



GAZIANTEP UNIVERSITY JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Journal homepage: <http://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/jss>



Araştırma Makalesi • Research Article

Turco-Greek Battles in 1921 in the British Press

İngiliz Basınında 1921 Yılında Türk-Yunan Muharebeleri

Mekki ULUDAĞ^{a*}

^aDr. Öğr. Üyesi, Dicle Üniversitesi, Edebiyat Fakültesi, Tarih Bölümü, Diyarbakır / TÜRKİYE
ORCID: 0000-0001-6557-7917

MAKALE BİLGİSİ

Makale Geçmişi:

Başvuru tarihi: 9 Haziran 2023

Kabul tarihi: 18 Eylül 2023

Anahtar Kelimeler:

Milli Mücadele,
Batı Cephesi,
1921 yılındaki gelişmeler,
İngiliz Basını,
Türk-Yunan Savaşı.

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received: June 9, 2023

Accepted: September 18, 2023

Keywords:

National Struggle,
Western Front,
Developments in 1921,
British Press,
Turco-Greek War.

ÖZ

Bu çalışmada 1921 yılında Milli Mücadele dönemi Batı Cephesinde Türk-Yunan savaşında yaşanan gelişmeler İngiliz basınındaki haber ve yazılar esas alınarak değerlendirilmiştir. Çalışmanın amacı, Türk-Yunan cephelerinin durumunun İngiliz basınına yansımalarının ortaya çıkarılmasıdır. Çalışmada karşılaştırmalı analiz metodu tercih edilmiş olup İngiliz basınında konuya ilişkin tespit edilen haber ve yazılar yerel kaynaklardaki bilgilerle karşılaştırıldıktan sonra değerlendirmeye alınmıştır. Reuters, Associated Press ve Havas ajanslarına ait haberler ile gazetelerin kendi muhabirleri ve özel savaş muhabirlerine ait yazı dizileri çalışma kapsamında değerlendirilmiştir. Batı Anadolu'daki Yunan işgali, İngilizlerin öncülük ettiği müttefik kuvvetlerinin yoğun teşvikleri sonucunda gerçekleşmiştir. Bu nedenle 1921 yılındaki Yunan işgalleri İngiliz basınında sıklıkla yer almış ve işgaller övülmüştür. 1921 yılının eylül ayından itibaren Yunan işgal kuvvetleri geri çekilerek Türk birliklerine karşı savunma durumuna geçmek zorunda kalmışlardır. O tarihten sonra İngiliz basınında Yunan işgallerine yönelik olumsuz haberler daha fazla yer almışken Türk ilerlemesine ilişkin övgü dolu ifadeler kullanılmıştır. İngiliz basınının Türk-Yunan savaşının başından sonuna dek aynı tavrı takındığını ileri sürmek mümkün değildir. Üstelik, İngiliz basınının tutumu büyük oranda İngiliz hükümetinin politikasından da farklılaşmıştır. Bu gerçeklerden hareketle İngiliz basınının savaşın gidişatına göre hareket ettiği söylenebilir. İngiliz basını, Türk-Yunan savaşında çarpışmalardan galip çıkarak ilerleyen tarafın haber ve bildirimlerine yer vermiş, yenilerek geri çekilen taraftan gelen bildirimleri nadiren sayfalarında duyurmuştur.

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the Turkish-Greek War on the Western Front during the National Struggle period of 1921 by analyzing British press coverage. The study aims to unveil how the Turkish-Greek fronts were portrayed in the British press. The research employs a comparative analysis method, assessing news and articles in the British press by comparing them with local sources. The study primarily focuses on news from Reuters, Associated Press, Havas agencies, as well as articles authored by newspaper reporters and war correspondents. The British press extensively covered the Greek occupation in Western Anatolia, which received strong support from the Allied forces, particularly the British. Initially, the Greek invasions were lauded, but starting in September 1921, the British press began reporting more negative developments regarding the Greek invasions and expressed admiration for Turkish progress. It is important to note that the British press did not maintain a consistent attitude throughout the Turco-Greek War. Furthermore, the stance of the British press significantly differed from the policy of the British government, indicating that the British press aligned its coverage with the evolving dynamics of the war. The British press predominantly featured news and statements from the victorious advancing side, while rarely including perspectives from the defeated and retreating side in the Turkish-Greek War.

* Sorumlu yazar/Corresponding author.
e-posta: mekki.uludag@dicle.edu.tr

Introduction

In 1921, the Western Front of the Turkish War of Independence bore witness to significant events and notable developments. Greek forces intensified their efforts to occupy Western Anatolia, with the ultimate goal of establishing complete dominance over the entire Anatolian region. Their objective was to suppress the Turkish movement, which had recently achieved military and political consolidation, establishing its headquarters in Ankara. The Greek government used the pretext of compelling the Turks to accept the Treaty of Sèvres on behalf of the Allied states as a means to legitimize their occupation activities. (Beaumont, 1921, p. 9). Under the guidance of Mustafa Kemal Pasha, the Turkish populace endeavored to expedite both military and political mobilization within Anatolia, with their primary goal being to end the Greek occupation. Despite the initial progress made by Greek forces in their invasion of Anatolia, a sudden change of government occurred in Greece, leading to adverse consequences for the Greek occupation forces in Anatolia. While the Allies, who supported Greek Prime Minister Venizelos' pan-Hellenism policy, anticipated the democratization of Greece, the outcome of the elections, in which Greek King Constantine emerged victorious, brought profound disappointment among the Allies (Sarıhan, 1995, p. 295).

A significant development revolved around the efforts of the Allied nations in 1921 to secure acceptance of the Treaty of Sèvres by Turkish authorities. Recognizing the onerous terms contained within the treaty, certain proposals were put forth to engage the Turks. Consequently, a conference was convened in London, during which Bekir Sami Bey, acting as the representative of the Ankara Government, received official recognition from the Allies. This recognition marked the first formal acknowledgment of the Ankara Government by the Allied powers. (Sofuoğlu and Yıldırım, 2018) have asserted that the London Conference, which they examined through the lens of archival documents, played a significant role in recognizing the Ankara Government. The Greeks opposed the lenient provisions outlined in the Treaty of Sèvres. Simultaneously, the Ankara Government insisted that the Greeks vacate Anatolia entirely before negotiations could commence. Consequently, the negotiations yielded no results, and the conflict in Western Anatolia entered a new phase. The Greek state recognized the rapid organization and consolidation of Mustafa Kemal Pasha's movement in Turkey, along with the assembly of regular army units. In response, they decided to launch a surprise military operation. The Greek objective was to completely suppress the Turkish movement and capture Ankara before the Turks could fully organize themselves. In contrast, the Turkish side effectively utilized the available time, achieving significant progress in their political and military organization, thus becoming well-prepared to confront the Greeks (Jensen, 1979, p. 553).

A large-scale Greek invasion movement began from İzmir in the south, passing through Uşak to Afyonkarahisar, and from Bursa in the north, heading towards Eskişehir. In the initial clashes between the Turkish regular troops and the Greek army near Eskişehir in the İnönü region, the Greek forces suffered an unexpected defeat. However, they regrouped and launched a counterattack, gaining significant territorial ground since the start of their Anatolian invasion against Turkish forces. Major towns like Eskişehir and Afyonkarahisar fell under Greek occupation. Mustafa Kemal Pasha described the Turkish army as *skilled in conducting warfare across a wide front*, which allowed them to prevent the concentration of Greek forces at a single point. Turkish forces engaged in continuous pursuit and launched frequent attacks on the Greek troops from specific locations. Eventually, Turkish and Greek troops converged near the Sakarya River. After intense battles resulting in the loss of thousands of officers and soldiers on both sides, the advance of Greek troops halted, and they couldn't maintain control over those areas, ultimately retreating to the defensive line between Eskişehir and Afyonkarahisar (Atatürk, 1927, p. 442).

As the Turkish-Greek clashes of 1921 temporarily ceased, significant insights had emerged about both sides. It became evident that the Greek military lacked the necessary resources to advance beyond the Eskişehir-Afyonkarahisar line in eastern Anatolia. The prospect of the Allies furnishing extensive weapons, ammunition, troops, or financial assistance to the Greeks was out of the question. Throughout the Turkish-Greek conflict, the Allied states maintained a primarily neutral stance, causing considerable unease among the Greeks. (Turco-Greek War, 1921). Following this, the Greeks found themselves compelled to defend an extensive front line. The Allies became convinced that the Greeks were unlikely to attain victory against the Turks. Consequently, they initiated diplomatic engagements with the Turks and entered into several treaties (Jaeschke, 2001, p. 88). The Turkish forces acknowledged their lack of readiness for an immediate offensive and began comprehensive preparations. As these preparations advanced, the Turks grew increasingly confident in their ability to defeat the Greeks and initiated a successful offensive operation (Tansel, 1974, p. 121). This paper primarily focuses on identifying and analyzing key developments through news articles. The significant issues covered include Greek occupations, the First and Second İnönü Battles, the London Conference, the Kütahya-Eskişehir Battles, and the Battle of Sakarya. Subsequently, news and articles pertaining to these developments were chosen and evaluated, primarily sourced from British press outlets during the relevant period. An important aspect of this study is the examination of press usage for propaganda, as noted by Wollaeger (2006). Additionally, various studies that have explored different facets of the National Struggle period (Özel 2020) with various aspects, and their reflection in the British press (Aybars, 1988) and Hacıhanıoğlu (2019) were also utilized. The Greek occupation of Western Anatolia has been addressed by İsmail Ediz (2019). The primary motivation behind this research stems from the absence of a comprehensive study exclusively dedicated to the developments on the Western Front in 1921, with a sole reliance on the British press as the primary source of information. This study aims to bridge this gap by conducting a thorough examination of events during that period as reported by British press outlets. By focusing on these particular sources, my objective is to offer a distinctive perspective that illuminates the Western Front's developments and how they were reported in the British press.

Greco-Turkish Battles in 1921

In late 1920, Prime Minister Venizelos suffered a defeat in the Greek elections. The united opposition front emerged victorious in the election and subsequently conducted a referendum, which paved the way for the return of ex-King Constantine. He had been in exile outside Greece but was reinstated as the King of Greece. The referendum yielded a substantial majority in favor of Constantine's return, leading to his comeback and his ascent to the Greek throne. In contrast to the anti-Venizelos opposition front, which had campaigned on the promise of ending the occupation in Western Anatolia and bringing Greek soldiers back home, Constantine, in one of his initial statements, expressed his intentions to capture Ankara by deploying additional Greek soldiers to Anatolia and expanding the occupation. (Strange Events, 1921). At the outset of 1921, the Greek army prepared for a significant invasion operation and successfully occupied the territory up to Uşak, encompassing the area referred to as the Milne Line. They also gained control over the railway line between İzmir and Uşak. However, Turkish forces emerged victorious in the First Battle of İnönü, which occurred in the İnönü region between Turkish and Greek troops in January 1921. (Greeks and Turks Fighting, 1921). In an effort to account for their defeat, Greek troops attributed their losses to adverse weather conditions. Concerning the First Battle of İnönü, British sources alleged that Soviet forces had supported the Ankara Government. However, a news report clarified that no Soviet soldiers were present among the Turkish troops. Additionally, it was revealed that the archives of the

Ankara Government had been relocated to Sivas as a precautionary measure during the battle. (The Greek Offensive, 1921).

After the Greek forces faced defeat in İnönü against the Turkish troops, a correspondent from The Guardian joined the Turkish side to gather their perspectives and impressions. The author noted that the Turks held a negative view of the British due to their open and substantial support for the Greek invasion of İzmir and Thrace. Turks found it challenging to trust anyone identified as British, as they associated them with the British responsibility for the Greek occupations in Anatolia. According to the majority of Turks, the war would not end until all Greek soldiers were expelled from Anatolia. (The Turks' Point of View, 1921).

The outcome of the eagerly awaited Greek offensive remained uncertain. Major Allied powers strongly desired a complete cessation of Greek occupation in Western Anatolia, with a shared goal of ending the Greek presence in the region (Sforza, 1930, p. 177). The Greek populace, in their opposition to Venizelos, voted for a political alternative with the intent to halt the Greek occupation movement in Western Anatolia. However, Constantine, who was placed on the Greek throne by this opposition, adopted a similar stance to Venizelos and made promises of engaging in further conflicts. The war initiated by the Allies in Western Anatolia, involving Greek troops with the aim of pressuring the Turks into accepting the Treaty of Sèvres, ultimately met with failure. (Erim, 1953). The shift of power from the Sultan in Istanbul to nationalist leaders in Ankara occurred rapidly, and nationalists chose to resist rather than accept the terms of the treaty. Observing this resistance, the Allies designated Greece as the guarantor of the treaty. Venizelos accepted the role, and in return, Greece was promised territories, including Bulgarian regions in the Aegean, all of Thrace, and Western Anatolia stretching to Gallipoli, Izmir, and Istanbul. However, when the nationalist Turkish government under Mustafa Kemal rejected the Treaty of Sèvres, Venizelos dispatched an army to Western Anatolia. Had Venizelos remained in power, it's likely that the Allies would have continued their efforts to enforce the implementation of the Treaty of Sèvres. Nevertheless, numerous obstacles impeded the treaty's implementation, as Mustafa Kemal's government solidified its position and thwarted its execution. Yerasimos (2000) conducted a study on Turkish-Russian relations during the specified period and suggests that there existed a close relationship and cooperation between the two sides. According to studies by Yahya Akyüz (1988) and Bilge Yavuz (1994), France, facing difficulties in Syria, decided to evacuate Cilicia and negotiate an agreement with Ankara. Conversely, Çelebi (2002) argued that the Italians, concerned about the Greek occupation in Western Anatolia, made concessions regarding their territorial claims on Antalya. Additionally, due to British concerns about the Turkish-Russian rapprochement, they permitted Constantine to operate in England to secure the supply of weapons and ammunition (Nicolson, 1934, p. 257). A potential new Greek offensive, regardless of its outcome, would have conflicted with the interests of France, Italy, and Britain. If the Turks were to defeat Constantine once again, they would gain limited benefits, as the Allied Council had already offered to grant Ankara all the territories currently under Greek control in Asia. The sole potential beneficiary of a new war would have been Soviet Russia, which sought to perpetuate the chaos in Western Anatolia and establish a united front of Asian nations against the European nations (Clogg, 1979, p. 117).

During a period when the Greek troops claimed to be launching attacks against the Turks, a Turkish statement declared that the Turkish forces counterattacked and inflicted a significant defeat on the Greeks. According to this statement, numerous Greek soldiers were killed, and approximately 1,700 Greek soldiers were captured as prisoners by the Turks. The occupation and invasion actions carried out by Greek troops in Western Anatolia were not recognized or supported by the Istanbul Government and were strongly condemned. In a diplomatic note addressed to the Allies, the Bab-ı Ali Government protested against the

occupation of Western Anatolia by Greek forces and held Greece responsible for the ongoing conflict. The note asserted that the Greek occupations and invasions posed the most substantial impediment to the peaceful resolution of issues between the Allies and the Ottoman Empire. (A Turkish Protest, 1921).

The information coming from Ankara created a state of confusion for the Greek troops. On one hand, there were discussions about the Turks mounting a robust defence against Greek operations, while on the other hand, there were claims that Mustafa Kemal Pasha had been instructed to evacuate Ankara. The claims of Ankara's evacuation should be viewed with suspicion since they originated from the Turkish side. It was possible that the Turks intended to lure the Greek troops into fighting in a vast area beyond their military capacity, aiming to inflict significant blows on them and potentially forcing them to retreat from the occupied areas. According to the information received, General Harington, the Commander of the British Occupation Armies in Istanbul, firmly stated that Britain maintained neutrality during the battles between Turkish and Greek units. Despite the call for peace from the Supreme Allied Council, both the Turkish and Greek governments rejected it (Greek Advance in Asia Minor, 1921).

In his address to the parliament, Fevzi Pasha, the Deputy Chief of National Defense and the Deputy Chief of the General Staff, presented detailed information to the Grand National Assembly regarding the fronts where Turkish troops achieved victories over the Greek forces. A significant point emphasized by Fevzi Pasha was that the Greek soldiers who arrived from Greece did not exhibit a strong desire to fight; instead, they sought discharge and a return home. However, he underscored that the Greeks residing in Western Anatolia displayed a fervent ambition and animosity towards the Turks, which fueled their determination to engage in combat (Çakmak, 1921, p. 321).

The Greek forces' efforts to capture Afyonkarahisar and Eskişehir ended in failure, eventually leading to their retreat. According to sources aligned with the Kemalist faction in Istanbul, the Greek forces faced defeat in the Second Battle of İnönü at the hands of Turkish troops. After a nine-day-long conflict, the Greek troops were completely forced out of Eskişehir (Severe Defeat of the Greek Army, 1921, p. 11). Mustafa Kemal Pasha issued a statement urging all capable Turkish men to enlist in the army, emphasizing that refusal to do so would be regarded as an act of treason punishable by law. The Greek forces' retreat from Afyonkarahisar stirred feelings of anxiety and anger in Athens. The situation on the frontlines was growing increasingly tense, prompting Turkish mobilization efforts to strengthen their military capabilities in response to the Greek presence in Anatolia (Greek Advance, 1921). Despite their initial setback, the Greek troops remained determined to gather reinforcements and displayed confidence in their capability to prevail against the Turks. There were accusations that the Greek Government concealed the defeat of their troops from the Greeks, leading to a lack of awareness among the people. Nevertheless, after a period of regrouping, the Greek forces initiated new operations, and throughout April 1921, they continued their advance in Western Anatolia (Greeks Still Advancing, 1921). In addition, the Greek military operations in Western Anatolia imposed a substantial burden on the Greek economy, resulting in a rapid depreciation of the Greek currency. Despite the implementation of various economic measures, the Greek government struggled to achieve the desired results. The economic crisis caused significant distress in Athens, and the Greek government placed its hopes on obtaining a war loan from England to alleviate the financial strain (Greek Finances, 1921).

Greek commanders claimed assertively that they would defeat the Turks (Turco-Greek War, 1921). Violent clashes erupted between Turkish and Greek troops. One week after the Greek operation began, Kütahya fell under Greek occupation. The capture of Kütahya by Greek troops was met with tremendous enthusiasm in Athens. (Greek Victory, 1921). Due to the

ongoing conflict, Turkish forces retreated from Eskişehir, leading to its occupation by Greek troops. (Capture of Eskişehir, 1921). The fall of Eskişehir sparked extensive debates in Ankara (Turco-Greek War, 1921).

Athens contended that the Turkish retreat from the vital strategic positions of Izmit, Kütahya, Eskişehir, and Afyonkarahisar was not a tactical maneuver, and these regions fell into the hands of Greek troops following significant clashes. (The Greek Theory, 1921). The Greeks made efforts to persuade the British government that they possessed the capability to overcome the Turks. (The Defeat of the Turks, 1921). The assertions made by Greek sources did not come to fruition, and Turkish troops promptly initiated a recovery process. (Kemal's Forces, 1921).

Greek and Turkish troops engaged in combat without direct Allied intervention. Both sides received arms through individual sales, which were viewed as commercial activities. No Allied soldiers were deployed, and there was no provision of economic aid or credit. The Allies believed that the conflict should be resolved by the Greeks and Turks themselves. French officials stressed the importance of non-intervention, while British Prime Minister Lloyd George supported the Greek troops' right to benefit from their victories. The rejection of the Treaty of Sèvres by the Turks further reduced Allied involvement. Consequently, the Allies abstained from sending troops, providing weaponry or ammunition, or offering loans, although individual weapon sales were permitted. (No Intervention by the Allies, 1921). Lloyd George criticized Greece for overestimating its strength and embarking on military operations beyond its capacity, viewing it as a significant mistake. He foresaw that Greece's resources would soon be depleted, leading to a challenging reality. Consequently, he believed that Greece's most prudent course of action was to promptly engage in peace negotiations. (Advice and Warning, 1921).

According to *The Guardian*, a pivotal outcome of the Greco-Turkish War would determine the destiny of Istanbul, often referred to as the 'golden gate of Asia.' The victorious side in the conflict would lay claim to the city. Greek troops expressed confidence in their ability to capture Istanbul with a resounding victory. The French entertained optimistic scenarios where they either controlled the city or it was returned to the Turks. However, Mustafa Kemal Pasha faced the potential loss of his high-stakes gamble. In any case, French authorities were disheartened by the prospect of Greek dominance in Istanbul. (The Golden Key of Asia, 1921).

The Turkish-Greek conflict, initiated in the vicinity of the Sakarya River on August 23, escalated with each passing day. As the progress of the Greek troops was halted, reports indicated that a reinforcement unit of twelve thousand men would soon join the Turkish forces from Antalya. (Greek Army Held Up, 1921). According to Papoulas, the commander of the Greek occupation troops who faced defeat in the Battle of Sakarya and had to retreat, there was a relentless and bitter conflict between the Turkish and Greek forces. Despite the challenging circumstances, the Greek troops remained confident that they would eventually capture Ankara. (Greeks Confident, 1921). According to Kemalist sources in Istanbul, the engagements in Göksu, near the Sakarya River, concluded with the defeat of the Greek troops, compelling them to withdraw hastily due to substantial losses. (Greek Defeat Claimed, 1921). Based on reports from Izmir, despite the interruption of the Turkish-Greek war due to the exhaustion of both sides, the Greek troops remained confident in their prospects for a decisive victory. However, heavy rain in the combat zones rendered military movements impossible, and reinforcements for the conflict areas became unfeasible. (End of Anatolian War, 1921). The Turks had successfully withstood the formidable Greek assault to a significant degree and remained firmly entrenched around the Sakarya River. (Kemalists' Resistance, 1921).

According to a report by The Guardian's correspondent, who visited Greece after the Battle of Sakarya, Greek newspapers published inaccurate, false, and exaggerated reports to bolster the belief among Greeks that Greek troops were victorious in all engagements and that Turkish forces were completely encircled and on the brink of annihilation. (Greece at War, 1921). This propaganda was intended to boost morale among the Greek population and to conceal the true extent of their military losses. However, this strategy was ultimately unsuccessful in preventing the Turkish forces from achieving a decisive victory in the battle. However, the undeniable reality was that the only viable option for the Greeks was to come to the peace negotiation table. (A New Leaf, 1921). The Greek army's occupation in Anatolia placed an enormous burden on the Greek economy, pushing Greece to the brink of financial collapse. (Constantine's Throne, 1921).

Greek Propaganda in the British Press

In 1921, there was a significant Greek propaganda campaign within the British press. (Kitsikis, 1963). The propaganda emphasized the certainty of Greek victory in the Anatolian war, portraying the Turkish troops as having no chance against their Greek counterparts. (Greek Army Impatient, 1921). According to Constantine, the Turks lacked the military capability to launch an attack around Izmir, and it appeared unlikely for the Russians to assist the Turks in that region. Hence, the Greek army enjoyed the freedom to maneuver in Anatolia. (Strange Events in Asia Minor, 1921).

According to an alternate report, in January 1921, Greek troops' self-assurance saw a substantial boost. Greek sources asserted that the Turks lacked the capability to resist them and that they could capture Ankara within a mere ten days. (Greeks in Asia Minor, 1921). Turkish and Greek sources continued to issue press releases regarding the ongoing conflicts, with each side asserting advances and significant losses inflicted upon the enemy. Greek sources maintained that they had gained control of numerous towns and villages in the direction of Uşak, while the Turks acknowledged a tactical withdrawal during the initial Greek assault but asserted that they had swiftly received substantial reinforcements. They claimed to have dealt a severe blow to the Greek troops and taken nearly two thousand Greek soldiers as prisoners. (Greek Attack Begun, 1921). Such was the assertiveness of Greek sources that certain Greeks in Istanbul had taken it upon themselves to clean Hagia Sophia and prepare it for Orthodox Easter, scheduled for May 17, 1921, in anticipation of their celebration within the iconic monument. (Outmanoeuvring the Kemalists, 1921).

In response to the Greek authorities' excessive boasting and threats, the Turks asserted in a statement that they had halted the Greek troops across the entire front line and inflicted substantial losses on Greek forces at multiple points. Greek declarations had boldly predicted the imminent Greek dominance over all of Anatolia, with Constantine's entry into Istanbul scheduled for the beginning of May 1921, marked by a reception in Hagia Sophia. However, impartial news sources suggested that reports from both Turkish and Greek sources were exaggerated. Fierce fighting persisted near Eskişehir, and signs of fatigue and boredom began to surface among the Greek troops. (Struggle for Turk Stronghold, 1921). Amidst rumors of massacres attributed to Greek soldiers in Anatolia, Athens issued a statement vehemently denying the allegations and asserting that the sole focus of the Greek troops was on the Kemalist forces. (Imperial and Foreign, 1921).

An article discussing the Ankara-based Turkish movement emphasized that those referred to as Kemalists were not merely followers of Mustafa Kemal Pasha or any single individual. It was deemed misleading to characterize the Kemalist movement as a mere gang uprising or a simple rebellion. Instead, it was portrayed as a thoroughly revolutionary movement with ideals, discourses, and consequences akin to the Russian or French revolutions.

The movement was organized, with both strengths and weaknesses, susceptible to collapse at any moment, and possessing enduring ramifications. While it might have been convenient for Europeans to label a resistance movement opposing the dissolution of an empire they sought to dismantle as rebels or gangs, such definitions failed to capture the truth. Notably, the Turkish movement displayed an absence of class discrimination, as members of the public from diverse backgrounds could rise to the highest ranks. Furthermore, the Turkish army's officers were highly experienced individuals with extensive years of wartime service. (Ransome, 1921, p. 4).

According to a report, following their triumphs in the Battles of Kütahya and Eskişehir, the Greek troops began to harbor grand aspirations. They envisioned their next target as Ankara, believing that Mustafa Kemal Pasha had only a modest force of thirty thousand personnel remaining, which they deemed insufficient to defend the city against the Greek army. (King at Eskişehir, 1921). According to another article laden with Greek propaganda, it was claimed that it was impossible to match the rapid invasion pace of the Greek army, which had penetrated Anatolia. (A Rapid Advance, 1921).

Greek Atrocities in Anatolia in the British Press

From the very moment they set foot in Anatolia, Greek soldiers initiated a campaign of atrocities, resulting in the deaths of tens of thousands of civilians, including unarmed and innocent individuals. They also confiscated the property of Turkish and Muslim residents, forcibly displacing them from their homes. An in-depth study, based on archival documents conducted by the General Directorate of State Archives (1996), shed light on the comprehensive scope of Greek atrocities. These acts of brutality by Greek troops in Anatolia have been the subject of numerous scientific investigations, addressing various aspects. Halide Edip (1922) provides significant details regarding the Greek atrocities she personally witnessed. Additionally, evidence of these atrocities can be found in reports from the British press. According to an article in *The Guardian*, Greek soldiers commenced slaughtering Turks immediately upon landing at the Izmir dock, resulting in the streets and dock being filled with the bodies of Muslim victims. The brutal acts of the Greek soldiers, including massacre, robbery, looting, and plundering, persisted for over ten days. It was only due to the warning from Allied authorities that Greek officers eventually put an end to the massacre. (The Massacre of Moslems, 1921).

The special correspondent for *The Guardian* stationed in Izmir engaged with Turks residing in settlements under Greek occupation. According to the correspondent, one of the initial actions undertaken by Greek troops upon their arrival was an attack on the sacred values of the local population. This involved damaging mosques and inciting inter-religious tensions by burning and desecrating the Qur'an, the holy book of Muslims. This strategy was apparently intended to portray the onset of a Muslim-Christian conflict in the West, potentially garnering Western support for Greece. Strikingly, despite the evident Greek cruelty, the author's article shifts blame onto the Turks, asserting that they also engaged in the destruction of churches. The author contended that Greek authorities were actively working to mitigate problems, attributing the atrocities to individual wrongdoers who faced severe punishment. This apparent contradiction emerges as the author, while describing the Greek atrocities he personally witnessed, simultaneously claims that Turks were committing similar acts, despite having no direct observation of such actions. (The Turk at Home, 1921). Despite the inconsistencies in the article, it is noteworthy that Greek atrocities received such transparent coverage in an English newspaper. This is particularly significant considering the strict censorship regulations imposed by the British during the war. The British government had already grappled with press-related issues during the First World War, and after protracted negotiations, they decided in May 1915 to permit five reporters to access the front lines and report. These accredited British correspondents included Herbert Russell for Reuters, Percival Philips for Daily Express and

Morning Post, Perry Robinson for The Times and Daily News, Philip Gibbs for Daily Telegraph and Daily Chronicle, and William Beach Thomas for The Daily Mail and Daily Mirror. (McLaughlin, 2016, p.101)

In McCarthy's (2014) study, crucial insights into the Greek atrocities during their campaign in Anatolia come to light. McCarthy reveals that as Greek troops continued their occupation and territorial expansion, they resorted to the deliberate destruction of Turkish villages and towns. In a chilling sequence of events, Greek forces occupied a minimum of fourteen settlements around Yalova, expelling their inhabitants, pillaging their belongings, and ultimately setting everything ablaze. These actions were part of a broader strategy aimed at altering the demographic composition and settlement patterns of these regions. (The Greek Atrocities at Yalova, 1921). A correspondent from The Guardian, who diligently covered the Greek troops' incursion into Anatolia over a span of seven months, provided harrowing accounts of Greek atrocities. Alongside their military operations, Greek forces subjected Turkish civilians in the areas under their occupation behind the front lines to cruelty and severe abuses. (Greece at War, 1921). The Greek army initiated a campaign of arresting civilians in the Western Anatolian regions under their occupation, citing accusations of being war criminals. (TBMM, 1921, p.373). One of the most significant justifications they provided for these arrests was the assertion that the detained individuals had previously engaged in combat against Greek forces as part of the Turkish army. According to this claim, these individuals had subsequently shed their military attire, abandoned their weapons, and returned to their civilian lives. It was evident that the Greek troops were attempting to offer inconsistent explanations for their acts of war crimes. (Athens Press Stories, 1921).

The recruitment methods employed by Greek administrators in Izmir led to a growing rift between the local population and the Greek government. Greek troops attempted to portray their conscripts as volunteers by coercing them to sign certain documents. Prior to the arrival of Greek occupation forces, non-Muslims under Ottoman rule were not obligated to perform military service. However, the Greek government's imposition of military service on this population segment caused discontent among the Greek residents. The behavior of Greek soldiers who came from Greece and were sent to the frontlines also stirred resentment among the people of Izmir. Some Greek soldiers recklessly fired their guns into the air along their routes, resulting in the deaths of numerous civilians. On occasion, Greek soldiers even fired at the minaret of a mosque in Basmahane, and they did not hesitate to target fuel tankers owned by foreign companies. Such conduct by Greek soldiers disrupted the activities of foreign companies from Allied states that were heavily engaged in commerce in the region, thereby affecting trade. If the undisciplined and hazardous behavior of Greek soldiers persisted, the port of Izmir would lose its commercial significance, and the entire city would suffer as a result. (Damage to British Trade, 1921).

London Conference and Diplomatic Negotiations

In early 1921, the Allies made the decision to convene a conference in London and invited both the Turkish and Greek governments to participate in it. This conference was a significant diplomatic effort aimed at resolving the ongoing conflict between the two nations. (The London Conference, 1921). Indeed, the primary aim of the London Conference in 1921 was to seek a peaceful resolution to the Turkish-Greek conflicts and bring an end to the hostilities in the Near East. (Greeks and Turks to Meet, 1921). As per the French perspective, Greek soldiers stationed in Anatolia displayed reluctance to engage in combat, and it appeared that Greece was the only nation willing to confront Mustafa Kemal. Given this situation, reaching an agreement with Mustafa Kemal was seen as the most favorable course of action. Eventually, the Turks accepted the proposals put forth by the Allies and achieved a comprehensive agreement with the French on all matters. Despite the Greek government's

dissatisfaction with the negotiations, there was an expectation that it would acquiesce to the Allies without putting up resistance. (Turks and Greeks, 1921). The negotiations in London concluded, and the draft treaty was handed over to the Turkish and Greek representatives. (Important Turkish Treaty, 1921). The conference yielded no results as the Greek troops launched an attack on the Turkish forces while the negotiations were still ongoing. (The War in Asia Minor, 1921). Following the failure of the London Conference, Greek Minister of War Gounaris issued a statement. He stated that the Turks were rapidly mobilizing and openly declared their intention to bring Turkish troops from Cilicia to fight against the Greeks. In response, Greece reinforced its Anatolian army with an additional forty-five thousand troops, aiming to launch a major operation before the Turks could fully prepare. Gounaris asserted that the Kemalist army stood no chance against the Greek forces. Greek Prime Minister Papadakis also emphasized that Greece's sole objective was to ensure the implementation of the Treaty of Sèvres by the Turks, and Greece sought to establish an Allied mandate in Anatolia. He claimed that Greece desired peace, not war. (Greece Restive, 1921).

During the ongoing Turkish-Greek conflicts in Western Anatolia, British Foreign Minister Lord Curzon traveled to Paris for a meeting with French statesmen regarding the matter. The French believed that there was no need to engage in an adventure in Anatolia and recommended the withdrawal of Greek troops from Anatolia. However, it was challenging to assert that the UK shared this viewpoint. (Lord Curzon's, 1921). As a result of a joint note from France, Britain, and Italy, a decision was made to implement a ceasefire and initiate peace talks between Turkey and Greece. (Allies to Offer, 1921). The common opinion among the Allies was that Greece would immediately accept this offer, but it was considered certain that the Turks would reject these offers. The Turks had previously stated with certainty that they would not participate in any negotiations unless the Greek troops were completely removed from Anatolia. (Allies & the Anatolia War, 1921). The offer for a ceasefire and negotiations was initially presented to the Ankara Government. After discussions in the parliament, it was rejected by the Ankara Government, despite causing some debates. Ankara Government officials expressed their confidence in winning the war to Allied state representatives. Subsequently, the same ceasefire and negotiation offer was extended to the Greek Government, which welcomed the Allied offers and expressed a desire for Allied mediation. (Allies' Intervention, 1921). While the proposals made by the Allies were slated for discussion in the Greek parliament, it was believed that Greece would reject the Allies' proposals, especially since they had already been rejected by the Turks. The Greek Government had issued a comprehensive response to the Allied mediation offer. According to their stance, it would be inappropriate to make peace without achieving all the *lofty goals of Hellenism*. They argued that Greek troops were fighting on behalf of the Allies and against the Turks to fulfill the Allies' objectives, including the acceptance of the Treaty of Sèvres by the Turks. Consequently, with regret, the Greek Government delivered a negative response to the Allies' offer. (A Polite Refusal, 1921).

Conclusion

In 1921, the Greek occupation in Western Anatolia expanded to cover a broad territory. Nevertheless, the Turkish military organized regular troops and made extensive preparations to effectively resist the invasion. The Greek occupation forces, aiming to hinder the Turks from fully preparing themselves, launched a major offensive utilizing their entire strength. At the outset, the Greek offensive was indeed highly successful, resulting in the occupation of a substantial portion of Western Anatolia. Encouraged by these victories, Greek troops started discussing plans to capture Ankara, defeat the Turkish forces decisively, and occupy Istanbul entirely. As Constantine was getting ready to participate in the Easter celebrations at Hagia Sophia, some Greeks in Istanbul cleaned the Hagia Sophia and prepared it for the festivities.

The mediation offers presented by the Allies were outright rejected by both the Turkish and Greek governments. The Turks insisted that they wouldn't entertain any treaty unless the Greek occupying forces were entirely withdrawn from Anatolia. On the other hand, Greek officials argued that a treaty that didn't involve capturing Ankara and putting an end to the Turkish movement would lack support within Greece.

By the end of 1921, Greek occupation troops had transitioned to a more defensive position. Greece was also grappling with significant economic troubles, and there were speculations about the Greek king possibly abdicating from the throne. In various press reports, there was increasing coverage of the potential withdrawal of Greek troops from Anatolia, along with predictions about concessions that might be offered to the Turks by the Allies. While it's true that the Turkish-Greek War of 1921 resulted in significant loss of life and Greek occupation of some Turkish territories, the balance of power shifted decisively in favor of the Turks. Greek occupation forces found themselves mainly on the defensive, and they were forced to defend their positions until the last Greek soldier was driven out of Anatolia. The Turks, confident in their ability to defeat the Greek troops, began preparations for a major offensive. Despite these developments, Western Anatolia had suffered extensive destruction due to the Greek invasion in 1921, and Greek occupation of the region continued until the Turkish Great Offensive in 1922.

The British press played a crucial role in documenting and reporting on the Turkish-Greek conflict in Western Anatolia during this period. These reports not only provided insights into the evolving military situation but also shed light on the propaganda efforts and alleged atrocities committed by Greek forces in the region. One significant observation is that the Allies, particularly Britain and France, seemed to have divergent interests and priorities when it came to the outcome of the war. While the British government appeared to favor a Greek victory, the specific reasons or interests behind this preference were not readily apparent from the available information. This raises questions about the underlying motivations of the Allied powers and the potential factors driving their policy decisions. Additionally, the continuation of arms sales to both the Turkish and Greek governments by private companies suggests a complex web of commercial interests at play. The fact that these transactions were allowed to proceed without direct intervention from the Allies underscores the intricate nature of international relations during this period. The French perspective, as mentioned, pointed to Greece's perceived alignment with British ambitions, further highlighting the nuances and divisions within the Allied camp. These divisions may have influenced their approach to mediating and ending the Greco-Turkish conflict, with differing expectations and objectives among the Allies.

The examination of the British press during the Turkish-Greek conflict reveals a nuanced and complex perspective within the British government and media. It's evident that there was not a uniform stance on the war among British officials, with some, notably Prime Minister Lloyd George and his supporters, favoring Greek interests, while others advocated for a more neutral position. The media's reporting also reflects this divide, with varying degrees of coverage and tone depending on the outcomes of battles and the overall situation. Victories by either side received more attention and positive coverage, while negative news was predominantly associated with the defeated side. This suggests that the British press was influenced by the ebb and flow of events on the ground. Crucially, the paramount concern for the British government and media seemed to be British interests in Anatolia. This focus on national interests underscores the pragmatic approach of British policymakers, who were primarily concerned with how the conflict would impact British economic and strategic interests in the region. This perspective aligns with the broader patterns of great power politics during this era, where global powers often prioritized their national interests over other

considerations. Overall, the British press's coverage of the Turkish-Greek conflict reflects the multifaceted and pragmatic nature of British foreign policy at the time, driven by a keen awareness of national interests and strategic concerns.

References

- A new leaf in the near east. *The Guardian*, October 04, 1921, p. 8.
- A Turkish protest. *The Daily Telegraph*, March 29, 1921, p. 9.
- Advice and warning to Greeks. *The Guardian*, August 17, 1921, p. 8.
- Akyüz, Y. (1988), *Türk Kurtuluş Savaşı ve Fransız kamuoyu 1919-1922*. Ankara: TTK Basımevi.
- Allies & the Anatolia war, mediation-or tanks for Greece. *The Guardian*, June 23, 1921, p. 8.
- Allies to offer mediation to Greeks and Turks, Paris agreement. *Birmingham Gazette*, June 20, 1921, p. 1.
- Arşiv belgelerine göre Balkanlar'da ve Anadolu'da Yunan mezâlimi II: Anadolu'da Yunan mezâlimi* (1996). Ankara: Osmanlı Arşivi Daire Başkanlığı.
- Atatürk, K. (1927), *Nutuk*. Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı.
- Athens press stories. *The Daily Telegraph*, July 23, 1921, p. 11.
- Aybars, E. (1988). Millî Mücadele'de İngiliz basını. *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi*, 4(12), 603-636.
- Hacihanıfioğlu, A. (2019). *Millî Mücadele'nin İngiliz basınındaki yankıları (1919-1922)*. Master Thesis, İstanbul University, YÖK Thesis Center. (https://tez.yok.gov.tr/UlusalTezMerkezi/TezGoster?key=vjszP7PzV0HebcjFEvDfwBYzcGJZ97xsjQALfCz0WNvpmmUAJh1-dz526_ZXtpDK).
- Beaumont, A. (1921). Greece's war, allies' intervention, expected rejection. *The Daily Telegraph*, June 24, p. 9.
- Beaumont, A. (1921). Greek finances, alleged British aid. *The Daily Telegraph*, May 13, p.11.
- Beaumont, A. (1921). Greek reply to allies' mediation, text to the note, a polite refusal. *The Daily Telegraph*, June 27, p. 11.
- Beaumont, A. (1921). Strange events in Asia Minor, Kemal and the Bolsheviks. *The Daily Telegraph*, January 12, p. 8.
- Beaumont, A. (1921). Turco-Greek war, a rapid advance. *The Daily Telegraph*, August 29, p.7.
- Beaumont, A. (1921). Turco-Greek war, Kemalists' resistance, severe struggle. *The Daily Telegraph*, August 30, p. 10.
- Beaumont, A. (1921). Turco-Greek war, offensive begun. *The Daily Telegraph*, July 13, p. 11.
- Beaumont, A. (1921). Turco-Greek war. *The Daily Telegraph*, July 26, 9.
- Clogg, R. (1979). *A short history of modern Greece*. London: Cambridge University Press.
- Constantine's throne in danger, abdication rumours in Athens. *The Guardian*, October 20, 1921, p. 7.
- Çelebi, M. (2002). *Millî Mücadele döneminde Türk-İtalyan ilişkileri*. Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi.
- Edip H. 1922. *İzmir'den Bursa'ya, hikayeler, mektuplar ve Yunan ordusunun mesuliyetine dair bir tetkikat*. İstanbul.
- Ediz, İ. (2019). *Diplomasi ve savaş, Batı Anadolu'da Yunan işgali 1919-1922*. İstanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat.
- End of Anatolian war approaching, Greek optimism. *The Guardian*, September 12, 1921, p. 9.
- Erim, N. (1953). *Devletlerarası hukuku ve siyasi tarih metinleri, C.I, (Osmanlı İmparatorluğu anlaşmaları)*. Ankara: TTK Basımevi.
- Greece at war, so many victories and yet no end. *The Guardian*, September 23, 1921, p. 6.
- Greece at war. *The Guardian*, September 23, 1921, p. 6.

- Greece restive under Turkish threats, war minister explains mobilization. *The Guardian*, March 22, 1921, p. 8.
- Greek advance in Asia Minor, no serious opposition. *The Daily Telegraph*, March 29, 1921, p. 9.
- Greek advance, anxiety at Athens. *The Daily Telegraph*, April 2, 1921, p. 10.
- Greek army held up. *The Daily Telegraph*, August 31, 1921, p. 10.
- Greek army impatient to advance. *The Guardian*, March 14, 1921, p. 10.
- Greek attack begun, Turkish claims. *The Times*, March 26, 1921, p. 8.
- Greek defeat claimed. *The Daily Telegraph*, August 30, 1921, p. 10.
- Greek offensive, outmanoeuvring the Kemalists. *The Times*, March 28, 1921, p. 7.
- Greek victory, capture of Kutahia. *The Daily Telegraph*, July 20, 1921, p. 10.
- Greeks and Turks fighting. *Citizen*, January 11, 1921, p. 6.
- Greeks and Turks to meet. *The Times*, January 29, 1921, p. 12.
- Greeks and Turks, no intervention by the Allies, neutrality and private trade in Paris. *The Guardian*, August 11, 1921, p. 7.
- Greeks at Smyrna, damage to British trade. *The Daily Telegraph*, May 4, 1921, p. 9.
- Greeks confident of halting Turks. *The Daily Telegraph*, September 15, 1921, p. 12.
- Greeks in Asia Minor. *The Daily Telegraph*, March 26, 1921, p. 11.
- Greeks still advancing. *The Daily Telegraph*, April 1, 1921, p. 10.
- Imperial and foreign news items. *The Times*, April 23, 1921, p. 9.
- Important Turkish treaty proposals. *North Star*, March 11, 1921, p. 1.
- Jaeschke, G. (2001). *Kurtuluş Savaşı ile ilgili İngiliz belgeleri*. Çev. Cemal Köprülü. İstanbul: Cumhuriyet.
- Jensen, P. K. (1979). Greco-Turkish war 1920-1922. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 10(4), 553-565.
- King at Eskişehir. *The Daily Telegraph*, August 02, 1921, p. 8.
- Kitsikis, D. (1963). *Yunan propagandası*. (İstanbul: Meydan Neşriyat).
- Lord Curzon's mission to Paris, France and a Near East compromise. *The Guardian*, June 18, 1921, p. 9.
- McCarthy, J. (2014). *Ölüm ve sürgün, Osmanlı Müslümanlarının etnik kıyımı (1821-1922)*. Çev. Fatma Sarıkaya. Ankara: TTK Yayınları.
- McLaughlin, G. (2016). *The war correspondent*. London: Pluto Press.
- Nicolson, H. (1934). *Curzon: the last phase 1919-1925, a study in post-war diplomacy*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Özel, E. (2020). *İngiliz basınında Millî Mücadele ve Mustafa Kemal Paşa*. İstanbul: Cinius Yayınları.
- Ransome, A. (1921). Origin of the Turkish nationalist revolt, its motives and methods. *The Guardian*, July 14, p. 4.
- Sarıhan, Z. (1995). *Kurtuluş Savaşı günlüğü iii (açıklamalı kronoloji), TBMM'den Sakarya Savaşı'na (23 nisan 1920 – 22 ağustos 1921)*. Ankara: TTK Basımevi.
- Severe defeat of the Greek army, retreat from Eskişehir, serious situation. *The Daily Telegraph*, April 6, 1921, p. 11.
- Sforza, C. C. (1930). *Makers of modern Europe, portraits and personal impressions and recollections*. New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company.
- Sofuoğlu, A. & Yıldırım, S. (2018). *Arşiv vesikalarına göre 1921 Londra Konferansı tutanaklar-belgeler*. Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi.
- Strange events in Asia Minor, the Smyrna front. *The Daily Telegraph*, January 11, 1921, p. 8.
- Struggle for Turk stronghold. *The Times*, April 04, 1921, p. 9.
- Tansel, S. (1974). *Mondros'tan Mudanya'ya kadar IV*. Ankara: Başbakanlık Basımevi. *TBMM zabıt ceridesi*, 1. dönem, 9. cilt, 2. birleşim, 2 Mart 1921, s.373-384.

- TBMM zabıt ceridesi*. 1. dönem, 9. cilt, 15. birleşim, 2 Nisan 1921, s.321-330.
- The defeat of the Turks. *The Guardian*, August 06, 1921, p. 6.
- The golden key of Asia. *The Guardian*, August 22, 1921, p. 5.
- The Greek atrocities at Yalova, fourteen Turkish villages destroyed. *The Guardian*, June 10, 1921, p. 9.
- The Greek offensive. *The Western Daily Press*, April 02, 1921, p. 2.
- The Greek theory. *The Guardian*, July 30, 1921, p. 10.
- The London conference, Greeks and Turks to attend. *The Observer*, January 30, 1921, p.14.
- The massacre of moslems. *The Guardian*, March 04, 1921, p. 4.
- The Turk at home, interviewing under difficulties. *The Guardian*, April 12, 1921, p. 9.
- The Turks' point of view, what they ask of the western nations, to be treated as equal. *The Guardian*, May 23, 1921, p. 6.
- The war in Asia Minor, Greeks and Turks. *The Staffordshire Sentinel*, March 28, 1921, p. 2.
- Turco-Greek war, capture of Eskishehr. *The Daily Telegraph*, July 22, 1921, p. 11.
- Turco-Greek war, Kemal's forces. *The Daily Telegraph*, August 04, 1921, p. 10.
- Turco-Greek war. *The Daily Telegraph*, July 28, 1921, p. 8.
- Turco-Greek war. *The Western Daily Press*, April 19, 1921, p. 8.
- Turks and Greeks. *Western Morning News*, March 11, 1921, p. 5.
- Wollaeger, M. (2006). *Modernism, media, and propaganda, British narrative from 1900 to 1945*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Yavuz, B. (1994). *Kurtuluş Savaşı döneminde Türk-Fransız ilişkileri, Fransız arşiv belgeleri açısından 1919-1922*. Ankara: TTK Basımevi.
- Yerasimos, S. (2000). *Kurtuluş Savaşında Türk-Sovyet ilişkileri 1917-1923*. İstanbul: Boyut Yayınları.