

Nationalist Approach to the Music Culture in Early Republican Period in Turkey

Hilmi Yazici

Abstract—The more homogenized population taken over by the Republic immediately after the Ottoman was being canalized towards the goal of national identity and the historical and cultural structure of the nation was being readdressed and redefined. Modernization and Westernization history of the new Turkey, which started with Ottoman reforms and took its final form with the Kemalist nation-state, politically resulted in transformation from a multinational empire to a “nation-state” and adopted reaching to the level of Western civilizations as a sociology ideal. This objective of change will be achieved, on the one hand, by finding the Turkish culture which was preserved only by the society and by instilling Western civilization to national culture, on the other hand. In line with this, it is seen that in musical considerations while Turkish folk music was accepted and adopted as an indispensable part of Turkish identity, Turkish classical music was refused on the ground that it was not a part of Turkish identity. Again in this period, it is seen that with the notion of cultural reform, which is a part of “nation building”, the desire to create a national music to be performed with Western techniques brought along deliberate interventions to folk music.

Keywords—Folk song, Nationalism, National music, nation-state, Turkish music.

I. INTRODUCTION

LEWIS [1] maintains that drastic change in Turkey was accomplished in a long period via successive reformist and radical waves and defines this process as a transformation “from an Islamist empire to a Turkish state, from middle age theocracy to constitutional republic, from a bureaucratic feudalism to a modern capitalist economy”. The Ottoman State, which continued its existence in the pre-republican period and consisted of a variety of components, featured a culture composed of the synthesis of these components. In time, disintegrations in the state started to arise with the influence of the Empire’s multinational structure among many other factors. At this point, two factors that led to the collapse of the Ottoman Empire can be emphasized. Georgeon [2], who first mentioned “capitulations” as a factor, pointed out that the whole history of Ottoman Empire bear the trace of struggle against Christian Europe, but this struggle came to have a different meaning after the Ottoman started to recede in the 18th century. Because the capitulations granted in a period when the Ottoman was at the peak of its power laid foundation for Europe’s economic and commercial influences on the Ottoman Empire. The second was the fact that as of the early 19th century Ottoman came to face “nationality” problem like other great empires in Eastern Europe. As a matter of fact,

Christian peoples of the Balkans gradually came to realize their “nationalities” and started to rebel against central authority, represented by the Ottoman State.

Özkişi [3] states that at the turn of the 19th century modern nation states were started to be founded and towards the end of the 19th century the theory of modernism started to come into being. Özbek [4] maintains that theoretically modernization was developed to explain the change processes in non-Western societies that failed to pass to capitalism on their own after the World War II and it is a sort of “social change theory”. Of course, these two approaches regard the manifestation of the modernization in the 19th century after the Enlightenment. The most important trigger of dissolution of Ottoman can be the emergence of the concept of “modern society” in the 18th century. As a matter of fact, the concept of “modern society” which started to flourish with Enlightenment in Europe started to be influential outside Europe as well. In line with this, with intensifying relations with Europe and facing with the fact that the West is superior in many aspects led to the birth of new movements of thought in Ottoman and to the emergence of modernization movement. All nations in Europe had significant effect on Ottoman State, but it can be said that in that period the effect of France was greater. Shaw [5] points out that Ottoman Empire was one of the few neutral lands in Europe thus these lands were unique for the proponents or opponents of French revolution who want to take the support of Ottoman Empire. In this exceptional atmosphere, the proponents of revolution went to coffeehouses and distributed pamphlets and made mentions of such concepts as human rights, freedom and equality. Renaissance and modernization the state undertook in many areas can be referred as one of the main results brought about in this environment.

II. WESTERNIZATION AND MODERNIZATION ATTEMPTS IN OTTOMAN EMPIRE

Modernization process in the republican period can be traced back to modernization efforts in the Ottoman period. Rubin [6] states that most of the process of passage to modernity and social change in Ottoman considered being a result of interaction of Ottoman and European societies was actually on-going in the 19th century. With regard to this, Rubin emphasizes that the source of increasing social restlessness, weakening of political power, initiatives toward market economy and similar developments were perceived as social and economic dynamics emerging before the 19th century. Açıksöz [7] argues that the beginning of the attempts that led to modernization in the Republican Period can be

H. Yazici is with the Selcuk University, Konya, 42075 TR (phone: +90 555 458 39 14; e-mail: hilmiyazici@selcuk.edu.tr).

traced back to innovations introduced especially at the end of 18th century in the Ottoman Empire under the reign of Selim III, which later turned into reforms with Reforms movements, and that modernization was identified with Westernization. Shaw [5] states that Selim III was the real inheritor of the 18th century Sultans who mostly focused on military reforms. However, neither he nor the people around him understood that technological innovations in Europe were the results of social, economic and political reforms that had been going on since “the Reform” and they were taking small attempts to solve old problems with old methods rather than showing efforts towards managerial, economic and social modernization. They were devising regulations to suppress serious results of the problems both in cities and in the country. That is Selim’s social and economic reforms were far from being innovative [5]. In this atmosphere, “Nizam-ı Cedid” (the New order) can be referred as the most prominent step taken towards reform in the reign of Selim III. Yöre [8] maintains that everything to do with “new” within the context of Europeanism in the Ottoman Empire started with “Nizam-ı Cedid (1789)”, which means the New Order and it is a process aimed at Europeanism in military, political and cultural and relevant acculturation.

Although only a few among many reform initiations by Selim III were successful, these efforts can be argued to serve as a guide for successive efforts. This process witnessed the partial collapse of the wall between the Ottoman Empire and the West, and military and technical developments in Europe whose basic ideas found their way to the Ottoman. Shaw [5], who states that such an opening could only have a small effect on an introverted society based on religion which functions as a means to protect the past and traditions, emphasizes that this laid the foundation for more widespread and significant initiatives in the following years when the real foundations of the modern Turkey were laid. With regard to this issue Rubin [6] says that reform movements were considered as a whole which started around the 1800s and finished with the collapse of the empire and those comprehensive executive and legal innovations by Tanzimat reformists started to yield fruits in the reign of Abdülhamid II.

In this period, besides inclination towards to Europe seen in many fields, the influence of Europe was also seen in arts. According to Yöre [8], one of the manifestations of reform associated with Europeanisms is music, which is always associated with many things primarily with politics. In this context, music is European art music. In parallel with this, Küçüköncü [9] states that reform movements in the Ottoman, which started in 1826, the establishment of Muzika-i Hümayun (The Imperial Orchestra of the Ottoman Empire) (1831), which was regarded as official acceptance of Western music, instruments and teaching methods used there and Turks’ interaction with western music showed their effects primarily on military music, band music and later on civil music. Therefore, it can be said that first steps towards reform in music were made with Muzika-i Hümayun. Özcengiz [10] states that Muzika-i Hümayun was moved to Ankara in 1924 upon Atatürk’s order and called “Riyaset-i

Cumhur Musiki Heyeti” (Presidential Musical Band). Thus, it can be argued that orientation to the West in music started in the Ottoman continued in the Republican period as well.

Shaw [5] states that it was said that Selim III invited European actors to watch their performances, and reproduced western music and poetry and imported pieces of western art for personal use. Altar [11], who stated that Selim III, who produced a number of momentous works in Turkish music, might have carefully examined anecdotes about music and opera in the reports of ambassadors he sent abroad, cited that Selim III watched an opera performance by a foreign play group in Topkapi Palace in 1797. Öztürk [12] states that in the following period, with the replacement of “traditional reform” process policies in the reign of Selim III by “modern reform” process policies in the reign of Mahmud II, music became a significant and primary issue in Turkish modernization.

Reform understanding and efforts which started under the reign of Selim III in the Ottoman Empire continued under the reign of Mahmud II and they became more concrete with the announcement of the Tanzimat (Imperial Edict of Reorganization) in the reign of Abdülmecid. It is seen that concrete steps were taken in the realm of music as well. Giuseppe Donizetti, who came to Istanbul in 1828 upon the invitation of Mahmud II, established the first brass band and palace orchestra. Again in this process, Italian operas acted in Beyoğlu theaters can be referred as one of the most attention grabbing developments. Altar [11] cites that especially between 1846 and 1885 the operas of famous Italian composer Giuseppe Verdi were acted in Istanbul just a few years after their world premiers. Again when music is considered as a part of modernization efforts in the final period of the Ottoman, one of the significant institutions to be mentioned is Dar-ül Elhan (House of Music). Dar-ül Elhan, the first official music school in the Ottoman was founded in 1914 and provided Western music education besides Turkish music education. After the foundation of the Republic, this institution was reorganized and turned into a conservatory based on Western music and was named as Istanbul Conservatory.

When the Ottoman music up to the proclamation of the Republic is considered, the influences of reform efforts and initiations towards reform can be seen. However, Balkılıç [13] states that Westernization efforts in the final period of the Ottoman Empire were much influential neither socially nor institutionally. Yet, the first steps taken in this period laid the foundation for more regular initiations. At this point, the transformation of Muzika-i Hümayun (The Imperial Orchestra of the Ottoman Empire) into the Presidential Musical Band and transformation of Dar-ül Elhan into Istanbul conservatory and continuation of their existence in the Republican period can be given as examples.

III. NATIONALISM IN THE REPUBLICAN PERIOD AND ITS EFFECT ON MUSIC

In the Republican Period, Modernism and Turkism movements whose first steps were also taken in the Ottoman Empire grab attention. Özkişi [3], who considers Modernism

as passage from agricultural society to industrial society, maintains that modernism aims to destroy such concepts as multiculturalism, diversity and localism brought about by agricultural society and tried to establish a new and single structure. Again, Özkişi emphasizes that the reflections of this great change in the realm of arts were rather clear and radical. Öztürk [12] underscores that modernization experienced in Turkey were essentially of political quality in all aspects, primarily in military, administrative, social and cultural areas and in fact it had intense effects on politics, culture and music in many parts of the world. In parallel with this, Küçüköncü [9], who stated that Westernization started in the Ottoman period turned into modernization with the Republic of Turkey and that modernization understanding in this period formed music culture, remarks that Western Art Music started to attract the attention of Turks in this sense especially after 1826. Sağlam [14] points out that the most important element of Westernization of Republican period was to get rid of the West's guidance that is "Westernization in spite of the West".

Say emphasizes that Turkish Republic was based on Enlightenment Philosophy and French principles and the culture and education policies were naturally "nationalist" [15]. In parallel with this, Yöre [15] states that Atatürk, the leader of Turkish Nationalist Struggle and Revolution was concerned with the problems of Ottoman society like many other intellectuals of the time, and thus could distinguish between the East and West. At this point, Yöre points out that Atatürk's learning of French and idea movements in French Revolution in his student days is important as this led him to think that it was necessary to found a new nation state based on national values and modern principles to replace collapsing Ottoman State.

Balkılıç [13] who states that in the foundation process of this modern nation state, as in the examples of modern state formation, efforts to "legitimize new national state in political, economic and cultural areas and to consolidate its own power at social plane" were made, emphasizes that these efforts were based on nationalistic populist ideology. The modern structure of new state based on nationalistic populist ideology was based on the Enlightenment philosophy, which indicates European effect, as mentioned above. Therefore, the dominant structure in the period was based on the idea of "synthesis" and of course the idea of synthesis would be applied in the field of culture as in every area. In this framework, folk music would be treated with modern European music to obtain modern national music. However, Yavuz [16] states that in this process the idea of modernization was handled as if it was against the great Ottoman customs and lacking tradition. The essential point here was that the idea of nationalism, which would lay the foundation for the new regime together with modernization, was against the frame of mind in the final period of the Ottoman, that is, it was based on the idea of "being Turkish". Georgeon [2] states that there is not only cultural but also social differences between Turkish nationalism and other European nationalism. As Georgeon states that nationalism in Turkey "did not receive support from a clergy who sustained national traditions or from the church;

on the contrary, Turkish nationalism had to be formed in part against religion and the claims of "ulema's" (religion scholars) to maintain the unity of Muslim ummah (community)". In parallel with this, Demiralp [17] states that the Republic was founded against the Ottoman; the War of Independence did not only end enemy's occupation but also led to changes in political, cultural and social order as well.

These developments could be said to be caused by the idea of homeland, which includes the concepts of inherited lands and the concept of lands for which blood was shed. These are the concepts which started to develop in the mid-19th century. Georgeon [2], who stated that Turkish nationalism which developed in this atmosphere was different from the rebellions by battered peoples, explains at least two differences as follows: "First, Turkish nationalism was not against the West. Turkey was suppressed but not colonized. The problem that emerged in this period was cultural alienation. Who alienated the culture of the Turks? Was it Islam or Europe? Initially some nationalist in the Ottoman Empire, and later some nationalist in Kemalist Turkey were against the prominence European culture, particularly the prominence French culture gained after the Tanzimat. However, cultural alienation of Turkey was not seen as a result of European dominancy but that of hundred years of Islamization. It was thought that real Turkish element would appear when Islamic cultural polish was scratched". In this process, the dilemma of Turkish nationalism emerged as well. Would the concept of nation to be associated with land be based on Central Asia or Anatolia? Georgeon [2] remarked that Atatürk tried a synthesis of these two points of views. Accordingly, he sought to reconcile Turks history with their geography by developing a theory which argues that the ancient peoples of Anatolia (Hittites, Sumerians) were Turkish and enroot Turks within the history of ancient Anatolia.

Tekelioğlu [18] mentions of Ziya Gökalp as the developer of an enforced synthesis idea in which reform in music can also be determined and as the pioneering philosopher of the new Republic. Öztürk [12] remarked that it could be argued that Gökalp, who determined the ideological direction of new Turkey in the field of music even if he was not a musician, in fact proposed Turkey the options of "breaking off its cultural past" and "connecting to a imaginative history". Açıksöz [7] remarked that it was said that within the context of this idea led by Gökalp, Turkey, which was considered to fall behind compared to "universal level of civilization", need to reach universal civilization level but not to make concessions to its own essence. Therefore, Gökalp's point of view on this issue was "new music" for "new nation" and this music would emerge from the combination of Western music, which represents new civilization and folk music. At this point, the following point of view Ersoy [19] stated with regard to the importance of music within the idea of nationalism whose foundations were laid by Gökalp can be mentioned as follows: "Today music as a symbolic field of activity is a means of ultimate importance with regard to the existence of the nation-state. Music, which was placed in the cultural background and as one of the standards of national identity, has a prominent

role to play as an element to legitimize a certain nation. Especially pieces of folk music are expressive pieces of culture which always provide important mechanisms for nation-states. As a matter of fact, nation-states can easily build and pass down its collective cultural experience and the sense of history via pieces of folk music". In parallel with this, Atatürk's understanding of national music which formed the basis of music policies in the Republican period is as follows: "National music which has a great place within the national culture of a country is the music which the people of that country internalize, love and listen with pleasure. The people of that country find themselves in this music." [20]

With regard to this, Balkılıç [13] remarks that studies on songs or folk culture were seen with the rise of nationalism in the final period of the Ottoman Empire. According to Balkılıç, who states that music policies in the Republican period were completely based on efforts to build nation and national culture, in this period supreme culture of Turks was damaged in various ways under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. Similarly, exalted and noble Turkish music was also alienated with the influence of the Ottoman music and it was even about to extinct. However, it is argued that Turks somehow preserved their natural characteristics especially in the country. Therefore, folk culture is handled so that Turkish people reject Ottoman music deemed "foreign" and explore their already available national character. In line with this, Stokes [21] states that folk music in Turkey was presented as an apparent and time-independent reality of Turkish culture but in fact "people" and music of people were explored and redefined again from time to time in the history of the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey.

It can be said that these redefinition initiations were initially problematic. As a matter of fact, as Balkılıç [13] mentions the basis of the studies on folk music in this period were nationalist and populist paradigms of the era rather than deep musicological analysis. As a result, reformists assess folk songs based on the values they attribute to them and thus folk is music is invented when it is being defined. The following words uttered by Cemal Reşit Rey are important in that they refer to the problematic progression of these studies: "Upon Atatürk's directive, after a while (in 1934), Minister of Education Abidin Özmen invited eight of us to a congress in Ankara as musicians (Cevat Memduh Altar, Halil Bedi Yönetken, Hasan Ferid Alnar, Necil Kâzım Akses, Ulvi Cemal Erkin, Nurullah Şevket Taşkıran, Cezmi Erinç and me). [...] When the Minister of Education told us with his nice accent: 'Come on then! We are supposed to do a music reform, how are we going to do this?'" a blow of surprise filled the congress hall. [...] In excitement Abidin Özmen expressed us: 'The Pasha has called me on the phone a few times recently. He asks how the music revolution goes on'. We were completely stumped. We could not figure out what decision to take". [22]

Tekelioğlu [18] states that the period between 1924 and 1929 coincided with the years when the Kemalist regime was reinforced and ideological efforts to establish the Western Kemalist principles into the cultural system. Within this framework, as of the 1930s, a series of policies of culture was

followed. In line with this: "Official education polyphonic music starts with conservatories which take Western educational institutions as models. While instructors are brought from abroad, talented students were sent abroad for music education. Free music courses were started to be provided in community centers where both polyphonic music and standardized solo folk music tunes were performed. In State balls held both for folk and political elite, polyphonic waltz, tango and similar pieces of music were performed. In the school curriculum, history of Western music and the life of its composers were started to be taught rather than teaching to play instruments due to lack of some opportunities. Orchestras started to give free public concerts in every corner of the country"

Within all these Westernization and modernization movements, it is seen that folk music was given great importance. It is seen that in this process efforts to raise folk music to modern level, reformist sought to embed elements peculiar to West into Turkish folk music. In this sense, Balkılıç [13] states that reformists regarded folk music as a source of synthesis ideas for the creation of national music but did not accept folk songs as they were. In line with this, it is claimed that Turkish people are by nature accustomed to polyphony as folk music as the real music of Turks is polyphonic and the Western music technique would bring in Turks true tones into folk music. The idea of polyphony Balkılıç mentions here stems from connections with history which is of great importance for becoming a nation again. As a matter of fact, this polyphonic music Turks are accustomed to goes back to Central Asia which is claimed to be native land of Turks. While it was said that folk songs were to be improved to reach modern civilization level, it was even argued that the West owes polyphony to Turks. Another remarkable claim with regard to determination of Turkish elements in the process of establishment of modern national music is "pentatonicism", which is again associated with Central Asia. Stokes [21] states that in the quest for what is Turkish, it was accepted that the most original and the most basic modal structure was pentatonic scale.

One of the important developments in this period was the effort to establish a national opera. In opera establishment efforts undertaken upon Atatürk's great interest and wish, Ahmed Adnan Saygun's "Özsoy" opera draws attention because this work both in terms of form and content is a concrete example of cultural policy and common spiritual values of the new nation Atatürk established [22]. When Özsoy's words are considered, the effects of asserted Turkish history can be clearly seen. As a matter of fact, at the beginning of the opera it is said that the Turk race emerged from Asia and spread and thus its rise started civilization and introduced it into Europe, Anatolia and the Middle East. It can be argued that Özsoy's music made use of folk tunes. In certain parts of opera, there are polyphonic structures inspired from these tones. Again in this period, other composers like Necil Kâzım Akses, Hasan Ferit Alnar, Cemal Reşit Rey also composed polyphonic works based on folk just as Özsoy. Yöre [15] states that we can talk about nationalism not only in

melody but also in harmony in the pieces of music created by these composers within the framework of national music because Turkish polyphony music composers, who used makams (mode) horizontally in their main melodies in their works, developed a different understanding of harmony by using them vertically as well.



Fig. 1 Saygun's Cello-Piano Sonata op.12 ,chapter I

Balkılıç [13] remarks that in this period when folk songs were judged by aesthetic values of the Western music and expression forms of the Western music were used in the notes of some folk songs. As Balkılıç maintain, in his book called "Samples of Anatolian Folk Music" Ferruh Asunari, who was one of the prominent figures studying on folk music in that period, provided samples of folk songs from Kütahya province and stated that these pieces of folk songs would lay the foundation for ballets and suites of the future. Besides judgments of folk tunes based on Western music, it is seen that there were some interventions to recast them into desired forms. With regard to this issue, Tunçay [20] cites the following words by Atatürk after A. Adnan Saygun extemporaneously performed a song on the piano which was translated into pure Turkish in a meeting in Çankaya Palace: "... Gentlemen! Those lyrics are in Ottoman and its music is Ottoman music. These lyrics are in Turkish and this music is Turkish music ... A new society, a new music". "Most of the time, we cannot find the complete dignity of Turkish music. The music that you listen here is the true Turkish Music and it is undoubted that it is the music of a supreme civilization. This music is to be understood by the world and we need to give voice to it all over world and we as a nation are to reach the current level in the world".

Balkılıç [13] states that Saygun as one of the most important figures of the period had different ideas about synthesis and folk music. He states that Saygun spoke of two phases in music revolution. The first stage is folk music and it is very important to perform pieces of folk music monophonically and clearly. In second stage, polyphony is to be handled. In passage to polyphonic music education, special attention is to be paid not to spoil the characters. According to Saygun taking the "Saz" (a stringed instrument) from the hands of peasants and giving them mandolin would yield no result and efforts to create a polyphonic music are to originate from folk songs. Balkılıç [13], who argues that folks songs judged by aesthetic criteria are expected to have an understandable and lyric structure as much as to be modern melodic features and be polyphonic, states that at the basis of the studies on public songs of the period lie the idea of "creating pure Turkish language" and language revolution. According to the reformists in the period, folk songs are to be the samples of pure Turkish. Therefore, the lyrics of the composed folk songs cannot be accepted as they are and

revised for homogenous and smooth Turkish. At this point, with regard to the emerging problem Stokes [21] states that language reform was not a simple replacement but rather created languages in place of languages. As a matter of fact, it is not possible to stop people using some words.

One of the toughest interventions in reforms initiations in music was to forbid playing "alaturca" (Ottoman Style) music, which was argued to be corrupt, in radio broadcasts. Sağlam [14] states that the basis of this approach was the idea that radio was corrupting culture and music training with these broadcasts and as a result, with ordinance by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, it was announced that these broadcast of alaturca music forbidden from November 2, 1934 to September 6, 1936. However, Refiğ [22] states that while such steps toward reform were taken in the Republican period there have been some negative sides of revolutionary approaches that emerged later. For example, Dar'ülelhan was transformed into Conservatory of Istanbul Municipality and forbiddance of traditional Turkish music training was there was one of the negative incidences experienced. As a matter of fact, due to such prohibitions in this period and later led to a large gap between traditionalist Turkish musicians and polyphonic music performing musicians supported by the Republic.

IV. RESULT

It is seen that the more homogenized population taken over by the Republic was directed towards the national identity target and the historical and cultural structure of the nation was readdressed and redefined. In this process, "culture" was one of the most important elements for the building of a nation and it was thought that citizens were to internalize modern culture as much as a national identity. However, efforts to construct this modern culture could also be argued to be an attitude that breaks people off the Ottoman culture and that refuses it to reinforce the new Turkish national identity. The modernization project applied in this process was readily problematic as it was under the control of nation-state. The opinion that in this period many practices that appease the freeing soul of modernism were carried out in the name of modernism is now pronounced more.

Theoretical frameworks of folk music and art music in Turkish music conservatories are now completely different and thus they follow separate education programs as a result of this. Although Saygun confessed that it was a mistake done under the influence of the politic thinking in that period, it is still a common the belief that the origin of folk music is Central Asia and it is of pentatonic structure. The trainers and students of two traditional types due to pitch (musical note-sound) systems that got separated into two traditional types with these effects write and read the same notes of Western music with different symbols.

In line with Westernization idea in the period, reformists think that folklore materials are not reliable with their current forms. In this context, folk songs were submitted to a sort of social engineering and some interventions in terms of melody and harmony were made folk songs to prove polyphony in folk music. However, such interventions to folk culture are not

unique to Turkey. In different nation building processes similar interventions are seen. In such countries, the broadcast of local music was forbidden; Western music was made compulsory in education and the media. In countries like Turkey, where monophonic modal music culture is dominant, the broadcasting of monophonic and modal music and only the forms of these music redesigned with polyphonic performance methods of the Western music were deemed appropriate.

Today it can be argued that contrary to the tradition idealized by the reformists of the period, folk songs do not involve exalted art based on the history of a nation but their daily lives.

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