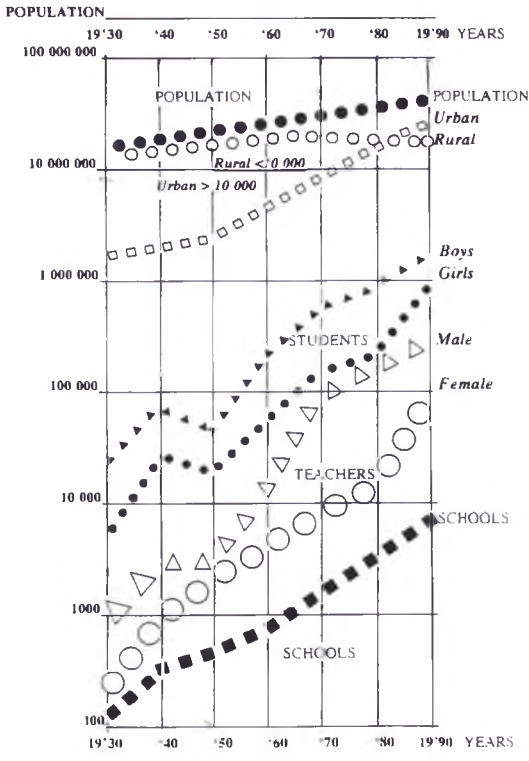
Taking the sex ratios in schools as a “measure of secularism” (*laicite*), it could safely be concluded that the Turkish Republic and society have definitely grown more secular in the last 70 years.

**Fig III.2.1. PRIMARY EDUCATION IN TURKEY  
(Semi - Logarithmic)**



SOURCE Table III.2.1. *Primary School Statistics: 1923-1992*  
From AKYÜZ (1994:304)

## Fig III.2.2. SECONDARY EDUCATION IN TURKEY (Semi - Logarithmic Curves)



SOURCE: TABLE III.2.1 *Secondary School Statistics: 1923-92*  
From AKYILZ (1994: 308)

With in such a quantitative growth in meeting the challenge of big and growing numbers, schools, students and teachers multiplying at unprecedented rates, it was impossible to keep or maintain the quality of education. First, schools became more crowded than ever before.

Then, two or three shifts -a- day schools came to being, reducing the school hours by half or two-thirds. This perhaps solved the problem of teaching space but then finding qualified teachers became a problem. In a development economy with inflation with which the country still struggles, the status of poorly-paid school teachers hit the bottom. Nearly anybody wishing to teach for the pay scale offered could teach. Building new schools with a limited or minimum budget left the old ones with for maintenance, repair and renovation. In classrooms designed for 30-40 students there were 80 or 90 students. Teaching aids and equipment were very scarce as were laboratories. More often than not school libraries, open for working hours alone, carried no more than a collection of books specified for the courses taught. School books written and printed every few years to satisfy the syllabi specified by the ministry —with a slim budget— were far from attractive. Hence school books became a big business of cheap quality. The inherent and structural problems of school could perhaps be compensated by the high quality of enthusiastic teachers. Subject to the law of supply and demand, good teachers moved from rural to urban, from small towns to cities, from the public to private schools, from the underprivileged to the affluent communities. Private tutoring houses, preparing students for high school or university entrance exams, became the generous employers of reputable teachers. Students attending public school, could hardly identify with a single teacher that he would like to be, or see as a mentor in life. Hence, the negative selection: bright students did not wish to become teachers. The lower fifth of the class would perhaps resolve to go to teaching if they couldn't qualify at all for any other vocation.



Politicians promising people and pressuring bureaucracy for new schools at all levels, the ministry officials opening new schools everywhere with the slogan “*bir müdür bir mühür*” (One teacher director /one official seal) considered, sufficient for the school. The public and media were aware that the overall quality of general education was rapidly falling. People remembered an old saying to the effect “Start early, the order of migration will improve on the road”, meaning that quality may wait or sought later. Standards kept falling, There was not much left for the education ministers to do other than make-believe, provide mere window dressing in changes to school regulations. That is exactly what they have done. They are expected to change some things -in the name of reform— and they kindly oblige by changing programs, courses, hours, years, evaluations, exam systems, books, uniforms, shirts or skirt lengths, anything they can. So that going through any school, regulations are likely to be changed at least several times. However Ministerial terms of office are not more stable or steady. Like the weather, everybody talks but nobody does anything about it.

*III.3. Dichotomies: General or Technical,  
Separate or Comprehensive;  
Private or Public; English or Turkish;  
Tuition Fees or Free School?*

After the 1950's when the process of change began gaining momentum, Turkish education has faced several dichotomies. While both the Industry and economy needed more technical-vocational graduates, the popular trend was in the opposite direction: white-collar

professions like medicine, law and engineering (geometrics, that is) Were popular with families in the middle echelons wanted their sons to move to, or marry someone from the top. Most of the secondary and technical schools were not coeducational. Separate schools developed different programs. What the economy and democracy badly needed was a comprehensive school of general and technical education, boys and girls under the same roof or on the same campus. One school with a variety of programs.

Educators talked and planners worked on such schemes but did not have the political will to implement them. American schemes versus the European STET the French one often led to stalemates. If we have a comprehensive high school what will be the fate or future of the Turkish lycée. What is a lycée anyway? In the National Education Convention held in 1960, educators deliberated for a month just to define it as a “school that prepared individuals for University”. If this is what a Lycée is, then everybody would prefer to go to the a Lycée. Why not the best? The idea of *Sultaniya* was so dear that educators wanted to insure its high standards. They succeeded in creating nearly 70 different lycées, all equivalent to the lycée, *ie*, all graduates eligible at least to apply and go to university. Screening the unqualified rather than selecting the qualified, an elaborate system of entrance and placement examinations was innovated. Then there was the crucial question of secondary graduates who were not admitted to, or placed in a university. Some contended that the examination for Higher Education should be abandoned, without offering however, a feasible alternative. The Open University did not prove to be the panacea that it was once hoped to be.

It may make up for the shortcomings of secondary education but not for much of a higher or technical education.

There are two viable contenders to a higher education degree: foreign languages and computer sciences. Most of the public advertisements for market employment require both, even before the diploma or the institution. Then the question is how to acquire these skills. One of the dilemmas of recent decades has been (a) “teaching of a foreign language” (Yes) or (b) “teaching in a foreign language (No!) Private schools that teach in a foreign language also seem to be more successful in teaching the foreign language. Families in middle income groups who cannot afford the high tuition fees charged by private schools, forced the ministry to have a new category of “*Anatolian Schools*” teaching some selected subjects like maths and sciences in foreign languages so that students will learn. Then, in the name of “equal opportunity”, everybody is for an *Anadolu College* or *Lycée*. Educators with some common sense further argue that teaching the Turkish language is just as important as learning a foreign language. If foreign languages replace the mother tongue, will this not lead to a modern *Madrasa*? Having bitter memories of recent history, educators don’t want to take this responsibility. Everybody agrees that mastering at least one foreign language is essential. Yet the method and techniques of teaching it have yet to be found or innovated, without sacrificing, the language of national instruction —Turkish. The popularity of private secondary school teaching a foreign language is so high that the “private classrooms” (*dershaneler*) of tutoring have already become a billion dollar business. But the “equal opportunity” principle is still

dear and valid, Turks half ironically remark that "Everybody is equal but some are more so " (the upper one-fifth of the society gets 55% and remaining four fifths the 45% of the GNP.) Among the cries for educational reform, those who can afford the tuition fees of private colleges teaching one or two foreign languages stand better chances in the higher education placement exams, for admission to a foreign language university and finding a job waiting ready at graduation. This is but the classical "Socio-Economic—Status" paradigm: Good family background- good school -good education and success in life cycle. Many Turkish families aspire to break into this vicious cycle at some point or phase. So they send their children to tutoring classrooms but refuse the educational tax or paying a tuition in public school. The state, on the other hand, rightfully contends that though it is constitutionally responsible for free and compulsory basic education, the cost of secondary education, at least, should be shaved (lycée or college), and for tuition charges in higher education —public or private, established by non-profit foundations. The constitution was recently amended to legitimize the dichotomy.

#### *III.4. Dilemma: Islamic vs Secular or the Turk-Islam Synthesis?*

It was already pointed out (in Part III. 2) that the Unification of Education Law of 1924, while closing down *Madrassa*, had stipulated Imam-Hatip schools for training the Pastor Preachers who will be needed for religious services. And some twenty of such schools survived until the early thirties. Although there is no clergy class in Islam, there are nevertheless *Imam-Hatibs*

who perform comparable services to Christian Masses, *Imam* is any old and respected member of the community—not a professional- who may be expected on request to lead the praying ritual in the mosque. A *Hatib*, on the other hand, is the speaker who addresses the congregation gathered in the mosque on Fridays or special occasions. These two functions may be performed by the same person. So the Republican purpose behind these schools was to train enlightened and enlightening Muslim scholars. In 1951, these schools were revived as (3+4=) 7 year institutions. The Seventh Educational convention held in 1960 (after the first military intervention) recommended that some 15 of such schools which were not serving the purposes defined by law be closed. Instead, in 1962 their numbers went up to 26 (the same number as in the thirties). In 1971 (after the second Military intervention) the Minister of Education Oral, converted them to three-year vocational lycées, above the 3-year middle schools. In 1972-74, only graduates of middle (*orta*) school were admitted. Under the 1974 coalition government, however, the first cycle of three years was reinstated. The government also decided that general ethics and morality courses be given by teachers of religious instruction. The preamble of the *Fundamental Law of Education* enacted in 1973, stipulated several reformative changes in the educational system. First, there was the idea of an uninterrupted “8-year basic education” (by combining the 5-year elementary and the 3-year middle schools). Secondly, a new concept of lycée that would prepare its students (1) for higher education, (2) for life directly (a vocation, industry or services) and (3) both for life and higher education; Thirdly, there was a new and brave proposal

for the *Imam-Hatib* education; it was a logical corollary of the 8-year basic education:

The *Imam-Hatibs* are vocational schools  
at secondary level for boys - only

This was simply because Islam did not permit woman pastors and preachers. It was logical because all technical and vocational education will be built on 8-year, compulsory basic schools.

Despite this policy recommendation on record, the 1974 coalition government opened the first (*orta*) cycle and thus reconstructed the original (3+4=) 7-year *Imam Hatib* school. In 1975, the National Board of Education entrenched behind the Ministry walls (but under the Minister's control) decided that the *Imam-Hatib* schools were equivalent to general lycées, with all the rights and privileges of a Baccalaureate degree, meaning in effect these *Imam-Hatib* candidates could apply and attend any or all higher education programs that they may qualify for. Within two years, 230 *Imam Hatib* schools were opened and a second track of Islamic education was thus created parallel to the secular public education, envisaged by the *Unification of Education Law* of 1924. The new system was similar to the double track of State (secular) and Al-Azhar (Islamic) schools in Egypt. In the 1995-96 School Year, there were 561 schools with 492 thousand students and 17 thousand teachers. If an Islamic primary school and an Islamic university were added it might rightly be called the "Turkish Al Azhar". A pseudo-legitimate way was thus found to restore the old *Madrassa*. In addition to the standard lycée curriculum, *Imam-Hatib* schools offered 11 to 18 hours of professional (Islamic) studies per week. Not so much the

weight of Islamic studies, but the fact that standard lyée (secular) courses were offered with a built-in Islamic world view made all the difference. For example the schools would teach modern biology but would not accept evolution. The tenth Convention of National Education held in 1981 recommended that between the ages of 6 to 14, all Turkish students should be given an 8-year basic education. The 1982 Constitution (soon after the third military intervention) came as a blow to secularism. Rather than going to the 8-year basic school, the constitution stipulated religious education starting from 4th grade up, all the way to the end of secondary school. Rather than a general education, or objective information about religion the Sunni (or Orthodox) version of Islam alone was taught. It was a constitutional paradox. Whereas the first paragraph of the constitutional article guaranteed unalienable freedom of conviction and credo, the third paragraph said that religious culture and ethics are compulsory in elementary and secondary educational institutions. In 1984, there were 80 *Anadolu Imam Hatib* schools instructing Islam in English. In 1990, there were some 70 thousand girls registered in these schools, 50 thousand attending the middle and 20 thousand at the higher level. In the 1989-90, school year, out of 8 thousand graduates less than one thousand (or 12%) applied to the faculties of theology. 2000 registered *Kur'an* (reading) courses, reminiscent of the Sibyan schools, but under Ministry's supervision. The number went up to 5000, with as many teachers and 150 thousand graduates. The numbers were growing like a snow ball. Fanatic Muslim groups deployed in Germany declared themselves the Khaliph of the Islamic State that they have established there. More recently, in a

conference on “Turkish Identity”, the Secretary General of the “National” Vision Organisation established in Germany overtly declared that they are not citizens of the Turkish Republic but followers of the Muslim World at large. Their representatives in Turkish politics declared that the voluntary militia (*Mujahideen*) of the Islamic Restoration or Revival was being trained in the backyards of Imam Hatib Schools.

The crux of the problem is that radical Islam does not recognise any intermediary identity between Man and God except Islam. Radicals even advocate waging war (*jehat*) on laïcists, on the grounds that they are *not* Muslims.

Is this a dress rehearsal for a takeover, as was staged in Iran and Algiers? Many Turks wondered and seemed worried.

### *III.5. Prospects of the “Uninterrupted 8-Year School” Controversy*

#### *Notes on the Role of the Military: Intervention or Mediation?*

In Section III.1., the republican turned democrat writer Safa’s critical views of the Turkish revolution were briefly mentioned. A group of intellectuals called “Aydınlar Ocağı”, following up the points raised by Safa, published in 1973, the “Problems of Turkey : the View of Intellectuals”. Not only were the problems discussed but there were prescriptive solutions were provided in this book which did not get much attention or publicity. Apparently, however, some people took the book rather seriously and wrote a remedial “Plan for National Culture



(*Milli Kültür Planı*, 1983). This book, which was published by the State Planning Organisation, was later adapted semi-officially as the “National Culture Policy.”

From 1984 to 1989, the plan became better known as the “Turk Islam Synthesis”, simply because it was formally or literally advocating such a synthesis. As a matter of fact, however, the “synthesis” was a deceptive cover up for the restoration of Islam. This was seen specifically on two hypothetical premises : (1) There is an unchanging core of culture(s) and (2) That core is religion [or *Islam*]. In accordance with this plan, all manifestations of culture ie, educational, linguistic, academic, mediatic, aesthetic and ideological institutions and their programs were revised and rendered compatible with teachings of Islam. Later it appeared as if the political will that endorsed the plan had not read the purposes hidden behind the Synthesis cover and between the lines. As a result, the Turkish Republic for decade between 1986 and 1996, was looking West to European Union but steadily shifting towards political Islam. Turks were asking each other “Is our Republic secular any more?” If not, isn’t it time to building a “Second Republic” —following the French example. People began wondering which way was the country going, the Iranian or the Algerian way? From 1986 on, there were cries for *laïcité* (laïcisme or secularism). For nearly sixty years people had taken secularism for granted. It was a fundamental attribute of the Republic and could not be changed — they believed.

Gradually however it became clear in the minds or consciences of people that, whatesover laïcisme is, it was being exhausted or destroyed. Seminars, panel discussions, columnists, teachers, students: everybody

was talking and writing about it. The so-called Islamic turbans, covering the hair and face of women were becoming a common sight everywhere. There were meetings and demonstrations also for the laïque front. The 1995 general elections were held amidst these developments. The center left votes for social democracy was divided between two parties; so were were the center right votes. Out of this dividedness, the Islamist Refah (Welfare) Party emerged as the number one party with 21% of the popular votes cast. A coalition was inevitable. One of the parties of the previous coalition, trying to cover up its corruption files, became the junior partner of the Refah coalition. This government accelerating the sway from democracy to fundamentalist Islam by declaring that if they were avid attain the necessary majority for amending the Constitution, they would lift all legal obstacles blocking the way to an Islamic Republic of Turkey.

### III.5. Prospects of the “*Uninterrupted 8-Year School*” Controversy

This served as a red alarm before a perceived doomsday. In February 1996 in a meeting of the National Security Council, the Commanders raised the issue. They imposed not an ultimatum but a list of urgent measures to be taken by the government for safe keeping the principle of *laïcisme*. The crucial item in the list was the “uninterrupted 8-year basic education school” which in effect meant the closing of middle sections of the *Imam Hatib* schools. For several months now this has been the number one topic on the national media. To save the schools in question Islamists had proposed 5+3 (=8), which is an interruption. Finally the government

resigned and three parties plus one supporting from outside formed a new coalition government which received the vote of confidence and is currently going full speed ahead, Islamists, lacking the parliamentary backing demand an early election. The laïcists prefer an election in 1998, after taking a population census (bypassed in 1995 and after), in order to renew the electoral registers, and after putting the house and the political backyard into some kind of order by revising Political Parties Law and changing the Electoral Law etc. For a more democratic election all these steps seem to be necessary. Meanwhile, the Chief Attorney of the Republic requested the Constitutional Court that the Islamist Refah Party be declared unconstitutional and closed.

The Refah Party was finally closed but unmediately replaced by the *Fazilet* (Virtue) Party.

The Refah Party in return tries to excite its ardent and faithful followers that there has been a hidden case of intervention by the Armed Forces. Some Muslims coming out of the Friday or Sunday prayers demonstrate (with green flags of Islam) against and accuse the present Government even though it has been approved by the President and endorsed by the Military.

On behalf of democracy, the Turkish Armed Forces have, at ten-year intervals, intervened three times, all for the Sake of protecting the democratic and secular Republic. The first one in 1960 depoliticized the rural backbone of the country. The second in 1971 was so premature that it was aborted without affecting the political trends under way. The third in 1980 nearly turned out, in fact to be a depoliticization of urban intellectuals and served by proxy the restoration of Islam

—rather than democracy or laicism— since, by taking the peasants and urbanites out of the political arena, the political stage was being turned over to the conservative townships. So this time, in 1997, the Armed Forces put their weight behind the secular education and refrained from an overt intervention. In doing so, the Armed Forces is saying “stop” to an unconstitutional double track education. Since the Turkish Army has always pioneered in adapting and implementing the western and modern education, there is nothing wrong with this. As guardians of the secular Republic, the Armed Forces made the initial move but left the rest to the “unarmed forces” of the society. The ethical question facing the Republic now is how, many of the benefits of democracy could be allowed for a party which does not believe in and tries to put an end to parliamentary democracy. Secular parties have learned to tolerate Islam, now it is Islam’s turn to accept and tolerate the secular republic. Political parties like the citizens of the Republic ought to come to terms on basic values and prerequisites. They also have to learn that a parliamentary majority isn’t necessarily the will of the nation.

There is no crystal ball to predict the future of things to come, prospects however seem pretty good. The socio-political and demographic indicators of change show that despite structural handicaps, the Turkish Republic and culture have made some progress. If Turkish society can pull out of this predicament peacefully, that is, without resorting to civil strife, it may be her unique contribution to world history. For all modern nations, from England, to America, France, Italy, Russia, Spain, Iran and Algiers had civil wars, following their revolutions. Turkey stands

a good chance to change or end this historical pattern. Turks have usually searched the solution to their social problems in formal education or schools; the prospects are such that solutions to some of the problems may now be found outside the school —by the society or in the society. Turkey expected the Ministry of National Education to carry out the reforms are that long overdue. A huge and bureaucratic ministry with some 40 general directorate cannot undertake any reforms. In order to be able to reduce the 70 different types of lycées to three the number of general directorates had/has to be reduced to five or six. This means an external operation, for no bureaucracy dares undertake a risky venture of this magnitude.

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