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Editors

Music, Words, and Nationalism

National Anthems and Songs in the Modern Era

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(Re)Sounding Nations: Anthems and the Politics of Performing and Listening in Wartime Europe (1936–1945)

Iván Iglesias

In wartime, music is unavoidable in the construction and maintenance of nationhood, with anthems as its most ubiquitous expression.¹ However, sound and listening have not been major concerns of studies on patriotic songs. Even the most exhaustive and brilliant analyses of anthems are exclusively focused on lyrics. If Brian Murdoch sees music as a mere vehicle for poetry (Murdoch 1990), F. Gunther Eyck classifies national songs

¹This chapter was written within the framework of the research project ‘Música popular y cultura urbana en el franquismo (1936–1975): sonidos cotidianos, dinámicas locales, procesos transnacionales’ (PID2021-128307OB-I00), financed by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation.

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only according to their lyrics (Eyck 1995). Although the most common theme of an anthem's lyrics is courage or bravery (Pavković and Kelen 2016, 28), no words are necessary to hear heroism after centuries of fanfares and marches that combined timpani and brass instruments, of rising fifths, sixths, and eights, of dialectical forms that end in triumphant major modes.² Christopher Kelen recognizes that anthems' texts do not differ much from nation to nation, which he calls the paradox of the "uniformity of differences" (Kelen 2014). Probably, the most memorable component of anthems is their music, not their lyrics. If anthems distinguish nations abroad, it is largely through its sound. Few would recognize the lyrics of the Russian or the German anthems in Southern Europe, but many could identify the tunes. In fact, history shows us that it is easier to change the text than the music to an anthem. Moreover, lyrics are sound, too: we know that how words are sung is crucial to their meaning.

This chapter seeks to integrate anthems and its effects into the cultural history of Europe during the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) and the Second World War (1939–1945). It is therefore an attempt to see the 1936–1945 period from a transnational perspective, avoiding Spanish exceptionalism. As Enzo Traverso has claimed, the armed conflicts that devastated Europe from 1914 to 1945 had both national and transnational components, which cannot be understood independently. This is radicalized from 1936, with the war in Spain, to continue later in a large part of the continent, perhaps more noticeably in France, Italy, Greece, or the Balkans (Traverso 2016, 53–58). Furthermore, as a study of war as an acoustic environment, a "sonic warscape", this is also a contribution to sound studies and aural history. In that sense, its aim is to examine anthems not only as music, but in relation to the control of sound and listening. I will focus on three different, but interconnected, domains: composition, performance, and violence. Limiting the study to Europe allows me to go transnational, but staying aware of Western notions of sound and listening without positioning them as universal through a seemingly neutral ontology (Sykes 2018).

²As Scott Burnham (1995) has analyzed, a dialectic narrative, underpinned by Ludwig van Beethoven's heroic music, its influence, and its diverse appropriations since the early nineteenth century, has at the same time adapted and dictated the ways of listening in Western modernity. It is not by coincidence that the Finale of Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* has been elected as the anthem of the European Union.

COMPOSING THE NATION: OLD AND NEW ANTHEMS FOR WARTIME

Most national anthems of Europe played and sung during the 1936–1945 period predated this era. In fact, many of these songs had actually been used in the nation-building process of diverse countries. However, they acquired new meanings in wartime. “La Marseillaise”, a battle song originally titled *Chant de guerre pour l’armée du Rhin* and written in 1792, was declared national song by the French Republic in 1795, disdained by the rulers during the Empire, and adopted as the national anthem of France in 1879 (Vovelle 1998). From 1936, as a revolutionary march against tyranny that calls for fighting against foreign invaders, it was sung in every country where Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy got involved, such as Spain, France, Italy, Greece, and Russia. In Spain, it was frequently programmed in official acts of the Republican side, both at the front and in the rear-guard, to represent the fascist attack against the legitimate government. When the Vichy regime unofficially replaced “La Marseillaise” with “Maréchal, nous voilà”, based on the glorification of Philippe Pétain as an experienced soldier, the former gained in patriotic emotion.³ The well-known scene of the battle of anthems in Michael Curtiz’s film *Casablanca* (1942), where the fugitive Victor Laszlo performs “La Marseillaise” with the Rick’s Cafe band against the group of Nazi officers singing “Die Wacht am Rhein” with piano accompaniment, underpinned the antifascist connotations of the French national anthem during World War II.

The words of another French song, “The Internationale”, were written in 1871 by the Communard Eugène Pottier to be sung to the tune of “La Marseillaise” after the fall of the Paris Commune that year. In 1888, the Belgian woodcarver and composer Pierre De Geyster added different music for a workers’ choir from Lille, *La Lyre des Travailleurs*, and this version became the official Socialist anthem in the International Congress of Copenhagen in 1910 (Cull et al. 2003, 181). From 1922 to 1944, and somewhat paradoxically for its universalist ideal, “The Internationale” served as the official anthem of the Soviet Union, which entailed some particularities in its uses across Europe. It was often sung and played by Republican soldiers at the front, as well as by citizens and orchestras in

³The Pétain regime preferred “Maréchal, nous voilà” but never replaced officially “La Marseillaise”, because it was a too powerful symbol in France, accepted as its own even by the far right during the Great War (Sweeney 2001, 33).

Spanish loyalist cities such as Madrid, Barcelona, and Valencia, during the war in Spain. However, the situation was quite different in the United Kingdom. From 1939 to 1941, the BBC broadcast the national anthems of the countries invaded by Nazi Germany. When Hitler attacked the USSR in June 1941, however, a direct order of Prime Minister Winston Churchill, a fierce anti-communist, clearly stated that “the Internationale is *on no account* to be played by the BBC” (Miner 2003, 205–206). Churchill revoked the prohibition in 1942, the year when Stalin personally commissioned a new and strongly nationalistic anthem in response to the ultrapatriotic atmosphere of wartime, performed in public for the first time on Soviet radio on New Year’s Eve, 1943, and officially adopted on March 15, 1944 (Brooke 2007). Stalin contributed to the song when it was already finished, suggesting some changes in the chorus and a line about the defeat of the fascist invaders (Montefiore 2003, 469) strategically situated at the rising crescendo passage of the third verse.

Of course, as in the Soviet case, the war fostered new music and reappropriations of old songs in many countries, but their nature and connotations varied, even in states directly involved in the conflict. New marches and songs composed in Nazi Germany during World War II had a more explicitly militaristic sound than in the Weimar Republic (Frey 2020). The Hitler regime maintained the previous national anthem, the “Deutschlandlied”, but also made official the march “Die Fahne Hoch” (Raise de Flag) with the lyrics added by the “Brownshirt” Horst Wessel, turned into a Nazi martyr by Joseph Goebbels. Furthermore, public performances of the national anthem added a martial character to Joseph Haydn’s original tune through percussion and rhythmic emphasis.⁴ In this form, “often played as a bombastic *marche militaire*”, it was also assumed as the Austrian national anthem when the country became part of the Third Reich in 1938 (Barker 2009). With the new delivery, the first stanza, “Deutschland, Deutschland über alles”, criticized by the foreign press and some German leftists during the Weimar period, acquired “ever-stronger imperialistic and racist overtones” between 1939 and 1945 (Hermand 2002, 260). The “Lied der Deutschen”, as it was better known during World War II, often preceded by the Nazi anthem “Horst Wessel Lied”, was part of every important event or radio program of the Third Reich. In contrast to this growing emphasis on martial and patriotic music in Russia

⁴A decree signed by Hitler himself established precise metronome speeds for the “Deutschlandlied” and the “Horst Wessel Lied” in 1939 (Levi 1994, 35).

and Germany, the initial jingoism of BBC musical broadcasts in the United Kingdom yielded ground to songs of “longing, escapism, and sentimentality” after the winter of 1940 (Baade 2012, 58). In the same way, the early attempt of the Fascist Party in Italy to encourage mobilization and patriotism through new warlike national music, allocated to a prime-time radio program called *Canzoni del tempo di guerra*, gradually lost the listeners’ interest and ran out of steam in 1942, giving way to romantic and nostalgic songs (Lanotte 2016, 152–165).

The Spanish Civil War was a good example of the importance of tradition in the social relevance of national anthems. Although many were composed during the strife or to celebrate the new Franco regime, most of the socio-logically relevant songs had already been composed before 1936 (Ossa 2011; Giner and Porcile 2015). In the tense political climate of the Second Republic, from 1931, music was used to convey diverse narratives, to legitimize ideologies, and to mobilize popular support. With the coup d’état, anthems and songs acquired new affects and revealed the complex conglomerate of political cultures involved in the conflict. On the Republican side frequently sounded the “Himno de Riego”, as the national anthem of the Second Republic, but also transnational symbols of the left such as “La Marseillaise” and “The Internationale”. The song “La joven guardia”, a translation of the French “Le chant des jeunes gardes”, served as the official song for the Juventudes Socialistas Unificadas (Unified Socialist Youth), and the anarchists sung “A las barricadas”, a translation of the Polish revolutionary song “Warszawianka” (Whirlwinds of Danger) and a slightly altered version of “Hijos del pueblo” (Sons of the People). Moreover, because nationalism was a key part of wartime ideology and mobilization (Núñez Seixas 2006), these pieces were combined with the anthems of the substate nationalisms of Catalonia (“Els Segadors”), the Basque Country (“Gernikako Arbola”), and Galicia (“Os pinos”).

The situation was no less complex in the territories where the coup was successful, but the establishment of the official songs and anthems was belated and at the same time more authoritative. The institution of the rebels’ new musical symbols was a process of several months. After the success of the coup in Seville, for example, General Queipo de Llano’s first radio broadcast still ended with the Republican anthem (Balfour 2002, 283). With the passage of time, however, because one of the main aims of the self-proclaimed “Nationalist” side was to destroy Republican and “separatist” symbols, the “Himno de Riego” and the national anthems of Catalonia, the Basque Country, and Galicia were banned. At the

beginning of the war, the best-known pieces by the rebels were the “Canción del legionario” (Song of the Legionnaire) and the Carlist march “Oriamendi”. Beginning in November 1936, when the Axis powers officially recognized the Franco government, musical ensembles also started to play the national anthems of the “friendly nations”, Germany, Italy, and Portugal, the Nazi “Horst Wessel Lied”, and the fascist “Giovinezza”.

The anthems that would become more representative of the “Nationalist” side were not widely known before the war (Díaz Viana 1985). The tune of the Falangist song “Cara al sol” (Facing the Sun) had been composed by Juan Tellería before the leader of the fascist political organization, José Antonio Primo de Rivera, and some poets of his reliable circle, namely Agustín de Foxá, Dionisio Ridruejo, Pedro Mourlane Michelena, Jacinto Miquelarena, and Rafael Sánchez Mazas, added the lyrics in December 1935.⁵ Although it was first sung at a rally held in Madrid’s Cine Europa on February 2, 1936, the “Cara al sol” remained, just as Falange itself, on the sidelines of the public sphere until the military uprising. Nevertheless, the violence and the political radicalization created by the conflict served as the perfect atmosphere for the growing visibility of fascist proclamations and symbols. The dissemination of the “Cara al sol” was the product of one of the more meticulous campaigns of musical propaganda of the Spanish Civil War. Its lyrics were published in the press at the end of July 1936, Falange local leaders hastened to print diverse versions of the music score, and a recording of the anthem could be purchased in Valladolid at the beginning of August (Álvarez 2021, 188–189). From then on, the radio and the increasing presence of the Falange in public events made the rest. It took time to popularize the tune, but in November it was already considered the most distinctive song of the rebel side (Suárez-Pajares 2016).

In contrast, the piece that would become the national anthem of Spain until today, the “Royal March” or “Grenadier March”, went practically unnoticed during the first months of the war. This piece, a march without lyrics used in the events linked to the royal family and to some religious events from the eighteenth century, had gained public prominence during the reign of Isabel II (1833–1868), the *Sexenio Democrático* (1868–1874), and the Restoration (1874–1931) as a traditionalist emblem and official march (Lolo 2000; Nagore Ferrer 2011). With the advent of the Second Republic in 1931, the “Himno de Riego”, a symbol during the *Trienio*

⁵ About the circumstances of composition of *Cara al sol*, see Suárez-Pajares (2016).

Liberal (1820–1823), unofficially replaced the “Grenadier March” in state events. On February 28, 1937, the Head of the State established the “Royal March” as the only Spanish national anthem and “Cara al sol”, “Canción del legionario”, and “Oriamendi” as “national songs”, which caused a deep discontent among Falangists (Rodríguez Jiménez 2000, 270–271; Box 2010, 302–306; Box 2014).

To legitimize their election of the “Royal March”, the rebels carried out a careful invention of tradition. In the decree of February, they exclusively mentioned it as the “Marcha granadera”, avoiding its royal connotations, and presented it as the piece that had been the national anthem until the proclamation of the Second Republic in 1931, which simplified the changing identity of that Spanish national symbol in the last century.⁶ Furthermore, although some authors wrote lyrics for the anthem, and Franco himself approved the text created by the traditionalist poet José María Pemán in 1928 with some modifications to include symbols of the Falange, the tune was regularly performed without lyrics during and after the civil war. This arose in part from technical difficulties because the “Marcha granadera”, as a military march and in contrast to the aforementioned national anthems, emphasizes every beat in the measure, which complicates the adaption of lyrics in a strongly polysyllabic language like Spanish.

Eventually, the decision not to fit a new text served to link the rebel cause to the pre-Republican past, as well as to avoid contestation and the potential refusal to sing. Adopting a music-only anthem has been a strategy followed by countries with irreconcilable political cultures, several official languages, or even ethnic conflicts such as the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, or Kosovo. It has also been the approach of the European Community to choose an anthem beyond its unequivocal diversity.⁷ Crucially, the relative triviality of lyrics in the “Royal March” avoided its unequivocal identification with a concrete ideology, which contributed to the survival of the tune after World War II as a sonic symbol not of fascism, but of anti-Communism. In contrast, “Cara al sol” progressively vanished from official events with the gradual

⁶About the complex history of the Spanish national anthem, see Nagore Ferrer (2011).

⁷The European Community adopted a part of the “Finale” of Beethoven’s *Ninth Symphony* in the arrangement made by the then chief conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, in 1973 (Buch 2003, 239–242). Actually, the arrangement is almost identical to the second and third instrumental variations of the “Joy Theme”, bars 140–191.

“de-fascistization” of the regime beginning in 1943, when the Falange power diminished in favor of the military and the Catholic church, due both to internal tensions and to the changes in the international order. In the end, the tradition of the “Marcha granadera” as a tune without lyrics and the little success of Pemán’s poem facilitated Spaniards assuming in democracy, not without controversy and renaming it again as “Royal March”, a national anthem officially adopted for the first time by the elites of a dictatorship.

PERFORMING THE NATION: RITUALS AND NARRATIVES

Benedict Anderson famously stated that nation as an imagined community is grounded not only in common ethnicity, tradition, language, or territory, but also in an “experience of simultaneity”, particularly materialized during the singing of anthems. For him, the ritual component of national songs enables the group to share the same temporality: “at precisely such moments, people wholly unknown to each other utter the same verses to the same melody”. This “unisonance”, as he called it, represents “the echoed physical realization of the imagined community” (Anderson 2006, 145). This idea is critical to understand the centrality of anthems and their sound in national rituals, with some complementary nuances. First, Anderson placed too much emphasis on singing, but his appreciation can be applied to listening in general: on the one hand, most renditions of anthems are instrumental; on the other, singing is also a particular way of hearing (Schulze 2018, 231). Second, it is time and rhythm, rather than melody, that afford synchronization. Temporal and rhythmical coordination or *entrainment* “is a ubiquitous phenomenon related to music’s social functions of promoting group bonding and cohesion” (Clayton et al. 2020, 136). Third, I believe that “unisonance” does not represent selflessness and abnegation, as Anderson argued, but presence and involvement. In any case, it is difficult to disagree with Anderson’s final claim: “nothing connects us all but imagined sound” (Anderson 2006, 145).

Certainly, anthems are an inherent part of official events as ways of imagining the nation, uniting the singers, players, or listeners, creating identification, and differentiating people from similar or antithetical groups. In fact, this political and ritual character is what distinguishes them as a music genre (Pavković and Kelen 2016, 2). Singing or listening to them requires a proper and solemn behavior. What people know is not only melody and lyrics, but also attitudes, gestures, and emotions

associated with that music. The mere adoption of a song as a national anthem implies differences in its uses and in the listening attitudes compared with other songs. That the Spanish “Grenadier march” had to be listened in silence, as the press spread in 1937 and a Francoist complementary order stated in 1938,⁸ contributed to its solemnity and respect. In contrast, “Cara al sol” and “Oriamendi” were sung in more popular, festive, and spontaneous milieus during the Spanish Civil War (Álvarez 2021, 204). After the outbreak of hostilities between Germany and Poland, in August 1939, the Nazi regime arranged for the two official anthems, “Horst Wessel Lied” and “Deutschlandlied”, to end every *Sondermeldungen* or special radio announcement, as well as every broadcasting day (Hermand 2002, 260).

This power of anthems to perform the nation led to their omnipresence in wartime. To gain in “solidarity, loyalty, and motivation”, the three desired outcomes for anthems during armed conflicts (Pavković and Kelen 2016, 7), their repetition is decisive to bind people together and to mobilize for a political cause. George Orwell famously portrayed Barcelona at war as a soundful city where “the loudspeakers were bellowing revolutionary songs all day and far into the night” (Orwell 1938, 5). In a certain way, the battle of anthems in Spanish loyalist cities reproduced the struggle of various collectives to gain weight in the new political situation that began in July 1936 (Cortès and Esteve 2012, 272–273). The anarchist, socialist, and communist unions situated at the forefront during this radical first phase of the war, many of which had been secondary in Spanish politics until then, had to disseminate their anthems to show the weight of their respective political cultures in the city. The CNT-FAI also inserted the music (without the lyrics) of at least one of the two anthems that represented anarchism in Spain, “A las barricadas” and “Hijos del pueblo”, into its propaganda films (López 2021, 330). On the other hand, official events had to include the anthems of all these collectives as part of the legitimate side and to assert unity against the enemy, which led to odd situations. The composer Pablo Sorozábal, who conducted the Banda Municipal de Madrid during the civil war, complained in his memoirs about the number of anthems that the ensemble had to play at every concert, which compelled him to considerably reduce the number of works. Furthermore, he

⁸ Archivo Histórico Provincial de Valladolid, Gobierno Civil, Relaciones Interministeriales, Coordinación Provincial, box 100/79.

describes in his memories the “incomprehensible” behavior of people during the performance of the anthems:

When we played “The Internationale”, socialists and communists stood up and saluted very seriously with clenched fists. Most members of the FAI and the CNT were still sitting and looking scornful. On the contrary, when we performed “A las barricadas”, all the anarchists and *cenetistas* stood up, raised their arms above their heads, joined their two hands interlocking them with their fingers and listened with true devotion, while the socialists and communists disdainfully sat down. At the end, when we played the National Anthem, the “Himno de Riego”, only a few Republicans reacted. During my expedition to Catalonia, I had to add “Els Segadors” and [the sardana] “La Santa Espina” to all these anthems.⁹ (Sorozábal 2019 [1986], 148–149)

The rebels also inserted anthems as mandatory in commemorations, festivals, political rallies, street parades, masses, bullfighting, sport competitions, and music shows, performed by an ensemble or played from a device, to remind the audience of the exceptional situation and foster patriotism. The audience had to listen to the “Marcha granadera” on their feet, with an arm frontally raised and extended in the fascist salute, and in complete silence (Moreno Luzón and Núñez Seixas 2017, 263). In some of these events, particularly in theaters, the anthem was accompanied by projections of Franco’s portraits (Zenobi 2011, 141). It was also structurally and strategically included in radio schedules.

As Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi notes, the fascist anthem “Giovinezza”, composed by Giuseppe Blanc in 1909 and sung by the Arditi during the Great War, was placed within a narrative of fascism as a symbol of youth, especially during the war. To incarnate Italian virility and a young spirit, Mussolini publicized his sporting activities and forbade journalists from mentioning his birthday and illnesses (Falasca-Zamponi 1997, 72–73).

⁹ Cuando tocaban “La Internacional”, los socialistas y los comunistas se ponían en pie y saludaban muy serios con el puño cerrado. La mayoría de los de la FAI y la CNT seguían sentados y con cara de desprecio. Por el contrario, al interpretar “A las barricadas”, todos los anarquistas y cenetistas se levantaban, elevaban los brazos sobre sus cabezas, juntaban sus dos manos enlazándolas con los dedos y oían con verdadera devoción mientras los socialistas y comunistas se sentaban desdenosamente. Al final, cuando tocábamos el Himno Nacional, el Himno de Riego, eran unos cuantos republicanos solamente los que reaccionaban. Durante mi excursión a Cataluña, a todos estos himnos tuve que sumar “Els Segadors” y “La Santa Espina”.

For its part, the Third Reich could easily appropriate the official conservative symbols of the Weimar era, which facilitated people's identification. However, within a process of festivalization of everyday life, preexisting anthems were carefully placed in new and radically masculine narratives about the nation. Nazi events followed a careful program that alternated between songs, instrumental music, and spoken texts. They were commemorative rituals that provided a means of "performing group participation in the nation's rebirth by means of organized sound" (Birdsall 2012, 42).

From 1936, the dissemination of new technologies reduced the distance between the battlefield and home. One of the main novelties of the 1930s conflicts was the regularization of broadcasting. According to Simon Potter, global radio made the 1936–1939 conflict in Spain the first time in history in which listeners in other countries were "able to have direct contact with the very nerve centers of the rival parties of a serious civil war". Music broadcast by Spanish stations offered a means to identify sonically the different sides, in a way that required no words (Potter 2020, 108–109). Mediated sound also changed the ways of experiencing the war because listeners could imagine themselves hearing the same sounds as other people. As David Morley argues, national broadcasting can "create a sense of unity—and of corresponding boundaries around the nation; it can link the peripheral to the center; turn previously exclusive social events into mass experiences; and, above all, it penetrates the domestic sphere, linking the national public into the private lives of its citizens" (Morley 2000, 107). Beginning in 1939, nationally syndicated radio was employed by the Third Reich on a large scale to bridge public and private experiences of the war, as a live and simultaneous gathering of listeners as earwitnesses. *Sondermeldungen*, established as major moments on Nazi radio from the first months of the war, began with a fanfare of trumpets and drum rolls that interrupted any other program, followed by a victory notification, a song related to a recent campaign, the two German national anthems, or some religious hymns (Birdsall 2012, 113–119).

However, the omnipresence and repetition of anthems brought about a major risk: their trivialization. Anthems differ from other songs in that they "signal that an occasion is of national significance and is thus serious and not frivolous" (Pavković and Kelen 2016, 8). They mark the pass from entertainment to solemn patriotism. Because the rhetoric of war revolved around heroism, levity was not allowed. However, the abundance and repetition of anthems in the streets and at every show during could blur the

line between recreation and seriousness. An editorial in the official newspaper of the anarchist CNT-AIT union, *Solidaridad Obrera*, made this clear at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War: “The fight against fascism is too serious a thing for anyone to frivol with. It is necessary to end the silly parades through the streets of the city. [...] The noise of timpani and trumpets is a derision for those who fight on the front lines” (“La guerra es una cosa más seria” 1936).

This statement has parallels with many others on the rebel side, which also tried to temper fun and frivolity (Pérez Zalduondo 2018). Against them, Víctor de la Serna wrote his famous “Praise of the cheerful rear-guard”, which complained about that “psychosis of sadness—dark melancholy—among some people from our rear-guard, who find the atmosphere of San Sebastián and Seville frivolous and almost nefarious” (Serna 1937). As soon as the end of October 1936, the Economic Committee of Theater asked the music bands “to refrain from playing popular anthems, since their daily repetition in intermissions and at the end of the works makes them lose the emotional solemnity that they have. Anthems in theaters should only be played at official performances” (“Himnos populares” 1936).¹⁰ Francoist authorities did not implement this measure during the war, but in February 1940 the National Propaganda Service ordered that bands not play the national anthem at the end of the performances that did not correspond “with the appropriate artistic milieu” such as cabaret, dances, and frivolous shows (Álvarez 2021, 197). In May 1943, the General Director of Prisons in Franco’s Spain warned that a disproportionate use of anthems could lead prisoners to “routine habits without emotion or sentiment”, precisely the opposite of what authorities intended (Pérez Castillo 2021, 383).

IMPOSING THE NATION: VIOLENCE AND RESISTANCE

Conceptions of music tend to idealize it as pleasant, therapeutic, or emancipative. However, music can be offensive, incite rage, promote subjugation, accompany aggression, and cause pain. It is violent when it is imposed and the listener perceives it as undesirable sound. As Suzanne Cusick

¹⁰El Comité Económico del Teatro (CNT) ha suplicado a las orquestas y orquestinas de los coliseos que se abstengan de ejecutar himnos populares, ya que su repetición diaria en los entreactos y finales de las obras les hace perder la solemnidad emocional que aquellos tienen. Los himnos en los teatros deberán ejecutarse solamente en las funciones con carácter oficial.

remarks, music turned into unwanted noise can release a person “into a paradoxical condition that is both highly embodied and almost disembodied in the intensity with which one forgets important elements of one’s identity, and loses track of time’s passing” (Cusick 2006, 12). Bruce Johnson and Martin Cloonan have urged us to “go well beyond music aesthetics” to understand this relationship between music and violence, which they find “mundane and ubiquitous” (Johnson and Cloonan 2009, 4 and 73). Certainly, if this link is not exceptional in everyday life, it became normalized in wartime. In fact, the traditional opposition of music and noise can complicate the comprehension not only of sound violence, but also of how armed conflicts change listening practices.

Anthems were part of the arsenal of acoustic violence during the Second World War, primarily in those places that represented pain *par excellence*: the battlefield, prisons, and concentration camps. National songs were employed to mobilize soldiers, intensify emotions, and incite violence. The Third Reich was the first government to use loudspeakers to create immersive musical atmospheres and sound effects that affected the body and mind simultaneously, both on the battlefield and in propaganda ceremonies, where anthems played a prominent role (Volcler 2013, 45–46). Moreover, except Chelmno, all the Nazi death camps had musical activity. In particular, its use in Auschwitz responded to a careful sound policy of the SS to employ music in the process of extermination, in different ways: the ensemble or *Lagerkapelle* could help to calm down prisoners when they arrived at the camp, but also facilitated discipline and order in work, marches, and countings, and assisted in demoralizing the captives during tortures and executions (Gilbert 2005, 194). The violinist and conductor Simon Laks, interned in Birkenau for more than two years, affirmed that music, far from being a medium of relief and resistance, was an additional instrument of domination and torture that worked on the inmates “in a depressing way and provoked that the state of physical prostration was even deeper” (Laks 2018, 368).

Music functions as violence when one cannot choose and is forced to play, sing, or listen to what they do not like. That sound, in Cusick’s words, “blasts away all sense of privacy, leaving in its place a feeling of paradoxically unprivate isolation” (Cusick 2013, 276). In wartime, being forced to sing the enemy’s songs is a detrimental punishment because it destroys subjectivity by compelling the victim to embody an unwanted or even hateful political identity. The contradiction between the singer’s identification and sound can be particularly demoralizing. In Francoist

prisons, the main musical repertoire consisted of the national anthem, the “Grenadier March”, and the official songs of the Falange, the Carlist *Requetés*, and the Spanish Legion. Because the objective was not only to perform the songs, but also for them to sound good, prison governors divided the internees into groups to conveniently teach them and ensure that everyone was singing (Pérez Castillo 2021, 382). In 1943, the General Directorate of Prisons exhorted the directors to put a lot of effort into giving the “Grenadier March” “the character of highest seriousness and emotion as the expression of respect to the Fatherland and its institutions” (Calero Carramolino 2021, 111).

Anthems could also serve as a means of acoustic surveillance and accusation. In Spain, their singing was often alluded to in reports and trials of both sides as proof of adhesion or treachery. The Falangist writer Jacinto Miquelarena mentioned that Juan Tellería, who lived in Republican Madrid during the Spanish Civil War, was reported and incarcerated as the composer of “Cara al sol”, but survived by pretending to be insane and swearing that the rebels had stolen his music (Miquelarena 1939, 23). Anthems could condemn but also save lives. In the court case of Covadonga Martín Gutiérrez, who had been secretary of the International Red Aid in Almería, a witness declared that she had never participated in left-wing propaganda and that she had even sung the anthem of the Falange on some occasions. The court-martial, held on June 7, 1941, found Covadonga not guilty (Ruiz Expósito 2008, 331). In order to turn anthems into instruments of political control, totalitarian regimes had to distinguish between *listening*, which entailed actively attending to the music, and *hearing*, which revealed disinterest or disdain for the represented nation.¹¹

The same process that turned anthems into a form of violence made it possible for them to be a means of individual and collective resistance. Depriving people of singing or listening to their former national anthems in invaded areas was a common form of sonic violence in Europe from 1936 to 1945. After the Allied victory in World War II, for example, the measures imposed by every country that took control of Germany were different. Whereas the United States forbade military music, and the Soviet Union banned the German national anthem, Britain allowed the

¹¹ A similar distinction can be observed in the most conservative Islamic circles of the Persianate world, where merely hearing the Qur’an without listening to it is regarded as sinful and, conversely, hearing most popular music is permitted but listening to it is considered “lascivious” (Beeman 2010, 143–145).

playing of “Deutschlandlied” (Potter 2016, 112). In these situations, a frequent practice of defiance was singing one’s own national or political songs. In the Amsterdam occupied by the Nazis, there was no permission to be out after midnight, so people could not celebrate the 1942 New Year. As a display of pride and rebellion, they started to sing the Dutch national anthem loudly from their windows (Jacobs 2014, 317).

Tom Rice (2016) argues that prisoners can play a limited, but active, role in shaping their sonic environment through diverse ways of listening and sound-making, and the Europe at war was not an exception. Thus, captives reframed their space and eluded the subjugation of their bodies to the enemy. Lin Jaldati remembered one particularly emotional evening in Birkenau, when Polish, Hungarian, Dutch, French, and German prisoners began to sing their national anthems and folk songs from their countries, creating a fraternal feeling beyond linguistic differences (Jaldati and Rebling 1966, 409–410; cited in Gilbert 2005, 154). This resistance through the display of personal national identity through singing was especially intense for inmates and disturbing for executioners during the killings. The captive anarchist Juan Manuel Molina recalled that, during an execution in Castellón, Francoist authorities compelled the other prisoners to sing the Falangist anthems aloud to drown out the revolutionary songs of those who were going to be shot (Molina 1958, 139–140). Similarly, Filip Müller, a *Sonderkommando* member in Birkenau, depicted a poignant scene of Czech Jews about to be gassed in July 1944:

Most of the people now began to undress, but some were still hesitating... Suddenly a voice began to sing. Others joined in, and the sound swelled into a mighty choir. They sang first the Czechoslovak national anthem and then the Hebrew song ‘Hatikvah’. And all this time the SS men never stopped their brutal beatings. It was as if they regarded the singing as a last kind of protest which they were determined to stifle if they could. To be allowed to die together was the only comfort left to these people. Singing their national anthem they were saying a last farewell to their brief but flourishing past, a past which had enabled them to live for twenty years in a democratic state, a respected minority enjoying equal rights. And when they sang ‘Hatikvah’, now the national anthem of the state of Israel, they were glancing into the future, but it was a future which they would not be allowed to see. (Müller 1979, 110–111)

Another common strategy was *contrafactum*, the substitution of the original lyrics without changing the music. In Francoist prisons, some

internees altered the words of the national anthem and the official songs during collective singing, a severely punished practice if they were discovered (Calero Carramolino 2021; Pérez Castillo 2021). One of the best-known songs of occupied France was “Dans le cul” (Up the Arse), whose words were fitted to the German national anthem (Murdoch 1990, 190). Mocking was not infrequent even between allies: a parody of the fascist anthem “Giovinezza” that ridiculed the failed Italian imperialism was quite popular in Germany during the war (Henderson 1948, 36). Sometimes, *contrafactum* was not strict and could include variations of the original melody. The song “London Pride” was written by the playwright, composer, and actor Noël Coward in 1941 during the Nazi bombing of London. Although the music seems to be based on the traditional English song “Won’t You Buy My Sweet-Blooming Lavender”, Coward also conceived and described it as a variation of “Deutschlandlied”, which turned “London Pride” into a symbol of anti-German resistance under the Blitz (Murdoch 1990, 190). Condemnation of the enemy could also be achieved through a parody of the original anthem, as in the Polish filmmaker Eugeniusz Cękałski’s *Utwory Chopina w kolorze* (1944), a denunciation of the Holocaust that used a distorted version of the Nazi “Horst Wessel Lied” (Boczkowska 2020, 271).

Due to the elusive nature and difficult control of music, a national anthem can be a powerful means of subversion even without lyrics. After the Nazi occupation of Czech lands, in March 1939, Christian churches were tolerated in the proclaimed Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, but also strictly controlled due to its social influence. Initially, Nazi rulers permitted the hymn in honor of martyr Saint Wenceslas, Duke of Bohemia in the tenth century and political symbol of peace and mercy who had introduced German priests in churches and favored the Latin rite over the old Slavic one, on the assumption that it symbolized the belonging of the Czech lands to Germany. Nevertheless, the Saint Wenceslas chorale became an unofficial national anthem that replaced “Kde domov můj” (Where My Home Is), only allowed in combination with “Deutschlandlied”, and encouraged people to resist the invaders. In the late phase of the occupation, when singing the hymn was banned, organists used its melodies and motifs in their preludes and improvisations (Seibt 1974, 351). Moreover, many Czech composers such as Otakar Jeremiaš, Lubomír Peduzzi, Josef Bohuslav Foerster, Vladimír Štědroň, Ladislav Svěcený, Josef Plavec, Jaroslav Doubrava, Iša Krejčí, Vitězslav Novak, and the Jewish Pavel Haas, who died in Auschwitz in October 1944, defiantly

quoted the Saint Wenceslas chorale in their wartime works, sometimes in combination with the Hussite war song “Ktož jsú boží bojovníci” (Ye Who Are Warriors of God), considered anti-German, or opposing it to the “Horst Wessel Lied” (Velek 2015).

CONCLUSION

From 1936 to 1945, old and new European anthems displayed national belonging and solidarity, encouraged patriotism and mobilization, conveyed narratives of antagonism and victory, forged and symbolized different political cultures, but also adapted their sound to new technologies and ways of listening, were recorded and broadcast, became ubiquitous, connected public and private spaces, and served as means of acoustic surveillance and violence. However, not all these questions are evident without paying attention to sound and listening, a perspective that challenges both the “visualism” that has dominated our thinking about history (Smith 2004) and the reduction of anthems’ affects to verbal meanings. Assuming that “it is the anthem lyrics that function as primary national or cultural marker” (Pavković and Kelen 2016, 15) led to lexico-semantic analyses that are necessary but, in isolation, can impoverish our comprehension of the power of patriotic songs. Anthems acquire more significance when analyzed not only as poetry nor as the mere sum of words and music, but also as embodied and embedded sound. Thus, they reveal that aurality has been a central issue of nationalist policies and the experience of war.

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