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A Staged Fright: Musical Hybridity and Religious Intolerance in Turkey, 1923–38

JOHN MORGAN O'CONNELL

Abstract

This article is concerned with the relationship between musical style and religious prejudice in Turkey during the early Republican period (1923–38). It focuses on a musical contest in 1932 between a Jewish cantor (*hazan*) and an Islamic vocalist (*hafız*) in the presence of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881–1938), the president of the Turkish Republic who instigated revolutionary reforms that affected many aspects of Turkish culture, including music. Historical accounts of this musical contest not only suggest how religious discrimination manifested itself in a competitive setting but also serve to question the parameters of religious tolerance in Turkey, a country often admired for its favourable attitude towards Jews during the twentieth century. The discussion draws on Homi Bhabha's concept of a 'third space' to uncover the complex relations that existed in Turkey between Jews and Muslims on the one hand and among Jews on the other. It also invokes Bhabha to show how music can be viewed as a 'supplementary discourse' that serves both to unify cultural interests and to perpetuate cultural differences. By challenging the accepted narrative of religious tolerance in historical sources, the article explores through music the characteristics and consequences of racism in the country during a period of growing anti-Semitism both at home and abroad.

This article is concerned with the relationship between musical hybridity and religious intolerance in Turkey during the early Republican period (1923–38), a major period of political change and cultural reform.¹ In particular, it focuses on a musical contest between

This article reflects an ongoing interest in musical practices among minority groups in the Islamic world, drawing also on my research on Jewish culture in Turkey, completed with a grant from the Getty Foundation (2006). In this matter I am grateful to Irene Bierman for her personal support and her intellectual contribution. I would also like to acknowledge the assistance of Stanford Shaw, a recently deceased authority on Jewish history in Turkey, who supervised part of my doctoral research, and Ali Jihad Racy, whose musical knowledge informs not only my work in general but also my interest in using music to advance intercultural understanding. Special thanks are due to Ruth Davis, whose friendship and perseverance made this publication possible, as well as Stephen Blum, Philip Bohlman, Leslie Hall, Maureen Jackson, Dwight Reynolds, and Edwin Seroussi for their comments on, and criticisms of, earlier versions of this article.

Where not detailed otherwise, all technical terms in this article use the modern Turkish spellings found in Redhouse, *Redhouse Turkish/Ottoman–English Dictionary*. The suffix (-s) is used for the plural form of non-English terms. As is usual in publications concerning the Turkish Republic (see Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, vol. 2, p. ix), the scientific transliteration of Ottoman terms is not provided. Where personal names are concerned the Turkish form is generally given, along with the non-Turkish and non-Muslim form where applicable. Here it is difficult to provide a consistent approach to personal nomenclature. With reference to the Jewish repertoire performed in 'espa[n]ol' (Turkish, 'yahudice') I employ the technical term Judeo-Spanish instead of Ladino.

1 For an authoritative overview of Turkish history see, for example, Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, and Faroqi and Inalcık, *The Ottoman Empire and its Heritage*. For more generalized accounts see Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern*

a Jewish cantor (*hazan*) and a Muslim vocalist (*hafız*) in the presence of the Turkish president, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881–1938). With its potential for the display of religious prejudice, the competition and contemporary reports of it highlight the growing antagonism of a Muslim majority towards a Jewish minority following the demise of the Ottoman Empire and the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923.² While historically Jews had experienced a favoured status in comparison with other minorities during the Ottoman period (1299–1922), their privileged position was called into question with the advent of competing nationalisms (especially Turkism and Zionism) and the concomitant rise of anti-Semitism. Although official policy in the Turkish Republic continued to endorse Jewish interests, the unofficial attitudes of Turkish Muslims towards Turkish Jews were often less sympathetic.

This article draws on Homi Bhabha's concept of a 'third space'³ to uncover the complex relations that existed in Turkey between Jews and Muslims on the one hand, and among Jews on the other (especially between the Sephardim and the Ashkenazim).⁴ It invokes Bhabha also to show how music can be viewed as a 'supplementary discourse', serving both to unify cultural interests and to perpetuate cultural differences. Bhabha's notion of hybridity is

Turkey; Zürcher, Turkey: a Modern History; and Quataert, The Ottoman Empire, 1700–1922. For an evaluation of Jewish history in the Ottoman Empire see Lewis, The Jews of Islam, and Shaw, The Jews of the Ottoman Empire. See also Juhasz (ed.), Sephardi Jews; Levy, The Sephardim in the Ottoman Empire and The Jews of the Ottoman Empire; Landau, 'Relations between Jews and Non-Jews'; Ortyal, 'Ottomanism and Zionism'; Rodrigue, 'The Beginnings of Westernization'; Bali, Les relations entre Turcs et Juifs and 'The Thrace Events'; Tütüncü, Turkish–Jewish Encounters; Rozen, 'Elite Culture and Popular Culture'; Shapira, Avraham Firkowicz in Istanbul; Campos, 'Between "Beloved Ottomania" and "The Land of Israel"'; Haker, Edirne; and Ben-Naeh, Jews in the Realm of the Sultans. For distinctive evaluations of Turkey's role in assisting Jews during the Holocaust see Shaw, Turkey and the Holocaust; Neumark, Zuflucht am Bosphorus; and Reisman, Turkey's Modernization. On Turkish music during the early twentieth century see İnal, Hoş Sadâ; Saygun, Atatürk ve Müzik; Özalp, Türk Musikisi Tarihi, vol. 2; Behar, Klasik Türk Müzikisi; Feldman, 'Cultural Authority and Authenticity'; O'Connell, 'Alaturka Revisited', 'Fine Art, Fine Music', 'From Empire to Republic', 'Sound Sense', 'In the Time of Alaturka', and 'Alabanda'; Paçacı, Cumhuriyet'in Sesleri; Çakıroğlu, İstanbul Radyosu; Aracı, 'Zor Yıllar (1935–1946)'; and Erbay and Erbay, Cumhuriyet Dönemi.

- 2 This article complements my research on Jewish music in Turkey during the early Republican era. My essay 'Modal Trails, Model Trials', for instance, explains the discrimination of Muslim commentators towards Jewish vocalists (of Sephardi extraction) and Jewish instrumentalists (of Ashkenazi origin), two distinctive groups that (for the most part) performed two different styles, *alaturka* and *alafranga*. It also describes the ways in which Jewish artists were discriminated against in musical institutions (such as conservatories) and in their access to media (such as recording studios), arguing in particular that the employment of Jewish instructors in the Ankara Music Conservatory on the recommendation of Paul Hindemith (1895–1963) incited anti-Semitic sentiment in musical circles, especially among Turkish *alafranga* composers (who had been displaced) and Turkish *alaturka* musicians (who had been made redundant). Especially noteworthy are the religious and political dimensions of intolerance amongst Sufi brotherhoods. In particular, Mevlevî and Bektaşî commentators viewed Jewish artists in terms of a contemporary conspiracy, a foreign plot to subvert their nationalist aspirations.

3 See Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*.

4 The perception among Muslim critics of Jewish musical (and by extension cultural) fragmentation is explored further in O'Connell, 'Modal Trails, Model Trials'. Philip Bohlman has commented insightfully on the wider discourse about Jewish hybridity (and by implication Jewish cosmopolitanism) in both European and non-European contexts (see, for example, Bohlman, *Jewish Music and Modernity*). I would like to thank an anonymous reader for pointing out the relevance of this study for other Jewish sites of musical production, especially in the Mediterranean and in the Middle East. Since this is a very large issue, I shall simply refer the reader to Ruth Davis's edited volume *Musical Exodus*, which makes reference to a number of further relevant studies.

useful here. Muslim commentators employed the concept as a marker of aesthetic impurity to deprecate the performance practices associated with Jewish musicians. In contrast they equated aesthetic purity with the nationalist ideals of a dominant Muslim coterie. Further, hybridity and purity were correlated with specific temporalities – the former associated with a pre-modern imperial era and its cultural capital, the latter with a modern national epoch. By implication they were also linked by contemporary observers with a multicultural Ottoman past and a monocultural Republican present.

This simplistic division of time and state concealed a complex range of subject positions. While musical hybridity was equated with an Eastern style (*alaturka*) associated with a traditional imperial past and musical purity with a Western style (*alafranga*) associated with a modern national present, the terms *alaturka* and *alafranga* were used by different critics in different ways as a means of validating certain musical styles and practices while vilifying others. Moreover, some contemporary specialists, who wished to promote a conversation between the past and the present, called for the ‘alafrangization’ (*alafrangalaştırmak*) of *alaturka*. Through a process of modernization and westernization they hoped to reinstate an ancient musical tradition by invoking the aesthetic principles of the new national élite.⁵ In this way the dialectic of difference was transformed into an aporia of distinction, a ‘third space’ in which a simple opposition of aesthetic categories created not two diametrically opposed perspectives but a variety of distinctive viewpoints.

Jewish musicians were profoundly implicated in this discourse of difference. Generally speaking, the Sephardim were considered culture bearers of *alaturka* while the Ashkenazim were viewed as significant exponents of *alafranga*. Such a one-to-one association between culture and taste, while simplistic (and debatable),⁶ shows clearly how aesthetic discourse – and especially that of (mainly Muslim) nationalists – served to fragment Jewish cultural interests and subvert Jewish cultural integrity. Yet the terms *alaturka* and *alafranga* fail to define the entire range of Jewish musical output, musical styles that encompassed both the

5 For an in-depth examination of the *alaturka* phenomenon in Turkey see O'Connell, ‘Alaturka Revisited’, ‘Fine Art, Fine Music’, ‘From Empire to Republic’, ‘Song Cycle’, ‘Sound Sense’, ‘In the Time of *Alaturka*’, ‘*Alabanda*’, and ‘Modal Trails, Model Trials’. These publications examine the principal actors in a contemporary debate concerning the appropriate character of a national music (*milli musiki*). Since I wish now to examine the structure of this debate, and since I shall consider below the subject positions of different agents, I have not provided a detailed discussion and interpretation of these protagonists and their agendas here.

6 I would like to thank Philip Bohlman and Edwin Seroussi for challenging my simplistic ascription of aesthetic categories to the Sephardim and the Ashkenazim, whereby *alaturka* is viewed as the symbolic capital of the former and *alafranga* as the symbolic capital of the latter. While I am aware that such a one-to-one relationship is debatable in other Mediterranean contexts, in Turkey the distinction is appropriate, since music articulates historical, linguistic, cultural, and religious differences between the two communities during the early Republican era. However, Dorn, in ‘Change and Ideology’, has examined the evolution of taste among the Sephardi community from a preference for *alaturka* (here spelt ‘a la turka’) during the 1920s to a favouring of *alafranga* (here spelt ‘a la franka’) in the 1980s, an aesthetic transformation I evaluate in greater detail in ‘Modal Trails, Model Trials’. Bohlman has also helpfully pointed out that the Sephardim and the Ashkenazim were less distinctive culturally than in terms of their liturgical practice. In particular, he notes that the hybrid character of ‘Jewish culture’ was an established trope in anti-Semitic sources. In the Turkish context nationalist commentators invoked anti-Semitic prejudice to highlight the hybrid nature of Jewish music and, by extension, Jewish culture.

secular and the sacred, and embraced both the vernacular and the classical.⁷ They also fail to disclose the textured character of Jewish society, which involved an intricate tapestry of distinctive cultures with different interests. It was precisely this diversity in society that was mirrored by a hybridity in music, providing a 'third space' which crystallized in its relationship to a dominant discourse.

A 'third space'

In his classic book *The Location of Culture* Homi Bhabha calls for the recognition of a 'third space' in cultural analysis.⁸ Critical of the polarized representation of the colonized and the colonizer in colonial contexts (where the subaltern is always defined in terms of its opposition to a dominant order), he argues instead for the emergence of an 'in-between' space when two distinct but unequal groups come into contact. For him, this place involves the formation of multiple subject positions contingent upon (yet not bound to) an original dialectic, a play of opposites between the powerful and the powerless. It also involves the production of 'supplementary discourses' that provide unifying terms of reference for all the groups concerned, thereby subverting the hegemonic aspirations of any particular faction. From this perspective, music can be viewed as a 'supplementary discourse', as it provides a common language for disparate communities and promotes equality of expression within a 'third space'.

Music in Turkey can also be understood as a 'supplementary discourse'. Where *alaturka* had represented a shared idiom for Ottoman subjects of different backgrounds, *alafranga* provided a similar common currency among different Republican citizens. While *alaturka* looked eastwards for its artistic origins, *alafranga* looked westwards for its aesthetic inspiration. Both *alaturka* and *alafranga* represented a 'third space' in expressive culture, hybrid styles that were in fact ambiguously suspended between East and West and between past and

7 Generally speaking, this repertoire encompasses liturgical repertoire in Hebrew and paraliturgical repertoire in Judeo-Spanish. Jews performed *alaturka* using Hebrew, Judeo-Spanish, and Turkish texts. Among the *alafranga* coterie a variety of languages was employed, including French, Italian, and German/Yiddish. For an authoritative study of Jewish music in Ottoman territories see Seroussi, *Mizimrat Qedem*, 'The Turkish *Makam*', 'The *Peşrev* as a Vocal Genre', 'La música sefardí', and 'From Court and Tarikat to Synagogue'. I am very grateful to Edwin Seroussi for providing me with two essays, the article 'Maftirim Giriş / Introduction to Maftirim' (on the *Maftirim* ensemble) and his text accompanying *An Early Twentieth-Century Sephardi Troubadour*, a set of recordings of the vocalist Haim Efendi (1853–1938). See also Idelsohn, *Gesänge der orientalischen Sefardim*; Behar, *Kantes relijyozos de Selihot*; Katz, 'Singing of Baqqashöt by Aleppo Jews'; Özalp, *Türk Musikisi Tarihi*; Shaw, *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire*; Dorn[-Sezgin], 'Change and Ideology' and '*Hakhamim*, Dervishes, and Court Singers'; Feldman, *Music of the Ottoman Court*; Rozen, 'Elite Culture and Popular Culture'; Aksoy, *İzak Algazi* and 'A Great Voice of Ottoman Turkish and Jewish Music'; and O'Connell, 'Modal Trails, Model Trials'. Representative recordings include Esim, *Antik bir Hüzzün . . .*; Pal-Yarden, *Yahudice*; Seroussi, *An Early Twentieth-Century Sephardi Troubadour*; and Yasak and Dilmen, *Maftirim*. The work of the Jewish Music Research Centre at the Hebrew University (Jerusalem) has also been significant, as has Zimmerman-Kalyoncu's extended study of German musicians in Turkey during the twentieth century, *Deutsche Musiker in der Türkei im 20. Jahrhundert*. Many of these musicians were Jewish artists escaping Nazi oppression.

8 Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*.

present. Both also offered, during the period of their ascendancy, the opportunity for different groups to participate in expressive culture on an equal footing. For the Sephardim *alaturka* was the traditional mode of musical exchange during the imperial epoch; for the Ashkenazim *alafiranga* was the modern manner of musical interaction during the national era. Since *alafiranga* replaced *alaturka* as the preferred musical aesthetic, it could be argued that the Ashkenazim were elevated above the Sephardim in the formation of a new 'third space' during the early Republican period.⁹

However, music in Turkey seems to contest a singular reading of the 'third space'. As critics of Bhabha might contend,¹⁰ *alaturka* and *alafiranga* not only disclose distinctive subject positions but also reveal different conceptions of hybridity. Here the role of agency in the realm of representation is critical. Where one style is considered to be heterogeneous by one group, the same style is thought to be homogeneous by another. That is, musical purity is implicated in the power play that informs musical representation. As is demonstrated below with reference to the Turkish context, some authorities during the Ottoman era represented *alaturka* as pure and *alafiranga* as impure. On the other hand, during the Republican epoch, many commentators viewed *alafiranga* as pure and *alaturka* as impure. Although each style was itself hybrid, the subsequent elevation of *alafiranga* over *alaturka* had important implications for the status ascribed to Jewish musical production, the Ashkenazim (rather than the Sephardim) apparently becoming first among equals in the new 'third space'.

Yet *alaturka* had its advocates during the period. While orthodox opinion equated *alaturka* with an eclectic legacy from the Ottoman past, a heterodox perspective attempted to reclaim *alaturka* through a process of nationalization and modernization. Accordingly it emphasized the style's Turkish character and advocated its Western transformation. While this position was itself informed by a pervasive dogma, it does show how individual observers

9 As was mentioned in note 2 above, Ashkenazi musicians were employed in the Ankara Conservatory on the recommendation of Paul Hindemith. For the most part they occupied subordinate positions in relation to their Christian colleagues (see also Reisman, *Turkey's Modernization*; Shaw, *Turkey and the Holocaust*; and Zimmerman-Kalyoncu, *Deutsche Musiker in der Türkei im 20. Jahrhundert*). As representatives of *alafiranga* they were seemingly accorded an elevated status in relation to Jewish exponents of *alaturka*. However, this privileged standing disguised expressions of jealousy against them by redundant musicians who had been displaced in the academy. Some of these unemployed artists (such as the *alafiranga* composer Adnan Saygun, 1907–91) moved to the Istanbul Conservatory, their advocacy of a nationalist position chiming well with an established xenophobia at that institution; see Araci, 'Zor Yıllar (1935–46)'. In this context it is especially significant that a prominent member of the *alaturka* faculty, Ali Rifat Çığatay (1867–1935), was the elder brother of the fascist Cevat Rifat Atilhan (1892–1967).

10 Invoking Bhabha's critical perspective in this article brings with it certain limitations. First, Turkey cannot be classified as a postcolonial context in the same way that Algeria or India can. Second, Bhabha's concepts of hybridity and ambiguity are static rather than dynamic. While Bhabha reifies hybridity and ambiguity in his postcolonial critique of modernist intervention, he fails to recognize his own participation in the dialectic of opposites: that is, he privileges hybridity over purity and ambiguity over certainty. By inverting an established hierarchy he too essentializes the discursive character of his 'third space', where multiple positions are not possible and individual agency is undermined. In this respect I acknowledge Bhabha's theoretical precedent. However, I have modified his argument to suit a Turkish context, especially with regard to the significance of representation for articulating 'subject positions' in a 'third space'. See also O'Connell, 'Major Minorities', for a postcolonial reading of Irish minority musics. For a postcolonial and a poststructuralist critique of everyday practices in Turkey see Kandiyoti and Saktanber, *Fragments of Culture*.

were able to validate particular tastes using the nationalist rhetoric of contemporary ideologues and the political standing of contemporary authorities.¹¹ In this volatile quagmire of aesthetic discourse Jews played no part. Either their musical repertoire in non-Turkish languages was considered non-national or their musical preference for hybrid styles was viewed as archaic. Active musically but inactive politically, they were unable to challenge a pervasive impression that their music, like their culture, was hybrid – an ambivalent attitude that called into question the status of Jews as patriotic Turks.

An ambivalent attitude

This ambivalent attitude was informed by a paradoxical logic. Where Jewish musicians participated in the national project their contribution was often ignored, something especially problematic for Ashkenazi exponents of *alafanga* when they sought promotion. Where, on the other hand, Jewish musicians continued an imperial tradition their involvement was usually denigrated. This was particularly difficult for Sephardi proponents of *alaturka*, who performed an outdated style that was no longer acceptable. The central problem was that Muslims rather than Jews determined the acceptable parameters of musical practice. In this matter the Turkish language was employed as a barometer of Turkishness. Since Jews did not generally speak Turkish in vernacular contexts, their standing as good citizens was questioned. Here music was used as a medium for demonstrating the level of Jewish integration, since song texts in non-Turkish languages (such as Hebrew and Judeo-Spanish) seemed to confirm the non-national character of Jewish culture. Even when Turkish was used, Jewish vocalists often used a now discredited version of the language: Ottoman.

This attitude has persisted in recent times. When I conducted doctoral research in Istanbul (1992–6), I too encountered an ambivalent attitude towards Jewish music. On the one hand the quincentennial celebrations marking the Jewish exodus from Spain (in 1492) featured musical performances and conference presentations. At these events performances and analyses of musical repertoire in Judeo-Spanish were especially prominent and, aside from the one notable exception of a conference paper on *alaturka*,¹² the event seemed to underscore the singular relationship among Jews between a non-Turkish language and a non-Turkish music. On the other hand it was also evident that Jewish musicians were involved in performing a wide range of styles using a number of different languages. Inconspicuous as these performances often were, they nonetheless seemed to question the logic of cultural representations that equated musical purity with national integrity.¹³ From such a perspective Jews could never be Turks, since their music – like their language – was not Turkish.

I also experienced in Turkey an ambivalent attitude towards Jewish culture in general. In accordance with the public displays of religious amity during the quincentennial

11 See O'Connell, 'Fine Art, Fine Music', 'Sound Sense', and 'The Mermaid of *Meyhane*'.

12 See Dorn[-Sezgin], '*Hakhamim*, Dervishes, and Court Singers'.

13 See O'Connell, 'Modal Trails, Model Trials'.

celebrations, as well as diplomatic expressions of international concord such as the then strategic cooperation between Turkey and Israel, I found that official sources tended to represent the past in terms of religious tolerance, suggesting that the Ottoman period was exemplary in its acceptance of the Sephardim from Christian Spain, and the Republican period equally so for its rescue of the Ashkenazim from Nazi Europe. Generally speaking, the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic are represented as states of religious tolerance where the enlightened policies of Turkish rulers towards Jewish subjects are contrasted with the prejudicial attitudes towards Jewish residents in Christian territories. While such an idealized view is not universally held,¹⁴ the general consensus among scholars points to a favourable attitude towards Jewish minorities under Turkish rule.

Still, my experience in informal discussions was of a less deferential attitude towards Jews.¹⁵ During these conversations anti-Semitic views were often implicit, with, for example, Jewish historians and Jewish musicologists sometimes vilified for their pro-Israeli and pro-American connections. While in public the contribution of Jewish intellectuals is widely celebrated, in private the same evaluation is slanted negatively, the clichés of Jewish propaganda and Jewish espionage being reiterated with insistent regularity. I noted too that the Jewish response to these antagonistic viewpoints was ambivalent. Although some non-resident historians and musicologists have openly criticized Turkish discrimination against Jewish culture and the exclusion of Jews from Turkish culture,¹⁶ many resident Jewish scholars, for understandable reasons, have been more circumspect in their judgements. As mediators between a Muslim majority and a Jewish minority they have sought a compromise in their representations of past and present.

Representing the past

The historical representation of Jews in the Ottoman era is often contradictory. According to one view, the Ottoman Empire is recognized as a sanctuary for Jewish refugees, the welcome accorded by Bayazid II (1447–1512) to the Sephardim from al-Andalus (after 1492) being especially noteworthy. Although small numbers of Romaniots and Ashkenazim were already resident, the incoming Sephardim soon dominated many aspects of Jewish affairs. In terms of culture they utilized the imported technology of printing to publish sacred and secular texts that served both to consolidate a new identity in exile and to confirm the dominance of

14 In this matter see Lewis, *The Jews of Islam*, and Shaw, *Turkey and the Holocaust*, for two distinctive representations of Jews in Turkish history.

15 The representation of anti-Semitism in Turkey is problematic. The historian Rifat Bali argues in 'Confronting Turkish Anti-Semitism' that recent eruptions of anti-Semitism can be related directly to the negative policies of successive Israeli governments towards displaced Palestinians. While he recognizes that a range of opinions exists in Turkey, he is especially critical of a tendency to link anti-Israeli feeling with anti-Semitism. That being said, I have also encountered hostile remarks against other non-Muslim minorities (especially against Greeks and Armenians), but even more against Muslim minorities (such as resident Arabs and Kurds). Here anti-Semitism should be viewed in the context of the tendency towards xenophobia created by a nationalism at home that favours Turkish Muslims, and a racism abroad that discriminates against them.

16 See, for instance, Rozen, 'Between the Two World Wars', and Feldman, 'Cultural Authority and Authenticity'.

a Judeo-Spanish worldview, especially in the realms of philosophy and literature. In terms of social standing they excelled in a number of professions, achieving high office in the occupations of banking, diplomacy, and medicine. In terms of politics, according to this favourable representation, they were able to maintain their status as the favoured non-Muslim minority (in contrast to Christians) through their unquestioned allegiance, from necessity, to the Ottoman *porte*.

A contrasting view, however, denigrates the Ottoman period for its legalized discrimination against all non-Muslim subjects, including Jews. As non-Muslim subjects (known in Turkish as *zimmi*-s) organized into separate legislative communities (*millet*-s), they were bound by their overlords to the terms of a historic pact (known in Arabic by the cognate term *dhimma*), which required the payment of a special capitation tax (*cizye*) and adherence to a range of symbolic humiliations. Jews, like Christians, were not allowed to bear arms; they were prevented from public expressions of religious observance and were obliged to wear special clothing. Other forms of degradation involved inequitable legislation concerning marriage, enslavement, construction, and other matters. While in theory their status was protected under canon law, in practice Jews often suffered violence when accused of blood libel and blasphemy. Although free to roam and to worship under the auspices of a *pax ottomana*, Jews were also represented in expressive culture as a despised underclass, the Turkish term *çift* being employed pejoratively to designate an unfavourable stereotype.¹⁷

The nineteenth century witnessed a renaissance in Jewish culture. Following the Imperial Decree (Hatt-ı Hümayun) in 1856, Jews, like Christians, were accorded equal status as Ottoman citizens, a reform that involved the reorganization of the *millet* system and the abandonment of the *dhimma* contract. While at first isolated, the Jewish community soon looked to Europe both to revitalize its cultural constitution and to reinforce its demographic position. First, Ottoman Jews engaged with Jews from western Europe to establish a new educational system. Under the auspices of the Alliance Israélite Universelle (AIU) they founded a number of independent schools that emulated a Western precedent in their adoption of contemporary didactic principles. Although challenged by conservatives, the successful creation of AIU institutions enabled resident Jews to participate competitively in many aspects of Ottoman life, including political activism, economic betterment, and social advancement. Significantly, this embourgeoisement of some Jews was spearheaded by an influential coterie of Italian origin, the 'Francos'.

Second, the ascendancy of the Ashkenazim was reinforced by the migration of Jews from eastern Europe to the Ottoman Empire consequent to the rise of nationalism in the Balkans and the upsurge of anti-Semitism in Russia. Here a western European conception of enlightenment (*Haskalah*) became fused with an eastern European wish for independence that found expression in a local reading of Zionism, the secularist desire to found a Jewish

17 For a discussion of Jewish stereotypes in popular culture see Başgöz, 'The *Waqwaq* Tree'. For example, a negative portrayal of a Jewish character is featured in the musical *Alabanda* (1941), a popular revue composed by Cemal Reşit Rey (1904–85). It featured the vocalist Safiye Ayla (1907–98), who performed the role of an underwater sea goddess ('Mimoza'), and the actor Muammer Karaca (1906–78), who portrayed the role of a Jewish peddler speaking Turkish with a distinctly Jewish accent.

homeland in Ottoman Palestine. Although the number of Jewish migrants to Eretz-Israel was limited by the Turkish authorities, the new zeal for national determination caused a fundamental split between the immigrant Ashkenazim and the settled Sephardim, since the former, generally speaking, supported a Zionist secession from Turkish rule, while the latter favoured the Ottomanist status quo. This apparent clash between a monocultural nationalism and a multicultural imperialism reflected a wider fracture between modernists and traditionalists within the Jewish community, a fissure that persisted among the embers of imperial decline.

Representing the present

It was precisely this ambiguity with regard to national affiliation that aroused suspicion. Following the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923, Turkish Muslims sought to create a new nation-state that was both secular and modern. Above all, it was to be Turkish in essence. In the context of revolutionary reforms instituted by Atatürk, Jews felt obliged to conform to the nationalist ideals espoused by contemporary ideologues. While the rights of non-Muslim minorities were secured under the provisions of the Treaty of Lausanne (1923), resident Jews chose to forsake their special status by adopting Turkish citizenship in 1926. Eager to assume a low profile by becoming good citizens, they made a conscious effort to abandon Judeo-Spanish and to adopt Turkish instead as their language (and culture) of choice. Surprisingly they made little effort at this time to engage in the political process, reflecting perhaps an absence of leadership and a diversity of opinion within the community.

At one level this strategy of conformity appeared successful. With the scourge of anti-Semitism rampant in Europe, the Turkish authorities openly welcomed Jewish refugees, most of whom were en route to Palestine. Stanford Shaw, perhaps overestimating, places the number of Jews that had been saved by the end of the war from extermination in Nazi concentration camps at more than 100,000,¹⁸ the successful intervention of Turkish diplomats on behalf of Turkish Jews in Vichy France having been especially significant. As early as 1933 Atatürk had invited Jewish intellectuals, mostly from Germany and Austria, to set up first-class educational programmes in Istanbul and Ankara. While many of these refugees remained in Turkey only for the duration of the war, they left an indelible impression upon third-level education in the new Republic, so much so that Istanbul University (İstanbul Üniversitesi) was considered by some 'the best German University in the world'.¹⁹ Among the three hundred academics and professionals attracted to the country were some notable Western art musicians.

At another level the strategy of conformity concealed an ambiguous attitude towards the new migrants. For Turkish Muslims the influx of so many highly qualified specialists to Turkish universities led to resentment among displaced or impoverished academics.²⁰ The

¹⁸ Shaw, *Turkey and the Holocaust*.

¹⁹ Reisman, *Turkey's Modernization*, 24.

²⁰ See O'Connell, 'Modal Trails, Model Trials', and Shaw, *Turkey and the Holocaust*, 11–12.

situation was exacerbated by an alliance between Nazi Germans and rightwing Turks, which resulted in the dissemination of negative propaganda against migrant Jews in local publications. In particular, the Turkish fascist Cevat Rifat Atilhan (1892–1967), through his writings in the journals *Anadolu* and *Millî İnkılâp*, incited an anti-Semitic campaign that may partly have instigated the largely unreported pogrom against Jews in Thrace (1934). Although the incident was roundly (if belatedly) condemned by the Turkish government, the event revealed a wider apprehension about Jewish loyalty to the Turkish Republic. Given nagging concerns surrounding cultural integration (especially regarding the use of Turkish) and national affiliation (in view of the support for Zionism), the Jewish position appeared fragile.

For Turkish Jews the reaction to the stream of Ashkenazim coming from Central Europe was also mixed. While many resident Jews supported the boycott of German goods in Turkey and backed the continued transfer of Jewish migrants to Palestine, they were profoundly sceptical of the Zionist project. Wishing to demonstrate their unfettered devotion to the Turkish state in the context of growing anti-Semitism at home and abroad, they made a conscious effort to improve their everyday use of Turkish and to accelerate their participation in Turkish politics. In this matter, the cultural activist Moïse Cohen, or Tekinalp (1883–1961), and the medical practitioner Samuel Abravaya, or Marmaralı (1875–1954), were exemplary. While this public demonstration of cultural assimilation was welcomed by Muslims and Jews, it failed to heal a contemporary rift between distinctive Jewish groups in the country – that is, between the Ashkenazim and the Sephardim on the one hand and between modernists and traditionalists on the other.

A supplementary discourse

Abraham Galanté (1873–1961) attempted to mediate these internecine divisions.²¹ By publishing a number of historical studies concerning Jews in Turkey, he aimed to demonstrate the Jewish contribution to Turkish history and the Turkish imprint upon Jewish culture. As Minna Rozen states, '[T]he work of Abraham Galanté [. . .] is a classic example of the Jewish effort to gain acceptance into the Turkish consensus.'²² Like Tekinalp, Galanté was a firm advocate of the participation of Jews as Turkish citizens in the new Republic, the issue of linguistic fluency in the Turkish language being one of his principal concerns. Reflecting the contemporary ambivalence towards the Zionist project, he omits from his historical narrative any reference to the Zionist Federation of the Orient, emphasizing instead the symbiotic relationship between Jews and Turks, in both rural and urban contexts and during

21 For an authoritative biography of Abraham or Avram Galanté see Kalderon, *Abraham Galante*. See, among other sources, Rozen, 'Between the Two World Wars', and Shaw, *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire*, for a critical assessment of his life and work. Among his extensive writings he published an important study of Turkish and Jewish relations entitled *Türkler ve Yahudiler*, a book that appeared first in Turkish (1928) and later in French (1932). An expanded edition was published in Turkish (1947). Other major publications include *Documents officiels Turcs*, which represents the culmination of an extended period of collecting and translating archival sources.

22 Rozen, 'Between the Two World Wars', 246.

both the Ottoman and the Republican eras.²³ In this matter Galanté saw music as an important expression of interreligious acculturation.

Galanté was one of the first scholars to recognize music in this way. Since then, historians and musicologists have emphasized how music has operated as an indicator of cultural assimilation. In doing so, they have documented the place of Turkish art music during the Ottoman period and the way in which Turkish modes (*makam-s*) and Turkish genres (such as *peşrev-s* and *semâi-s*) were adapted to sacred and secular practices. They also emphasized the ways in which Jewish composers, musicians, and teachers contributed to the musical culture of the imperial epoch.²⁴ Here the imperial court and the Sufi lodges (*tekke-s*) provided a fertile site for a Jewish–Islamic musical exchange. In a similar fashion some scholars have also recognized the role of Western art music during the Republican period. Since Western art music was a central element in the modernizing reforms instituted by Atatürk, many Jews were summoned from Central Europe to fulfil this ideological imperative. As a result, each epoch is seen as dominated by distinctive Jewish groups, the Ottoman era by the resident Sephardim and the early Republican era by the non-resident Ashkenazim.

However, some scholars have been critical of the Turkish failure to acknowledge a Jewish contribution to music. Walter Feldman argues that, during the early Republican period, Turkish musicologists, for nationalistic reasons, wished to emphasize the Turkish provenance of Turkish art music.²⁵ In reaction to a polemical debate concerning the cosmopolitan character of this tradition, they sought to extract seemingly non-Turkish elements from a national canon by notating and performing only those works composed by Muslim artists with a Turkic pedigree. While Feldman's argument is somewhat overstated,²⁶ he does show how contemporary commentators responded to the rising tide of Turkish nationalism, a wave that was inimical to the interests of minority groups, especially Jews. What he fails to mention is the issue of language. Although he clearly acknowledges the hybrid origins of music theory and musical repertoire, he does not highlight the fact that numerous compositions using the same musical idiom exist in non-Turkish languages such as Hebrew and Judeo-Spanish.

23 Rozen, 'Between the Two World Wars', 246.

24 See above note 7.

25 Feldman, 'Cultural Authority and Authenticity'.

26 Feldman's representation of an exclusively Islamic repertoire (in 'Cultural Authority and Authenticity') seems to me exaggerated. During field research I noted that, even among the most nationalist ensembles (such as the Devlet Klasik Türk Müziği Korusu), non-Muslim composers were featured in concert programmes. These composers included the Armenian Bimen Şen (1873–1943) and the Jew Tanbûri İzak, or İsak Fresno Romano (1745–1814). It is interesting to note that other professional groups performed a more diverse repertoire that included compositions by different minority composers. This diversity is reflected in the standard music biographies (see, for example, İnal, *Hoş Sadâ*), music anthologies (see, for example, Üngör, *Türk Musikisi Güfteler Antolojisi*), and music histories (see, for example, Özalp, *Türk Musikisi Tarihi*) that were extant at the time of Feldman's important article. This diversity has recently been celebrated with the reissue of early recordings on the Kalan label. During the early Republican period too, Christian and Jewish musicians were active in many distinctive musical contexts, this despite the exclusionary policies of some institutions (for more on these issues see O'Connell, 'Alaturka Revisited', 'Fine Art, Fine Music', and 'Modal Trails, Model Trials').

It was precisely this issue of language that was central to the nagging debate concerning cultural assimilation. True, Jewish composers made a significant contribution to the enrichment and transmission of classical compositions in Ottoman Turkish. However, their output pales in comparison with the wealth of liturgical and vernacular compositions that were created by Jewish musicians throughout the Ottoman Empire. That Istanbul was often considered a less significant locus for musical production than other cities (such as Salonica) is interesting. As Rozen argues, music as a profession was not highly esteemed during the sixteenth century, this despite the production of music manuscripts and the publication of texts on music in that city.²⁷ The situation had not greatly improved by the nineteenth century. Even that luminary of the Jewish *Haskalah*, Moïse Franco, does not mention music in his extended list of respected professions.²⁸ However, he does concede that resident Jews were recognized by their Ottoman rulers as both vocalists and clowns.

A musician as mediator

The two issues of language and music seemed to confirm the cosmopolitan character of Jews in Republican Turkey. As a living example of Ottomanism their musical culture represented the multiple aesthetics of an imperial epoch, a period (if the polemicist Ziya Gökalp is to be believed²⁹) of religious pluralism and artistic eclecticism that had no relevance in a secular nation-state.³⁰ The fact that Jewish musicians were engaged in a diverse range of musical activities, which encompassed both popular and classical domains and both Western (*ala-franga*) and Eastern (*alaturka*) idioms, was especially worrisome. Of course, their ability as expert vocalists in a number of different styles was still prized, an expertise that was reflected in the widespread dissemination of representative sound recordings. However, it was their articulation of Turkish texts (rather than their knowledge of Turkish *makam*-s) that was the subject of particular scrutiny, so much so that the Jewish accent was caricatured in contemporary productions.³¹

To counteract this negative image of Jewish culture among Turkish nationalists, Galanté championed a number of cultural activists who shared his vision of cultural integration. In particular he highlighted the achievements of the author and composer İzak Algazi (1889–1950).³² Like Galanté, Algazi was Sephardi, an organic intellectual in the Gramscian sense

27 Rozen, 'Elite Culture and Popular Culture'.

28 Franco, 'L'alliance Israélite universelle et les Israélites de Turquie', 251, 256.

29 Gökalp, *Türkçülüğün Esasları*.

30 For an in-depth evaluation of Ziya Gökalp's polemical thesis concerning the historical evolution of Turkish music see, for example, Aksoy, 'Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyete Musiki ve Batılılaşma' and 'Is the Question of the "Origin of Turkish Music" not Redundant?'; Özalp, *Türk Musikisi Tarihi*; Behar, *Klasik Türk Müsikisi*; Özbek, *Popüler Kültür ve Orhan Gencebay Arabeski*; Stokes, *The Arabesk Debate*; Feldman, 'Cultural Authority and Authenticity'; Greve, *Die Europäisierung orientalischer Kunstmusik in der Türkei*; O'Connell, 'Alaturka Revisited', 'Fine Art, Fine Music', 'Sound Sense', and 'Modal Trails, Model Trials'; and Paçacı, *Cumhuriyet'in Sesleri*.

31 See above note 17.

32 For an authoritative study of the life of İzak Algazi or Rabbi Isaac Algazi see Seroussi, *Mizimrat Qedem*. Other references to this artist are scant, but include Galanté, *Turcs et Juifs*, 108–9, and *Türk Harsı ve Türk Yahudisi*, 45–6;

who mediated the divide between tradition and modernity. While a teacher in the traditional school of Jewish studies (Talmud Torah), he was also an educator in the modernizing academy of European instruction (AIU). Like Galanté too, Algazi was especially critical of the cultural fragmentation within the Jewish community brought about by religious conservatism and linguistic isolationism. To combat this condition he advanced his reformist views in *La Voz de Oriente*, a weekly publication in Judeo-Spanish that advocated the nationalist principles of the Turkish Republic. In this respect both Galanté and Algazi were firm advocates of Jewish participation in the modernizing project instigated by Atatürk.

Galanté recognized the significance of Algazi's contribution to cultural assimilation in the musical realm. Expert in the musical traditions of both Jewish ritual practice and Turkish art performance, he was able to bridge the gap that existed between a minority and a majority expressive culture. Here Algazi was an innovator in both contexts. As Edwin Seroussi shows, he was a virtuoso exponent of the liturgical repertoire, a unique attribute for a Sephardi cantor (*hazan*) in a conservative tradition that valued textual articulation over melismatic display.³³ As Seroussi also points out, Algazi experimented with a range of musical styles that embraced both the Eastern (*alaturka*) and the Western (*alafiranga*) aesthetic domains, being then representative of the Sephardi and the Ashkenazi traditions respectively. An innovator and a mediator, his musical output was consistent with Atatürk's vision for a progressive nation, a state in which the modernization and westernization of music were central to the reformist agenda.

As a musical exponent of revolutionary reform, Algazi was invited by Atatürk to his residence in Istanbul, Dalmabaçe Sarayı. According to Galanté, the audience was a great success.³⁴ He states:

Shaw, *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire*, 249–50; Özalp, *Türk Musikisi Tarihi*, vol. 2, p. 237; and Aksoy, 'A Great Voice of Ottoman Turkish and Jewish Music' and his annotations to the recording *İzak Algazi*. It is noteworthy that Seroussi and Shaw cite a number of distinctive sources, the former from outside, the latter from inside Turkey. Aksoy, in 'A Great Voice of Ottoman Turkish and Jewish Music' (quoting the Jewish musician David Behar, b?1923), also presents some new evidence concerning Algazi's performances and musical compositions. He even suggests that the vocalist Münir Nurettin Selçuk was an admirer. Significantly, İnal in his musical anthology *Hos Sadâ* does not make reference to Algazi. Representative recordings include Spottswood and Signell, *Masters of Turkish Music*, vol. 1; Ünlü, *Gazeller* and *Gazeller 3*; and Aksoy, *İzak Algazi*. For examples of his musical compositions see Algazi, *Extrait du fassil husseini des chants juifs orientaux*; Behar, *Klasik Türk Musikisi*; Seroussi, *Mizimrat Qedem*; and Dorn[-Sezgin], 'Hakhamim, Dervishes, and Court Singers'.

33 Seroussi, *Mizimrat Qedem*, 46.

34 The exact date of the audience is unclear. Although Hafız Yaşar states that it occurred in June 1932, Kocatürk (in *Atatürk ve Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi Kronolojisi*), who is meticulous about the movements of the president, does not show that Atatürk was in Istanbul during that month. However, Galanté provides the first reference to this event in *Turcs et Juifs*, 109. Writing in French rather than in Turkish (and with his usual inaccuracy in the spelling of names and places), the author confirms the year of the audience as 1932 by stating: 'A few weeks ago, Gazi Moustapha Kémal Pacha [*sic*], who is the President of the Turkish Republic and who was recently in Istanbul, invited the master Algazi to the palace of Dolma Bagtché [*sic*] and asked him about matters concerning Turkish music.' He again states that the president was very happy with the audience, giving Algazi an autographed copy of the Qur'an (*Kur'an-ı Kerim*), though he does not write here that the copy presented was of the recently published Turkish translation.

One of the best-known artists from among the Jewish community – İsak Algazi from Izmir – has been in Istanbul for eight to ten years, being occupied with performing Turkish music and with publishing articles in newspapers concerning the Turkish language. The artist was invited to perform by Atatürk. During the audience, which lasted around four to five hours, Algazi performed a range of pieces in different *makam*-s, explaining the character of each *makam* as the performance progressed. Atatürk, who was pleased with the performer's knowledge and the performer's voice, gave Algazi as a gift an autographed copy of the *Kur'an-ı Kerim* which had recently been published in the new script.³⁵

Other sources besides Galanté document the satisfactory outcome of this occasion, suggesting that the event marked an important milestone in Jewish–Muslim relations.

A staged fright

Another account of Algazi's audience with Atatürk is less favourable. The narrative that appears in the memoirs of Hafız Yaşar (Okur) (1885–1966)³⁶ is informed by an anti-Semitic bias.³⁷ As I show elsewhere,³⁸ the musical audience must be viewed in the context of 'table talk', extended discussions on contemporary reforms that occurred in presidential residences with individual specialists.³⁹ Since music was the subject of particular concern, Atatürk invited well-known musicians to perform different styles of music to satisfy a personal interest in the development of a national music (*millî musiki*). As a recognized exponent of *alaturka*, Algazi had to submit to the critical scrutiny of the president. Hafız Yaşar's representation of the event is quite different from Galanté's. Known as 'Gazi's Hafız', Hafız Yaşar was a key figure in Atatürk's circle and had considerable influence upon the successful outcome of musical auditions.⁴⁰ During a gathering of distinguished religious vocalists (*hafız*-s), he recounts:

At this gathering, the old artist Elgazi was present, a Jew from Edirne [*recte*: Izmir] who had attained considerable fame for his performances on contemporary

35 Galanté, *Türk Harsı ve Türk Yahudisi*, 45–6.

36 Cengiz, *Yaşanmış Olaylarla Atatürk ve Müzik*, 76–80.

37 For autobiographical information on Hafız Yaşar (Okur) see Cengiz, *Yaşanmış Olaylarla Atatürk ve Müzik*, 11–15. For details on Hafız Yaşar's life see also Ergun, *Türk Musikisi Antolojisi*, vol. 2, pp. 654 and 670–71; Özalp, *Türk Musikisi Tarihi*, vol. 2, pp. 99–100; and Öztuna, *Büyük Türk Mûsikisi Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 2, pp. 155–6, among other sources. For a representative recording of a *gazel* see Ünlü, *Gazeller*. See O'Connell, 'Modal Trails, Model Trials' for a critical evaluation of Hafız Yaşar in the context of anti-Semitic tendencies among mystical organizations during the early Republican period.

38 O'Connell, 'The Mermaid of the *Meyhane*'.

39 Mango, *Atatürk*, 481–90.

40 Cengiz provides the most comprehensive representation of Hafız Yaşar's memoirs in *Yaşanmış Olaylarla Atatürk ve Müzik*. Others, including Oransay, *Atatürk ile Kuş*, 50–52, 74–5, and 93–8, reproduce articles written by Hafız Yaşar in different published sources. For other memoirs concerning musical gatherings at the presidential residences see Ataman, *Atatürk ve Türk Musikisi*, and Saygun, *Atatürk ve Musiki*. For references to similar occasions involving musicians see Kinross, *Atatürk*; Mango, *Atatürk*; and Volkan and Itzkowitz, *The Immortal Atatürk*.

recordings. This was the first time that Atatürk had actually set eyes upon this old composer [Algazi was actually younger than both Atatürk and Hafız Yaşar]. He was the focus of attention. After an interval, Atatürk asked Elgazi some questions concerning the compositions of old masters. Atatürk was not satisfied with the answers that Elgazi supplied. Looking at Elgazi, Atatürk asked him if he would perform one of these pieces. Elgazi stood up in his place and, taking an *ud* in hand, replied 'at your command'. He sang, while accompanying himself at the same time, a *beste* in *Arazbar Buselik* by Hacı Sâdullah Ağa entitled 'Düşüm düşeli aşk oduan'. He also sang a *beste*, an *ağır semai*, and a *yürük semai*, slouched over his *ud* and at the top of his voice.

Atatürk detested shouting of this kind. Looking at Elgazi, he requested a *gazel* and the vocalist complied. Noticing the incorrect rendition of the poetic text during the first line (*zemin*) of the *gazel*, Atatürk looked at me smiling. As soon as he had finished the *gazel*, Elgazi, who had not noticed any of this, began to perform a *şarkı* in another *makam* without asking permission. Atatürk, who did not want to deprive the old man of his moment of pleasure, politely asked the artist to stop, saying: 'Üstad, you are tired . . . perhaps it would be better not to continue'. Atatürk wondered in amazement at how this old composer who sang in that style and who played the *ud* in that manner could have achieved such fame, especially given his faulty rendition of the poetic text. Atatürk paid a lot of attention to such matters. He never missed mistakes concerning poetic scansion or metre.

Atatürk inquired after a while: 'Üstad! I wonder whether there is some confusion with regard to your name. Everybody refers to you as Gazi.' [Gazi was the title accorded to Atatürk in 1921.] Turning his head to Hakkı Târik Bey [the Deputy for Giresun], he smiled and continued: 'Gazi is my name. Your name must be Elgazâ [meaning 'riddler'] since it is said that you have such a fine voice.' Elgazi went bright red. Bewildered, he stopped playing the *ud*. He was dumbfounded. He just looked in front of him and shook with fear. Atatürk then brought up the issue of Arab history. This lesson lasted an hour. I think that this unscheduled tutorial was Atatürk's way of chastising Elgazi for the unskilled manner of his performance. [. . .] Atatürk could [also] not endure his inappropriate breach of protocol [. . .] especially since he wished to develop music suited to the epoch and to elevate Turkish music using qualified professionals.⁴¹

An immoderate moderator

Hafız Yaşar reiterates here Moïse Franco's view of Jewish musicians in Turkey: good vocalists but comical figures. While Hafız Yaşar's narrative is somewhat disjointed, he does provide an important insight into Atatürk's approach to contemporary reforms, whereby the president operated as a moderator between competing groups, different specialists whom he invited to

41 Cengiz, *Yaşanmış Olaylarla Atatürk ve Müzik*, 76–80.

attend impromptu sessions in order to discuss issues related to language and history. On this occasion he brought together representatives from different religious traditions, expecting a Muslim and a Jewish vocalist to compete before him with the aim of establishing an appropriate musical style for the new nation-state. Although Atatürk – who wished to promote secular values – was probably ambivalent about the musical expertise of both groups, Hafız Yaşar makes his preference clear by pointing out the deficiencies in Algazi's presentation both in terms of linguistic proficiency and performance manner. In contrast to Galanté, he fails to mention the gift of a Qur'an (*Kur'an-ı Kerim*).

Hafız Yaşar is especially critical of Algazi's use of language. Here he focuses on the problem of poetic metre (*aruz*), especially during his rendition of the *gazel*, which is a vocal improvisation. However, he does not provide exact details of the mistake in question. As I show elsewhere, Algazi was conversant with the complex rules associated with poetic improvisation.⁴² However, Hafız Yaşar wished here to emphasize two points: first, Atatürk's knowledge of Turkish poetry; and second, his own evaluation of Turkish music. Both perspectives place poetry rather than music at the heart of the Turkish tradition. In this respect it is perhaps not surprising that Hafız Yaşar does not mention issues arising from musical intonation or modal exegesis.⁴³ By finding a common ground between Atatürk's contemporary interest in the Turkish language and his traditional concern for Turkish literature, he was able to demonstrate the relevance of an Islamic style (*hafız üslûbü*) for national music in the new Republic.

Hafız Yaşar is also particularly disparaging about Algazi's manner of performance. Two issues are emphasized in his account. First, Algazi is slouched over his instrument. Second, he sang classical works at the top of his voice. Although (as Halil Cengiz points out) the order of the programme is probably misrepresented,⁴⁴ Hafız Yaşar wishes to draw attention to the inappropriate style of presentation, a disposition more suited to a nightclub venue (*gazino*) than to a presidential audience. In keeping with contemporary developments in performance practice, he implicitly rejects the established stereotype associated with *alaturka* performance, equating a dishevelled demeanour and a raucous rendition with a non-Islamic legacy inherited from the Ottoman past. Like other religious singers at the gathering, he advanced a new westernized style of vocal performance, framing Western methods of vocal production with a Western convention of concert dress.⁴⁵ According to him, Atatürk considered this

42 See O'Connell, 'Alaturka Revisited'.

43 Hafız Yaşar does not mention the musical attributes of Algazi's performance. In contrast to other contemporary proponents of the *hafız* style he does not comment on the artist's intonation or pronunciation. He does not even describe the quality of Algazi's voice, for instance in terms of vocal range or vocal production. That Sağman (in *Meşur Hafız Sami Merhum*) makes such observations when writing on Hafız Sami's (1874–1943) style while Hafız Yaşar (writing on Algazi) does not is surprising, given that both advocated a kind of musical performance influenced by the rules of Qur'anic recitation, or *tecvid*. This religious style came to be called *hafız üslûbü*, a vocal style that was also considered classical (*klasik*). See O'Connell, 'Alaturka Revisited' and 'From Empire to Republic'.

44 Cengiz, *Yaşanmış Olaylarla Atatürk ve Müzik*, 76–9.

45 Hafız Yaşar was one of many *hafız*-s to advocate a westernized and classicized style of vocal performance in religious circles. Influenced by recording technology (especially electronic recording) and concert convention (especially in terms of dress), these *hafız*-s developed a refined manner of vocal practice that was suited not only to contemporary

new style of musical presentation more suited to the performance of Turkish music in the new nation.

Hafız Yaşar condemns Algazi for the disrespect he showed during the audience. While he explicitly rebukes Algazi's failure to await Atatürk's authorization before performing a new selection of songs, he also implicitly criticizes his inability to present Turkish classical works in a manner appropriate to the occasion. What is interesting is Hafız Yaşar's recognition of Algazi's fame, the reason he gives for the presidential audience. What is also interesting is that Algazi (and not the other *hafız*-s) was the focus of attention. As in other instances, Hafız Yaşar may in fact have been somewhat jealous of Algazi, given his successful recording career and his (then) favourable standing with Atatürk.⁴⁶ By focusing on the seemingly unacceptable aspects of Algazi's performance, he was able to confirm his own preferred status in Atatürk's eyes (especially with the benefit of hindsight). The fact that he and Algazi were apparently the only artists to be presented with autographed copies of the newly translated *Kur'an-ı Kerim* is especially telling.

In third place

The gift of the *Kur'an-ı Kerim* is in itself interesting. Although Galanté mentions Atatürk's present in different versions of this narrative, he does not find it problematic that the Holy Book was given as a prize to a Jewish Rabbi. Indeed, Seroussi suggests that Algazi may even have been involved in the Turkish translation of the Arabic original.⁴⁷ However, the failure of Hafız Yaşar to mention this gift in his account is equally surprising. As a recognized exponent of Qur'anic recitation (*kari*), he should have been pleased by Atatürk's generous presentation to a non-Muslim. That Hafız Yaşar was presented with his autographed copy in January of that year is noteworthy,⁴⁸ since he was the first *hafız* to recite the Turkish *Kur'an* in the presence of Atatürk.⁴⁹ By omitting the award from his memoirs, he may have wanted to reinforce the secondary status of Algazi's audience and to reassert the primary position of his own achievement in Atatürk's eyes.

From the perspective of the giver also, the presentation of the *Kur'an-ı Kerim* is significant. That Atatürk, as the architect of a secular state, should have chosen to make such an award on

technological developments but also to current ideological imperatives. In this respect these religious artists wished to distinguish themselves from a popular style (*piyasa tarzı*) characteristic of nightclub performers and non-Muslim vocalists. Other practitioners of this classicized style included Hafız Sami (1874–1943) and Hafız Kemal (1882–1939). The renowned vocalist Bekir Sıdkı Sezgin (1936–96) was a recent exponent of this style. See Danielson, *The Voice of Egypt*, for a comparable development in Egypt.

46 Hafız Yaşar was also a prolific recording artist. He is featured in many contemporary record catalogues such as Orfeon, Odeon, and Columbia (both at home and abroad). In his impressive publication on early recordings in Turkey Ünlü states that Hafız Yaşar was one of the most recorded artists during the period (*Git Zaman Gel Zaman*, 187). He calculates that he recorded over two hundred works for Columbia alone. Hafız Yaşar recorded a number of classical works on the orders of Atatürk. These were archived in the (then) İstanbul Konservatuvarı.

47 Seroussi, *Mizimrat Qedem*, 19.

48 Cengiz, *Yaşanmış Olaylarla Atatürk ve Müzik*, 113.

49 Kocaturk, *Atatürk ve Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi Kronolojisi, 1918–1938*, 22 January 1932.

that particular occasion is remarkable.⁵⁰ True, he had commissioned the new translation of the Holy Book as an integral part of religious reforms, which involved the closure of the Sufi lodges and the invention of a national style of religious observance. Here Turkish rather than Arabic was accorded a privileged position. To validate his contention of a new linguistic order, Atatürk looked to history, where a contemporary theory of cultural origins (the Sun Language Theory) placed the Turks at the hearth of cultural evolution. This may account for his impromptu lesson on Arab history during Algazi's audience. For Atatürk the Arabs, like the Jews, occupied a secondary position in this new understanding of human development, on the basis that the Turks still spoke the original language and laid claim to the first civilization.

We do not learn of Algazi's reaction to the gift of the Turkish *Kur'an-ı Kerim*. As an enlightened exponent of religious tolerance, he would probably have appreciated this honour. However, he may also have been concerned about the prospect of a comparable turkification of the Hebrew language in ritual contexts and the adaptation of the Hebrew script in secular publications. His worries were not misplaced. As a founding member (in 1930) of the newspaper *La Voz de Oriente*, he represented favourably the reformist goals of Atatürk's vision. Aimed at resident Jews, the newspaper was published in Judeo-Spanish using a cursive form of Hebrew script (*rashi*). Like Galanté, Algazi did not adopt the Latin alphabet – this despite the language reform of 1928, when the Arabic script was abandoned in the representation of modern Turkish. Like Galanté too, he found that his failure to comply with the recent legislation was frowned upon. Coincidentally *La Voz de Oriente* appeared in Latin script soon after his audience with Atatürk.

What we do learn from these accounts is that there were winners and losers. Emerging in first place, Atatürk is represented positively in both accounts: by Galanté as an enlightened reformist and by Hafız Yaşar as a knowledgeable intellectual. That Atatürk sought at the time to discriminate against *alaturka* in favour of *alafranga* is not mentioned in any of the accounts. Hafız Yaşar comes out, so to speak, in second place, having attempted to reclaim the status of *alaturka* in Atatürk's eyes by advocating a reformed style of Turkish music, a westernized version of a religious style that was freed from the corrupting influences of non-Turkish and non-Muslim practitioners. Here, his position as the first reciter of the Turkish *Kur'an-ı Kerim* is significant. In third place Algazi tried to make the most of a difficult situation. Represented as non-national (in his knowledge of language) and as anti-modernist (in his performance of *alaturka*), he attempted with limited success to sustain his established credentials as a nationalist and a reformer.

50 Since the War of Independence (1918–23) Atatürk had promoted secularism as a key policy in his revolutionary reforms. Inserted into article 2 of the constitution (in 1937), secularism formed one of six ideologies that constituted what came to be called *Kemalizm*. Secularism embraced many cultural domains, including government, religion, law, and education. It also informed more obliquely reforms in the areas of dress, address, gender, language, and, of course, music. As Shaw notes in *History of the Ottoman Empire*, the president hoped to replace religion with nationalism as the spiritual norm in the new Republic, though this need not have entailed a complete abandonment of Islam, since '[t]he secularist program never opposed religion as such' (vol. 2, p. 387).

A musical exodus

The gift of the *Kur'an-ı Kerim* might be viewed as a double-edged sword – at once a symbol of both acceptance and alienation. Where Galanté indicates that the reward reflects Algazi's success, Hafız Yaşar omits any reference to the prize, no doubt for the same reason. For him, the offering would have reflected Atatürk's recognition of Algazi's contribution to literature and to music. However, the *Kur'an-ı Kerim* also represents a compromise on the part of Atatürk, a man who had only recently envisaged a secular state but who now accepted public displays of religious observance, albeit in Turkish. Here religion mediated the divide between language and history. While the Turkish language could not be purified completely of Arabic influence, Turkish history could successfully accommodate an Arabic moment in its national evolution. By translating the *Kur'an-ı Kerim* into Turkish, Atatürk was able to adapt a venerated practice inherited from the Ottoman past to suit the religious requirements of the Republican present.⁵¹

Where religion set a precedent, music had to follow. While *alaturka* represented the cultural capital of an Islamic tradition, *alafiranga* represented the aesthetic norms of a secular modernity. In this context Algazi was severely limited. As an exponent of a decadent *alaturka* he was marginalized by an ascendant *alafiranga*. In a similar fashion he was overlooked by a recognized member of the Muslim majority (Hafız Yaşar), despite being himself a prominent representative of the Jewish minority. Although religion is not explicitly highlighted in the historical account, Algazi's incomplete knowledge of language and his diminished status in history seems to confirm his subservient standing in a national order ostensibly controlled by Muslims. As Seroussi argues, 'Algazi tried to effect an impossible compromise' by attempting to balance a diverse range of cultural interests from a subaltern position both musically and linguistically.⁵² It is noteworthy that Algazi left Turkey soon after his audience with Atatürk.

Even Algazi's flight from Turkey in 1933 holds some mystery. Two explanations are posited by Seroussi and Shaw.⁵³ The first is that Algazi left Turkey for political reasons. Although a staunch supporter of Kemalist reforms, Algazi, unlike Galanté, was also an active exponent of Zionism, an ideological position at variance with the nationalist interests of the Turkish Republic. In the context of the growth of anti-Semitism that occurred after a number of racist incidents, Algazi's espousal of Zionism was especially problematic. As Rozen demonstrates, these incidents included the Gunsberg trial (1923–8), the Spanish letter (1926), and the Niego funeral (1927), all of which involved claims of Jewish subversion.⁵⁴ The problem was not confined to the domain of Muslim–Jewish relations alone. Among Jews, Algazi (like Galanté) incurred the wrath of traditionalists who were opposed to his support for educational reform and his fight against institutional corruption. Simply put, Algazi had exhausted his political backing among Muslims and Jews alike.

51 Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, vol. 2, pp. 301–4.

52 Seroussi, *Mizimrat Qedem*, 26.

53 Seroussi, *Mizimrat Qedem*, 20–21; Shaw, *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire*, 249–50.

54 Rozen, 'Between the Two World Wars'.

The second is that Algazi left Turkey for professional reasons. Seroussi and Shaw both contend that Algazi was disillusioned because he was not appointed to the board of a radio commission. For example, Seroussi (drawing on the testimony of Moshe Vital) incorrectly states that ‘Mustafa Kemal Pasha [...] refused to grant him a seat on the Board of Radio Ankara’.⁵⁵ Although Radio Ankara (Ankara Radyosu) had not as yet been founded, Algazi’s exclusion (had he stayed in Turkey) would have been predictable. As an exponent of *alaturka* he would not have been considered for such a position, given the official preference for *alafranga* at the time. That Atatürk had discriminated against him on religious grounds for this position is also quite unlikely, since the president employed other Jewish professionals in his circle.⁵⁶ What is evident, though, is the absence of non-Muslim vocalists in the programme schedules of Istanbul Radio (İstanbul Radyosu), especially in the years preceding the ban on *alaturka* in radio broadcasts (1934).

Subject positions

The sanction against *alaturka* represented a wider trend whereby non-Muslim exponents of the tradition were often excluded from institutions and the media. Where sound recordings are concerned, it is remarkable that Jewish vocalists are rarely represented in record catalogues after 1932, despite the popularity of such notable artists as Haim Efendi (1853–1938) and Mısırlı İbrahim Efendi (1881–1933) in previous decades.⁵⁷ Although found in catalogues outside Turkey, Algazi too is notable for his exclusion from the Turkish lists. This may represent a contemporary preference in Turkey for the Islamic style of vocal performance (*hafız üslûbû*) advocated by Hafız Yaşar. The record industry also set a precedent concerning institutional employment. Following relevant legislation in 1927 *alaturka* musicians demonstrated against the employment of non-Turkish musicians in Turkish institutions (most notably in the Istanbul Conservatory). As I show elsewhere, this protest was sponsored by Columbia Records and resulted in *de facto* discrimination against non-Muslim Turks.⁵⁸

Where *alaturka* failed, *alafranga* prospered. Despite further legislation in 1932 that enabled Turks to monopolize certain professions (including music and dance), non-Turkish musicians were actively recruited to promote the development of Western art music in the Turkish Republic. Under the aegis of Paul Hindemith (1895–1963) Jewish musicians fleeing Nazi oppression were invited to teach in the new academies of Western music, especially in Ankara.⁵⁹ Their employment provoked resentment among resident *alafranga* artists, who were either displaced or demoted. It also incited anger among *alaturka* musicians, who felt sidelined in the new drive towards musical westernization. Seeing the preferential status

55 Seroussi, *Mizimrat Qedem*, 21.

56 Seroussi, *Mizimrat Qedem*, 21.

57 The exclusion of Jewish vocalists from Turkish record catalogues might be circumstantial. See O’Connell, ‘Modal Trails, Model Trials’, for a detailed investigation of this issue, especially with respect to Haim Efendi or Haim Behar Menahim (1853–1938) and Mısırlı İbrahim Efendi or Avram Levi (1881–1933).

58 O’Connell, ‘Fine Art, Fine Music’.

59 See O’Connell, ‘Modal Trails, Model Trials’.

accorded to Jewish musicians in *alafranga* circles, they sought to exclude all Jews from employment in the Istanbul Conservatory, preventing them from engaging in the diminished archival and research remits of that institution. Significantly, no Jewish vocalist is represented in the artistic recordings commissioned by Atatürk and deposited in the music archive there.

The formation of a music commission (Büyük Musiki Komisyonu) highlighted these inequities. Following the exclusion of *alaturka* from radio broadcasts (November 1934), the new body sought 'to oversee the organization and control of musical manners in radio broadcasts'. Composed of members generally antagonistic towards the *alaturka* perspective, the commission was not unified in its aims. Its most conservative figures, the composer Ulvi C. Erkin (1906–78) and the musicologist Cevat M. Altar (1902–95), wished to exclude all Turkish music from the airwaves. Its most nationalistic, the composer Adnan Saygun (1907–91) and the musicologist Mahmud R. Gazimihal (1888–1961), wanted to broadcast Turkish folk music in both vernacular performances and polyphonic arrangements. Only Halil B. Yönetken (1901–68) seemed to offer some hope for the beleaguered exponents of *alaturka* by advocating the transmission of all Turkish styles that used Western techniques. In this context it is extremely improbable that Algazi was ever considered for membership of this commission in the way that Seroussi and Shaw suggest.

The fragmentation of opinion among *alafranga* supporters was also evident in the *alaturka* camp. Like Yönetken, some *alaturka* artists wished to transform their musical tradition, employing the didactic methods and the performance practices of the Western tradition. These included the vocalist Münir N. Selçuk (1899–1981) and the instrumentalist Refik Fersan (1893–1965). Some, like Şeref M. Targan (1892–1967), were even 'bi-musical' in the sense proposed by Mantle Hood.⁶⁰ Others followed in the footsteps of the nationalist camp by advancing the polyphonic arrangement of *alaturka* since, according to the logic of contemporary historiography, *alaturka* could also be viewed as Turkish in origin. H. Sadeddin Arel (1880–1955) was the principal proponent of this view. Even among conservatives the issue of westernization was acknowledged, especially in the realms of music theory and transcription. Here the musicologist Rauf Yekta (1871–1935) not only changed his mind about musical modernization but also altered his attitude towards musical acculturation. Interestingly, his public recognition of a Jewish dimension to *alaturka* occurred at this time.⁶¹

60 See Hood, 'The Challenge of "Bi-Musicality"'.
 61 O'Connell, 'Modal Trails, Model Trials', examines Rauf Yekta Bey's disparaging characterization of Hanende Karakaş in 1900. Rauf Yekta Bey implies that the Jewish vocalist cannot do justice to the Turkish art tradition through his lack of musical erudition and linguistic knowledge. However, by 1933 (having participated in the Cairo Conference the previous year) he had published a complimentary article on Jewish music in Istanbul for the journal *Nota* (reproduced in Özalp, *Türk Musikisi Tarihi*, vol. 2, pp. 207–8). Like other Muslim exponents of *alaturka*, he vacillated between an open hostility towards, and a more private respect for, the Jewish contribution to *alaturka*. Despite this, it is noteworthy that the Jewish musician David Behar attended a Mevlevi *tekke* and the Muslim musician Kani Karaca (1930–2004) a Jewish synagogue, both thus reinforcing an ancient tradition of religious tolerance through music. See Aksoy, *İzak Algazi*. See also Aksoy's article 'A Great Voice of Ottoman Turkish and Jewish Music', posted on the Turkish Music Portal, concerning David Behar's reminiscences of Algazi.

The location of music

These subject positions reflect a 'third space' that emerged within (but was not tied to) the polarized discourse surrounding the correct constitution of a national style. Much as it might seem to involve basic distinctions between East and West and between past and present, the polemical exchange that characterized the *alaturka* versus *alafiranga* debate was anything but simple. It involved agents who actively sought to promote their views for personal reasons by turning a contemporary vocabulary of aesthetic preference to their advantage. Further, their opinions were subject to change, being dependent on the vagaries of personal prejudice and political pressure. What is missing here is a Jewish voice. Excluded from active participation in the public debate, it is a voice that is muted. In the writing of Galanté it speaks in a conciliatory tone, unwilling to ruffle the feathers of national intolerance. In the writing of Hafız Yaşar it is silenced by other voices that speak on its behalf. In both instances the Jewish right to speech is compromised.

Music is a better medium than language for exploring the position of a Jewish minority in Turkey. As a 'supplementary discourse' *alaturka* had in the past provided an expressive space for articulating the collegial nature of Jewish and Muslim relations. As a 'supplementary discourse' too, *alafiranga* had a similar function in the present. However, each musical style had distinctive exponents. Where the Sephardim had once excelled in the realm of *alaturka*, the Ashkenazim now shone in the domain of *alafiranga*. Although some musicians (like Algazi) attempted to cross the aesthetic divide, musical taste seemed to confirm the fragmented nature of Jewish culture. Here non-Jews represented Jewish music as impure, since it was national neither in spirit nor in essence. It is ironic, therefore, that the purification of *alaturka* using *alafiranga* was itself a hybrid solution to the development of a national style. However, this solution was proposed by a Muslim majority eager to ascribe religious purity to a new style of vocal performance (*hafız üslûbü*).

This musical performance therefore provides an ideal locus for interrogating the parameters of religious prejudice in the early Republican period. Although a single event, Algazi's audience with Atatürk elicits plural responses: a 'ground plan' on the part of Galanté to promote interreligious relations and an 'interpretative move' on the part of Hafız Yaşar to foster religious difference. It also highlights the ambiguous attitude towards minorities in the Turkish Republic, where Jews in particular were considered at once both respected citizens and potential traitors. In this respect the concept of hybridity is useful, as it helps not only to clarify the ambivalent status of Jews in the Turkish Republic but also to illuminate the power of representation underpinning the politics of impurity. Here the subaltern is left silent in the aporia that exists within the dialectic of difference, since verbal representations of a minority culture are determined by a majority interest.

In response to the rhetorical question of the postcolonial theorist Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak 'Can the Subaltern Speak?',⁶² I would answer 'yes'. The voice of the subaltern can still be heard, but, in the case of Algazi, through music rather than through language. Ambivalent though verbal representations of his ability might be, musical presentations of his artistry are

62 Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?'

unambiguous. Since I began my research a number of important sound recordings featuring Algazi have been circulated. While Algazi had already recovered his voice outside Turkey, it was only recently made known to a Turkish audience through the efforts of the record label Kalan.⁶³ In these recordings the diversity of Algazi's vocal repertoire is presented, and the stylistic purity of his musical presentations is indisputable. Multilingual and multimusical, Algazi implicitly contests the disparaging attitude towards multiculturalism in the Turkish Republic. Performing to an international audience in a 'third space' that is now global, Algazi has the final say in song.

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