

EGLI'S MÜLKIYE: ANKARA'S MODERN HERITAGE AND ITS TRANSFORMATION

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ABSTRACT

Modern architecture, especially in the non-European territories, has been utilized to represent a breaking point from the past. This pattern has repeated also in Turkey to create a secular modern nation (Turkey Republic) out of a centuries-old Islamic dynasty (the Ottoman Empire). Foreign architects have been invited by the young Republic not only to design the cities and buildings but also to teach in academia. Austrian-Swiss architect Ernst Egli (1893-1974) has been one of the prominent names of European architects/planners whose works constitute Ankara's modern heritage. His 1936 project for the School of the Political Sciences represents the modern face of Turkish Republic. This research analyzes the place that this campus building holds within the modern architectural heritage of the Republican era, and it assesses the place of this heritage in the memory of people.

Keywords: modern architecture, modern heritage, Ankara, Mülkiye, Ernst Egli

1. INTRODUCTION

The first half of the 19th century has been the defining point for the development of modernism in terms of state empowerment. As Mitchell (2000) suggests, the non-European territories' experiences with the modernism are generally conceived as the unsuccessful attempts to imitate Europe, mostly through methods that had been already outdated for Europe. Such conception of 'other modernisms' is mostly due to the understanding of modernism as a part of history that has emerged (and arguably terminated) within Europe (Mitchell, 2000; 1-3). It should be strongly highlighted that modernism is a plural concept; each case may have its unique complexities. However, there are similarities in the experiences of the non-Western countries that may help understanding how modernism operated in these lands. As the main curiosity of this article is to understand the role of architecture and higher education in Turkish modernism, these similarities may help us locating Turkey case into a global perspective. Especially in the Middle East, modernism has almost contemporarily been experienced through powerful community leaders such as Atatürk (1881-1938) in Turkey, Reza Shah Pavlavi (1878-1944) in Iran, David Ben-Gurion (1886-1973) in Israel, or Habib Ben Ali Bourguiba (1903-2000) in Tunisia. The common thing for these diverse situations was the

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danger of Western colonialism. Once the dangers of the external forces were expelled from the country, the ruling elite had exploited similar tools to form their nation states. Generating a new constitution to guarantee modern reforms and establishing national institutes to realize these reforms were the main operational tools (Owen, 1997; 245). This narration of modernism is valid for the case of Turkey as well.

2. ON MODERNISM IN TURKEY

The Turkish Republic was founded in 1923 by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who was also the first president of Turkish parliament. When the Turkish Independence War was won (after the First World War 1914-1918), Atatürk and his military friends were able to establish the new state. Doing so, they have also started the modernism's journey in Turkey. This journey had a similar path to the above-mentioned pattern of modernism in the Middle East. The parliament accepted intense reforms rapidly under the presidency of Atatürk. Sultanate was already abolished in 1922; and in 1924 caliphate was also abolished and the educational system was renewed to abolish Islamic education. In 1925, religious lodges (*tekke*), shrines (*türbe*), and spaces of fraternities (*zaviye*) were abolished; the alphabet was changed from Arabic to Latin in 1928. In addition, women rights were improved and in 1934 Turkey became one of the earliest countries in Europe that granted women the right to vote and to get elected. All these reforms were part of a modernist project to create a secular modern nation-state.

Among these chain of reforms, one may question the selection of Ankara as the new capital in 1923. This oriental town, which was settled on and around the Roman citadel, did not have the makings of a capital city. Even though the arrival of railways in 1893 had increased the commercial activity; Ankara did not have other transportation connections, infrastructure, or other proper public services that could accommodate new institutions (Hastaoglou-Martinidis, 2011; 165). The old capital İstanbul, on the other hand, was a devastated city after a decade of wars, four years of occupation, a long history of political instability, and natural disasters. Almost throughout history, İstanbul has suffered from earthquakes and fires; especially after the 1894 earthquake; many districts were in ruins. Nevertheless, another significant motivation to change the capital was creating a distance with the Ottoman past (Altınyıldız, 2007; Bozdoğan, 2001). To gain that distance; Turkish Republic invited European (mostly German) architects and urbanists to create plans for the cities, and to erect grandiose modern buildings that can represent the modern and secular face of the new state. This followed the adoption of the modernist architectural language to the Turkey with a nationalist agenda (Bozdoğan & Akcan, 2012; Kezer, 2015). It should be also highlighted that the memories of the Ottoman past (together with its daily life routines) was still vivid in the minds of the citizens of this nascent state. The city had had a great amount of empty building stock of all the imperial buildings (sultan and his family's palaces), spaces of abolished religious practices, and *madrasas* (complexes for Islamic education). In addition, the intellectual elites of İstanbul were important figures of the Ottoman period; therefore, the remnants of the Ottoman past were visible not only in the built environment (through the empty building stock), but also in the cultural life. Therefore, even though Ankara was a rural underdeveloped city; it was the optimum solution: It provided a safe tabula-rasa on which modern architecture could operate freely. Following the declaration of Ankara as the new capital, foreign expert urbanists were invited to plan the city, and to teach in academia.

When *Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi* (the Academy of Fine Arts) (it was modeled after the French Ecole des Beaux Arts system) was established in 1883, European and Levantine architects were the first professors to teach architecture. Alexandre Vallauray and August Jasmund were

the two key figures in the architectural education. The following year, another school, *Hendese-i Mülkiye Mektebi* (the Civil Service School of Engineering) was also established to teach architecture. The quest for a national architectural language had risen in the following decades and these foreign/Levantine architects had been challenged by the next generation of Turkish architects. This later generation took over their professors' positions in *Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi* and they became the key figures of 'National Architecture Renaissance' Bozdoğan, 2001, p. 28). Therefore, when the Republic invited foreign experts, Turkish architectural community and the academia were already familiar with the European methods. This invitation was possible with a university reform came in 1933.

For the Republican ruling class, education has always been an important aspect of the modern Turkish society. Above mentioned nationalist agenda was theoretically formulated through public bodies that were founded by Atatürk's orders. Nevertheless, the restructuring of the educational system was not limited to primary and secondary education, but also the higher education system was planned to be renewed. The higher education reform in 1933 has played a double role for the Turkish Republic; firstly, it made it possible to invite European professors; and secondly it became possible to commission them state funded public projects. Following this reform, European professors (mostly German) came to Turkey to construct Turkish cities and educate Turkish architects.

In 1938, Clemenz Holzmeister (1886-1983) and Paul Bonatz (1877-1956) came to *Hendese-i Mülkiye Mektebi* (which would become İstanbul Technical University in 1944). They also professionally worked; Holzmeister designed many state projects in Ankara; some of which are Turkish Grand National Assembly, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Interior, Presidential Palace. Similarly, some of Bonatz's projects are public houses in Saraçoğlu district, and the conversion of the exhibition hall of Şevki Balmumcu into an opera house.

Unlike *Hendese-i Mülkiye Mektebi*, *Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi* already had European or Levantine architects since its foundation. In the 1930s, the Academy was already the battleground for the clash between two diverse modernisms: one that advocated a nationalist interpretation (by Ottoman architectural elements) and another one that provided more universal and/or 'international' architectural language. Giulio Mongeri (1875 – 1953), Kemalettin Bey (1870 – 1927) and Vedat Bey (1873 – 1942) were the key figures of this era. When Giulio Mongeri and Vedat Bey resigned from their positions; Ernst Egli became the new section head in 1930. Egli's projects, his design ideas, and his effects on the Turkish architectural community will be discussed further below.

3. ERNST ARNOLD EGLI: A FOREIGN ARCHITECT IN TURKISH REPUBLIC

3.1. Ernst Arnold Egli and His Educational Buildings

Ernst Arnold Egli is an Austria-originated Swiss architect. He was born on January 17, 1883 in Vienna and graduated from Vienna Technical University in 1919. After few years practicing, in 1927, Egli was appointed to Ankara branch of the Ministry of Education in Republic of Turkey as the chief architect. At the same time, he was charged with the management of Academy of Fine Arts in İstanbul. Until 1935, he carried out these appointed duties and in stated year he resigned from his official charges and just worked as the chief architect in the Turkish Aviation Association. Following that, in 1940, due to the uncertainties in the political state, Egli moved to Switzerland. Until 1953, when he returned to Turkey and worked in Ankara as the representative of United Nations, he practiced in Zurich and Beirut.

However, his second turn in Ankara took two years and after that Egli returned to Zurich again and lived there until his death in October 20, 1974.³

Ernst A. Egli was responsible with design of the most important field of the newly established Republic as being the chief architect of Ankara branch of the Ministry of Education. The educational buildings to be designed under his directorship were the modern buildings to raise modern young people who were bound up with the revolutions. These educational buildings, with their location in cities and their design features that meet the requirements of modern educational programs, were a matter of prestige of the Early Republican Period. The Educational buildings in Ankara designed by Ernst Arnold Egli can be listed as:

Table 1. The Educational buildings in Ankara designed by Ernst Arnold Egli

<i>Musiki Muallim Mektebi</i>	State Conservatory	1927-1929
<i>Ankara Ticaret Lisesi</i>	Ankara Commercial High School	1928-1930
<i>Yüksek Ziraat Enstitüsü</i>	High Institute of Agriculture	1928-1933
<i>Yatı Mektebi</i>	Boarding School	1929-1930
<i>Uçuş Okulu – Türkkuşu Okulu</i>	Aviation School	1930
<i>Jimmastik Okulu</i>	Gym School	1930
<i>Yapı Usta Okulu</i>	Building Master School	1930
<i>İsmet Paşa Kız Lisesi</i>	İsmet Paşa Girls High School	1930-1934
<i>Ankara Kız Lisesi</i>	Ankara Girls High School	1930-1931
<i>Mülkiye - Siyasal Bilgiler Okulu</i>	School of Political Sciences	1935-1936
<i>Gazi Lisesi</i>	Gazi High School	1936

These educational buildings were two or three-storey-height structures designed in shape of T, L, U or multiple buildings around a rectangular courtyard with a functionalist approach. The spatial needs of different functions were the determinant in distribution of these spaces- and so functions- into the blocks or the floors of the buildings. In the façade organization of these building, the architect paid attention to differentiation of front and rear façades. The entrance on the front façades was mostly emphasized with a monumental intervention or projecting the entrance back or forth. Relatedly, this kind of a focus on the entrance also emphasizes the symmetrical arrangement of the façade- and also blocks if the building is in ‘U’ shape. Moreover, all the buildings were constructed with the concrete frame structural system as being the representatives of the modern architecture; and almost all the buildings were covered with *edelputz* plaster and covered with *Ankara taşı* (Ankara stone) on the sub-basement floor. Furthermore, the effort of the architect on the perception of the buildings in pure geometric forms can be seen on the roofs also. In general, Egli mostly choose to use low-pitched roof hidden behind the parapet walls or flat roofs which enabled the continuation of cubic form of the building in perception.⁴

3.2. Mülkiye – Siyasal Bilgiler Okulu

Mülkiye was first established with the name of *Mekteb-i Mülkiye-i Şahane* in 1859 in İstanbul. After the foundation of the Republic, the school was planned to move to Ankara with the order of Atatürk. The construction of the building, designed by Ernst A. Egli, started in 1935 and the building began to be used in October 1936. The building has reached today with many

³ <http://www.goethe.de/ins/tr/ank/prj/urs/arc/egli/trindex.htm>

⁴ Examples of this kind of an interpretation can be seen in Figure 1-2-3.

spatial transformations and/or additions due to changing conditions and different spatial needs through time.

In original, the building was designed with the functionalist approach and composed of two main blocks perpendicular to each other forming a T-shape plan (Aslanoğlu, 2010) (Figure 1). The block, perpendicular to the street involved four blocks with two-floor-height; and, the other block, parallel to the street, was a single horizontal block and its main entrance was one floor higher than the other block. (Alpagut, 2012).

A small hall is reached from the entrance in the main block and this hall is opened to a marble-covered multi-purpose hall with two rows of columns. Namık Kemal Güçhan states about this marble-covered hall that “We loved that hall a lot. It was a pleasure to take a walk in the hall. Especially when it rains or snows... you walk warmly and watch from the windows. Students were in the hall mostly; sat, had a chat etc., and that gave a sense of home to you.”⁵ (Figure 2). In the first floor, there are two rows of offices with different sizes on both sides of the corridor. The second floor with classes and other offices have the same floor plan with first floor. The other block, which is adjacent to the main block, embodies large spaces like the conference hall, the dormitory and the cafeteria in the original plan. According to Güçhan, the dormitory spaces were large enough to embody 60-100 students, and they had no separate rooms or partition wall. However, because of the different spatial needs through the time, only the conference hall on the south-east corner of this block could preserve its original spatial qualities substantially (Figure 3-4).

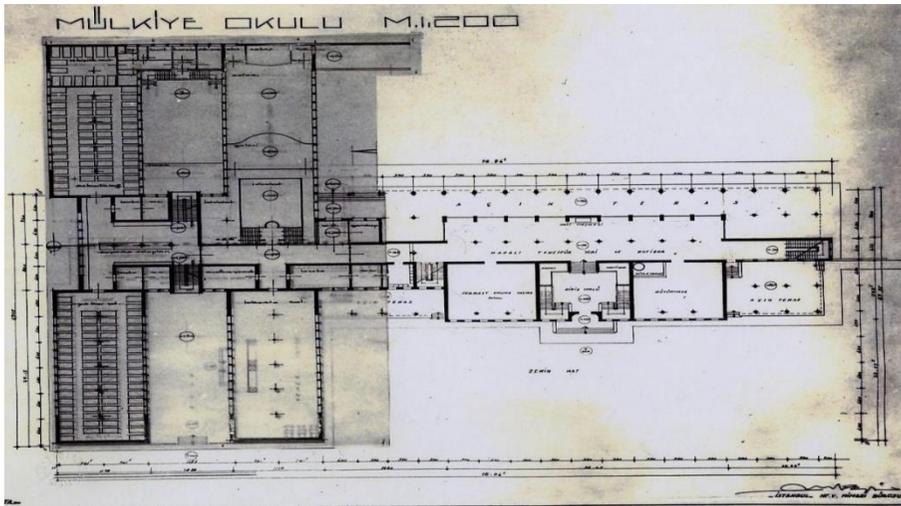


Figure 1. Ground Floor Plan of Mülkiye (ALPAGUT: 2010, 142)

⁵ Interview with Namık Kemal Güçhan, a former graduate of the school (1947), November 2015.



Figure 2. Entrance hall and marble-covered hall of Mülkiye (ALPAGUT: 2010, 142-143)



Figure 3. Conference Hall (archive of VEKAM)

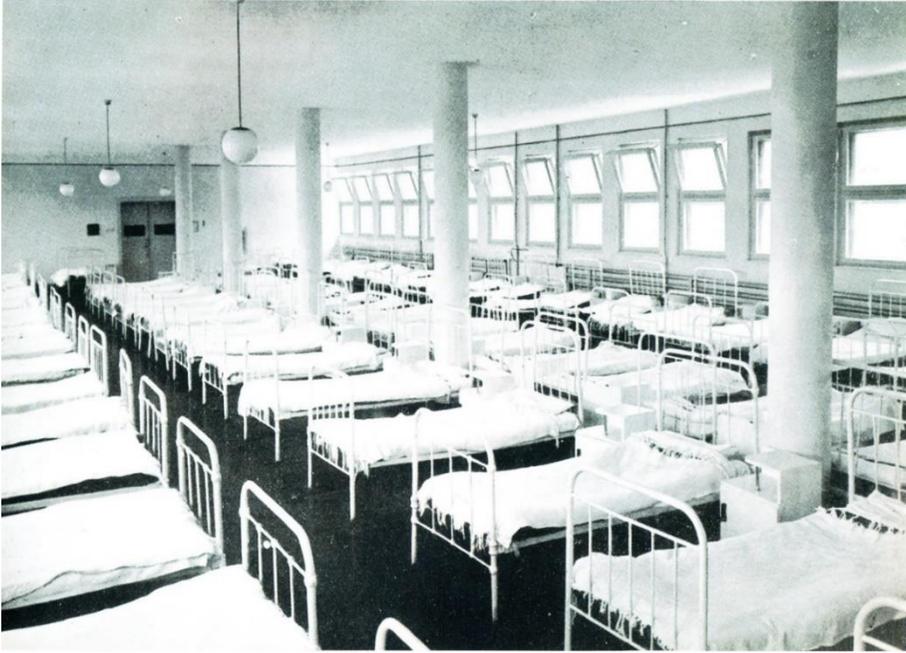


Figure 4. Dormitory (archive of VEKAM)

All four facades of the main blocks were designed with different approaches. The one facing the street has a simple and horizontally designed façade, covered with Ankara stone till ground floor level. The monotony, created by frequently located same-sized windows, is broken with a twelve-stepped main entrance in the center and with the balcony on top of projected windows (Figure 5-6). On the ground floor of the south façade the colonnades of the former corner openings are continuing through the façade with vertical windows in-between. On the upper floor, there is a monotonous order of the same-sized windows with the front façade. While the front façade of the perpendicular block was mainly attracted the attention with large balconies, which were closed after; other façades of the building are mainly composed of the modular composition of same-sized windows.

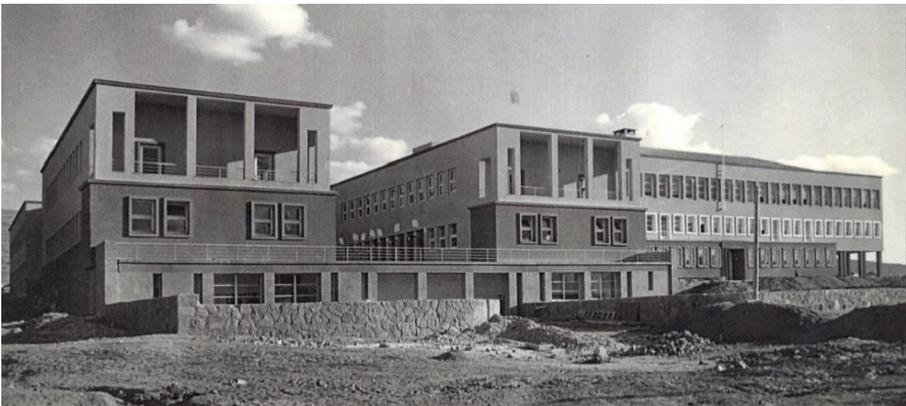


Figure 5. North façade of the building (facing the Street) (ALPAGUT: 2010, 145)

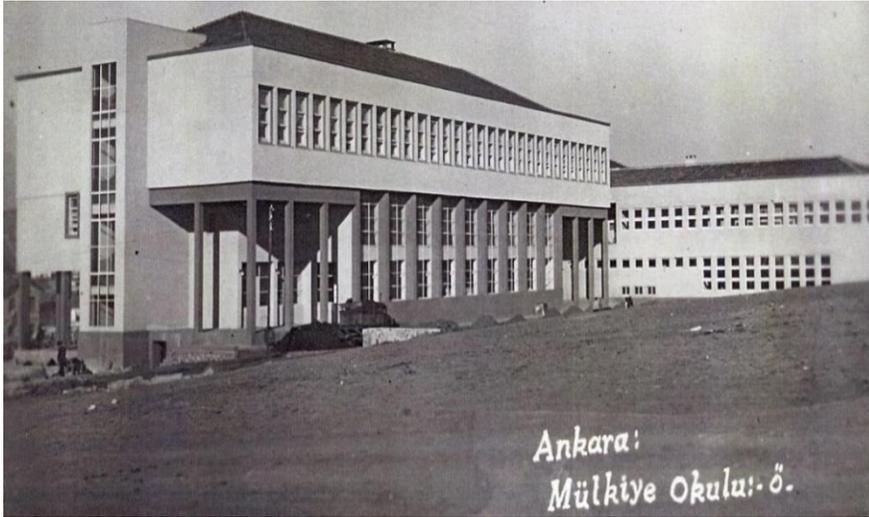


Figure 6. South façade of the building (ALPAGUT: 2010, 141)

There is also a sports hall, designed together with other two buildings and located separately on the east side of the main block. The construction of the building started in 1937, completed in 1939 and was opened to use of students (Öztürk, 2007). The building was constructed with concrete frame structure and covered with two-level pitched roof (Figure 7).⁶



Figure 7. An old photo from the interior of the Sports Hall building (archive of ilef)

⁶ Unfortunately, there is no photograph of the Sports Hall building on the exterior dated back to its first-built times.

The building of *Mülkiye* is one of the main representatives of the international modern architecture movement in Ankara with its architectural features formed related with the function. Besides, the symmetrical arrangement of façades with simple and plain design approach and low-pitched roofs surrounded with parapets supporting the cubic appearance of the building are the characteristics of the building, increasing its being one of the predecessors of the Early-Republican modernism in Ankara (Figure 8).

Aslanoğlu refers to the buildings of Egli as the good examples of the rational architecture in Turkey with their simplified and functional designs; and “all these buildings⁷ display the principles of the functional-rational approach of the modern movement.” (Aslanoğlu, 1986). Not just the mass, plan and façade design was showing the characteristics of the modern movement, as mentioned above, the complete abandonment of decoration and simplicity were also the main principles in the design of interiors with the use of modern original details, material and finishing of the faculty building.



Figure 8. *Mülkiye* (ALPAGUT: 2010, 140)

The simplicity and no decoration as main concerns can be observed in the entrance and the marble-covered multi-purpose hall where the entrance gave way. The lack of any decorative elements, the use of pure geometric forms in architectural elements, floor coverings, lighting elements etc. and the simple joint details of vertical and horizontal elements prevent user from getting lost in details and enable him/her to have a spatial experience in its pure form (Figure 9). The approach of simplicity and purity can be observed throughout all the spaces from offices to the dormitory rooms. The simplicity in togetherness of vertical and horizontal elements and pure geometric forms in interior spaces compose a whole with the design of the faculty building with functional approach. (Figure 10).

⁷ *Musiki Muallim Mektebi* (School of Music), *Divan-ı Muhasebat* (Sayıştay), Trade School for Boys, İsmetpaşa Institute for Girls, High School for Girls, building of *Mülkiye*, the Rectorate Building at the campus of the Faculty of Agriculture, Marmara Kiosk and Turkish Bath at Gazi Orman Çiftliği, the Embassy buildings for Iraq and Switzerland, a villa at Bebek in İstanbul.

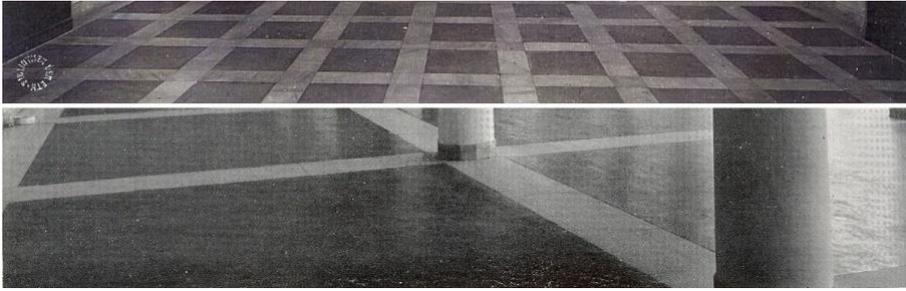


Figure 9. Geometric pattern of floor covering of the entrance hall and marble-covered hall (ALPAGUT: 2010, 142-143)

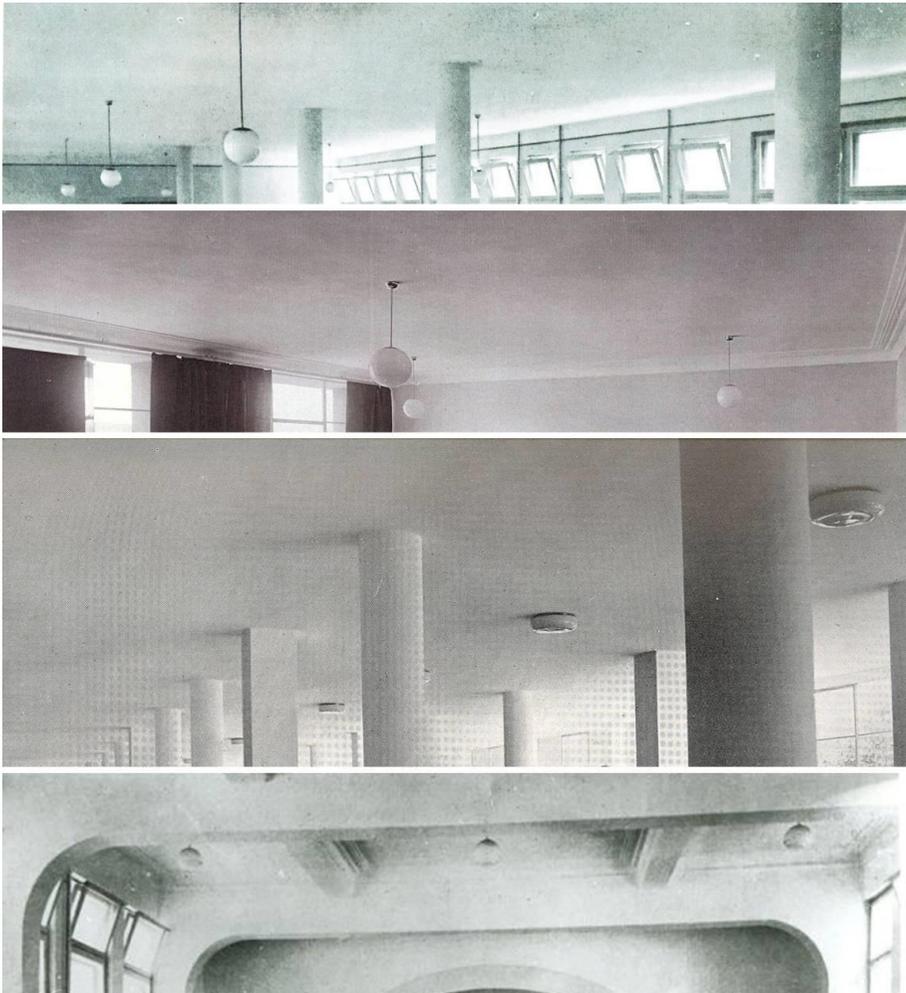


Figure 10. Pure geometrical forms and simple details of vertical and horizontal elements in spaces (archive of VEKAM) (ALPAGUT: 2010, 143)

Following the foundation of the school, there is a continuous growth and development occurred in the faculty buildings as mentioned above. There was addition of building blocks, changes related with construction of these new building blocks, functional changes according to changing spatial needs and improvements of spatial qualities of classrooms etc. Related with increasing student number and changes in spatial needs according to developments in educational mediums, as being an eighty-year-old building, *Mülkiye* has gone through various changes and improvements some of which are mentioned above. While some of these arrangements required serious constructional changes, some were just functional transformations with minor changes. There were few spaces that originality could be traced today.

4. CONCLUSION

Besides its role as one of the main representatives of modernization efforts of the new Republic both architectural and social terms; *Mülkiye* stands as the place which hosted and witnessed all the processes Turkey, especially Ankara, went through. These processes can be named architectural, social and political at the same time. Indeed, the social and political disturbances had architectural reflections or caused interventions on the building. The student upheavals, revolts related with coups and the incidents after the interventions of cops or soldiers caused damages in the building. However, more important than that, *Mülkiye* became symbol of student movements with its political stance in the history. In other words, the building is seen as a significant precedent of modernist architecture and representative of the reforms of the Republic in the field of architecture and by the academicians; furthermore, for the students, graduates of the school and the citizens *Mülkiye* is a place of memory which is intended to be survived today.

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