RADIO PROPAGANDA IN TURKEY IN WORLD WAR II

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

BARAN ŞEN

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN
THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

DECEMBER 2025

Approval of the thesis:

RADIO PROPAGANDA IN TURKEY IN WORLD WAR II

submitted by **BARAN ŞEN** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **Master of Science in International Relations, the Graduate School of Social Sciences of Middle East Technical University** by,

Prof. Dr. Sadettin KİRAZCI
Dean
Graduate School of Social Sciences _____

Prof. Dr. Özgehan ŞENYUVA
Head of Department
Department of International Relations _____

Prof. Dr. Ebru BOYAR
Supervisor
Department of International Relations _____

Examining Committee Members:

Prof. Dr. Meliha ALTUNIŞIK (Head of the Examining Committee)
Middle East Technical University
Department of International Relations _____

Prof. Dr. Ebru BOYAR (Supervisor)
Middle East Technical University
Department of International Relations _____

Prof. Dr. Nazan ÇİÇEK
Ankara University
Department of Politics and Economics _____

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Name, Last name: Baran Şen

Signature:

ABSTRACT

RADIO PROPAGANDA IN TURKEY IN WORLD WAR II

Şen, Baran
M.Sc., Department of International Relations
Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Ebru Boyar

December 2025, 105 pages

This thesis examines the utilisation of radio as a medium of both propaganda and counter-propaganda in Turkey during the Second World War (1939‑1945). It analyses how radio, as a form of mass communication, was employed by the Turkish state to disseminate official narratives to domestic and international audiences, while also countering foreign propaganda campaigns aimed at influencing public opinion and undermining Turkey’s wartime position and policies. Although Turkey did not participate in the war as a belligerent power, it nevertheless became a focal point of competing propaganda efforts by the warring states. By focusing on radio broadcasting practices and state information management, this study demonstrates the strategic role of radio in shaping Turkey’s wartime neutrality, controlling public discourse, and maintaining its diplomatic balance throughout the conflict.

Keywords: Propaganda, Counter-propaganda, Radio

ÖZ

İKİNCİ DÜNYA SAVAŞI'NDA TÜRKİYE'DE RADYO PROPAGANDASI

Şen, Baran
Yüksek Lisans, Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölümü
Tez Yöneticisi: Prof. Dr. Ebru Boyar

Aralık 2025, 105 sayfa

Bu tez, Türkiye'de İkinci Dünya Savaşı (1939‑1945) sırasında radyonun hem propaganda hem de karşı propaganda aracı olarak kullanımını incelemektedir. Çalışma, radyonun bir kitle iletişim aracı olarak Türk devleti tarafından resmi söylemlerin yurt içi ve yurt dışı kamuoyuna aktarılmasında nasıl kullanıldığını ve aynı zamanda Türkiye' nin savaş dönemindeki konumunu ve politikalarını etkilemeyi amaçlayan yabancı propaganda faaliyetlerine karşı koymak için nasıl seferber edildiğini analiz etmektedir. Türkiye savaşın tarafı olarak fiilen çatışmalara katılmamış olsa da, savaşan devletler tarafından yürütülen yoğun propaganda faaliyetlerinin odağında yer almıştır. Radyo yayıncılığı uygulamaları ve devletin enformasyon yönetimine odaklanan bu tez, radyonun Türkiye' nin savaş dönemi tarafsızlığını şekillendirmede, kamusal söylemi kontrol etmede ve çatışma boyunca diplomatik dengenin korunmasında oynadığı stratejik rolü ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Propaganda, Karşı Propaganda, Radyo

To Ayşe

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Ebru Boyar, for her invaluable guidance, insightful advice, and constructive criticism from the very beginning of this thesis and throughout the entire research process. Her academic expertise, patience, and careful supervision have been instrumental in shaping both the direction and the content of this study. It was thanks to her constant encouragement, understanding, and unwavering support that I was able to overcome the challenges encountered during the research and successfully complete this thesis.

I should also like to thank my thesis committee members Prof. Dr. Meliha Altunışık and Prof. Dr. Nazan Çiçek for their acceptance to be in my thesis committee and for their valuable comments.

I would also like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my mother, Saniye, and my brother, Hasan, for their constant support, understanding, and encouragement throughout this journey. Their presence, patience, and belief in me gave me the strength and motivation to complete this thesis.

Last but not least, I owe my deepest thanks to Ayşe, who always listened to my endless concerns and frustrations about the difficulties of writing this thesis and never failed to encourage me to do my best. Her understanding, compassion, and constant reassurance gave me strength during the most challenging moments of this journey. I am profoundly grateful for her unconditional love, kindness, and support, which made the completion of this thesis possible in ways she may not even realise.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM iii
ABSTRACT iv
ÖZ v
DEDICATION vi
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS viii
LIST OF TABLES x
CHAPTERS
1. INTRODUCTION 1
1.1. The Secondary Literature Survey 5
1.2. The Thesis Plan 9
2. HISTORY OF RADIO BROADCASTING IN TURKEY (1923-1939) 12
2.1. Turkey's First Radio Enterprise: *Türk Telsiz Telefon Anonim Şirketi* 12
2.2. Wave Control: The State Monopolization of Radio and the Ankara Radio 17
2.3. Radio as a Major Propaganda Tool 19
2.4. The Number of Radio Devices in Turkey 22
2.5. The Increase of Radio Devices and Listeners in Turkey: The Role of Halkevleri in Expanding Access and Engagement 27
2.6. Conclusion 32
3. RADIO AND PROPAGANDA IN TURKEY (1939-1945) 33
3.1. Place of Radio in Turkey during the Second World War 33
3.1.1. Matbuat Umum Müdürlüğü (MUM, the General Directorate of Press) and the Radio Management 34
3.1.2. Accessibility of Radio in Turkey during the Second World War 39
3.2. The Threat of Foreign Radio Propaganda 41
3.3. Turkish Propaganda and Counter-Propaganda via Radio 45
3.3.1. International Radio Broadcasts 45
3.3.2. Countering Foreign Radio Propaganda 49

3.4 Conclusion..... 59
4. RADIO FOR PROPAGANDA AND COUNTER PROPAGANDA: BURHAN BELGE'S *GÜNÜN MESELELERI*..... 60
4.1. Burhan Belge's Role in Making Propaganda via Radio..... 60
4.1.1. Burhan Belge's Early Life and Career..... 61
4.1.2. Burhan Belge at the MUM..... 64
4.2 Burhan Belge's Radio Speeches: *Günün Meseleleri*..... 66
4.2.1. Educating and Warning Domestic Audience about Foreign Propaganda..... 67
4.2.2. Countering Foreign Propaganda..... 69
4.3. Conclusion..... 81
5. CONCLUSION..... 82
BIBLIOGRAPHY..... 86
APPENDICES
A. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET..... 91
B. THESIS PERMISSION FORM / TEZ İZİN FORMU..... 105

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Number of Radio Devices per 1,000 people 23
Table 2. Frequences of Foreign Radio Stations that Conducted Turkish Broadcasts 51

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines the utilisation of radio as a medium of both propaganda and counter propaganda in Turkey during the Second World War (1939-1945) and analyses how radio, as a medium of mass communication, was utilised by Turkey to disseminate its narratives to domestic and international audiences while it was also employed for countering propaganda campaigns that targeted Turkey in an effort to undermine its wartime position and policies. As Arronson and Pratkanis noted, the Second World War was not only a conflict fought with bombs and bullets but also one waged with images and words,[1] underscoring the central role of propaganda during the wartime. Although Turkey did not actively participate in the war, it nevertheless found itself at the centre of these propaganda battles.

That is why, this thesis argues that despite its non-belligerent status in the war, Turkey actively became involved in these global propaganda and counter propaganda wars. This involvement was, in several respects, unavoidable. Throughout the course of the Second World War, Turkey was continuously exposed to foreign propaganda campaigns originating from both the Allies and the Axis powers. In other words, both sides bombarded Turkey with images and words emphasising their fair and just cause[2] and hence sought to influence Turkish government and public opinion. Faced with these propaganda attacks, Turkey was compelled to design its own propaganda and counter-propaganda campaigns not only to convey its stance and policies but also to respond to these foreign propaganda campaigns. In this context, Turkey's

[1] Aronson, Elliot and Anthony Pratkanis, *Age of Propaganda: the Everyday Use and Abuse of Persuasion*, (New York: W. H. Freeman, 1992), p. 166.

[2] Akçalı Uzunhasan, Hatice Selen, "War of Images: Visual Propaganda Efforts of German and British Governments in Turkey During the Second World War", *İnsan ve İnsan*, 9/32 (2022), p. 68.

most effective and critical instrument in these global propaganda wars was radio, and Burhan Belge's *Günün Meseleleri* (Issues of the Day) was the most significant program that Turkey utilised in order to convey its narratives and counter foreign propaganda efforts through radio. *Günün Meseleleri* was aired on Ankara Radio. It was 15-minute program that was prepared and presented by Burhan Belge on Saturdays at 09.45 p.m. With Belge's *Günün Meseleleri*, Turkey not only conveyed and reinforced its own policies and narratives but also countered the propaganda campaigns directed against it. In doing so, this thesis highlights Turkey's utilisation of radio for its propaganda and counter propaganda efforts.

The 20th century was a pivotal period in history. It brought profound changes in almost every aspect of life, from politics to economics, and from culture to technology. During this century, the world experienced two devastating world wars, and their lasting consequences continue to shape the world today, particularly the effects of the Second World War. Whereas the impacts of the world wars of the 20th century were extensive and multifaceted, one of the most critical features of the 20th century wars was the emergence of total war, which marked a significant shift in the nature and scale of the modern warfare and therefore led to a complete transformation in the way that wars were fought.

As Taylor underlined, earlier wars such as the Napoleonic Wars or the American War of Independence already hinted at this concept of total war as they involved an elevated level of engagement from the public. Nonetheless, the world wars of the 20th century, notably the Second World War were quite distinct from previous wars not only in their scope but also in the extent to which civilians were directly impacted by and to some extent, directly contributed to front-line events. Citizens were now directly involved in the war, which had been perceived as a fight for the country's survival and hence all available resources such as military, economic, industrial, human, and psychological had to be utilized in order to win or prevent loss.[3] In other words, this new form of warfare switched the line of combat closer than ever to the lives of ordinary citizens, and the consequences of the war were now

[3] Taylor, Philip. *Munitions of the Mind: A History of Propaganda from the Ancient World to the Present Era*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), p. 173.

felt directly in the daily life such as air raids, and intense pressure on emotions and psychology, making the effects of the conflict more apparent to ordinary citizen than before. In this turbulent environment, propaganda emerged one of the most crucial tools to be utilised in the war. Each country, either at war or non-belligerent, understood the importance of propaganda dissemination and accordingly employed various tactics to convey their narratives not only to the international audience but also to their domestic populations.

The rapid advancements in communication technologies in the 20th century, particularly radio, further facilitated the widespread dissemination of propaganda. This allowed governments to reach millions of people simultaneously by overcoming barriers such as language, geography, and literacy. At the same time, these technological advancements in the communication technologies made the nations more vulnerable and open to foreign propaganda campaigns. As a result, propaganda began to be used as a significant component of wars as the battle for hearts and minds extended beyond the battlefield into the realm of information where words, images, and symbols have become powerful weapons. Therefore, as propaganda emerged as a key part of modern warfare, countries had to think not only about their military power but also about how to exert their influence over other nations and on their own citizens, while protecting them from the influence of foreign propaganda. This dynamic drastically affected the policies of countries during the Second World War, and Turkey was no exception in this regard. In this context, Turkey's radio broadcasts during the wartime should not be understood solely as a source of communication, entertainment, or education, but rather as an instrument of state policy which was designed to disseminate Turkey's stance and protect its interests.

Turkey, throughout the majority of the Second World War, spanning from its outbreak until 23 February 1945, adhered to a policy of active neutrality,[4] and devoted all its energy to staying out of the war. Although there was a leadership change with the death of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and İsmet İnönü became the president in November 1938, Turkish foreign policy during the period of İnönü, did

[4] Deringil, Selim, *Turkish Foreign Policy during the Second World War: An Active Neutrality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). p. 15.

not differ fundamentally from the Turkish foreign policy of the Atatürk period. Turkey continued to maintain its policy of ‘’Peace at home, Peace in the World’’ as new president İnönü and most of his associates remembered well how the Ottoman Empire had been dragged to its destruction by its involvement in the First World War.[5]

Turkey knew that there were revisionist states that aimed to change the status quo in its region and hence began to look for ways to preserve the status quo before the beginning of the Second World War. For instance, in the Balkans, Turkey, Yugoslavia, Greece and Romania were in favour of preserving the status quo in the region and materialised their intent to preserve the status quo by signing the Balkan Pact. They perceived Italy as the most significant danger to the region[6] and accordingly, excluded Albania from the pact as it was militarily and economically dependent on Italy.[7] Furthermore, although they wanted to include Bulgaria in the Balkan Pact, it refused to join in the pact as it would mean accepting the territorial status quo in the region, which it believed was contrary to its interests. Thus, the Balkan Pact demonstrated Turkey’s commitment and willingness to preserve the existing political and territorial status quo in its western borders. Turkey also separately signed the Treaty of Friendship, Impartiality, Conciliation and Arbitrator's Agreement[8] (*Türk-Yunan Dostluk, Bitaraflık, Uzlaşma ve Hakem Muahedenamesi*) with Greece and a ten-year friendship treaty with the Soviet Union in 1935.

In addition, Turkey signed a similar pact for its eastern borders, named the Saadabad Pact with Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Additionally, in 1936, Turkey signed the Treaty of Montreux, which allowed Turkey to place its own troops into the Straits of Çanakkale and İstanbul which were demilitarised as a result of the Lausanne Peace Treaty, build fortifications in these straits, and become the authority for regulating

[5] Shaw, Stanford and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey Volume II: Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808-1975* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 396.

[6] Türkeş, Mustafa, ‘‘The Balkan Pact and its Immediate Implications for the Balkan States, 1930-34’’, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 30/1 (1994), p. 123.

[7] Türkeş, “The Balkan Pact and its Immediate Implications for the Balkan States, 1930-34”, p. 133.

[8] Koçak, Cemil, *Türkiye’de Milli Şef Dönemi*: *1938-1945* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1996), p. 229.

navigation in the Straits.[9] In other words, Turkey regained its sovereignty and control over the Straits by restoring its authority over the Straits. Lastly, Turkey solved the Hatay Question, which had been a source of dispute between Turkey and France, in its favour and Hatay joined Turkey in 1939. With these strategic moves, Turkey aimed to secure its borders from west to east, and from north to south, and to preserve the status quo in its region. These were the main developments in the Turkish foreign policy before the Second World War. Nevertheless, all these moves in order to secure its borders, and its non-belligerent status did not make Turkey exempt from the foreign propaganda wars, and Turkey had to actively participate in these global propaganda wars, both to disseminate its own discourse to domestic and international audiences and to protect its citizens from the influence of foreign propaganda campaigns that targeted it.

1.1. The Secondary Literature Survey

The main argument put forward in this thesis requires a critical assessment of primary sources and the existing secondary literature on Turkey's propaganda and counter-propaganda campaigns through radio during the Second World War. Although there are considerable scholarly works that focus on propaganda environment during the war, these studies, however, often focus on the Allies and the Axis powers, and in the case of Turkey, specifically its use of radio for propaganda, has had very limited academic consideration. Despite the significance of the topic for analysing how Turkey conveyed its narratives to international and domestic audiences and countered the narratives that targeted its wartime policies, there is a notable absence of comprehensive academic research on this topic.

A few scholarly works that focus on the role of radio, or Turkey's propaganda and counter propaganda activities during the Second World War do not directly address how radio was utilised by Turkey for its propaganda purposes**.** Instead, these scholarly works tend to focus on themes such as the history of communication, cultural importance of radio, or belligerent countries' propaganda campaigns directed

[9] Mango, Andrew, ''Atatürk'', in *The Cambridge History of Turkey Volume 4: Turkey in the Modern World*, ed. Reşat Kasaba (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 169.

against Turkey such as Paddy Scannell's *Radio, Television, and Modern Life*[10], and Johannes Glasneck's *Türkiye'de Faşist Alman Propagandası*[11]. Hence, these studies often overlook the critical place that radio occupied for propaganda making during the war in Turkey. In addition, another critical absence of the existing literature is that they generally overlook the archival documents in the state archives of Turkey. Both Republican and Diplomatic Archives of Turkey have valuable documents for the wartime period, and they offer critical information on Turkey's propaganda and counter-propaganda activities during the Second World War. This situation could be explained by the fact that some critical archival documents, which this thesis used extensively, have only recently been opened to researchers. The availability of these sources allows for empirically grounded and more nuanced study of Turkey's propaganda campaigns. By using these archival materials, this thesis challenges the existing assumptions and offers a new perspective on Turkey's propaganda and counter propaganda efforts during the Second World War and argues that despite its neutral status during the war, Turkey actively engaged in propaganda and counter propaganda campaigns, and radio was the most crucial instrument in these campaigns.

Within this context, there are few scholarly works that address the history and institutional development of radio in Turkey during the war years. These works, although their main focus is not propaganda, provide valuable contextual and structural information on how radio in Turkey was established and transformed into a state-controlled medium, especially during the Second World War.

Uygur Kocabaşoğlu's *Şirket Telsizinden Devlet Radyosuna: TRT Öncesi Dönemde Radyonun Tarihsel Gelişimi ve Türk Siyasal Hayatı İçindeki Yeri* provides invaluable information on the history of Turkish radio between 1926 and 1964[12]. In his work,

[10] Scannell, Paddy, *Radio, Television, and Modern Life: A Phenomenological Approach* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996).

[11] Glasneck, Johannes, *Türkiye'de Faşist Alman Propagandası*, trans. Arif Gelen (Ankara: Onur Yayınları, 1976).

[12] Kocabaşoğlu, Uygur, *Şirket Telsizinden Devlet Radyosuna: TRT Öncesi Dönemde Radyonun Tarihsel Gelişimi ve Türk Siyasal Hayatı İçindeki Yeri* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Yayınları, 1980).

Kocabaşoğlu not only discusses the organizational and technical features of radio but also examined the changes that fundamentally changed the structure of radio, such as the laws and regulations enacted regarding radio and its management. He also detailly analyses the changes made in the radio organisation in order to utilise radio more effectively during the Second World War. In addition, his study provides significant information about the quantity and quality of radio broadcasting in Turkey. His work provides data on the expansion of radio infrastructure in Turkey, including detailed information on the construction of new radio stations, and the growth in the number of radio receivers across the country.

Furthermore, he analysed the content of the broadcasts and provided detailed figures about the duration of the programs. Nevertheless, Kocabaşoğlu does not provide any information how Turkey strategically used radio for propaganda and counter-propaganda purposes. He only highlighted that the Second World War required a new radio management, and the government shaped radio in accordance with the necessities of the war. In other words, Kocabaşoğlu thoroughly analysed the transformation that the radio underwent to increase its capacity as a medium for propaganda. However, his analysis stopped at this point, and he did not study how radio was utilised in the process of propaganda and counter propaganda making.

Meltem Ahıska's *Occidentalism in Turkey: Questions of Modernity and National Identity in Radio Broadcasting* is a significant scholarly work that focused on the role of radio in the propaganda making. [13] In her book, she analysed how radio was used for propaganda purposes. Nevertheless, she overlooked how Turkey utilised radio for its propaganda campaigns. Rather, she studied how Britain, with BBC, prepared propaganda broadcasts that sought to influence the Turkish public opinion. According to her, British propaganda's goal was to influence the Turkish public by establishing a dialogical connection with the Turkish culture. However, she failed to explore how these propaganda campaigns of Britain were perceived by the Turkish government and public, their effect on Turkish audience nor she examined the counter propaganda tactics that Turkey developed as a response. Furthermore, she

[13] Ahıska, Meltem, *Occidentalism in Turkey: Questions of Modernity and National Identity in Turkish Radio Broadcasting* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014).

studied how radio was used by Turkey to construct a pure voice through marginalisation of oriental music and the shaping old songs such as Greek and Armenian into a new genre of Turkish folk music. Nevertheless, she did not thoroughly analyse how radio was instrumentalised by the Turkish government to disseminate its course to different audiences during the war.

Nurgün Koç's article "Cumhuriyetin İlk Yıllarında Radyo" examines the effects of radio on the political, social, and cultural structure of the Turkish Republic during its early years. [14] Koç argues that radio was employed mainly for propaganda purposes, particularly during the Second World War. Furthermore, she highlights that the power of radio began to increase in Turkey from late 1920s onwards. For the newly founded state, radio proved to be a crucial instrument in disseminating government's policies and hence consolidating the new regime. Koç specifies that social, political, and cultural content broadcast on the radio was instrumentalised for the adoption and institutionalisation of the new order. However, while Koç acknowledges the power of radio and its role in propaganda making, she does not examine how Turkey employed radio for propaganda and counter propaganda. In other words, even though Koç underlines that Turkey utilised radio for disseminating its policies, she fails to substantiate her claim with concrete evidence. Thus, Koç's analysis remains largely descriptive.

Ali Okur's "1927-1950 Yılları Arasında Türkiye'de Radyo Yayıncılığı" provides a broad historical overview of radio broadcasting in Turkey between 1927 and 1950.[15] Okur correctly points out to radio's emergence as an important instrument of propaganda, particularly during the Second World War. Nevertheless, his analysis of radio broadcasting during the war years remains analytically limited. Whereas his work examines how the government officials perceived radio and its strategic importance, he does not study how radio was utilised for propaganda and counter-propaganda making and this makes his analysis largely descriptive.

[14] Koç, Nurgün, "Cumhuriyetin İlk Yıllarında Radyo'', *Cumhuriyet Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 8/15 (2012), pp. 73-74.

[15] Okur, Ali, "1927-1950 Yılları Arasında Türkiye'de Radyo Yayıncılığı'', (Unpublished Master's Thesis, Hacettepe University, 2019).

Hatice Selen Akçalı Uzunhasan's "Political Propaganda During the Single-Party Regime in Turkey (1931-1946)" is a valuable scholarly work that focuses on the political propaganda activities of the Turkish government during the given period. [16] In this work, Turkey's propaganda activities are categorised into two chronological periods as "revolution propaganda and "wartime propaganda", and it is argued that these two periods had different propaganda objectives. Although it is correct that propaganda objectives of the two periods differed to some extent, the foundations of Turkey's wartime propaganda had been laid before the war and Uzunhasan's study does not consider this fact. Furthermore, Uzunhasan's study claims that the Matbuat Umum Müdürlüğü (General Directorate of Press, hereafter MUM) was the institution that was responsible for propaganda in both periods. Whilst this institution was responsible for propaganda in Turkey, its actual role as the main propaganda institution and watchdog over media only began in 1940, but Uzunhasan overlooks this distinction. In other words, Uzunhasan fails to make a clear distinction between the MUM, which was affiliated with the Ministry of the Interior, and the wartime MUM, whose powers were significantly expanded and directly affiliated with the Prime Ministry. This conflation obscures a major institutional transformation that radically reshaped the government's capacity to disseminate information propaganda during the war. By ignoring this difference, her analysis not only simplifies the institutional structure of the period but also ignores a fundamental element necessary for understanding how propaganda was organised, coordinated, and implemented in practice.

1.2. The Thesis Plan

Based on primary sources such as published and unpublished Turkish archival materials, transcripts of radio speeches, magazines and newspapers of the period such as *Radyo* and *Ulus*, this thesis aims to fill the gap in the existing secondary literature and approaches the given period from a more nuanced perspective. Unlike the existing secondary literature referred above, that overlooks Turkey's propaganda and counter-propaganda campaigns by failing to analyse specific cases, this thesis

[16] Akçalı Uzunhasan, Hatice Selen, "*Political Propaganda during the Single-Party Regime in Turkey (1931*-1946", (Unpublished Phd Dissertation, Boğaziçi University, 2016).

examines these propaganda and counter-propaganda campaigns of Turkey through a detailed study of Burhan Belge's radio speeches and supports the analysis of these speeches by making use of archival materials and other primary sources.

Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 examines the institutionalisation of radio broadcasting in Turkey, and this chapter traces the establishment and organisation of Türk Telsiz Telefon Anonim Şirketi (The Turkish Wireless Telephone Joint Stock Company, hereafter TTTAŞ) which was Turkey's first private radio broadcasting entity. The chapter further examines the fact that although it was formally a private enterprise, it operated under strict government control. This chapter shows how Turkey, by the second half of 1930s, came to recognise importance of effective communication not only for conveying its own narratives to public but also for countering hostile narratives. Although Turkey's radio broadcasting experience had taken its roots earlier in the decade, the existing radio infrastructure appeared to be insufficient for a countrywide and effective transmission. At the same time, Turkey began to realise that other countries had already begun to utilise their radios for propaganda purposes. In light of these developments, Turkey took a step to build a new radio infrastructure that would enable itself for a countrywide radio broadcasting. In parallel to this move, Turkey also brought the management of radio under its direct control to ensure that it would be employed in the approaching war. This chapter also examines how Turkey attempted to increase the number of radio devices across the country and aimed to increase the number of radio listeners. That is why, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (the Republican People's Party, hereafter CHP) began to equip Halkevleri (People's Houses) with radio devices. By the end of the 1930s, the government felt the need to have strict control over press, including radio and this led to the reorganisation of MUM under the Prime Ministry in 1940, and radio management were subordinated to it.

Chapter 3 explores the propaganda environment in Turkey by emphasising the central role of radio in propaganda and counter propaganda efforts and argues that radio broadcasting during the Second World War in Turkey employed not only as a means of communication but also as a strategic instrument to disseminate its own

discourse. The chapter further contends that the Turkish government's approach to radio during the war was shaped by three main dynamics: the centralisation of radio management under the MUM, which aligned broadcasting with government's broader wartime policies; use of radio as a medium of mass influence both domestically and internationally; and its employment as the principal channel to counter foreign propaganda that targeted Turkey. In addition, Turkey recognised that foreign radio broadcasts also targeted Turkish citizens and exposed them foreign propaganda messages. Thus, Turkey began to closely monitor these foreign radio broadcasts. This chapter also examines how this monitoring was conducted and which institutions were responsible for it. By analysing these dynamics, Chapter 3 demonstrates how the Turkish government adapted radio to wartime conditions and transformed it into a vital instrument of propaganda and counter-propaganda.

As radio became Turkey's most vital propaganda and counter-propaganda instrument, Chapter 4 turns to the figure who most effectively embodied this role: Burhan Belge. Chapter 4 begins with an analysis of Belge's early life and career, arguing that his experiences shaped his worldview, interpretations, and communication style that significantly affected the tone of his speeches. Building on this foundation, Chapter 4 provides an in-depth analysis of Belge's *Günün Meseleleri*. Belge's radio speeches are analysed to reveal how he conveyed Turkey's wartime stance and policies to domestic and international audiences and how he responded to and refuted foreign propaganda campaigns, particularly those that originated from the Axis powers. It is further argued that Belge maintained a positive and sympathetic tone toward the Allies while he had a negative and critical tone toward the Axis powers. Chapter 4 also examines why Belge had a positive tone toward the Allies and argues that he believed, from the onset of the war, that the Allies would emerge victorious from the war. Overall, Chapter 4 argues that although Turkey adopted a neutrality policy in the much of the war, it faced foreign propaganda campaigns that sought to undermine its stance in the war, and Turkey had to respond these propaganda campaigns, and Burhan Belge's *Günün Meseleleri* was the most important instrument that Turkey employed in order to neutralise these attacks and to disseminate its own discourse.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORY OF RADIO BROADCASTING IN TURKEY (1923-1939)

This chapter traces the history, and structure of radio broadcasting in Turkey between 1923 and 1939 and studies the foundation of Turkey's professional radio broadcasting endeavours. It argues that although Turkey first established a semi-private radio company and this company held the right for radio broadcasting for ten years, the upcoming Second World War increased the need for country-wide radio access in order for government to disseminate its propaganda to wider audiences. To this end, Turkey decided to build new and powerful radio stations, and monopolised the radio broadcasting. In this way, it would have more direct control over the radio. In addition, while it sought to strengthen the radio infrastructure across the country, it also aimed to increase the number of radio listeners across the country and developed new policies for it.

2.1. Turkey's First Radio Enterprise: *Türk Telsiz Telefon Anonim Şirketi*

The origins of radio broadcasting in Turkey can be traced back to the days of the Independence War (1919-1922). Recognizing the significance of communication during wartime, both for the front-line communication and disseminating news to the domestic audience, it became evident that Turkey lagged in contemporary communication technologies as it experienced difficulties in the communication efforts. [17] To overcome this communication problem, a new law was passed by the parliament in 1925 which authorised the government to establish large wireless stations in Ankara and İstanbul and an internal wireless network in the country.[18]

[17] Kocabaşoğlu, *Şirket Telsizinden Devlet Radyosuna,* p. 9.

[18] Kocabaşoğlu, *Şirket Telsizinden Devlet Radyosuna,* p. 9.

A commission was established in 1925, including the representatives from the Posta Telgraf ve Telefon Umum Müdürlüğü (the Post, Telegraph and Telephone Directorate General, hereafter PTT) and the Ministry of National Defence, to oversee the development of radio broadcasting in Turkey. This commission was responsible for preparing the technical and administrative specifications for the tender process related to the establishment of radio stations. After finalising the necessary documents, the commission received proposals from several companies that were interested in undertaking the project, initiating one of the first formal steps toward building a countrywide radio network.

A total of five companies participated in the tender and three of five bidding companies were not accepted because their bids did not comply with the technical specifications that was determined for the tender. Thus, there were two companies left to bid in the tender, and these companies were German Siemens and French Compagnie general française de telegraphie sans fil (hereafter TSF). After the evaluations of the bid prices submitted by the competing firms, TSF was selected as the successful bidder because of its competitive price and its expertise on the field of radio technologies.[19] After the finalisation of the agreement, the construction works commenced in 1925. By 1927, important progress had been made, and radiotelegraphic connection was established with large capitals such as Moscow, Berlin, and London[20] and radio broadcasts officially started.[21] While the construction works were ongoing, it remained unclear who would operate the radio. However, one year before the construction was completed, on 6 January 1926, a company was founded with the permission of the government to run the radio broadcasting, named TTTAŞ which marked a significant milestone in the Turkish radio broadcasting history as it represented Turkey's first professional radio broadcasting entity and the TTTAŞ was granted an authorisation for ten years to conduct radio broadcasting in Turkey.[22]

[19] Kocabaşoğlu, *Şirket Telsizinden Devlet Radyosuna,* p. 9.

[20] Kocabaşoğlu, *Şirket Telsizinden Devlet Radyosuna*, p. 10.

[21] Deniz, Ünsal, "İstanbul Radyosu'nun İlk Dönemindeki (1927) Müzik Yayınları", *Eurasian Journal of Music and Dance*, 14 (2019), p. 65.

[22] Kocabaşoğlu, *Şirket Telsizinden Devlet Radyosuna*, p. 37.

Although some scholars, including Meltem Ahıska, have argued that the TTTAŞ was a Turkish-French joint stock company[23], this claim seems to be misleading and lacks concrete evidence. It is significant to underscore that the tender granted to the TSF was strictly for the construction of the radio stations. The tender agreement did not, in any form, authorise the TSF to operate the stations once the construction works were completed. As the TTTAŞ's ownership structure demonstrates, it had no ties to France whatsoever.

The ownership of the TTTAŞ was made up of three key stakeholders. 30% of the shares belonged to the state-owned Anadolu Agency, 40% to İş Bank, and the remaining 30% to the entrepreneurial Turkish group,[24] made up of shares belonged to Falih Rıfkı Atay, Cemal Hüsnü Taray, and Sedat Nuri İleri.[25] According to Kocabaşoğlu, the founders of the company were Minister of Interior Cemil Uybadın, the head of İş Bank, Mahmut Celal Bayar, Anadolu Agency board member Falih Rıfkı Atay, and journalist Sedat Nuri İleri.[26] In 1941, in the official radio journal, *Radyo*, Fuat Münir Bener who later became the chief of publications in the Ankara Radio[27] confirmed Kocabaşoğlu's point and wrote that the İş Bank and the Anadolu Agency were among the founders of the TTTAŞ.[28] In addition, the chairman of the board of directors included Mahmut Soydan who was an MP for Siirt and the chairman of board of İş Bank , the second chairman was Falih Rıfkı Atay who was an MP for Ankara and a prominent journalist, and the other members of the board of directors were İş Bank İstanbul manager Muammer Eriş, Anadolu Agency İstanbul representative Ethem Hidayet Akımsar, and Sedat Nuri İleri. That is to say, TTTAŞ and hence the radio broadcasting was under the influence and supervision of the government from the very outset.

---

[23] Ahıska, *Occidentalism in Turkey*, p. 70.

[24] İleri, Sedat Nuri, *Telsiz*, 1927, p. 5, in Deniz, "İstanbul Radyosunun İlk Dönemindeki (1927) Müzik Yayınları", p. 67.

[25] Kocabaşoğlu, *Şirket Telsizinden Devlet Radyosuna*, p. 37.

[26] Kocabaşoğlu, *Şirket Telsizinden Devlet Radyosuna*, pp. 12-13.

[27] Yazgan, Teoman, "Cumhuriyet'in Örnek Bir Kültür Kurumu: Ankara Radyosu", *TRT Akademi* 1/1 (2016), p. 301.

[28] Bener, Fuat Münir, "Radyomuz Onbeş Yaşında," *Radyo*, 15 December 1941, p. 4.

Despite being a private entity, it had some serious government influence from its inception in terms of its founders' identity, capital structure, and governmental interventions.[29] For instance, a commissioner appointed by the government from the PTT was tasked with overseeing and regulating the radio broadcasts on a day-to-day basis.[30] In addition, news bulletins that were broadcasted over the radio were not prepared by the TTTAŞ's employees but instead prepared by state-owned Anadolu Agency[31] to ensure that content of the news would be in line with the official narratives. Furthermore, many of its founders were closely linked with the government such as Celal Bayar who would later serve as the country's prime minister and eventually as the third president of Turkey. The presence of such figures in the TTTAŞ highlights that it was never entirely detached from the government. Whereas the government outsourced some activities of the TTTAŞ such as technical matters, it retained substantial control over it.

The main reason of those scholars who claim that the French had a partnership in the TTTAŞ is that the company sometimes broadcasted in French, required good knowledge of French when recruiting, and there were French texts at the end of each issue of *Telsiz* (Wireless) magazine, the official journal of the TTTAŞ. French texts consisted of letters from individuals who expressed their opinions about the magazine and radio, and the program flow of Istanbul Radio in French.[32] Nonetheless, there was no reference to French partnership in any of the tender documents or in the founding agreement of the TTTAŞ.[33] Broadcasting in French might be explained by the fact that French was the *lingua franca* of the period. Furthermore, the popularity of radio broadcasts in French content likely influenced the TTTAŞ's program flow and its recruitment processes. Hence, whilst the occasional use of French in TTTAŞ's broadcasts and publications might suggest that

[29] Arvas, İbrahim Sena, "Türkiye'nin Radyo ile Tanışması ve Türk Telsiz Telefon Anonim Şirketi", *International Journal of Cultural and Social Studies*, 4/2 (2018), p. 420.

[30] Bener, "Radyomuz Onbeş Yaşında", p. 5.

[31] Ahıska, *Occidentalism in Turkey*, p. 75.

[32] Akagündüz, Ümit, "Radyoculuğumuzun Cumhuriyetin İlk Yıllarındaki Serüveni ve Telsiz Mecmuası", *Kekibeç*, 37 (2014), p. 365.

[33] Arvas, "Türkiye'nin Radyo ile Tanışması ve Türk Telsiz Telefon Anonim Şirketi", p. 417.

there was a degree of cultural influence, it does not suggest that there was a formal partnership, or shared ownership between Turkey and France. The TTTAŞ was, from the very outset, a Turkish entity and was under the influence of the Turkish government. Its use of French should be attributed to pragmatic reasons rather than contractual obligation to France.

From 1926 to 1936, the TTTAŞ held the solo right to manage and operate all radio broadcasting and radio related activities in Turkey. During this period, it was authorised not only to operate the radio transmitters that were located in İstanbul and Ankara but also the right to expand the radio infrastructure by constructing new stations in other cities, if approved by the government.[34] However, in 1936, an important shift happened when the government decided not to renew the agreement that granted the TTTAŞ the right to run the radio broadcasting throughout Turkey. This decision marked a move toward bringing the control of the radio more directly under the control of the government. Consequently, the TTTAŞ's sole authority over radio officially came to an end, and the company was dissolved. This move marked a decade long chapter in the history of Turkish radio broadcasting and paved the way for the establishment of a state-run radio broadcasting.

Thus, from 1936, the government officially assumed the duty of radio broadcasting[35] which marked the beginning of an era in which radio became a medium that was fully monopolised by the state. This move highlighted a significant change in how radio broadcasting was regulated and managed in Turkey. In other words, a new era began where radio was no longer under the indirect supervision of the state but used as an extension of the state and used in accordance with its policies and national interests. Nonetheless, it would be inaccurate to describe the TTTAŞ as a completely private, and independent entity. The eventual dissolution of it, on the other hand, enabled the government to assert its impact directly on radio broadcasting. With the direct governmental control on radio, its organisation, content, and objectives were now directly determined by the government. With the radio under its sole authority,

[34] Ahıska, *Occidentalism in Turkey*, p. 69.

[35] Bener, "Radyomuz Onbeş Yaşında", p. 5.

the government obtained the capacity to utilise this medium not only for conveying the official narrative to the public but also for advancing its strategic and educational goals.

2.2. Wave Control: The State Monopolization of Radio and the Ankara Radio

When the agreement that granted the TTTAŞ the right to operate the radio endeavours in Turkey came to an end in 1936, the government decided that the radio operations would be handled by the PTT. Consequently, all rights and responsibilities pertaining the radio broadcasting were given to the PTT, which at the time was located under the Ministry of Public Works.[36] In addition to the transfer of rights and responsibilities, the personnel of the repealed TTTAŞ, including engineers, and technical and administrative employees were also transferred to the PTT[37]. The organisational structure of the radio was also reorganised. In this newly structured organization, the Ministry of Public Works held the highest authority. The General Directorate of the PTT, operating under the ministry, assumed the full responsibility for radio broadcasting. The management of radio operations was delegated to the Post and Telegraph Directorates in İstanbul and Ankara, both of which were subordinate to the PTT. Within these directorates, studio directorates were established, under which separate departments for speech broadcasting (*söz neşriyatı*) and music broadcasting were organized. [38]

When the government monopolised the radio broadcasting, it soon came to realise that the existing radio infrastructure was far from being adequate for nation-wide and effective radio broadcasting. One of the most pressing issues was the low signal strength of the existing radio stations in İstanbul and Ankara. At the time, both Ankara and İstanbul radio stations' signal strengths were five kilowatts, which was considered very low for effective and nation-wide radio broadcasting. Due to this low signal power, Ankara and İstanbul radios were often unlistenable. This became

[36] Kocabaşoğlu, *Şirket Telsizinden Devlet Radyosuna*, p. 136.

[37] Bener, "Radyomuz Onbeş Yaşında", p. 4.

[38] Kocabaşoğlu, *Şirket Telsizinden Devlet Radyosuna*, p. 178.

evident through the letters and reports that were received by the CHP, which highlighted the poor quality and limited reach of the existing stations. In a letter to the General Secretariat of the CHP from Siirt Halkevi, it was complained that the Ankara and İstanbul radios were frequently unlistenable. On the other hand, while people in Siirt were barely able to listen to the Turkish national radio, they were able to clearly listen to the Belgrade radio's Turkish broadcasts.[39] This posed a serious threat as it meant that the domestic audience was open to foreign propaganda messages through radio broadcasts because they were unable to tune into their national radio stations. As a result, when they turned on their radios, they had usually no choice but to listen to foreign radio stations which not only would hinder the government's ability to convey its messages to the domestic audience, but also making the public susceptible to foreign propaganda messages. In other words, whereas the Turkish government had difficulties to disseminate its messages to its citizens, countries that thousands of kilometres away were able to reach to the Turkish audience and disseminate their propaganda messages directly to the Turkish audience.

The General Secretariat of the CHP received many similar letters from its regional branches throughout the country, and all were sharing the same concern: the poor quality and hence limited reach of national radio broadcasting in their respective areas. These letters emphasised the inadequate radio infrastructure which hindered the government's ability to disseminate the official views, news and educational content to its citizens. In response to these appeals, the government took an important step and decided to establish new radio stations in the country. With this initiative, government aimed not only to increase the overall quality of the radio broadcasts but also to ensure that most parts of the country would have access to Turkish radio broadcasts which would increase its reach to the citizens. That is to say, the government's ultimate goal was to narrow the communication gap between the centre and the periphery. In 1936, Ankara and İstanbul were initially chosen as the locations where new, modern, and powerful radio stations would be constructed[40]. However,

[39] 16 July 1936: Devlet Arşivleri, Cumhuriyet Arşivi, Ankara (hereafter BCA), 490.10.01.23.51.15.2.

[40] 29 July 1936: BCA, 030.18.01.02.67.65.7.

although government's aim was to construct two new radio stations, only the Ankara Radio station was built, and the İstanbul radio station's construction was not realised at the time. In the same year, government announced an international tender for the construction of the Ankara Radio. This tender attracted serious interest from well-known international companies that were specialised in the communication technologies, especially radio technology. Companies participating in the tender included American Marconi's Wireless Telegraph Company, German Telefunken and Lorenz, and Dutch Philips. After the evaluations, The Marconi's Wireless Telegraph Company of America was awarded the contract with 1,735,10 liras.[41] Etimesgut, a district of Ankara, was selected as the centre where the new radio receivers would be constructed. The Turkish government informed the foreign embassies in Ankara and declared Etimesgut a non-fly zone as a security measure.[42] At the same, new radio studios that were equipped with modern devices were constructed in the centre of Ankara.

Construction works for the new radio station commenced in 1937 after the completion of the tender process and by 1938, construction works was finally completed. On 28 October 1938, one day before the Republic Day, the Ankara Radio officially started broadcasting which marked a critical milestone in the Turkish communication history. [43] The start of the radio broadcasting from Ankara was met with great public attention and perceived as a major development of the Republican era. Bener praised Ankara Radio with the following words: "In this way, the Turkish nation had a strong radio station, which was one of the countless beneficial works of the Republican government and took a worthy position in the radio world."[44]

2.3. Radio as a Major Propaganda Tool

Even before the construction of the new Ankara Radio had begun, the government had already realised the great potential of radio as a powerful tool for propaganda to

[41] Bener, "Radyomuz Onbeş Yaşında'', p. 5.

[42] 3 November 1938: Devlet Arşivleri, Türk Diplomatik Arşivi, Ankara (hereafter TDA), 22.15.15.21.51.81.116.

[43] Kocabaşoğlu, *Şirket Telsizinden Devlet Radyosuna*, p. 148.

[44] Bener, "Radyomuz Onbeş Yaşında'', p. 5.

shape the public opinion and disseminate its messages to the broader public. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's opening address to mark the legislative year of the Grand National Assembly in 1935 signalled that the government's goal was to utilise radio as an important tool for propaganda. In his speech, Atatürk stated that "It would be appropriate for you (the Assembly) to give importance to the radio, which is not only essential for national culture but also of great significance in international relations."[45] Following Atatürk's words, CHP took action. In the declaration that was published after the 4th Grand Congress of the party on May 9, 1935, the article 51 of the fifth section, it was stated that "the party considers radio to be one of the most valuable tools for the cultural and political education of the nation. The party will establish powerful broadcasting stations and ensure the easy and affordable procurement of radio devices."[46]

Accordingly, the government decided to give a large space for propaganda broadcasts since radio was an ideal medium for propaganda dissemination in countries where the literacy rate was low.[47] Obviously, Turkey was in this category and it was clear that the impact of print media propaganda would be quite limited in Turkey, where a significant part of the population was illiterate.[48] Radio, on the other hand, allowed news and propaganda messages to reach wider audiences by transcending the boundaries of literacy. Furthermore, it became a medium where words and thoughts were electronically transmitted and disseminated.[49] Hence, it was perceived as the best medium that could bring what was thought and said in the world to the illiterate and uneducated audience.[50] In addition, its timeless nature allowed it to integrate into daily life, whether passively listened to in the background during routine activities or

[45] https://ata.msb.gov.tr/Genel/icerik/1-kasim-1935-tarihli-konusmasi (accessed 11 August 2025).

[46] Okur, "1927-1950 Yılları Arasında Türkiye'de Radyo Yayıncılığı'', p. 91.

[47] MacDonald, Callum A., "Radio Bari: Italian Wireless Propaganda in the Middle East and British Countermeasures 1934-38", *Middle Eastern Studies*, 13/2 (1977), p. 195.

[48] Koçak, *Türkiye'de Milli Şef Dönemi*: *1938-1945*, p. 472.

[49] Ong, Walter J., *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Routledge, 1982), p. 2.

[50] Dinsman, Melissa, *Modernism at the Microphone: Radio, Propaganda, and Literary Aesthetics during World War II* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), p. 7.

actively and attentively while sitting alone and thereby increased its impact on public opinion.

Another significant difference between radio and print media was, according to Burhan Belge, who was the chief advisor (*başmüşavir*) at the General Directorate of Press, that radio is a more effective tool for persuasion than the print media. Belge stated that radio is an easier medium for persuasion:

> Since the ear, not the eye, that receives what the radio says, human memory cannot establish a continuous logical control over its content. Speeches through radio are like objects blown by the wind, either entering one ear and exiting the other, or if it has had a deep effect, they might resurface through listener's own speech. However, if this process is made to belong to certain event clusters and taken within a certain period of time, then what the radio does becomes tangible, visualised, and defined. In this case, the necessary persuasion has been made and has come into being.[51]

As the power of radio for reaching masses became more apparent, some members of the government also began to recognise the need to use it more frequently. In a letter written to the Prime Ministry on 29 August 1938, Minister of Public Works Ali Çetinkaya emphasised the crucial role of radio among contemporary propaganda tools. Çetinkaya underscored the necessity of incorporating propaganda broadcasts extensively in the upcoming broadcasts of Ankara Radio as he recognised the radio's ability to reach wider audiences across the country. Çetinkaya also emphasised the significance of not only conveying propaganda messages but doing it with skill and precision. He highlighted that in order for propaganda to be functional and effective, it should be disseminated by trained and articulate orators who spoke clearly and persuasively to the public. In addition to that, he stressed that the content of these propaganda broadcasts should be tailored to resonate with the Turkish audience. In other words, Çetinkaya suggested that propaganda scripts should be carefully written, and they should be in line with the political and cultural context of the Turkish audience. To his end, Çetinkaya added that his ministry already employed some such skilled orators, and he suggested that it would be beneficial if the Prime Ministry instructed other ministries to prepare propaganda scripts related to their

[51] Belge, Burhan Asaf, "Radyo ve Gazete'', *Radyo*, 15 April 1942, p. 6.

respective fields.[52] This, he believed that, would increase the effectiveness of propaganda broadcasts.

Çetinkaya's suggestions was found reasonable by the Prime Ministry and hence in response to his letter, the Prime Ministry ordered the other ministries to prepare propaganda scripts regarding their fields in an enlightening and systematic manner. Following the directive of the Prime Ministry, these ministries began to work on propaganda materials in their respective fields by emphasising the advancements that the Republican regime had brought to Turkey.[53]

2.4. The Number of Radio Devices in Turkey

Although the government decided to use radio as a major tool in propaganda dissemination, it faced with a significant challenge. The number of radio devices throughout the country was still very low when the Ankara Radio station was opened. Moreover, the government had not decided how to operate the newly opened station. The Prime Ministry and the General Secretariat of the CHP requested detailed reports on the number of radio devices and radio operations in other countries when the construction of the Ankara Radio station was still underway. The first report was received from Türk Philips Şirketi (Company). Türk Philips suggested to the CHP General Secretariat that the number of radio stations in the country should be increased for Ankara Radio to be operated profitably and for achieving the desired level of influence over the audience. To support its suggestion, the number of radio stations in other countries and the number of radio devices per 1000 people were shared with the General Secretariat. [54]

As the table below shows, the number of radios and the number of radios per 1,000 people were high in the developed countries of the time, in comparison to Turkey. At the same time, Türk Philips estimated that in 1936, only 7,000 radio devices were

[52] 29 September 1938: BCA, 030.10.15.84.14.

[53] 31 September 1938: BCA, 030.10.15.84.14.

[54] 30 May 1936: BCA, 490.01.12.35.11.52.

available in Turkey. Nevertheless, Kocabaşoğlu, by citing Walker Hines, argued that in 1936, there were 10,640 radio devices in Turkey[55] which means the number of listeners was eventually expected to be higher. Although it is not possible to determine the exact number of radio devices and the number of radio listeners, considering that radios were listened to in public spaces and there were radios brought into the country illegally, it is still safe to argue that the number of radio devices in Turkey was quite low in comparison to other countries.

Table 1. Number of Radio Devices per 1,000 people

Countries	**Number of radio devices per 1,000 people**
Denmark	165
England	163
Germany	100
Switzerland	91
Belgium	86
Austria	80
Czechoslovakia	50
Hungary	39
Latvia	36
Japan	32
Poland	14

Türk Philips Şirketi asserted that although Turkey did not have a national radio industry and hence had no domestic production of radio devices, or its parts, it nevertheless imposed a heavy taxation on radio imports to the country which significantly restricted the entry of radios into the Turkish market. To illustrate its point, the company wrote that the taxes collected corresponded to 150% of the ex-factory price of radio devices, and this taxation significantly increased sales prices of radio devices in Turkey, thereby resulting in a discernible reduction in sales volume.

[55] Hines, Walker D., *Türkiye'nin İktisadi Bakımdan Umumi Bir Tetkiki 1933-1934* (Ankara: Köy Öğretmeni Basımevi, n.d.), p. 472 in Kocabaşoğlu, *Şirket Telsizinden Devlet Radyosuna*, p. 55.

Türk Philips contended that Turkey imported approximately 3000 radio devices annually, and posited that, with a mitigation or elimination of the tax levied on the radio imports, the annual sales could reach 25,000 radio devices. In further substantiating its argument, the company asserted that in Egypt, with a population of 12 million which was less than Turkey's population of 16 millions[57], 30.000 radio devices were sold annually by implementing a low tax policy on radio imports, and if Turkey would implement similar low tax policy on radio imports, it could reach the similar sales figures.[58]

Earlier, the General Secretariat of the CHP received another report in December 1934 from the Vice President of Turkish Aircraft Association, *Türk Hava Kurumu*, Vice President who was sent to the United States of America in order to analyse the radio system in the US. The name of the vice president was not given in the report. The only identifier provided in the signature section is "the Vice President of the Turkish Aircraft Association". Ziya Gevher who was a member of parliament for Çanakkale, asked the vice president to write a report investigating the American radio system, its establishment, propaganda method, and radio laws. The Vice president analysed the US radio system through interviews with individuals employed in the American radio industry. One such interview was conducted with the manager of the National Broadcasting Company, during which some valuable insights about the US radio system were gained. According to this report, the radio broadcasting in the United States was not subject to any monopoly, in contrast to Turkey. In the US, the radio broadcasting only necessitated a government-issued license. To acquire the license, no charges were incurred, and no extra tax was collected from radio device manufacturers other than the profit tax. Furthermore, the report highlighted that while there were a few broadcasting companies in the US, two major companies stood out: the National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) and the Columbia Broadcasting and these two companies had 600 radio stations in the country, 96 of which were classified as large stations. According to the vice president who prepared the report, thanks to this advanced radio system nationwide, radio broadcasts in the

[57] According to the population census in 1935, the population of Turkey was 16,158,018.

[58] 30 May 1936: BCA, 490.01.12.35.11.52.

United States could be carried out seamlessly and clearly for 18 hours a day.[59] These findings on the American radio system held significance as they highlighted the technological capability of the US which enabled it to have a functional countrywide radio system and was effectively able to convey its narratives to its citizens. In addition, the prolonged broadcast hours exemplified a dedication to providing continuous access to news, entertainment, and educational content which turned radio into an entertainment and education tool as well as a communication tool. In other words, radio became a popular medium in the US not only for information but also for entertainment and education. Strengthening and enhancing the appeal of the local radio was essential to deter people from listening to foreign radios, aiming to reduce their exposure to foreign propaganda dissemination through radio.

Additionally, during the interview, the manager of the National Broadcasting Company compared the American radio system with the Turkish radio system. The first comparison was on the taxes that levied on the radio broadcasting. The manager said "With the current tax rates in Turkey, establishing and broadcasting on the radio is impossible. Only the upper class might afford radio under these tax rates. Radio should contribute to the education, upbringing, and spiritual nourishment of the poor, children, students, and villagers. Turkey should not impose any tax on radio broadcasting and equipment, striving to provide cheap or even free radio services to the public."[60] For instance, in the United States, it is possible to purchase a radio for four dollars, and with this radio, one can listen to all the radios across the country. However, the manager of the National Broadcasting Company highlighted that the selling prices of radios in Turkey range from 150 to 200 lira, equivalent to 35 to 40 dollars[61] which kept the volume of radio sales low.

Apart from the reports that analysed the radio systems of foreign countries, the General Secretariat of CHP received several letters and reports from its branches throughout the country. A remarkable letter was written by the Trakya Umum

[59] 3 December 1934: BCA, 490.01.12.35.11.52.

[60] 3 December 1934: BCA, 490.01.12.35.11.52.

[61] 3 December 1934: BCA, 490.01.12.35.11.52.

Müfettişi (the General Inspector) Kazım Dirik in 1936. He wrote to the General Secretariat by highlighting the need for radio equipment such as radio receivers and external speakers that would enable the villagers to listen to radio broadcasts as a community. He stated that although their goal was to equip each village with radio devices, the current economic situation did not allow them to equip each village with the necessary equipment. Instead, he added, they identified 50 villages for which the General Inspectorate to buy radios and speakers. In response to this letter, Minister of Internal Affairs and CHP Secretary General Şükrü Kaya wrote that "although the party aimed to spread radio devices throughout the country in a systematised manner, it was stated that it would not be appropriate to procure and distribute radio devices to the villages widely before the construction of Ankara Radio is completed. Otherwise, radios to be procured for villages would be exposed to propaganda from foreign radios such as Egypt, Russia, and Bulgaria."[62] It is significant to note that the government was aware of the danger that the foreign radio broadcasts could pose as the government believed that foreign radio stations would disseminate their own messages to the Turkish audience and hence aimed to shape the Turkish public opinion in a desired way. The government was, in a sense, justified in its concerns since, as evident from previous correspondences, the İstanbul and Ankara radios, with their weak signal strengths, were often inaudible. If radio devices were sent to villages before the construction of Ankara Radio was completed, villagers would usually only be able to listen to foreign radios, as they cannot listen to the national radio, and hence would be exposed to foreign propaganda transmissions.

In this letter sent by Şükrü Kaya to Kazım Dirik, a strategy was outlined. In the letter, Kaya stressed that while it was possible to procure some radio devices for particular locations, the total number of devices should not exceed ten.[63] The main strategy was that government did not want to provide widespread access to radio immediately. Instead, it was aimed to gradually introduce radio to the public by focusing on significant locations. This approach was designed to generate curiosity and increase awareness about this new communication medium. This limited

[62] 11 August 1936: BCA, 490.01.12.35.11.52.

[63] 11 August 1936: BCA, 490.01.12.35.11.52.

distribution approach underscores the fact that the government had a nuanced understanding of radio's potential as a powerful communication medium. Instead of distributing large quantities of radio devices which could lead to exposure of foreign propaganda broadcasts, the government opted for a controlled and limited distribution of radio devices. By placing radio devices in particular locations, the aim was to get the public familiarise with the radio and display its capabilities.

2.5. The Increase of Radio Devices and Listeners in Turkey: The Role of Halkevleri in Expanding Access and Engagement

When the Ankara Radio became fully operational, the number of radio devices in Turkey soared drastically. This surge in the number of radio devices might be attributed two main factors; each had a critical role in the expansion of the radio devices across the country. The first reason was the opening of the new Ankara Radio station which enabled the citizens to listen to the national broadcast clearly and without technical constraints that had negatively affected earlier attempts at radio communication. Prior to the opening of the Ankara Radio, as it has been analysed in the previous pages, signal strength of the existing radio stations was low and that is why their reach to the wider audience was limited. Consequently, most of the Turkish audience cannot listen to the national broadcast. But with the opening of the modern Ankara Radio station which had a powerful signal strength, citizens now could listen to national broadcasts. Hence, with the new station's powerful transmission, more people might motivate themselves to buy new radio devices to listen to the Turkish radio. The second main factor for the increase in the number of radio devices was the outbreak of the Second World War which will be covered in the third chapter, as the war increased the demand for information and government perceived radio as the most important tool in news sharing and propaganda dissemination during the war.

In the first half of 1938, according to the Prime Ministry General Directorate of Statistics, 33,753 active radio devices were present in Turkey. İstanbul was, by far, the city with the most radios, with 16,933 radio devices, which was followed by Ankara and İzmir, which had 5,016 and 2,415 radio devices respectively.[64] At the end

[64] 21 June 1938: BCA, 030.10.00.24.138.16.

of 1938, the number of radio devices in Turkey increased to 46,238. In 1939, the numbers soared to 50,246. In 1939, when the Second World War started, Turkey had 50,246 licensed radio devices and from that time on, the numbers augmented significantly.

One of the primary strategies employed by the government to increase the number of radio listeners throughout the country involved equipping Halkevleri (People's Houses) with radio devices. Halkevi was established in 1932 as cultural and political centres that were designated to indoctrinate the citizens with nationalist, secularist, and populist ideas of the state. The primary goal of the Halkevleri, Karpat noted, should be assembled into two categories as cultural and political. "While the former aimed to establish a national culture based on folklore and authentic Turkish lifestyle, the latter aim focused on persuading the citizens to believe in the new principles of the state such as nationalism, and secularism, and in order to fulfil this political role, Halkevleri had to develop an effective media system, and consequently, radio occupied a critical role in this media system."[65] Halkevleri spread across the country and their numbers reached almost 500 at the end of 1945[66].

As it has been noted, radio prices were relatively high in Turkey, in comparison to other countries and the tax burden was one of the most significant, along with the low value of the Turkish lira, reasons for high prices. The government decided to exempt the radios that would be bought for Halkevleri from the customs tariffs. Although the total exemption would require a new legislation, the Council of Ministers decided that radios to be purchased by Halkevleri would be exempt from the 25% stamp tax.[67] Hence, Halkevleri would be able to buy radio devices cheaper than the actual market prices. Accordingly, Halkevleri across the country began to demand new radio devices from the General Secretariat. For instance, the Halkevi in Batman's Gercüş district wrote a letter to the CHP General Secretariat. According to this letter, although a radio device was sent when the Halkevi was first established,

[65] Karpat, H., Kemal, "The Impact of the People's Houses on the Development of Communication in Turkey: 1931-1951", *Die Welt des Islams*, 15/4 (1974), p. 60.

[66] Zürcher, Erik Jan, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), p. 180.

[67] 9 March 1937: BCA, 030.18.01.02.72.17.2

citizens could not fully benefit from this device due to several faults and malfunctioning. Gercüş Halkevi requested a new radio so that citizens could listen to the radio, particularly on 29 October.[68] A similar request came from the Halkevi in Bayındır, a district of İzmir. Bayındır Halkevi President Vasfi İdil stated in an official letter to the General Secretariat that the Halkevi had a radio, but since it was broken, the citizens had left the Halkevi's hall where they listened to radio broadcasts. Therefore, İdil wanted to purchase a new radio for Bayındır Halkevi, with an exemption from customs duty.[69] Furthermore, the General Secretariat of CHP received several similar reports from Halkevleri throughout the country.[70]

Purchasing new radios for Halkevleri was only a partial solution in the government's broader effort to increase the radio access throughout the country. In addition to purchasing new radio devices, Halkevleri administrators had also to be taught how to use these radios. To address this need, the General Secretariat of CHP sent instructional materials to Halkevleri administrations that included guidelines on how to use these radios and what to do in case of malfunction of the devices and their parts. Halkevleri administrators would be responsible for the usage and safety of the devices. Although the devices were purchased by the General Secretariat of CHP, their maintenance, and batteries would be ensured by Halkevleri administrators, and these radios were debited to Halkevleri as fixtures.[71]

Once the radio systems became fully operational in Halkevleri, they began to transform into significant places where masses gathered and listened to radio broadcasts as a community. The General Secretariat of CHP instructed Halkevleri to use these radios effectively in order to have more people listen to radio broadcasts there. To illustrate, in 1937, the General Secretariat sent a letter to Halkevleri and informed them that a conference would be held at the İstanbul University about İbn-i

[68] 12 October 1939: BCA, 490.01.12.29.91.13.

[69] 26 October 1939: BCA, 490.01.12.29.92.19.

[70] 23 November 1939: BCA, 490.01.12.29.91.2; 14 August 1939: BCA, 490.01.12.29.91.2; 18 October 1939: BCA, 490.01.12.29.92.1; 17 May 1940: BCA, 490.01.12.30.93.2; 27 September 1941: BCA, 490.01.12.30.95.1.

[71] 22 June 1939: BCA, 490.01.4.20.25.

Sina (Avicenna) which would be broadcasted. The CHP General Secretariat asked all Halkevleri to tune their radios to this conference and all Halkevleri members to listen to this broadcast en masse.[72]

Furthermore, in order to extend the reach of radio broadcasts beyond the walls of Halkevleri, the General Secretariat of CHP procured and sent external speakers that would be installed in village or district squares in addition to other important central locations. These external speakers were placed in these locations so that the broadcasts would reach more people. By doing so, government's aim was to ensure that the sound of the radio might be heard by more people such as passersby and marketgoers, in other words, by people who engaged in their daily activities. The installation of external speakers served not only to increase the accessibility to the radio but also to increase engagement with it, thus integrating the voice of the government into daily life. That is to say, people could still hear the sound of the radio in the background even as they went about their daily business, allowing the radio's messages to permeate daily life and reach wider audiences.

The government, aimed to increase the number of radio devices across the country and to ensure broader access to the radio, strategically used Halkevleri as central gathering places where masses could come together to listen to the Ankara Radio's broadcasts. As the government recognised the potential of Halkevleri to serve as places for communal radio listening places, it launched a countrywide campaign that aimed to equip Halkevleri with radio devices. To this end, the government allocated significant resources to the purchase of radio devices for Halkevleri. In addition, the architectural features of Halkevleri were configured to facilitate communal gatherings. The General Secretariat of CHP, through directives to Halkevleri, determined specific standards to be adhered to in the constructions, or renovations of Halkevleri. This directive set some certain significant features in the design and layout of Halkevleri. Following these directives, it was envisaged to build a hall for at least 300 people, where cinema and radio screenings could be held in Halkevleri.[73]

[72] 16 June 1937: BCA, 490.01.3.15.29.

[73] 13 April 1939: BCA, 490.01.4.20.10.

This directive is an important indication that the government recognized Halkevleri as important venues where citizens could collectively listen to radio broadcasts as a community. Furthermore, it was also aimed by the government that spending time in these halls would also increase the sense of unity among citizens.

Another important initiative taken with the aim to increase the number of radio listeners in Turkey and make the radio more accessible to the wider population was the development of cheap *halk tipi* (public type) radio devices. These radio devices would be imported from abroad as Turkey did not have a national radio manufacturing industry at that time. For this purpose, the Ministry of Public Works and the General Directorate of PTT were assigned to develop the design of these radio receivers whose prices vary between 10 and 30 liras. Considering the lack of electricity infrastructure in the villages, these radios would run on batteries.[74] While the first series of radios would have a maximum of three lamps and would work with dry batteries, the second series of radios would have a maximum of four lamps and would operate on electricity. Therefore, the first version of radios was designed for villages whereas the second series of radios would be sent to the places where electricity infrastructure was available. The PTT General Directorate would first order 5,000 or 10,000 units of radios that were deemed suitable. It was believed that if these attempts were to be realized, the number of radio devices in Turkey would quickly exceed 100,000.[75] As a result of the studies, a report was prepared, and this report was shared with radio manufacturers and distributors. According to the report, radio receivers would be made in two series, and the government would procure these radios and then distribute them to villages and cities.[76] Although it is understood that some companies submitted proposals to the PTT in order to manufacture these cheap, public type radio sets, no information was found about the fate of this project, and most likely the project was not realised. Thus, Halkevleri and other communal spaces stood as some of the most significant collective spaces where people might listen to radio broadcasts.

[74] "Halk Radyoları, Üç Tipin Satış ve Tevziine Telefon İdaresi Memur Edildi", *Cumhuriyet*, 21 January 1939, p. 2.

[75] Kutay, Cemil, "Radyonun Düğmesini Çevirelim – Ankara'yı Çok İyi Dinliyoruz", *Ulus*, 15 January 1939, p. 9.

[76] "Halk Radyoları, Köy ve Şehirler için İki Tip Tespit Edildi", *Cumhuriyet*, 24 February 1939, p. 2.

2.6. Conclusion

The emergence of radio broadcasting in Turkey in the second half of the 1920s marked the beginning of a new era in which Turkey gained transformative and technological experience. For a decade, radio's management was operated by the TTTAŞ, a company nominally private yet effectively controlled by the government, which had two radio stations, İstanbul and Ankara. However, these stations' signal power soon to be proved low which prevented a countrywide effective radio broadcasting. Furthermore, on the eve of the Second World War, this posed a serious threat as Turkish citizens, most of the time, could not listen to the İstanbul and Ankara radios while they could listen to foreign radio stations. The government was quick to realise the seriousness of this threat and decided to build a strong radio station while it also decided to bring the radio management its direct control. At the same time, government began to explore ways to increase the number of radio devices across the country and it used Halkevleri as the places where people could listen to radio. However, the approaching Second World War would introduce new imperatives, and Turkey would feel the need to tighten its control over radio and employ it as its most significant and effective propaganda instrument.

CHAPTER 3

RADIO AND PROPAGANDA IN TURKEY (1939-1945)

This chapter examines the propaganda environment in Turkey during the Second World War and argues that radio occupied a central role as the government's most critical and effective propaganda tool. Unlike the printed press whose reach was constrained by some factors such as geography, circulation limits, and literacy, radio provided the government with an imminent and far-reaching medium. This chapter argues that radio broadcasting in Turkey during the Second World War evolved into a strategic instrument through which government conveyed its discourse to both domestic and international audiences and countered propaganda campaigns conducted by foreign countries and targeted Turkey. This strategic utilisation of radio was shaped by three interrelated developments. First main factor was the reorganisation of radio under the MUM which led to centralised and further monopolised management of the radio in order to align it with the government's broader strategies. Second was the expansion of radio as a channel through which the government could reach and influence audiences across and beyond Turkey. Third was radio's emergence as the most effective medium for countering foreign propaganda campaigns. This chapter examines these dynamics and demonstrates how Turkey adapted radio and its broadcasting activities to the wartime needs and transformed radio into its most important medium for propaganda and counter propaganda.

3.1. Place of Radio in Turkey during the Second World War

The Second World War highlighted a significant change in the area of communication as the new communication technologies such as radio enabled a more rapid and convenient dissemination of information and propaganda. As a result,

communication technologies, particularly radio, were no longer merely seen as a tool of communication but also as a critical instrument of both internal and foreign politics. Consequently, the Turkish government perceived radio as an instrument that required a reorganisation, tighter oversight, and control to adapt it to the wartime needs, and the first step that the government took was to establish a new organisation that would be responsible for all the press endeavours in Turkey.

3.1.1. Matbuat Umum Müdürlüğü (MUM, the General Directorate of Press) and the Radio Management

As discussed in the previous chapter, following the closure of the TTTAŞ which had previously had the authority to manage the radio, the responsibility for radio was transferred to the PTT. From the dissolution of the TTTAŞ to the first half of 1940, PTT had the authority to manage the radio broadcasting and radio operations. Nevertheless, PTT was inexperienced in radio management. Apart from that, it had a heavy workload apart from the radio broadcasting, and it was suffering a labour shortage due to the Second World War because many of its male employees had been drafted into the military. Furthermore, the inadequacy of radio use in the intense propaganda environment of the war necessitated the use of all press, broadcasting and propaganda tools in a single organization.[77] In addition, in a 1939 report on the CHP program, it was envisaged that a new organization would be established to carry out the radio broadcasting service in full harmony.[78] The MUM, affiliated with the Prime Ministry, was established with law number 3837 that was adopted by the parliament on 22 May 1940 to control all media endeavours, including radio.[79] In other words, the MUM was given almost unlimited authority over the press.

For example, the MUM was granted the right to follow publications in terms of political, economic, social, and cultural movements both domestically and internationally. Specifically, it was tasked to follow external publications in terms of

[77] Kocabaşoğlu, *Şirket Telsizinden Devlet Radyosuna,* p. 231.

[78] CHP, *Programın Hükümetçe Tahakkuk Ettirilen Kısımları Hakkında Rapor* (Ankara: Ulusal Basımevi, 1939), p. 113.

[79] *T.C. Resmi Gazete,* 28 May 1940, pp. 13874-13875.

the trends of countries in world politics, their manifestations in their internal politics, and their relations with Turkey. It was authorised to establish relations with the international press and radio organisations to intervene in the news about Turkey when necessary. Furthermore, it was tasked with countering foreign campaigns and propaganda that may violate the national politics and interests of Turkey, both inside and outside the country, to inform public opinion about the government's internal and external policies, and to make publications that it deemed necessary. By countering such propaganda campaigns, the MUM sought to ensure that the Turkish public maintained their trust in their government by refuting the claims of other states.

Within this context, radio was the most critical and strategical instrument at the MUM's disposal. To achieve these goals, the MUM prepared and delivered programs that would satisfy the political, social, economic, and artistic needs of citizens through radio broadcasts. Additionally, producing broadcasts deemed appropriate by the MUM allowed for the conveying of Turkey's national narrative both domestically and internationally. The MUM also became responsible for upholding national morality, ensuring the accuracy of news that would be circulated both inside and outside Turkey, presenting the state activities to the public to the extent and importance that they deserved, and internal publications in terms of national culture and press laws. Indeed, the MUM became the primary organization which supervised the implementation of the press law in Turkey, ensuring that the national press complies with the state principles, the general policy of the state and the needs of the country. Finally, the MUM was granted the right to control all cinematic productions both domestically produced or imported from abroad.[80] With all these rights and duties, the MUM became the primary organization for all press-related affairs. Ertuğ explained in *Radyo* the necessity of control of all media tools should be gathered under the umbrella of MUM as follows:

> Knowing what is said and written about our country in the world is the job of announcing to the outside world, in the most accurate measure, the unshakable power of our state, the honest politics of our government, and the loyalty of our nation to its supreme National Chief, homeland and national independence. It was also very important before the war, but the war

[80] *T.C. Resmi Gazete,* 28 May 1940, pp. 13874-13875.

> increased the importance of this job. Therefore, the management of press and broadcasting media was gathered under one roof.[81]

With this law, the rights, powers, and duties that had been previously granted to the PTT, regarding radio broadcastings and wireless telephone receiver installations by the radio law no. 3222, were transferred to the MUM, together with the existing radio organisation, just as the TTTAŞ's cadres acceded to the PTT in 1936. This move was welcomed by the PTT, which was complaining about its heavy workload due to the ongoing war.[82]

As a result, the MUM became the primary regulatory authority for the press in Turkey and hence gained significant control over the media. The MUM was granted the authority not only to oversee and govern all press endeavours but also to enforce the regulations and impose penalties on press institutions. In other words, the MUM had the authority to monitor the content of the media to ensure that they would adhere to the government's policies. In essence, the MUM became the gatekeeper of the press.

This situation led some scholars to believe that Turkey, throughout the war, subjected the press to strict control[83], if not censorship.[84] Even before the war, a commission was established with the decision of the Council of Ministers to examine harmful publications [85] and some newspapers were temporarily closed, and some books, magazines, and cinematic products were prohibited and confiscated with the decree of the Council of Ministers. Before the establishment of the MUM, such decisions of closure and confiscation were made through prohibition memorandums submitted to the Council of Ministers by the Ministry of Internal Affairs or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. For example, in November 1937, it was decided by the Council of

[81] Ertuğ, Hasan, Refik, "Sizin İçin Çalanlar", *Radyo*, 15 October, 1943, p. 1.

[82] 13 December 1941: BCA, 030.10.159.118.4.

[83] Deringil, Selim, *Denge Oyunu: İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nda Türkiye'nin Dış Politikası* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2010), p. 8.

[84] Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 205.

[85] 24 December 1938: BCA, 030.18.01.02.85.105.17

Ministers, upon the request of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, to confiscate, ban from sale and ban the import of posters that would offend Turkish-Greek friendship.[86] In addition, the temporary closure of the *Türkische Post* newspaper, which was funded and controlled by Germany[87], published in Istanbul, which published articles against the foreign policy of the state, was accepted on 27 March 1940 by the Council of Ministers, according to the article 50 of the Press Law, upon the proposal of the Ministry of Interior.[88] Furthermore, the Foreign Ministry wrote a memorandum asking the Council of Ministers to ban the sale of the book *Hitler Bana Dedi ki* written by Hermann Rauschning, and the Council of Ministers decided to ban the sale of the book in Turkey.[89]

With the establishment of the MUM, it assumed the duty from the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and it applied to the Council of Ministers for prohibition decisions, and the Council of Ministers took the prohibition decisions accordingly. Tevfik Başokçu's book, *Paris Cehenneminden Nasıl Kurtuldum*, published in Istanbul in 1941 was banned under the article 51 of the Press Law on the grounds that it contained articles that would negatively affect the foreign policy of the government. Upon the proposal of the MUM, the Council of Ministers decided that the printing and sale of the book was banned.[90] With another decision of the Council of Ministers, it was decided to confiscate the brochure titled *900'üncü Yıl Dönümü* written by Hüseyin Nihal Atsız upon the proposal of the MUM.[91] Newspapers were also temporarily shut down when they were believed to be publishing contrary to the government's policies. To illustrate, *Cumhuriyet* and *Son Posta* newspapers were shut down for a day as their publications were perceived as being against the foreign policy of the government, upon the memorandum of the

[86] 2 December 1937: BCA, 030.18.01.02.79.90.15.

[87] Gökay, Bülent, "Turkish Neutrality in the Second World War and Relations with the Soviet Union," *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 23/6 (2021), p. 847.

[88] 27 March 1940: BCA, 030. 18.01.02.90.29.2.

[89] 30 August 1949: BCA, 030.18.01.02.92.86.7.

[90] 2 March 1942: BCA, 030.18.01.02.97.124.18.

[91] 13 January 1941: BCA, 030.18.01.02.93.123.3.

MUM, and the Council of Ministers ordered the closure of these newspapers for a day.[92] A few months later, the MUM requested that *Cumhuriyet* be closed for a week because it was again publishing against the foreign policy of the state, and so the newspaper was closed for a week by the decision of the Council of Ministers.[93] Some other newspapers that were closed by the Council of Ministers included *Bugün*, a local newspaper based in Adana[94], *Tasvir-i Efkar*[95], *Tan*[96], *Yeni Sabah*[97], *Akşam*[98], *İkdam*[99], and *Vakit*[100]. It is critical to note here that many of these newspapers were the most sold newspapers of the period. Nonetheless, the government did not hesitate to close them whenever they were believed to print items contrary to the government policies and hence might damage the foreign policy of the government.

Additionally, the MUM dictated the content of the press by providing directives to the newspapers regarding which news the newspapers would or would not publish. For instance, the request not to provide information about foreign ships that passed through the Bosporus was sent to the MUM by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In response to this request, the MUM acted swiftly and imposed a restriction, forbidding newspapers from publishing such news.[101]

The MUM, along with the Foreign and Interior Ministries, was also authorised over the control of cinematic productions that were brought into the country. For instance, some war films that were imported to Turkey from the United Kingdom were found

[92] 3 December 1941: BCA, 030.18.01.02.96.99.1.

[93] 4 September 1941: BCA, 030.10. 86.568.16.

[94] 5 November 1940: BCA, 030.18.01.02.93.103.20.

[95] 12 March 1943: BCA, 030.18.01.02.101.16.14.

[96] 7 December 1940: BCA, 030.18.01.02.93.112.15.

[97] 8 March 1941: BCA, 030.18.01.02.94.20.8.

[98] 6 May 1939: BCA, 030.18.01.02.86.39.17.

[99] 8 July 1941: BCA, 030.18.01.02.95.61.20.

[100] 23 September 1941: BCA, 030.18.01.02.96.82.6.

[101] 16 June 1944: BCA, 030.10.85.561.14.

to contain insults and propaganda against Germany and Italy, and the import of these films into the country was banned.[102]

It is important to underline that Turkey, throughout the war, sought to have a delicate balance in its foreign policy between the Allies and the Axis and adjusted its stance and policies in accordance with its threat perception and this threat perception shifted a few times during the course of the war. Depending on the current threat perception, the government, through the MUM, intervened to the media outlets to ensure that their publications would not possess any threat to its policies. One step further, in 1945, full state control was brought to all kinds of cinematic products imported into Turkey. According to the decision, real and legal persons dealing with the film trade and cinema were obliged to report to the government all kinds of cinema films in their stocks and even waiting at customs, and these films were to be confiscated by the government and they would only be given to their owners after being checked by the MUM[103] to ensure that they did not have any unfavourable content that might harm the foreign policy of the government. With this move, the government strengthened its control over all cinematic products.

In essence, the primary objective behind such decisions as prohibition, confiscation, closure, and comprehensive regulation of media was the fact that the government's objective was to protect its neutrality policy and hence did not want the press to have any adverse influence on its policies. In other words, by putting the press under rigorous control, the government ensured that the press did not exert any significant influence on its policies, or the press did not pose any obstacle to the government's propaganda efforts.

3.1.2. Accessibility of Radio in Turkey during the Second World War

As in many of other countries, the Second World War significantly increased the demand for radio devices in Turkey, and the Turkish public began to equip more

[102] 7 November 1940: BCA, 030.10.235.584.15.

[103] 20 August 1945: BCA, 030.18.01.02.109.51.6.

devices. The increasing number of radio devices as of the start of the Second World War is a striking example showing that the public began to use radio more. As mentioned in Chapter 2, in 1939, there were 50,246 licensed radio devices in Turkey. From that time on the numbers augmented significantly. By 1940, the numbers climbed to 73,249, and by October 1941, the numbers further increased to 97,008, in February 1942, the number rose to 102,966, and just a month later, it experienced an additional 4,868 increments, totalling 107,834. Thereafter, in April 1942, the number of radio devices reached 105.653, followed by a rise to 111,747 in June 1942. A month later, the increase continued to grow, reaching 113,595.[104] On 21 January 1944, the International Radiodiffusion Association sent a telegraph to the Turkish Embassy in Bern, seeking information on the number of radio devices in Turkey. The Turkish Embassy in Bern forwarded the inquiry to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Ministry made a request to the MUM regarding the number of radio devices.[105] After obtaining the necessary information from the MUM, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs communicated to the Turkish Embassy in Bern that at the end of 1943, the number of radio devices in Turkey was 148,488.[106] In 1945, according to the Prime Ministry General Directorate of Statistics, the number of radio devices rose to 151,175, and the number of radio receivers per 1000 people increased to 8.4. This rate was 4.4 in 1940.[107] In other words, between 1940 and 1945, the number of radio devices per 1,000 people nearly doubled in Turkey, and this data clearly reflects that the radio's popularity among the public rose.

It is crucial to note that these numbers reflected the number of radio devices which the owners of the devices officially applied to the PTT and paid the license fee. For residences, the license fee was determined as five liras for settlements with a population of less than 10,000 people and 10 liras for larger settlements.[108] Hence, it might be argued that the actual number of radio devices in circulation in the country

[104] Yorulmaz, Cemil, "Yurdda Radyo Artışı", *Radyo*, 15 October 1942, p. 6.

[105] 19 July 1944: TDA, 540.44549.213792.62.

[106] 29 July 1944: TDA, 540.44549.213792.63.

[107] Kocabaşoğlu, *Şirket Telsizinden Devlet Radyosuna*, p. 253.

[108] Kocabaşoğlu, *Şirket Telsizinden Devlet Radyosuna,* pp. 148-149.

might surpass the recorded figures, encompassing those devices that entered the country through unofficial channels and thus remain unaccounted for in the PTT's official documentation.

3.2. The Threat of Foreign Radio Propaganda

In the second half of the 1930s, the international atmosphere was becoming growingly tense, and foreign propaganda began to pose a challenge for many countries. As the major powers of the time aimed to influence other countries not only through military force but also through propaganda and Turkey also began to feel this challenge.

In the 1930s, Italian aggressions in the Mediterranean which was marked by its military aggression and aggressive foreign policy was a concern of the Turkish foreign policy.[109] This concern soared further when Italy annexed Albania in 1939, which Turkey perceived as a direct threat to the balance of power of the region and existing political and territorial status quo. The Italian occupation of Albania brought the Italian military forces close to Turkey's western borders, and this situation raised serious concerns in Turkey. Moreover, the Italian threat was not confined to military proximity. As Italy had territorial ambitions, it actively engaged in ideological and psychological operations by commencing propaganda broadcasts, aiming to influence the public opinion in Turkey. In order to make their propaganda operations more efficient, Italian radios began to broadcast in Turkish language. Italian radio's Turkish activities were closely monitored not only by the government but also by the press as the Radio Bari of Italy was regularly broadcasting in Turkish[110] to influence the Turkish audience.

The propaganda activities of Radio Bari were seen as a hostile activity by Turkey and Zekeriya Sertel, owner of *Tan*, a popular daily newspaper, wrote in his column on the propaganda activities of Radio Bari on 10 March 1939:

[109] Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, p. 203.

[110] Deringil, *Denge Oyunu: İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nda Türkiye'nin Dış Politikası*, p.73

> Why does the Radio Bari speak Turkish? We are not a colony, we are not at war with Italy, and we are not very keen on learning the internal affairs of fascist Italy. Then why these Turkish broadcasts? The Italian radio centre in Bari is a propaganda station which is designed to muddy international atmosphere. It is this station that drives a wedge between the British and the Italians and sown the seeds of hostility between the French and the Italians every day. Bari radio broadcasts in every language except Italian. Arabic, English, French, and even Turkish.[111]

Whereas Radio Bari's broadcasts generally directed to the Arabic-speaking Middle East, and it was the fascist Italy's mouthpiece in the Arab countries[112], it also encompassed Turkey within its coverage. The government recognised the potential influence and hence threat of these broadcasts, it began to regularly monitor the content of Radio Bari's Turkish broadcasts. In addition to that, it kept a close watch on those who were suspected to listen to Radio Bari. For instance, according to a Turkish police report, on March 23, 1939, a banquet was organized for 40 people at the Mersin Italian Consulate General to listen to the speech given by the Italian Prime Minister Benito Mussolini on the radio, and it was stated that certain Italians and Germans attended the banquet with their families.[113]

In addition, according to a communication written by Hüseyin Ragıp Baydur, the Turkish Ambassador to Italy at the time, the Italian radio station, he presumably meant Radio Bari, was conducting propaganda broadcasting in several languages every evening. These radio broadcasts were designed to promote fascism to the international audience. Following these broadcasts, foreign listeners who were interested in learning more about fascism were encouraged to reach out to the Italian radio through letters. The Italian radio responded to such requests by sending books about fascism. According to the ambassador, a student living in the city of Çanakkale sent a letter to the Italian radio expressing interest in learning about fascism, and in response, the Italian radio sent books to this student. The ambassador recommended

[111] Sertel, Zekeriya, "Bari Radyosu Niçin Türkçe Konuşur?", *Tan*, 10 March 1939, pp. 1, 10.

[112] Marzano, Arturo, "Radio Propaganda during the War: The Mediterranean scenario in Radio Bari's broadcasts (1940–1943)" in *A Fascist Decade of War 1935–1945 in International Perspective*, eds. Marco M. Aterrano and Karine Varley (New York: Routledge, 2020), p. 167.

[113] 31 March 1939: BCA, 030.10.239.610.38.

that the student's parents should be warned.[114] The Foreign Ministry immediately informed the Interior Ministry[115] and the Education Ministry[116] regarding the books sent by the Italian radio. While the police launched an investigation to find the student, no archival document has been identified regarding the outcome of this investigation. Still, this example is important since it shows how closely Turkey followed Italian radio's propaganda activities directed towards Turkey, and it shows that these propaganda efforts found a response in Turkey. In addition, it highlights how Italy systematically utilised radio not only as a communication tool but also as a means of disseminating its propaganda on the international stage.

Furthermore, Turkey, through the MUM, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Turkish Embassy in Rome, listened to Italian radio broadcasts not only in Turkish but also in other languages as well and analysed the transcripts of these broadcasts. For example, according to an encrypted telegram from the Turkish Embassy in Rome, dated January 24, 1940, during a broadcast on Rome Radio where the issues of the day were explained after the news service, it was stated that the Turkish press continued its old habits and that such activities of the Turkish press, particularly its anti-Italian publications, had been supported by the British government. It was claimed that Turkey's cowardly and hostile attitude towards Italy had started with Italy's “so-called” invasion of Albania and that the Turkish army had been massing in Edirne since then and new troops had been sent in recent days. Additionally, it was stated that the Romanian city of Ploesti was 500 kilometres from Istanbul and 700 kilometres from Ankara as the crow flies in order to emphasise Italy’s military might to intimidate Turkey and aiming to spread fear among the Turkish government and Turkish audience, and that Ankara's intrigues were being closely monitored by Italy. The Turkish ambassador Baydur recommended to the Foreign Ministry that Ankara Radio should respond to this broadcast accordingly.[117] Baydur’s recommendation can be seen also a significant indication that the top-ranking bureaucrats of the time

[114] 10 July 1939: TDA, 541.44090.209107.33.

[115] 2 September 1939, TDA: 541.44090.209107. 31.

[116] 2 September 1939, TDA: 541.44090.209107. 32.

[117] 24 October 1940: TDA, 541.44157.209374.50.

recognised the Ankara Radio as the major propaganda and counter propaganda tool of Turkey and suggested that Ankara Radio should provide an appropriate response to this broadcast of Radio Rome.

This was not however the first such broadcast of Radio Rome. In the summer of 1939, before the Second World War started, Radio Rome alleged that the Allies envisioned establishing a Catholic state in Northern Europe, encompassing Bavaria and that Britain offered islands in the Aegean Sea to both Turkey and Greece at the same time[118], aiming to create confusion in the minds of Greeks and Turks against the Allies and against each other on the eve of the Second World War.

All in all, Italy, in accordance with its broader political strategies and ideological goals, utilised radio as a critical propaganda tool. On the one hand, it employed propaganda broadcasts in order to promote its fascist ideology to the international audiences by broadcasting in several languages and sought to build a favourable image in the eyes of foreign listeners. It also sought to establish relations with those individuals who were interested in learning more about Italy and fascism. On the other hand, it utilised radio as a tool for spreading fear among international audience, particularly on those whose countries were against the policies of Italy. As the Turkish government realised the potential influence of these broadcasts on the Turkish audience, it began to closely monitor these broadcasts from various channels to prevent Italian propaganda from having a decisive impact on the Turkish audience.

Turkey also had a close eye on radio broadcasts made by other countries and received a number of reports about such broadcasts. Archival records suggest that Ankara listened not only to the Voice of America's programs in Bulgarian[119] and the Bulgarian broadcasts of BBC[120], but also to the Crotian broadcasts of Berlin Radio[121] and even the Russian Radio's broadcast about the dangers of fascism.[122] It is beyond

[118] 5 August 1939: TDA, 534.37395.150251.41.

[119] 14 September 1944: TDA, 502.22257.98294.1.

[120] 27 December 1944: TDA, 571. 34996.138164.66, p.1.

[121] 28 December 1944: TDA, 571. 34996.138164.66, p.2.

[122] 22 November 1945: TDA, 571.34936.138079.41.

doubt that the Turkish intelligence also actively participated in these listening and monitoring activities of foreign radio stations. For instance, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs received a detailed information about Fevzi Kavukçu (Fawzi al-Qawuqji) who conducted Berlin Radio's Arabic broadcasts.[123] Furthermore, Ankara also had the information how Berlin Radio recruited an announcer who spoke Turkish.[124] All these examples show the efforts made by Turkey to monitor the foreign radio broadcasts, whether they were about Turkey or not. Through these listening and monitoring efforts, Turkey's goal was not only to receive information about other countries' radio broadcasts and hence understand their intentions but also to create responses to these broadcasts, in other words, create counter propaganda measures to minimise their effect.

3.3. Turkish Propaganda and Counter-Propaganda via Radio

Having recognised the importance of communicating Turkey's perspectives to international community during the Second World War, the Turkish government opted to utilise radio as a strategic political and diplomatic instrument. Radio's immediacy and broader reach made it an ideal medium for disseminating Turkey's narratives to both domestic and international audiences. By these broadcasts, the government sought to reinforce the domestic population's support to its policies, to validate Turkey's stance to the international audience and counter the propaganda campaigns that targeted itself and the domestic population.

3.3.1. International Radio Broadcasts

In this context, Ankara Radio assumed a crucial role in disseminating the Turkish propaganda to the international community. That is, Ankara Radio was assigned the duty of making the Turkish voice heard beyond the borders of Turkey. To this end, the government decided that Ankara Radio would commence broadcasting in several foreign languages to reach diverse international audiences.

[123] 12 September 1941: TDA, 501.88082.320106.180.

[124] 6 June 1940: TDA, 501.87959.320583.157.

This move held significance as broadcasting in different languages facilitated an accessibility for non-Turkish speakers to hear Turkish narratives which expanded the reach and the effect of Ankara Radio's propaganda dissemination drastically. Ankara Radio broadcasted in several languages, including French, English, Bulgarian, Serbo-Croatian, Arabic, Persian, and Urdu. The individuals responsible for presenting these broadcasts were Berrin Büktaş for French, Feridun Kurt for English, Abdürrap Yelgar for Urdu, Kasım Han for Persian, Remzi Garip for Arabic, Şahabettin Kalgay for Bulgarian, and Hüseyin Aksoy for Serbo-Croatian.[125] By the decision of the Council of Ministers, new positions were opened in the Radio Diffusion Directorate established within MUM for these civil servants who broadcast foreign broadcasts.[126] It was also decided that these civil servants who would broadcast in foreign languages and those who listen to foreign news and propaganda broadcasts of foreign radio stations[127] would be paid overtime because they had to work outside the working hours.[128]

As of March 15, 1942, the hours of these foreign language broadcasts of the Ankara Radio were as follows: Urdu broadcast started at 18.00, Persian broadcast started at 18.15, Arabic broadcast started at 18.30, Serbo-Croatian broadcast started at 18.45, while Ankara Radio continued its Turkish broadcasts from 19 to 20.45. Ankara Radio, which once again paused its Turkish broadcasts at 20.45, started broadcasting in Bulgarian at 20.45, broadcasting in French at 21.00, broadcasting in English at 21.15 and broadcasting in Greek at 21.30. It continued broadcasting in Turkish on long wave from 21.45 to 22.45.[129] Turkey made propaganda broadcasts in foreign languages every day between 18 and 18.30 and from 20.45 to 21.45 over a shortwave of 31.7 meters.

Turkey presented its propaganda broadcasts different from the broadcasts of other countries. According to an article in *Radyo* magazine, some states at war were

[125] "Radyoda Yabancı Dillerde Yaptığımız Neşriyat", *Radyo*, 15 February 1942, pp. 14-15.

[126] 21 October 1940: BCA, 030.18.01.02.92.99.10.

[127] 17 February 1940: BCA, 030.18.01.02.90.16.8.

[128] 4 June 1941: BCA, 030.18.01.02.95.45.14.

[129] "Ankara Radyosu (Kısa Dalga)", *Radyo*, 15 March 1942, p. 1.

following a path of refuting the claims of the opposing state and inculcating and imposing their aims in their broadcasts in foreign languages. Turkey, on the other hand, explained the purpose of its radio broadcasts to report the issues and events of Turkey on a day-to-day basis to present them directly to the world, and to evaluate and analyse the reported issues and events and to report them as news.[130] The source of these news was the state-owned Anadolu Agency, but it did not have a wide correspondent and information network abroad. That is why it needed foreign agencies as news sources[131] which highlighted its dependency on external networks. Some agencies that Anadolu Agency received news from included the British Reuters and French Havas.[132] How Anadolu Agency would prepare the news was also determined by the MUM, and the general director of the MUM, Selim Sarper, for instance, wrote a letter to the Anadolu Agency and gave instructions on how to write the news.[133]

Whilst Turkey accused radio broadcasts of other countries of being propagandistic and hence manipulative, it claimed that its radio broadcasts were free of any propaganda content. According to this official narrative, Turkey did not have a case that it was trying to convince the masses through propaganda, and therefore it presented news related to Turkey as they were. This narrative also aimed to show the moral superiority of Turkey against other countries. Another distinctive feature of Turkey's radio propaganda was that Ankara Radio did not change the texts of its foreign language broadcasts according to country and used the same text for each country, and these texts were prepared by Münir Müeyyet Bekman who was working as a councillor (*müşavir*) in the MUM. Other foreign radio stations used different texts in their broadcasts in foreign languages, depending on the interests that they pursued for each country they addressed.[134] By stressing this fact, Turkey aimed to

---

[130] Sarper, Selim, "Biraz da Onlar Bizi Dinlese", *Radyo*, 15 July 1942, p. 2.

[131] 11 October 1941: TDA, 500.8253.54519.1; 21 May 1940: TDA, 501.32040.126128.1; Glasneck, *Türkiye'de Faşist Alman Propagandası*, p. 19.

[132] Ahıska, *Occidentalism in Turkey*, p. 87.

[133] 12 August 1944: BCA, 030.10.85.561.19.

[134] "Radyoda Yabancı Dillerde Yaptığımız Neşriyat", *Radyo*, February 15, 1942, p. 14.

portray the fact that while other countries' radio broadcasts primary goal was to disseminate their narratives and manipulate the opinions of the targeted audiences, according to the Turkish authorities, Ankara Radio's broadcasts were free of propaganda content. In 1942, Selim Sarper explained the purpose of Turkey's radio broadcasts in foreign languages as "not to make propaganda neither for others nor for us. Especially knowingly and willingly offending someone is an act that is completely inconsistent with our national character. Our only goal is to reduce the trouble of our friends who want to get to know us and to introduce ourselves as we are."[135]

Vedat Nedim Tör, the director of Ankara Radio, explained the importance of radio during the war and Turkey's radio broadcasting policy in comparison to other countries:

> The most important revolutionary difference that separates this war from all previous wars is the involvement of radio in the war as a means of attack and protection. In previous wars, the main aim was to have an impact on the psychology of enemy nations with the propaganda leaflets that planes could throw across borders and because of this ineffective method, every state could easily protect its citizens against foreign propaganda. With the advent of radio and its involvement in the war, propaganda poison can now cross borders, countries and continents and enter every home and every ear. That's why all the warring countries broadcast on as many and various wavelengths as possible. Turkey, unlike these states, uses its national radio not as a means of attack, but as a means of protecting its national independence and freedom, preserving, and consolidating its national existence, strengthening, and enhancing its national unity, and spreading and deepening its national culture.[136]

It might be argued that even before the war, these broadcasts that Turkey conducted in foreign languages found some audience in different countries. For example, Ankara Radio's broadcast for the 15th anniversary of the declaration of the Turkish republic in 1938 aroused great interest in Yugoslavia. According to a telegram sent by Turkey's Consul General in Skopje, Safvet Ürfi Betin, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Muslim and Turkish people in the cities of Southern Serbia started listening

[135] Sarper, "Biraz da Onlar Bizi Dinlese", pp. 1-2.

[136] Tör, Vedat Nedim, "Radyo Savaşında Türkiyemiz", *Radyo*, 15 April 1942, p. 5.

to broadcast of Ankara Radio from the early hours of the morning. The Turks who came to the consulate to congratulate that evening were still talking about the radio broadcast with tears in their eyes, under the influence of the radio broadcast. Muslims who did not have a radio in Skopje formed large crowds in coffee houses and listened to radio broadcasts for hours. In addition, the Consulate General received several congratulatory letters from Turks and Muslims in Southern Yugoslavia.[137] This example did not only demonstrate the interaction radio broadcasts had with audiences in other countries and but also shed light on the potential of such broadcasts to strengthen future propaganda efforts as radio was able to appeal to the people there directly.

When the Second World War started, the Turkish access to the wider international audience became internationally more prominent as well. According to a telegram received from the British administration in India in 1940, it was reported that Ankara Radio's Urdu broadcast was listened to with great interest in India. The British administration had informed Ankara that in addition to publishing news reflecting Turkey's neutrality, conferences discussing world events from Turkey's perspective would also be welcomed.[138] Therefore, through such radio broadcasts in foreign languages, Turkey became capable of conveying its narratives to international communities. Indeed, it was now capable of presenting its policies in its own words. In addition, these foreign language broadcasts enabled Ankara to counter foreign propaganda campaigns which aimed to mispresent its policies. As a result, by conveying its messages to other countries' audiences in their own languages, Turkey strengthened its ability to present its policies and refuting the claims of other countries about itself.

3.3.2. Countering Foreign Radio Propaganda

In an article published in *Radyo*, Selim Sarper, who was then the head of MUM, claimed that Turkey was one of the rare countries where listening to foreign radio

[137] 30 October 1938: BCA, 030.10.0.0.198.353.10.

[138] 2 August 1940: TDA, 500.8241.54200.3.

broadcasts was not prohibited.[139] In a way, this statement was correct. Unlike some other countries, there was no legal restriction on listening to foreign radio stations in Turkey. Thus, Turkish authorities seemed to keep the right of Turkish citizens to listen to foreign radio stations.[140] In other words, there was no explicit restriction imposed by the Turkish government to listen to foreign radio broadcasts. On the other hand, several countries implemented restrictions on listening to foreign radio broadcasts as a means of controlling the flow of news, and information, and most importantly, preventing foreign propaganda from reaching to their own population and hence influencing them. For instance, in Japan, listening to foreign radio stations was banned, along with the sale of short-wave radio sets.[141] Germany had a similar policy and serious penalties implemented for those who were caught while listening to foreign radio broadcasts.[142] In France, the Vichy government forbade people to listen to the British radio in public and offenders were liable to a 100 franc fine or six days in prison.[143] In addition to that, the Vichy government banned the sale of radio devices and spare parts for these devices throughout the country as of March 31, 1943. The main purpose of this ban was to prevent the public from listening to foreign radio broadcasts. This development was reported to Ankara by Turkey's ambassador to Paris, Behiç Erkin.[144]

Turkey even regularly shared the times and frequency ranges of Turkish broadcasts made by 11 different foreign radio stations, which included Russian, British, American, German, Croatian, Lebanese, which was controlled by Vichy government, Italian, Romanian, Bulgarian, Palestinian and Iranian[145]. For example, The Soviet radio's Turkish broadcast at 07.00 in the morning was broadcast on frequency 9600

[139] Tör, "Radyo Savaşında Türkiyemiz", p. 5.

[140] Ahıska, *Occidentalism in Turkey*, p. 125.

[141] Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind*, p. 173.

[142] Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind,* p. 226.

[143] Jackson, Julian, *France: The Dark Years*, *1940-1944* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 275.

[144] 12 February 1943: TDA, 525.37822.151893.15.

[145] "Türkçe Neşriyat Yapan Yabancı İstasyonlar", *Radyo*, 15 September 1942, p. 21.

from 31.25 meters with the sign RW 96. While the British radio's 08.15 am Turkish broadcast was broadcast at 40.98 meters at frequency 7320 with the GRJ sign, the German radio's 09.00 am Turkish broadcast was at 49.92 meters at 6010 frequency with the DXO signal. The earliest of these foreign broadcasts in Turkish throughout the day was the Soviet radio service at 07.00 in the morning, while the latest broadcast service was the Iranian radio, which started at 22.45 with the EFE signal on frequency 8110 from 36.99 meters. This information was published in *Radyo* as shown in the table below. [146]

In addition to the information of foreign radios broadcasting in Turkish, the frequency information of European and Mediterranean radios broadcasting on long and medium wave[147] and the frequency information of radios broadcasting on shortwave in the world were shared with the public through *Radyo*.[148]

Table 2. Frequences of Foreign Radio Stations that Conducted Turkish Broadcasts

Time	Meter	Kc/s (Frequence)	Signal	Country
07.00	31.25	(9600)	RW 96	Russia
08.30	31.02	(9670)	WRCA	United States of America
09.00	49.92	(6010)	DXO	Germany
13.30	19.60	(15310)	GSP	Britain
18.15	37.57	(7985)	ODC	Beirut (Lebanon)
19.50	19.92	(15060)	2 RO 21	Italy
21.00	352.9	(850)	Sofya (Sofia	Bulgaria
21.20	36.45	(823)	Bükreş (Bucharest)	Romania
22.15	449.1	(668)	ZJM	Palestine
22.45	6.99	(8110)	EFE	Iran

[146] "Türkçe Neşriyat Yapan Yabancı İstasyonlar", p. 21.

[147] "Uzun ve Orta Dalgalı Avrupa ve Akdeniz Havzası İstasyonlarının Alfabetik Tablosu", *Radyo*, 15 January 1942, pp. 34-35.

[148] "Dünya Kısa Dalgalı Postaları", *Radyo*, 15 March 1942, p. 31.

While Turkey shared foreign radio stations' frequencies and indicated that citizens were free to listen to foreign radio broadcasts, it also warned its citizens about the potential danger of listening to foreign broadcasts in *Radyo* with the following warning:

> Citizen! Our country is one of the rare countries where listening to foreign radio broadcasts is not prohibited. Every nation propagates its own interests through its radio. Therefore, always be careful and alert while listening to foreign radios![149]

In an article published in December 1941 in *Radyo*, Turkish citizens were asked to question, while listening to Turkish broadcasts of foreign radio stations, how well the anchors of these radio stations spoke Turkish, how well they know Turkey, how accurately they detected Turkey's spiritual tendencies and the Turkish people's cognitive mechanism, and what they wanted from Turkey. According to this article, radio broadcasts in Turkish were rarely overtly directed against Turkey. Rather, they were carefully designed to appear neutral or even friendly on the surface. The article continued:

> Even if they wanted to make broadcasts against Turkey, they would hide their intentions as much as they could. These broadcasts were actually against the countries that the broadcasting country was fighting against. That's why foreign radio stations' Turkish broadcasts are, without exception, gossipy and disruptive. The claims that are argued in these broadcasts, such as news and statistics, are not true. Because if you listen to the same station's broadcasts in different languages for other countries on the same day, you will find that both the objective elements and the logic of suggestion are different. The reason for all this is simple: Propaganda is essentially the science of making others think as they want. Because of all these, Turkish broadcasts of foreign radios may be for any reason, but it does not have to comply with our own national interests! (Yabancı radyoların Türkçe neşriyatı her şey için olabilir; bizim güzel gözlerimiz müstesna!)[150]

This warning implied that foreign radio stations that broadcast in Turkish used these broadcasts to disseminate their messages and the Turkish audience ought to be aware of the propagandistic nature of these broadcasts when listening to them while

[149] "Türkçe Neşriyat Yapan Yabancı İstasyonlar", *Radyo*, 15 May 1942, p. 22.

[150] "Yabancı Radyoların Türkçe Yayınları", *Radyo*, 15 December 1941, p. 6.

pointing to the Turkish government's relatively liberal stance in allowing such radio broadcasts compared to other governments. Nevertheless, this did not mean that the government never intervened in the radio broadcasts. According to Ahıska, there were deliberate jamming of specific radio stations, and it was Radio Bari of Italy that was jammed most of the time. Technicians of Ankara Radio made a small transmitter and placed it in the Ankara Radio station to produce atmospherics every night before the broadcasting of Radio Bari started in order to made it unlistenable.[151] It is essential to underline that the primary objective of Turkey in its jamming efforts of the Italian radio was to prevent Italian propaganda from reaching and eventually infiltrating the minds of the Turkish audience.

As Turkey was aware of the danger that foreign radio broadcasts might pose, it had a close eye on propaganda broadcasts of foreign radio stations and followed them through three channels. First, Turkish embassies abroad sent detailed reports to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about radio broadcasts in their respective countries. In these reports, the contents of radio broadcasts, speeches of government officials, the countries' own internal agendas, and what was said on the radio about Turkey and world politics were shared with the Foreign Ministry. Furthermore, the ambassadors' views on those broadcasts and their recommendations on how to counter these broadcasts were also shared with Ankara. Secondly, radio listening services were established within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Intelligence Directorate. In these services, broadcasts of foreign radio stations in different languages were listened to and compiled into reports. Finally, radio listening services were established within the MUM and foreign radio broadcasts were listened to on a 24-hour basis. Listening to radio broadcasts around the world was among the MUM's duties that was specified by its law. Foreign radio broadcasts in all languages were listened to by a team of approximately 20 people within the MUM and reports about these speeches were prepared. The number of these reports exceeded ten in some days.[152]

By monitoring these foreign radio broadcasts, Turkey sought to gather information about how it was portrayed by foreign radio stations. This allowed Turkey to gain

[151] Ahıska, *Occidentalism in Turkey*, p. 126.

[152] "Dinleme Servisimiz", *Radyo*, 15 April 1942, pp. 10, 35.

insights into the narratives of other nations about itself. In response, it could generate and implement counter propaganda strategies and campaigns which were designed to challenge these broadcasts and minimise or even neutralise their impact. These counter-propaganda campaigns had two main goals. The first goal was to explain Turkey's position and policies to the international audience. This was done through radio broadcasts in foreign languages. On the other hand, Turkey should also prepare propaganda broadcasts targeting its own population. The public should be encouraged to use radio more in order to carry out propaganda aimed at its own population. To ensure this, some regulations were made regarding radio broadcasts. The aim was to transform radio from being just a means of receiving news into a means of entertainment, education, and propaganda. In this way, it was aimed to encourage the population to use radio more, in other words, to make it a part of daily life. In other words, radio needed to be creative and entertaining in order to attract its intended audience.[153] Thus, radio would become an indispensable device for the local audience, and they would be exposed to government's messages and propaganda in their daily lives. In addition, if radio became a part of daily life and the public listened to the Turkish radio, it would reduce the likelihood of the public listening to foreign radios, and thus the possibility of the public being exposed to foreign propaganda broadcasts would also decrease.

The first step to increase the popularity of the Turkish radio was rescheduling of the broadcasting hours. From Monday through Saturday, broadcasts started at 07.30 and concluded at 23.00, while on Sundays, broadcasts started at 08.30. This signified that radio broadcasting continued from early morning until midnight. The distribution of the programs was also arranged to encourage the public to use radio. In other words, special attention was paid to radio being both a means of receiving news and a means of entertainment and education. Between 1940 and 1946, approximately 65% of radio broadcasts consisted of music, 32% consisted of conferences, programs, and news, and 2% consisted of official announcements.[154] Although these rates changed every month, it may be asserted that the general figures were like this. For instance,

[153] Ahıska, *Occidentalism in Turkey*, p. 24.

[154] Kocabaşoğlu, *Şirket Telsizinden Devlet Radyosuna*, p. 259.

in December 1941, one month's broadcast time was 14,450 minutes. 9,050 minutes of this broadcast time consisted of music broadcasts, while 5,186 minutes consisted of conferences and speeches. The ratio of music broadcasts to all broadcasts was 62.6%, and the ratio of conferences and speeches to all broadcasts was 35.9%.[155] The type of music broadcasts was determined by considering the needs and target audiences to be reached. Ankara Radio had different music broadcasts such as Turkish art music, Turkish folk music, Western music and symphonies. The aim of these music broadcasts was to appeal to as many people as possible by providing contents that would be engaging and satisfying for audiences across the country. At the same time, another important goal was also introducing the public to new and diverse music types. In this way, radio was used not only for entertainment purposes but also used as an educational tool that could enrich the culture of Turkish people. Furthermore, it is critical to emphasize that these initiatives were in line with the modernisation efforts of the time. In short, the aim of the music broadcasts on the radio was to serve both the entertainment and education of the Turkish nation.

Other examples of the educational feature of radio were programs held on radio with specific themes. One of these programs was the *Evin Saati* (the Hour for the Home) program prepared by doctor Galip Ataç and read on the radio by Baki Suha. In this program, which was prepared mostly for women, several divergent topics such as modern home, family, gender roles, daily life, hygiene, nutrition, and health were discussed from Ataç's perspective. Furthermore, mutual communication between Ataç and his audience was achieved through audience letters which were sent to Ankara Radio, and it proved that Ataç had some engagement with the audience. In other words, in this program, Ataç conveyed to the audience information that would benefit the household, based on daily life in 1940s. Some of the program titles of *Evin Saati* were as follows: “How Young People Should Eat”, “At What Age Should One Get Married”, “Medicine to Keep at Home’’, How to Travel”, “Alcohol’’, “Pumpkin, Orange and Tangerine”[156]. As the titles of the episodes of *Evin Saati* suggested, this program covered the topics of daily life and thus addressed a wide range of topics which might appeal to the majority of people.

[155] “Türkiye Radyosu Neşriyat Nisbetleri’’, *Radyo*, 15 January 1942, p. 9.

[156] Ataç, Galip, *Radyoda Evin Saati* (Ankara: Dorlion Yayınları, 2022).

Another example program was the *Ziraat Takvimi Saati* (The Agricultural Calendar Hour) prepared by Ali Rıza Uluçam and presented by his daughter Nevin Uluçam. The program was prepared jointly with the Ministry of Agriculture. In this program, technical information on agriculture was shared with the audience such as field agriculture, soil condition, planting works, vegetable and fruit growing. For example, in a speech about the walnut tree, extensive information was shared with the audience, from the homeland of the walnut to the characteristics of walnut tree, how to use its fruit, and in which regions in Turkey it is found.[157] Considering that the majority of the Turkish people lived in villages at that time, his program targeted the majority of the population and aimed to convey information that might be useful for their everyday lives.

Another type of radio broadcasts that had a predominantly educational and entertaining aspect was *Radyofonik Tiyatro* (Radiophonic Plays). Aware of the impossibility of performing theatre plays in every city and village, the MUM brought theatre to the public through radio. Thus, the aim was for the public to listen to theatre performances on radio. In addition, through these broadcasts, it was aimed to create a unity of dialect to reduce regional speech differences and promote a standard Turkish, throughout the country and to convey the national and cultural values that were intended to be taught to the public more vividly than books or newspapers.[158]

Ankara Radio also included programs prepared for children. *Radyo Çocuk Kulübü* (the Radio Club for Children) was one of these programs for children. This program, which was aired on Ankara Radio for approximately nine years starting from 1941, was designed in a more systematic and child-friendly way than the programs made before it[159] and it was broadcast for 45 minutes a week.[160] This program was not just an entertainment program, but an educational program for children. In an article in *Radyo* from 1949, it was emphasized that radio was not only a means of pleasure and

[157] "Ziraat Takvimi Saati", *Radyo*, 15 January 1942, p. 13.

[158] Tözem, Kemal, "Radyofonik Tiyatro", *Radyo*, 15 December 1941, pp. 22-23.

[159] Türker, Erol, "Radyo Çocuk Kulübü ve Müzik Yayınları Üzerine Bir Araştırma", *Atatürk Üniversitesi Güzel Sanatlar Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 26 (2020), p. 340.

[160] Manyas, Nezih, "10 Liraya Neler Dinliyoruz", *Radyo*, 15 September 1942, p. 24.

entertainment, but also an effective tool in the musical education of children.[161] The topics covered in the program supported this claim. These included fairy tales, musicals, songs, poems, monologues, and riddles. This program attracted a large audience. In the nine months after it started broadcasting, Ankara Radio received more than 2,000 letters about this program.[162] Another feature of this broadcast was that it was listened to by Turks both at home and abroad such as Syria, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, and Switzerland.[163] Thus, it became clear that Ankara Radio's reach was not limited only to Turkey but also had some audience in other countries.

Such radio programs had two main purposes. The first was to inform and educate the public through radio. In this framework, radio was designated to function as a significant educational tool as it was able to reach the large segments of the public with ease. With these broadcasts, it was envisaged to increase the public's overall knowledge by providing informative broadcasts on a number of subjects which were closely related to daily life such as health, agriculture, and hygiene. Considering the low literacy rates of the period, radio emerged as an ideal and powerful medium for the education of masses. Furthermore, the language used in these broadcasts was deliberately kept simple and understandable so that more people could understand their content and to maximise the broadcasts impact on the society.

The second aim was to increase the people's engagement with radio. By providing broadcasts which were informative and captivating, the aim was to strengthen the relation, or connection between the radio and the public. These radio programs were designed to draw the audiences' attention, and to provide them valuable information that would receive their interests. Consequently, audience would be entertained and informed, and, in turn, they would be motivated to listen to radio more regularly, and hence it would become an internal part of their daily life. In this way, the amount of time that the Turkish audience listen to radio would increase and the likelihood of them listening to news and propaganda broadcasts made between these programs

[161] Türker, "Radyo Çocuk Kulübü ve Müzik Yayınları Üzerine Bir Araştırma", p. 341.

[162] "Radyomuzda Çocuk Saati", *Radyo*, 15 January 1942, p. 18.

[163] "Radyoda Çocuk Kulübü", *Radyo*, 15 February 1942, pp. 22-23.

would also increase. The letters sent to Galip Ataç were a concrete example of the developing relations between radio and the public.

Additionally, the MUM's magazine, *Radyo* received letters from the audience on various topics. The contents of the letters consisted of different topics, from information about radio technology to troubleshooting radio malfunctions, from program contents to broadcast quality. These letters and answers given to these letters were published in the magazine. This shows that some people developed a bond with radio and mutual communication occurred. Furthermore, it showed the increasing rate of usage of radio across the country.

In this way, Turkish public would not feel the need to listen to foreign radio broadcasts, as long as they were satisfied with the programs provided by the Turkish national radio. In other words, engaging and satisfactory content of the national radio would reduce the likehood of people listening to foreign radio broadcasts. Moreover, through the news and speeches that were strategically placed between these broadcasts, the government was able to communicate its policies and perspectives to the public. Hence, the government would have a wider audience for its propaganda efforts.

Another important feature of the radio broadcasts of this period was that the broadcasts did not contain advertisements. There were no advertisements either in the radio's own broadcast stream or in its magazine, *Radyo*. On the other hand, the TTTAŞ's journal *Telsiz* (Wireless) contained advertisements such as advertisements for radio sets. *Telsiz* started the first advertising campaign in Turkey which promised a free radio receiver for five coupons to be collected from the journal. The journal's mission was to promote radio in Turkey not only with the aim of education but also business.[164] This shows that the state control of radio and the conditions brought about by the war led to the disregard of the commercial nature of radio and that radio was perceived as a tool of entertainment, education and, most importantly, as a tool of propaganda. That is, the commercial nature of the radio was neglected. This

[164] Ahıska, *Occidentalism in Turkey*, p. 69.

advertisement-free broadcasting held importance for several reasons. First, commercial-free broadcasting signalled that the broadcasts had no commercial purpose and were, therefore, free of commercial interests, which could increase people's trust in radio. Second, the lack of commercials made propaganda efforts during the war more coherent since the government's propaganda messages could be effectively disseminated via radio broadcasts without being interrupted by advertisements. Overall, this advertisement-free nature of the radio held significance as it increased people's trust towards radio, allowed the government to convey its messages without interruption, and showed that the government did not perceive radio as a means of making money, rather it perceived it as the most essential tool for propaganda dissemination.

3.4 Conclusion

Recognising the power and extensive reach of radio, Turkey adapted radio as a critical instrument for its propaganda and counter propaganda efforts. To this end, it began to implement organisational reforms on radio's management and operations to bring radio under total governmental control, began broadcasting in foreign languages, and also closely monitored the radio broadcasts of other countries in order to provide responses. These measures showed Turkey's deliberate strategy to utilise radio as its most significant propaganda and counter propaganda tool. Within this framework, as will be discussed in the next chapter, Burhan Belge's *Günün Meseleleri* emerged as Turkey's most critical and effective radio programme through which Turkey conveyed its wartime position and policies and responded to foreign propaganda campaigns that sought to undermine its position.

CHAPTER 4

RADIO FOR PROPAGANDA AND COUNTER PROPAGANDA: BURHAN BELGE'S *GÜNÜN MESELELERI*

Burhan Belge's radio programme, *Günün Meseleleri* (Issues of the Day) served as a critical programme for disseminating Turkey's official discourse and countering foreign propaganda campaigns as during the Second World War, Turkey was subjected to various propaganda campaigns from different countries, each sought to influence the Turkish public opinion or challenge its position. *Günün Meseleleri* was a 15-minute program[165] that was prepared and presented by Belge himself. The program was first launched in 1939 and continued for approximately six years on Ankara Radio. Initially the program was aired once a week, but after 1943, it became to be aired biweekly, and it was scheduled for broadcast on Saturdays at 9.45 PM. In his program, Belge sought to disseminate not only Turkey's official narratives but also conveyed his own interpretations about the war and global politics. In one of his early speeches that he delivered in the first weeks of the Second World War, he said that as long as the war continues, he would continue to talk about propaganda and war, even though his true desire was to talk about peace rather than war.[166] This chapter examines Burhan Belge's *Günün Meseleleri* and argues that this programme functioned as one of Turkey's most significant and effective propaganda and counter propaganda tools of the period.

4.1. Burhan Belge's Role in Making Propaganda via Radio

Burhan Belge worked at the MUM from 1933 until 1945, and he assumed critical roles such as chief advisor (*başmüşavir*), and radio programmer. One of his most

[165] Karaosmanoğlu, *Burhan Belge'nin Sesiyle İkinci Dünya Savaşı*, p. 23.

[166] Karaosmanoğlu, *Burhan Belge'nin Sesiyle İkinci Dünya Savaşı*, p. 1.

notable works within the MUM was his radio talks, *Günün Meseleleri*, which he prepared and delivered on Ankara Radio during the Second World War and this program occupied a significant place in Turkey's propaganda and counter propaganda efforts. In addition to his role at the MUM, beginning in 1941, Belge was also among the writers of *Radyo*, which was a publication of the MUM, and he participated events in Halkevleri such as he was on the jury of a photography competition[167] and delivered speeches there.[168]

4.1.1. Burhan Belge's Early Life and Career

Burhan Asaf Belge was born in 1899 in Ottoman Damascus. His family was a wealthy and well-educated. His grandfather, Esad Efendi, was one of the prominent intellectuals and journalists of the Ottoman Constitutional Era. His father, Mehmet Asaf Bey was a district governor who graduated from Mekteb-i Mülkiye. Belge was born in Damascus during his father's post as the district governor there. He completed his primary school at the Menba'ül İrfan school in İstanbul. Then, he enrolled at St. Joseph High School in 1908; nevertheless, during the First World War, when foreign schools in the Ottoman Empire were closed, he transferred to Galatasaray High School.[169] He had to leave his education at Galatasaray unfinished due to his father's job, and he went to Lebanon and continued his education at the Beirut American College. In 1916, Ottoman students were sent to various cities in Germany, its ally in the First World War, according to their educational status and 250 students were sent in the first stage. Belge was among those students, and he was sent to Berlin, Germany, when he was 17 years old. He was later sent to Kassel for education from Berlin and completed high school there in 1917.[170] After completing high school, he enrolled in the architecture program at the *Technische Hochschule* in

[167] "Ankara Halkevinde Resim Heykel Fotoğraf Amatörleri Müsabakası", *Ulus*, 25 January 1941, p. 5.

[168] "Atatürk'ün Ölüm Yıldönümü Dolayısıyla Yapılan Merasimde Ankara Halkevinde Burhan Belge'nin İrat Ettiği Nutuk", *Ulus*, 11 November 1940, p. 2.

[169] Tekeli, İlhan and Selim İlkin, *Bir Cumhuriyet Öyküsü Kadroculari ve Kadroyu Anlamak* (İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 2003), p. 95.

[170] Akkaya, Ahmet Yaşar, "Burhan Asaf Belge (1899-1967)", *Atatürk Ansiklopedisi*, 24 May 2023, https://ataturkansiklopedisi.gov.tr/bilgi/burhan-asaf-belge-1899-1967/ (accessed 15 September 2025).

Karlsruhe. When the war came to an end, the Ottoman government instructed Ottoman students to return and Belge returned to the Ottoman empire. Upon his return, he stayed with his family until the early months of 1919. Then, he went back to Germany to continue his university. His return to Germany coincided with political unrest and conflict in Germany, marked by the prominence of the socialist movement known as the Spartacist Uprising, led by Rosa Luxemburg. During these years, a group of Turkish students in Berlin, led by Vedat Nedim Tör, who would become one of the closest associates of Belge, supported the Spartacist movement. This group also published a socialist magazine titled *Kurtuluş* (Liberation), and they considered themselves active participants in this struggle. Belge, who had known Tör from their time at Galatasaray High School, occasionally travelled to Berlin to meet him. His visits to Berlin provided him with the opportunity to follow political movements in Berlin as well.[171]

When he completed his degree in Germany in 1923, he came back to Turkey. Although his desire was to go back to Germany for doctorate on political science, his financial situation did not allow it. As it became clear that he would not go to Germany, he began to look for jobs. In April 1923, he began working as a translator at the State Railways office in Eskişehir. In the same year, he left his job at the State Railways and moved to the Anadolu Agency, government owned news agency, staying in Romania for a while as the agency's Bucharest correspondent. Belge, who left Bucharest in mid-1924, joined *Aydınlık*, the publication organ of the Communist Party of Turkey, and met leftist figures such as Nazım Hikmet Ran, Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, and İsmail Hüsrev Tökin. In 1925, *Aydınlık* was closed due to the Şeyh Said Rebellion and in the same year, he joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,[172] therefore moved to Ankara. While Belge remained unaffected by the wave of arrests during the closure of *Aydınlık* in 1925, he was not as fortunate during the 1927 operation targeting the Turkish Communist Party. His house was searched as part of the operation. As he was caught off guard by an unexpected search of his house, Belge got worried and called his friend journalist Falih Rıfkı Atay, a CHP MP and

[171] Tekeli and İlkin, *Bir Cumhuriyet Öyküsü Kadroculari ve Kadroyu Anlamak*, p. 96.

[172] Yıldız, Aytaç, "Burhan Asaf Belge: Cumhuriyetin Erken Döneminde Aydın ve İktidar İlişkisi" (Unpublished PhD Dissertation., Ankara University, 2009), p. 17.

one of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's close associates. Atay told Atatürk what had happened to Belge. Upon hearing the incident, Atatürk ordered Belge be summoned to Çankaya. At Çankaya, Belge and Atatürk had a meeting which lasted nearly four hours. The focus of the meeting was Belge's relations with the *Aydınlık* circle, but as the meeting continued, other topics such as the Soviet Revolution, political movements in Germany were also discussed. Atatürk was pleased with the meeting and told Belge to remain at ease, that he would not be arrested and that he would continue his duty at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[173]

Although his job in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was secured by President Atatürk, he was uncomfortable with the rumours circulating about him within the ministry. As Yıldız demonstrates, Belge expressed his frustration in a letter to his sister, Leman Karaosmanoğlu, stating: "Under these circumstances, even a single moment of lingering on the threshold of the ministry is a humiliation for me. Before long, it will undoubtedly become necessary for me to join a company in the country."[174] Eventually, he resigned from his position at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Nonetheless, after his resignation, a difficult period started for Belge. He held short-term positions in various roles, such as at the Ziraat Bank's Economic Research Department, as a translator at the Anadolu Agency, and as an economic publications advisor at the Ministry of Finance but none of these jobs lasted long.[175] In 1929, he started writing columns in *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, CHP's mouthpiece. During the period between 1929 and 1930, he largely avoided from addressing political topics in his column. Instead, he consistently drew comparisons between Ankara and Istanbul and emphasised the necessity of surpassing Istanbul.[176] While doing this, he emphasised that the centre of the new regime was Ankara and that the Ottoman Empire no longer existed, aiming to distance the Republic from the Ottoman past in İstanbul both symbolically and politically. In this regard, Belge adopted a position in support of the republican reforms.

---

[173] Tekeli and İlkin, *Bir Cumhuriyet Öyküsü Kadroculari ve Kadroyu Anlamak*, pp. 102-103.

[174] Yıldız, "Burhan Asaf Belge: Cumhuriyetin Erken Döneminde Aydın ve İktidar İlişkisi", p. 18.

[175] Tekeli and İlkin, *Bir Cumhuriyet Öyküsü Kadroculari ve Kadroyu Anlamak*, p. 103.

[176] Yıldız, "Burhan Asaf Belge: Cumhuriyetin Erken Döneminde Aydın ve İktidar İlişkisi", pp. 19-20.

Among the writers of *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* were Belge's close friends who was editor-in-chief Falih Rıfkı Atay, his brother-in-law Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu and Şevket Süreyya Aydemir. Following the 1929 Economic Crisis, those individuals sought to analyse the economic crisis and propose solutions and so, launched the *İktisat Sayfası*, a publication dedicated to discussing the economic matters, twice a week. Over time, their collaborative work gradually evolved into a magazine, named *Kadro*.[177] *Kadro* was published by Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, İsmail Hüsrev Tökin, Vedat Nedim Tör, Burhan Asaf Belge and Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu.[178] It was a monthly journal that was dedicated to political, economic, and social ideas It was published between 1932 and 1934 and it had two broad objectives: to build an ideological framework for interpreting the Turkish Revolution, and second to propose economic policies that the new regime should implement.[179]

4.1.2. Burhan Belge at the MUM

After Vedat Nedim Tör was appointed as the head of the MUM, which was established under the Ministry of Internal Affairs in 1933, Burhan Belge was transferred to this pivotal institution, where he would serve until his resignation in 1945. When the MUM was reorganised in 1940 as an institution subordinated to the Prime Ministry and endowed with extensive authority over the press, Belge continued to hold his position in the MUM. While he was working in the MUM, he continued to write for various media outlets. He wrote for *Kadro* until its closure in January 1935. He wrote regularly for *Ulus*, formerly *Hkimiyet-i Milliye*. After İsmet İnönü became the president in November 1938, Belge continued to write articles on daily political developments and other related issues in CHP's *Ulus*, Ahmet Emin Yalman's *Vatan* and *Tanin*, the latter being Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın's newspaper.

During his tenure at the MUM, Belge undertook many official trips abroad. In one of these trips, in 1937, he travelled to Egypt to observe and analyse the Egyptian media

[177] Yıldız, "Burhan Asaf Belge: Cumhuriyetin Erken Döneminde Aydın ve İktidar İlişkisi", p. 21.

[179] Türkeş, Mustafa, "A Patriotic Leftist Development-Strategy Proposal in Turkey in the 1930s: The Case of the Kadro (Cadre) Movement", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 33/1 (2001), p. 91.

system. During his visit to Egypt, he delivered a speech at the Egyptian Women's Union in Cairo. In his speech, he talked about Kemalist reforms and the developments which had brought to the Turkish public. His speech received great attention from both audience and the Egyptian press, and his speech appeared in the Egyptian newspapers. Even, Belge gave a two-page interview that was published in the *Al Siyasa,* an Egyptian newspaper.[180] However, his most significant trip abroad during his time at the MUM was his European tour that he took in 1939. In June 1939, he went on one-month tour with Asım Us, Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın and other journalists, visiting European cities such as Paris, London, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest, Berlin and Sofia. Throughout this tour, Belge conducted critical analyses and interpreted his observations within the prevailing political context of the period. For instance, during his visit to Britain, he observed that the British public regarded the war as legitimate and inevitable,[181] which made him believe that a global war was inescapable. Belge was surprised by the interest shown to them by press, especially in London and Paris, and commented that this was because of the impending war and that these countries were realising the importance of Turkey.[182]

During this tour, Belge also had the chance to observe how propaganda wars had already taken place before the war. For instance, he wrote that although the war had not yet officially started, the clashes between propaganda campaigns made the atmosphere as turbulent and unsettled as a real war. He described this situation as ''Beyaz Harp'' (White War), in which the nations attacked one another with propaganda cannonballs.[183] Furthermore, during his visit to Britain, he participated in a radio program of the BBC and had the chance to observe firsthand how his voice reached to hundreds of thousands of homes by surpassing constraints such as geography and illiteracy. Hence, it is safe to argue that his participation in this program on BBC reinforced his ideas about radio and its usage for communication and propaganda. In other words, Belge had the chance to observe the role of radio as

[180] ''Kahire Mektubu'', *Tan*, 25 April 1937, p. 2

[181] Belge, Burhan, ''Avrupa'da 4 Hafta – İngiltere Silahlanıyor'', *Ulus*, 1 July 1939, p. 2.

[182] Yıldız, "Burhan Asaf Belge: Cumhuriyetin Erken Döneminde Aydın ve İktidar İlişkisi'', p. 25.

[183] Belge, Burhan, ''İnsan ve Kültür: Beyaz Harp'', *Ulus*, 18 July 1939, p. 2.

a medium for communication, propaganda, and persuasion. He witnessed how radio became an important medium for disseminating information to audiences, and its power to influence and shape public opinion. In other words, Belge observed how governments employed radio not only for disseminating news but also as a major and critical tool for propaganda.

Upon his return to Turkey, he wrote his analysis and observations about his trip to Europe in a series of articles titled ‘‘Avrupa’da 4 Hafta’’ (Four Weeks in Europe) in his column in *Ulus*.[184] His insights were significant as political tension was high and soaring in Europe day by day. It is significant to note that the observations and experiences Burhan Belge gained during this trip to Europe played a significant role in shaping his mindset and, consequently, his radio broadcasts from Ankara Radio during the Second World War. His experience of the political, social, and cultural dynamics of Europe during a period of escalating tensions in the region gave him valuable insights. These experiences helped him to deepen his understanding of the broader geopolitical landscape. Further, these experiences fundamentally influenced his approach to communication and propaganda, and he understood the importance of communication. In this sense, Belge's European journey was not merely a passive, bureaucratic travel, but a transformative process that significantly broadened his intellectual framework and his role as a radio programmer during the Second World War.

4.2 Burhan Belge’s Radio Speeches: *Günün Meseleleri*

Burhan Belge’s *Günün Meseleleri* served as an important platform for spreading Turkey’s official discourse and countering propaganda aimed at Turkey. During the Second World War, Turkey was subjected to various propaganda campaigns from different countries, each seeking to influence Turkish public opinion or challenge its position. Belge responded by presenting factual accounts, highlighting Turkey’s policies, and reaffirming the country’s dedication to neutrality. His broadcasts also projected Turkey’s perspectives to international and domestic audience.

[184] Belge, Burhan, ‘’Avrupa’da 4 Hafta – Bulduğumuz Dostluk Havası’’, *Ulus*, 5 July 1939, p. 2.

The transcripts of Belge's speeches that he delivered on Ankara Radio were originally published by Ulusal Matbaa as a series of booklets. These booklets were around 50 pages, and each booklet contained transcripts of approximately 5 speeches. After Belge's death in 1967, transcripts of his speeches were compiled into a single book titled *Burhan Belge'nin Sesiyle İkinci Dünya Savaşı Radyo Konferansları* by his sister Leman Karaosmanoğlu. This book was published in 1970, by Ulusal Matbaa, and included an introduction by Mazlum Kayalar, and a preface by Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, Belge's close friend and brother-in-law. This book is the most comprehensive and significant source for Belge's radio broadcasts, and it is used as one of the primary sources for this thesis. Although some of his radio talks appeared in the newspapers of the time[185], aside from this book, there is no other source that contains the full transcripts of his radio talks. Furthermore, this book has the same texts that appeared in the booklets that was published in the 1940s. In other words, texts of Belge's radio speeches appeared in the book did not subject to any alterations. Hence, this book preserved the original language and structure of the broadcasts. Belge designed his program to address key issues related to propaganda and the ongoing war. Thus, in his radio program, he focused on two main themes: educating and warning the public about foreign propaganda and secondly, actively countering propaganda campaigns that were directed against Turkey.

4.2.1. Educating and Warning Domestic Audience about Foreign Propaganda

The first main theme of Belge's speeches was understanding the nature of propaganda and propaganda methods. According to Lasswell, "Propaganda is the management of collective attitudes by the manipulation of symbols"[186]. For Qaulter propaganda is consistent and deliberate attempts to form, control, and change the attitudes of groups[187]. Belge was aware of such features of propaganda and therefore sought to educate and warn the Turkish audience about propaganda.

---

[185] See, For example, "Felaket Dolayısıyla Vatandaşlara Güzel Bir Hitabe'', *Ulus*, 30 December 1939, p. 4.

[186] Lasswell, Harold D. "The Theory of Political Propaganda", *The American Political Science Review*, 21/3 (1927), p. 627.

[187] Qualter, Terence H. *Propaganda and Psychological Warfare* (New York: Random House, 1962), p. 27.

He analysed the tactics and strategies that drove the dissemination of propaganda. He highlighted the tactics that commonly employed in propaganda making such as the strategic use of persuasive language, manipulation of emotions, the deliberate, selective presentation of information, and the use and manipulation of symbols and slogans which all aimed to distort perceptions and influencing audiences in a desired way, and Belge sought to warn and educate the Turkish audience about these features of propaganda. As he expressed as early as 16 December 1939, propaganda had the ability to show issues that fell beyond the reach of diplomacy as if they were under the control of diplomacy, to exaggerate the military achievements, and to depict an indifferent public opinion as neutral, a neutral as a friend, and a friend as an ally.[188] A month later, on 6 January 1940, he wrote that propaganda is made through the strategic framing of narratives, selective manipulation of language and information because he believed that all those propaganda campaigns were always tailored according to their target audiences.[189] In the same speech, he argued that these words, which some people dismissed as mere words, were actually propaganda that was thought out, organized and directed to certain audiences to achieve certain goals.[190] He continued that beneath a four-line telegraph report or a two minute radio broadcast lay hidden intentions, and strategic plans that were designed to shape perceptions.[191]

Belge, throughout 1939, pointed out several times that as the international tensions rising and the likehood of a global war grew day by day, propaganda campaigns also intensified. Falih Rıfkı Atay also shared the same view with Belge and said that as the war intensified, foreign propaganda targeted Turkey also intensified as new rumours and misleading narratives emerged daily in Istanbul.[192] This indicates that both the government and intellectuals of the period were aware of foreign propaganda.

[188] Karaosmanoğlu, *Burhan Belge'nin Sesiyle İkinci Dünya Savaşı*, p 39.

[189] Karaosmanoğlu, *Burhan Belge'nin Sesiyle İkinci Dünya Savaşı*, p. 52.

[190] Karaosmanoğlu, *Burhan Belge'nin Sesiyle İkinci Dünya Savaşı*, p. 53.

[191] Karaosmanoğlu, *Burhan Belge'nin Sesiyle İkinci Dünya Savaşı*, p. 56.

[192] Atay, Falih, Rıfkı, ''Harp Dışında Fakat'', *Ulus*, 16 December 1939, p. 1.

In his program, Belge extensively talked about how propaganda reached to Turkey. In a speech that he delivered on 24 February 1940, he emphasised Turkey's significant role in propaganda wars while explaining to his audience how propaganda reached into the country. Propaganda entered Turkey through two main channels. The first was the formal route, which involved the arrival of international print media. Newspapers, magazines, and books imported from various countries carried ideas that were deliberately crafted to defend specific interests and to promote specific agendas. Since Turkey had not yet fully developed in this regard, it remained as a country that had to import a great number of foreign publications. Furthermore, Belge pointed out that in Turkey, the number of intellectuals who were capable of analysing the ideas presented in these publications was relatively low. Additionally, he noted that book reading rates in Turkey were not particularly high whereas newspapers being the most widely consumed form of print media. However, newspapers usually relied on foreign news agencies and translated content from international publications as their main sources of information. Given these circumstances, he asserted that there was little to prevent propaganda from easily entering the country.[193] Another, and most significant way that propaganda entered Turkey was through radio. Belge, a number of times, highlighted that radio had become the most important instrument for propaganda during the war, and he also utilised it for propaganda and counter propaganda making.

4.2.2. Countering Foreign Propaganda

In his radio talks, Burhan Belge's second most critical theme was to counter foreign propaganda messages directed to Turkey and explain the position of Turkey to domestic and international audiences. Throughout the war, Turkey's most significant objective was to preserve its neutral status.[194] In light of this policy of neutrality, Turkey made considerable efforts to stay out of the war and participated to the war on 23 February 1945, only in a symbolic manner in order to become a member of the United Nations. In order to explain this neutrality policy, which became a state

[193] Karaosmanoğlu, *Burhan Belge'nin Sesiyle İkinci Dünya Savaşı*, pp. 85-86.

[194] Önsoy, Murat and Gürol Baba, ''Escaping the Whirlpool of War: a Two-fold Analysis of Turkey's Neutrality Policy in World War II'', *Cumhuriyet Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 15/29 (2019), p. 125.

policy, to different audiences, Belge devoted a significant portion of his program to talk about the neutrality policy of Turkey and became a staunch supporter of this policy. Nevertheless, Belge's support to neutrality did not mean a complete or passive form of neutrality. Rather, his concept of neutrality can be named as 'active neutrality'. According to this active neutrality policy, Turkey would stay out of the war unless its territories would face with a direct attack, or it would face with a serious threat to its national security**.** Belge, in his radio talk dated 3 November 1940, conveyed to his audience that the fact that while Turkey sought to avoid from a direct military confrontation, it nevertheless always remained alert and always prepared to defend its territories if such attacks happened against Turkey.[195] Belge frequently reiterated this position in his radio broadcasts.

Atay also shared the same view with Belge and wrote in his column in *Ulus* that "Turkey is out of the war, wishes to remain so until the end, and aims to avoid any conflicts that would compel Turkey to use its national defence forces. However, if Turkey faces an attack, it possesses the necessary might to repel it."[196] By emphasising Turkey's wish to stay out of the war while, at the same time asserting its military capability, both Belge and Atay aimed to reassure the Turkish public, deter potential aggressors, and counter foreign propaganda messages which sought to portray Turkey as weak and vulnerable.

Furthermore, Belge emphasised several times that no external power had the right and ability to dictate when Turkey should enter the war. On 23 March 1940, Belge underlined that the decision to go to the war rested only with the Turkish people and their government, to whom Turkish people had given all their support unconditionally.[197] It is significant to highlight that Belge's this speech was delivered just after the Moscow Peace Treaty which was signed between USSR and Finland on 13 March 1940 through which USSR annexed some Finnish territory. In this context, Belge's emphasis on Turkey's sovereign right to decide whether to join the war

[195] Karaosmanoğlu, *Burhan Belge'nin Sesiyle İkinci Dünya Savaşı*, p. 70.

[196] Atay, Falih, Rıfkı, ''Harp Dışında Fakat'', *Ulus*, 16 December 1939, pp. 1-5.

[197] Karaosmanoğlu, *Burhan Belge'nin Sesiyle İkinci Dünya Savaşı*, p. 103.

functioned as a reassurance to the Turkish public. That is, only Turkey itself had the authority to determine its fate. With these words, Belge's message to audience, particularly to the international audience was clear: Turkey's neutrality policy should not be understood as a sign of weakness, or indecisiveness. Turkey did not pursue a policy to encroach on other countries territories. A month later, on 27 April 1940, Belge pointed out that if a country attacks Turkish soil, Turkey, with all its power, is capable of defend its territories and defeat the aggressors.[198] On the day Belge delivered this speech, Britain had begun to evacuate its troops from Norway, which marked the German victory in Norway. By highlighting Turkey's independent decision-making capacity, Belge sought to show his audience that the Turkish government was not under any country's shadow and made its decisions all by itself. In this speech Belge also addressed Turkish youth and urged them to draw lessons from the events in Norway and to keep Atatürk's Address to the Turkish Youth (Gençliğe Hitabe) in mind.[199]

In addition, in his speech dated 1 June 1940, he responded to those in the domestic public opinion who supported Turkey's entrance to the war. He stated that Turkey had a secure position in comparison to other countries and reminded the fate of countries who were dragged into the war and had to face with the dire consequences of it. By doing so, Belge wanted his audience to understand that Turkey was free to make its own decisions, but for that time, staying neutral was the wisest choice for Turkey. Nonetheless, if any attack would happen against Turkey, it possessed the necessary political and military might to protect itself.[200]

However, while he firmly supported Turkey's neutral and non-belligerent position during the war, he drew a clear distinction between the Allies and the Axis. In his radio speeches, from the beginning to the end of his radio program, Belge adopted a far more favourable stance towards the Allies while he had a critical and mostly negative stance against the Axis, particularly Germany, as in his speeches he

[198] Karaosmanoğlu, *Burhan Belge'nin Sesiyle İkinci Dünya Savaşı*, p. 123.

[199] Karaosmanoğlu, *Burhan Belge'nin Sesiyle İkinci Dünya Savaşı*, p. 117.

[200] Karaosmanoğlu, *Burhan Belge'nin Sesiyle İkinci Dünya Savaşı*, p. 146.

portrayed Germany as the principal aggressor whose expansionist and revanchist policies had dragged the world into war. Belge also emphasised the moral contrast between the Allies and the Axis powers. Belge conveyed that Germany's position which was the main reason of the war, resulted from Germany's actions that had, several times, violated its commitments and hence disregarded the international norms. Hence, according to him, Germany's actions reflected moral failure. On the other hand, he did not make such criticism towards the Allies. In order to highlight Turkey's position and moral superiority, Belge underlined that Turkey never behaved in such a manner, seeking to portray the country as a state which respected its commitments and international norms. This speech received considerable interest and was published in *Ulus* on 24 December 1939, one day after it was broadcasted on the Ankara Radio.[201]

The main reason why Belge aligned more closely with the Allies and held a negative attitude against the Axis was his belief, from the onset of the war, that the Axis powers had little chance of victory and he constantly reflected this view in his radio speeches. He foresaw, through his speeches that he delivered in different times, that the Allies would ultimately be victorious owing to their economic superiority, their geographical advantages, and most importantly, the eventual participation of the United States of America, which possessed vast economic resources and manpower, on their side.[202]

In a speech that he delivered on 16 December 1939, Belge analysed the economic conditions of Germany in comparison to that of Britain and France and argued that the Allies were in way more advantageous position than the Axis. He emphasised the impact of the British naval embargo on Germany which started on 6 September 1939, noting that it had effectively severed Germany's access to maritime trade. As a result, Germany was left reliant on trade through land with some European countries. However, most of Europe did not possess necessary production resources, in other words, they were dependent on imports in order for production. Hence, even the

[201] "Bugünkü Harbi Vasıtalandıran Tarihi Şartlar – Burhan Belge'nin Dün Radyodaki Konuşması", *Ulus*, 24 December 1939, p. 2.

[202] Karaosmanoğlu, *Burhan Belge'nin Sesiyle İkinci Dünya Savaşı*, pp. 86-87.

limited trade that Germany conducted with some European countries were under the blockage of the Allies. Furthermore, among the most significant necessities of Germany were foodstuffs, and its need to foodstuffs dramatically soared as it annexed Austria and Czechoslovakia, Europe's two of the most industrialised but at the same time poor in terms of agricultural production which even increased Germany's need to foodstuff. In spite of this increasing need, Germany faced several difficulties both in purchasing and export. While British naval blockade seriously diminished its ability to import and export, additional financial constrains further complicated Germany's ability to buy necessary resources. Belge argued that whereas the Allies were able to buy the necessary commodities with gold, or cash, Germany was relied on the old *kriling* method which made its economic position against the Allies even worse.[203]

Belge, through his radio talks, continued his analysis of the Allies' naval embargo against Germany and highlighted the impact of economic warfare in the broader context of the ongoing war. On 17 February 1940, he asserted that economic measures such as trade restrictions, resource blockades, and embargos, were not simply additional strategies but were equally decisive as direct military engagement. Just like propaganda, these economic measures had emerged as essential instruments of modern warfare that shaped drastically the course of the war.[204] By undermining the opposing side's capacity to sustain its war efforts and hence influencing the morale of the domestic population, Belge sought to demonstrate his audience the developments that the modern warfare had brought.

In his speech dated 7 June 1941, Belge noted another significant point and explained why he believed that the Axis powers would eventually lose the war against the Allies:

> The most powerful weapon of the Axis powers is the German army. However, in order to make the German army to be effective, a robust and healthy Germany is required. Such a Germany, on the other hand, is dependent on a

[203] Karaosmanoğlu, *Burhan Belge'nin Sesiyle İkinci Dünya Savaşı*, pp. 36-37.

[204] Karaosmanoğlu, *Burhan Belge'nin Sesiyle İkinci Dünya Savaşı*, p. 83.

> robust and healthy Europe. However, in reality, Europe is not in a position to feed itself and hence is in no position to be a robust and healthy again. Therefore, the fall of Europe will become inevitable as the time passes. That is, any victory for the Axis in Europe and any peace which may result from it is impossible. Armies derive their fighting power from the production capacity of the societies to which they belong. As the German army's source of strength is Germany and Germany's source of strength is Europe, then, when measured against Britain who derived its strength from the United States and from the rest of the world, this equation inevitably leads to the defeat of the Axis powers.[205]

That is to say, Belge staunchly believed that the Axis would eventually be defeated since their strength was derived from a continent which was insufficient to sustain itself and consequently Germany was deriving its strength from a collapsing continent while the Allies, especially Britain derived their source of strength from the United States and the rest of the world who were far more robust and resilient than Europe.

All these factors reinforced Belge's belief that Allies would eventually win the war decisively, and this belief shaped the content and tone of his radio speeches. Although in his radio talk dated 7 August 1944, he claimed itself being the Turkish propaganda and counter propaganda persona since 1939[206], he did not thoroughly analyse the Allies' propaganda and just informed his audience about that like a news anchor. On the other hand, when he was analysing the German propaganda broadcasts, he adapted a far more critical approach. Rather than merely providing its content to his audience, he critically examined these propaganda broadcasts in depth and deconstructed their hidden messages. To illustrate, in one of its Turkish broadcasts, the German radio talked about the economic situation in Turkey and argued that cost of living and unemployment rates were soaring rapidly and highlighted that Turkey was not receiving the aid that it was promised by Britain and France. In response to these claims of the German radio, Belge, on 16 December 1939, conveyed to his audience that the true purpose of such statements was to sow confusion among the Turkish audience and to provoke reactions which could be used to gather intelligence about Turkey. Furthermore, he warned his audience that these

[205] Karaosmanoğlu, *Burhan Belge'nin Sesiyle İkinci Dünya Savaşı*, p. 300.

[206] Karaosmanoğlu, *Burhan Belge'nin Sesiyle İkinci Dünya Savaşı*, p. 440.

broadcasts were not made to inform the Turkish audience about the economic outlook of Turkey, rather these propaganda broadcasts were carefully made to lead the Turkish people into despondency in order to weaken Turkey's national unity and resistance power in the future, just as it had happened in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Austria, prior to their fall against Germany. Belge urged his audience that they should remain vigilant, and they should not believe in such statements as their sole aim was to break the morale and unity of the Turkish people.[207] In other words, Belge sought to urge Turkish people by emphasising that Germany's aim was to promote uncertainty and portray Britain and France as unreliable partners. By doing so, its ultimate aim was to alienate the Turkish public opinion from the Allies, bring it to the Axis side, and make them force the government for a foreign policy change that would favour the German interests. In other words, Germany sought to render ineffective the Treaty of Mutual Assistance signed in Ankara on 19 October 1939 between Turkey, Britain, and France. This treaty sought to address complex challenges that had emerged on the eve of the Second World War with the growing threat that was posed by Germany and Italy in the Mediterranean and the Balkans. The treaty's goal was to meet the defence needs of Britain, France, and Turkey, and to ensure the security of the Balkans.[208]

According to Belge, as he argued on 20 January 1940, the main aim of the German propaganda was to disseminate carefully fabricated information while concealing the true military, political, and economic realities. Germany's propaganda strategy aimed two main goals. First was to control the domestic public opinion by promoting a controlled narrative that concealed weaknesses of Germany. Second was to influence international audiences by shaping their opinions in favour of German interests as it was tried to portray Britian and France as unreliable partners in the eyes of the Turkish audience. Belge asserted that German propaganda aimed to create an alternate reality through the intentional distortion of facts and selective presentation of information, thereby advancing its strategic and ideological objectives on both national and global stages.[209] By deeply analysing the subtle threats and underlying

[207] Karaosmanoğlu, *Burhan Belge'nin Sesiyle İkinci Dünya Savaşı*, p. 41.

[208] Soysal, İsmail, ''1939 Türk İngiliz Fransız İttifakı'', *Belleten*, 46/182 (1982), p. 367.

[209] Karaosmanoğlu, *Burhan Belge'nin Sesiyle İkinci Dünya Savaşı*, p. 64.

negative messages that German propaganda had, Belge's aim was to ensure that the Turkish audience would not only understand the content of the German propaganda but also to make his audience realise the psychological and strategic motives behind these propaganda broadcasts. In other words, his aim was to warn the Turkish audience against the German propaganda and prevent them from being influenced by it.

In addition, Belge had an indirect tone when warning his audience against foreign propaganda, particularly that of originated from Germany. Rather than simply refuting and advising the audience not to believe in German propaganda messages, he, several times, emphasised his confidence to intelligence of the Turkish nation and they would not be deceived by such propaganda messages. Besides, he frequently used a number of laudatory words to describe the Turkish nation. For instance, on 6 December 1941, when German army were on the outskirts of Moscow and the Japanese navy was advancing toward Pearl Harbour, he described the Turkish populace as strengthened not only by historical experiences but by resilience and pride which both established and dismantled its own empires throughout the history. Belge repeatedly highlighted that Turks was peculiar in having voluntarily abandoned its imperialistic past by dissolving the Ottoman Empire and founding the Turkish Republic as a nation state. According to him, rejecting imperialism for itself while simultaneously resisting its influence on other nations was an important historical example that set by Turks. He conveyed to his audience that Turks, as a nation that had an empire, revolted against imperialism, in other words, Turks that had always held the position of a master essentially rejected subjugation.[210] This rhetoric on imperialism was directly about the Axis as its aggression triggered the Second World War, and it was the Axis powers whose policies posed a significant threat to Turkey's security thereby heightening Turkey's threat perception.[211]

Belge stated that while Turkey had renounced expansionist and irredentist ambitions and founded a sovereign nation state, Germany's actions indicated otherwise. By

[210] Karaosmanoğlu, *Burhan Belge'nin Sesiyle İkinci Dünya Savaşı*, p. 536.

[211] Hale, William, "Turkey and Britain in World War II: Origins and Results of the Tripartite Alliance, 1935-40", *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 23/6 (2021), p. 825.

emphasising this stark contrast between Germany's imperialist and expansionist policies and Turkey's voluntary rejection of them, Belge sought to demonstrate to his audience the moral superiority of Turkey and justified the active neutrality policy of Turkey during the ongoing Second World War. At the same time, he portrayed Germany as an aggressor which had imperialistic and territorial ambitions. This overall rhetoric enabled Belge to shape the Turkish public opinion against Germany by fostering scepticism towards German propaganda. That is to say, Belge sought to ensure that his audience would remain cautious against the German propaganda that was targeting the Turkish audience. While Belge continuously warned his audience to be vigilant against the German propaganda as he did on 24 February 1940, he generally concluded his radio speeches with the following remarks: ''The effort of those propaganda endeavours to cloud the minds of the intelligent Turkish nation are futile. Turkish people could neither be deceived nor intimated by foreign propaganda endeavours as the Turks had strong and discerning minds. Furthermore, the Turkish people placed unwavering trust in their own reasonings and their government. However, still you shall remain prudent.''[212]

In addition, Belge several times conveyed to his audience that the Turkish people cannot be deceived or frightened by foreign propaganda manipulations. He emphasised that it is forbidden for foreign propagandists to infiltrate the Turkish people's realm of reason as Turks had strong minds. According to Belge, the Turkish nation firmly trusts in its own intellect, as well as the measures taken by its government and state. Belge urged his listeners not to drown in daily telegraph news, not to allow their minds to crack, and to navigate through the midst of propagandas, standing firmly behind their cause and the national chief and the president İsmet İnönü.

As Germany began to retreat in 1943, and its defeat became inevitable, Belge's tone getting even harsher against Germany, and more sympathetic to the Allies. Following Turkey's severance of diplomatic relations with Germany on 3 August 1944, just four days later, on 7 August 1944, Belge supported this decision in his program and argued that since its foundation Turkey had always supported nations' freedom and

[212] Karaosmanoğlu, *Burhan Belge'nin Sesiyle İkinci Dünya Savaşı*, p. 226.

independence and opposes the nations that pursued expansionist policies.[213] When Turkey declared war on Germany and Italy on 23 February 1945 he enthusiastically relayed Prime Minister Şükrü Saraçoğlu's announcement of war. Although Belge's personal stance, until Turkey's declaration of war against the Axis, was sympathetic to the Allies and critical of the Axis, he repeatedly emphasised Turkey's determination to stay out of the war, hence remaining neutral, and Turkey would only enter the war only on its own terms and at a time of its own choosing. Now, nonetheless, his tone in his radio speeches had shifted. In a speech that he delivered in February 1944, before Turkish declaration of war against Germany and Japan, he asserted that Turkey was a neutral country, but its neutrality was not an absolute one, as Turkey was bound to Britain by an alliance treaty[214] which was signed in 1939. When Turkey officially entered the war, he began to explain why Turkey decided to enter the war. His remarks had striking similarities to those of Prime Minister Saraçoğlu's. In his speech before the Turkish Assembly, Saraçoğlu justified his government's decision to enter the war with some moral and political arguments. He said:

> Since the very first minutes of the war, Turkey placed its words, arms, and hearth on the side of democratic nations, the Allies. Now, Turkey wants to take a step further and wants to join to those who sought to rescue civilisation, independence, and democracy, and wants to severely punish criminals responsible for the outbreak of the war. Thus, Turkey declares war on Germany and Japan in accordance with our national interests as well as the interests of the world and humanity.[215]

Agreeing with Prime Minister Saraçoğlu's words, Belge used his radio program to explain and rationalise the reasons behind Turkey's decision to enter the Second World War. He conveyed to his audience that Turkey had to participate in the war in order to secure its position in the new world order that would emerge after the war, in other words, to become a founding member of the United Nations. At the same time, Belge also underlined that this decision of entering the war made by Turkey of its

[213] Karaosmanoğlu, *Burhan Belge'nin Sesiyle İkinci Dünya Savaşı*, p. 438.

[214] Karaosmanoğlu, *Burhan Belge'nin Sesiyle İkinci Dünya Savaşı*, p. 417.

[215] ''Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisinin 23/2/1945 Tarihli Toplantısında Başbakan Şükrü Saraçoğlu Tarafından Verilen Söylev'', *T.C. Resmi Gazete*, 5940, p. 8329.

own will, without any external pressure or dictation. That is to say, Belge not only aimed to justify Turkey's entrance into the war to the Turkish audience but also to prove that Turkey made this decision solely on its own. As a result, Belge's *Günün Meseleleri* was used as a tool of propaganda to explain to the Turkish public opinion the reasons and justifications behind Turkey's involvement to the Second World War.

As the German threat against Turkey began to disappear while Belge continued to address his audience about the German propaganda, his focus started to shift to a new and emerging threat, the Soviet threat.[216] During the course of the war, Turkey's main threat perception was originated from Italy, and Germany. While the former threatened the status quo in the Mediterranean and the Balkans, the latter's troops presence in the western borders of Turkey had heightened the fear that Germany might attack and annex Turkey. However, as the German defeat became certain, Turkey's threat perception had also changed. Now, the new threat aroused from the USSR as it demanded Turkey to sign a new agreement that would resemble to the 1833 Treaty of Hünkar İskelesi, which gave the Russian Empire the right to ask the Ottomans to close the Dardanelles to any foreign warship if the Tsar felt threatened. In 1945, the USSR finally saw a chance to achieve this goal and even demanded Turkey to establish a military port near the Bosphorus which would have robbed the Turkish government of the fruits of its victory at Montreux.[217] In addition to its demands regarding the Straits, the USSR also demanded for the restitution of the eastern provinces of Turkey, namely Kars and Ardahan, cities that were under the control of Russia before they were ceded to Turkey. This situation heightened Turkey's sense of insecurity and hence led to a change in Turkey's threat perception as these demands posed a direct threat to Turkey's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

In light of these developments, Burhan Belge began to focus more on this situation in his radio talks and framed it within the Turkish foreign policy and sovereignty. For

[216] Gökay, Bülent, *Soviet Eastern Policy and Turkey, 1920-1991: Soviet Foreign Policy, Turkey and Communism*, (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 61.

[217] İşçi, Onur, "Turkey at a Crossroads: The Soviet Threat and Postwar Realignment, 1945–1946," *Diplomatic History*, 48/4 (2023), p. 633.

instance, on 9 April 1945, he sought to counter the Soviet propaganda that aimed to legitimise these claims while assuring the Turkish audience that Turkey would not accept and hence would resist the Soviet claims that would compromise its sovereignty. Nevertheless, Belge did not adapt the harsh tone that he used against Germany. He only dedicated one of his broadcasts solely to this topic and rather than criticise the USSR and its demands, it rather shared with his audience a speech that Turkey sought to find a middle ground, which would also please the Soviets.[218]

In this radio broadcast, Belge conveyed that the USSR expressed its intent to terminate the 1925 agreement that it signed with Turkey whereas Turkey, in turn, expressed its intent to sign a new treaty with the Soviets. Belge supported the signing of a new agreement with the Soviets and began to underline the common features and long history between Turkey and Russia. He emphasised that although the Second World War had divided several nations into opposing sides, Turkey and the USSR ultimately stood in the same side, and he highlighted that this situation created a favourable atmosphere between two countries. He, then, continued to underline the long history between Russia and Turkey and noted that although these two countries had been rivals for centuries, emphasising the rivalry between the Russian Empire and the Ottoman Empire, the path of two countries had begun to align over the past 25 years. As the end of the Second World War was about to come an end, Belge expressed that the new global atmosphere was shifting towards mutual understanding, and more cooperation, and the Turkish-Soviet relations should move in this cooperative direction. In addition, Belge further said that a possible hostility between Turkey and the USSR would harm both nations while friendship between two countries would serve their shared interests. In order to materialise his claim, Belge referred to Turkey's and the USSR's revolutionary experiences, which, he claimed, went parallel, both fought against imperialism to establish independent states.[219] By highlighting these shared characteristics, Belge had two main goals. First was to cultivate a sense of mutual understanding among the Turkish audience and to justify why Turkey would sign a new treaty with the USSR. Second was to

[218] Karaosmanoğlu, *Burhan Belge'nin Sesiyle İkinci Dünya Savaşı*, pp. 503-504.

[219] Karaosmanoğlu, *Burhan Belge'nin Sesiyle İkinci Dünya Savaşı*, pp. 503-504.

send a message to Moscow. From propaganda perspective, Belge aimed to portray Ankara as a friendly neighbour with which Moscow had several common interests.

4.3. Conclusion

The Second World War brought a number of profound developments to modern warfare. Advancements in technology brought changes not only in the military field but also in the field of communication and these developments enlarged the scope of warfare. As a result, communication has become one of the most critical components of the modern warfare. As Belge stated on 25 December 1944 "Just as this war is fought on three fronts, on land, at sea, and in the air, its management and direction also operate on three fronts: military, political, and propagandistic."[220]

As the importance of propaganda became apparent, Turkey was quick to recognise its importance and began to actively utilise it as an instrument of propaganda and counter propaganda. Among the other propaganda tools, radio emerged as the most critical propaganda tool of the time, and Turkey utilised radio as its major propaganda tool. So, Burhan Belge's *Günün Meseleleri* quickly became the cornerstone of Turkey's propaganda and counter propaganda campaigns. Although he touched on many different points in his program, his main goals were to educate the Turkish audience about propaganda and to counter foreign propaganda that targeted Turkey with the aim of influencing the Turkish public opinion in a way that the propagandist country desired. In this context, Burhan Belge's *Günün Meseleleri* not only reflected Turkey's wartime communication strategy but also emerged as one of Turkey's most influential propaganda and counter propaganda instrument.

[220] Karaosmanoğlu, *Burhan Belge'nin Sesiyle İkinci Dünya Savaşı*, p. 481.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Aiming to fill the gap in the existing secondary literature on Turkey's propaganda and counter-propaganda activities during the Second World War, this thesis has demonstrated the importance of situating the propaganda atmosphere in Turkey within a broader international and historical framework. Instead of limiting the focus of analysis to structural changes in radio, its management, the general importance of propaganda during the war, this thesis has analysed how Turkey designed and implemented its propaganda and counter-propaganda campaigns in practice. By analysing the transformation of radio management in accordance with developments in the interwar period and the exigencies of the Second World War in Chapters 2 and 3 and Burhan Belge's radio speeches, *Günün Meseleleri* in Chapter 4, this thesis has sought to demonstrate that Turkey, despite its non-belligerent status, was not a passive observer but rather it actively participated in the global propaganda wars. Even though Turkey did not enter the war militarily during the intense phases of the war and only symbolically declared war against Germany and Japan, it was nevertheless involved in the war from its very outset. This involvement was not in the form of direct military involvement but rather it was in the form of propaganda. In other words, Turkey was not formally at war, yet if found itself at the very centre of the war. Due to its strategic geographic location, it became the target of extensive propaganda wars that were conducted by both the Allies and the Axis, each aimed to draw Turkey into their respective sides. For instance, German propaganda campaigns targeted Turkey had aims beyond cajoling Turkey into a belligerent stance and concentrated on strengthening the ideological and economic links between two countries.[221] To draw Turkey into their respective sides, belligerent countries' most

[221] İşçi, Onur, *Turkey and the Soviet Union During World War II*: Diplomacy, Discord and International Relations (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2020), p. 7.

significant weapon was propaganda, particularly propaganda that was conducted through radio. Therefore, Turkey had to develop its own propaganda and counter-propaganda strategies.

Turkey's participation in these global propaganda wars wasn't simply a matter of choice as it became a target from the beginning. Had Turkey refrained from actively participating in these propaganda wars, it would have been unable to disseminate its stance and policies to either its domestic or the international audiences. In such a scenario, its image could have been shaped and potentially distorted by other countries. By proactively conducting its own propaganda and counter propaganda campaigns, Turkey was able to communicate its narratives, prevent other nations from portraying it in ways that contradicted its strategic interests, and counter foreign propaganda messages that targeted itself. This demonstrates that propaganda during the Second World War was not only a tool of persuasion but also a vital tool for survival.

Turkey's main propaganda tool during the Second World War was radio. However, its experience with radio predated the war. As Chapter 2 has demonstrated, Turkey's first professional experience with radio began in the late 1920s with the establishment of the TTTAŞ. While broadcasting operated nominally as a private enterprise for a decade, in practice it remained under strict state control. As the international political climate grew increasingly tense in the second half of 1930 and it became clear that a world war was approaching, the Turkish government more clearly recognised the strategic importance of radio and, as a result, decided to have direct governmental control over radio. At the same time, it accelerated its efforts to strengthen the radio infrastructure, particularly through the construction of Ankara Radio. These measures were complemented by policies aimed at increasing the number and reach of radio devices across the country. These developments laid the technological, institutional, and administrative foundations that would later enable Turkey goal to effectively use radio as a primary tool of wartime propaganda.

With the outbreak of the Second World War, the intensity of foreign propaganda broadcasts targeting Turkey increased drastically and this led the Turkish government

to implement comprehensive measures to manage both domestic and international information flows. At the same time, dissenting voices within the press were perceived as potential obstacles to the government's wartime policies. As Chapter 3 has discussed, the government addressed these challenges by establishing the MUM and empowered it to regulate, coordinate, and, if necessary, suppress press activity. The MUM's influence also covered radio, and it was placed under the MUM's control, and its broadcasting policy was determined jointly by the Prime Ministry and the MUM. In addition to tightening administrative control, Turkey also intensified its efforts to counter foreign influence by monitoring foreign radio broadcasts targeting itself and expanding Ankara Radio's broadcasts to include broadcasts in foreign languages. These foreign-language broadcasts aimed to project Turkey's official stance to international audiences and to participate more actively in the international propaganda arena. Domestically, the government sought to have a loyal and engaged audience by offering radio programs focused on daily life and general interest, thereby encouraging the public to listen to Ankara Radio more frequently and reducing the appeal of foreign radio stations. Through these combined measures, Turkey increased its capacity to shape public opinion, protect its discourse, and manage the information environment during the Second World War.

While Turkey implemented a series of institutional and administrative measures to protect itself in the increasingly complex propaganda environment of the Second World War, it also needed a strong and authoritative figure who was capable of conveying Turkey's wartime policies to the public and effectively responding to hostile narratives made by foreign countries to undermine its position. This role fell to Burhan Belge. As it has been explored in Chapter 4, Belge emerged as Turkey's most influential voice on radio during the war, becoming a central figure in the government's efforts to manage public opinion and counter foreign narratives. Through his broadcasts, he not only kept listeners informed about the changing dynamics and military developments of the ongoing war but also consistently emphasized Turkey' policy of active neutrality, by emphasising that Turkey had no intention to join the war, but if it was attacked, it had the necessary power to deter it. Belge placed considerable emphasis on exposing, challenging, and refuting propaganda campaigns made by foreign countries, particularly those originating from

the Axis countries, that attempted to portray Turkey as vulnerable and unstable country, and to portray the opposing side as an unreliable partner. By providing Turkey's stance and policies and refuting foreign countries' propagandas, Belge's *Günün Meseleleri* played a critical role in strengthening Turkish audience's confidence to its government and defending Turkey's interests in the international arena.

All in all, as this thesis has demonstrated, Turkey's involvement in the propaganda wars from the very beginning of the Second World War requires a reconsideration of how Turkey's wartime position is conceptualised. Throughout the war, Turkey pursued a policy to stay out of the war. The consequences of the Ottoman Empire's participation to the First World War were well-known to the Turkish government as its members had personally experienced that period and they were aware of the possible political, economic, and military costs of such involvement. Thus, the main objective of Turkish propaganda was to resist pressures that might draw itself into the war and radio was used as one of the main propaganda tools to achieve the Turkish propaganda tools.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

Archives

Devlet Arşivleri, Cumhuriyet Arşivi, Ankara

- 030.10.0.0 (Başbakanlık Muamelat Genel Müdürlüğü
- 030.18.1.2 (Başbakanlık Kararlar Daire Başkanlığı
- 490.1.0.0 (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi)

Devlet Arşivleri, Türk Diplomatik Arşivi, Ankara

Official Publications

T.C. Resmi Gazete

Newspapers and Journals

Cumhuriyet
Radyo
Tan
Ulus

SECONDARY SOURCES

Ahıska, Meltem. *Occidentalism in Turkey: Questions of Modernity and National Identity in Turkish Radio Broadcasting.* London: I.B. Tauris, 2014.

Akagündüz, Ümit. "Radyoculuğumuzun Cumhuriyetin İlk Yıllarındaki Serüveni ve Telsiz Mecmuası." *Kekibeç*, no. 37 (2014): 359–386.

Akçalı, Hatice Selen Uzunhasan. "Political Propaganda During the Single-Party Regime in Turkey (1931–1946)." PhD diss., Boğaziçi University, 2016.

Akçalı, Hatice Selen Uzunhasan. “War of Images: Visual Propaganda Efforts of German and British Governments in Turkey During the Second World War.” *İnsan ve İnsan* 9, no. 32 (2022): 67–81.

Aronson, Elliot, and Anthony Pratkanis. *Age of Propaganda: The Everyday Use and Abuse of Persuasion.* New York: W. H. Freeman, 1992.

Arvas, İbrahim Sena. “Türkiye’nin Radyo ile Tanışması ve Türk Telsiz Telefon Anonim Şirketi.” *International Journal of Cultural and Social Studies* 4, no. 2 (2018): 406–428.

Ataç, Galip. *Radyoda Evin Saati.* Ankara: Dorlion Yayınları, 2022.

Deringil, Selim. *Turkish Foreign Policy during the Second World War: An Active Neutrality.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Deringil, Selim. *Denge Oyunu: İkinci Dünya Savaşı’nda Türkiye’nin Dış Politikası.* İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2010.

Deniz, Ünsal. “İstanbul Radyosu’nun İlk Dönemindeki (1927) Müzik Yayınları.” *Eurasian Journal of Music and Dance*, no. 14 (2019): 63–88.

Dinsman, Melissa. *Modernism at the Microphone: Radio, Propaganda, and Literary Aesthetics during World War II.* London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017.

Glasneck, Johannes. *Türkiye’de Faşist Alman Propagandası.* Translated by Arif Gelen. Ankara: Onur Yayınları, 1976.

Gökay, Bülent. *Soviet Eastern Policy and Turkey, 1920–1991: Soviet Foreign Policy, Turkey and Communism.* London: Routledge, 2006.

Gökay, Bülent. “Turkish Neutrality in the Second World War and Relations with the Soviet Union.” *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 23, no. 6 (2021): 845–853.

Hale, William. “Turkey and Britain in World War II: Origins and Results of the Tripartite Alliance, 1935–40.” *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 23, no. 6 (2021): 824–844.

İşçi, Onur. “Turkey at a Crossroads: The Soviet Threat and Postwar Realignment, 1945–1946.” *Diplomatic History* 48, no. 4 (2023): 621–646.

İşçi Onur. *Turkey and the Soviet Union During World War II*: Diplomacy, Discord and International Relations. London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2020.

Jackson, Julian. *France: The Dark Years, 1940–1944.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Karaosmanoğlu, Leman (ed.). *Burhan Belge’nin Sesiyle İkinci Dünya Savaşı Radyo Konferansları.* Ankara: Ulusal Matbaa, 1970.

Karpat, Kemal H. “The Impact of the People’s Houses on the Development of Communication in Turkey: 1931–1951.” *Die Welt des Islams* 15, no. 4 (1974): 69–84.

Koç, Nurgün. “Cumhuriyetin İlk Yıllarında Radyo.” *Cumhuriyet Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi* 8, no. 15 (2012): 69–103.

Kocabaşoğlu, Uygur. *Şirket Telsizinden Devlet Radyosuna: TRT Öncesi Dönemde Radyonun Tarihsel Gelişimi ve Türk Siyasal Hayatı İçindeki Yeri.* Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Yayınları, 1980.

Koçak, Cemil. *Türkiye'de Milli Şef Dönemi: 1938–1945.* İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1996.

Lasswell, Harold D. "The Theory of Political Propaganda." *American Political Science Review* 21, no. 3 (1927): 627–631.

MacDonald, Callum A. "Radio Bari: Italian Wireless Propaganda in the Middle East and British Countermeasures 1934–38." *Middle Eastern Studies* 13, no. 2 (1977): 195–207.

Mango, Andrew. "Atatürk." In *The Cambridge History of Turkey, Volume 4: Turkey in the Modern World*, edited by Reşat Kasaba, 147–172. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Marzano, Arturo. "Radio Propaganda during the War: The Mediterranean Scenario in Radio Bari's Broadcasts (1940–1943)." In *A Fascist Decade of War 1935–1945 in International Perspective*, edited by Marco M. Aterrano and Karina Valley. New York: Routledge, 2020: 165-178.

Ong, Walter J. *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word.* London: Routledge, 1982.

Okur, Ali. "1927–1950 Yılları Arasında Türkiye'de Radyo Yayıncılığı." Master's thesis, Hacettepe University, 2019.

Önsoy, Murat, and Gürol Baba. "Escaping the Whirlpool of War: A Two-fold Analysis of Turkey's Neutrality Policy in World War II." *Cumhuriyet Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi* 15, no. 29 (2019): 123–147.

Qualter, Terence H. *Propaganda and Psychological Warfare.* New York: Random House, 1962.

Shaw, Stanford, and Ezel Kural Shaw. *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Volume II: Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808–1975.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977.

Soysal, İsmail. "1939 Türk İngiliz Fransız İttifakı." *Belleten* 46, no. 182 (1982): 367–414.

Taylor, Philip. *Munitions of the Mind: A History of Propaganda from the Ancient World to the Present Era.* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008.

Tekeli, İlhan, and Selim İlkin. *Bir Cumhuriyet Öyküsü: Kadroculari ve Kadroyu Anlamak.* İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 2003.

Türkeş, Mustafa. "A Patriotic Leftist Development-Strategy Proposal in Turkey in the 1930s: The Case of the Kadro Movement." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 33, no. 1 (2001): 91–114.

Türkeş, Mustafa. "The Balkan Pact and its Immediate Implications for the Balkan States, 1930–34." *Middle Eastern Studies* 30, no. 1 (1994): 123–144.

Türker, Erol. "Radyo Çocuk Kulübü ve Müzik Yayınları Üzerine Bir Araştırma." *Atatürk Üniversitesi Güzel Sanatlar Enstitüsü Dergisi*, no. 26 (2020): 338–352.

Yazgan, Teoman. "Cumhuriyet'in Örnek Bir Kültür Kurumu: Ankara Radyosu." *TRT Akademi* 1, no. 1 (2016): 300–314.

Yıldız, Aytaç. "Burhan Asaf Belge: Cumhuriyetin Erken Döneminde Aydın ve İktidar İlişkisi." PhD diss., Ankara University, 2009.

Zürcher, Erik Jan. *Turkey: A Modern History.* London: I.B. Tauris, 2004.

APPENDICES

A. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Bu tez, İkinci Dünya Savaşı (1939-1945) döneminde Türkiye'de radyonun hem propaganda hem de karşı propaganda aracı olarak kullanımını incelemektedir. İletişim aracı olarak radyonun, bu süreçte Türkiye'nin politikalarını hem yurt içi hem de uluslararası dinleyicilere yaymak amacıyla nasıl kullanıldığı analiz edilirken aynı zamanda ülkenin savaş dönemi pozisyonunu ve politikalarını zayıflatmayı hedefleyen propaganda kampanyalarına karşı koymak amacıyla nasıl kullanıldığı da ele alınmaktadır.

Tezin ikinci bölümünde gösterildiği gibi Türkiye'de radyo yayıncılığının kurumsal bir nitelik kazanması, 1920'li yılların sonunda başlamıştır. Bu çerçevede, Türkiye'nin ilk profesyonel radyo şirketi unvanını taşıyan Türk Telsiz Telefon Anonim Şirketi (TTTAŞ), 1928 yılında kurulmuştur. TTTAŞ, o yıllarda Ankara ve İstanbul'da inşa edilen iki radyo istasyonu aracılığıyla on yıl boyunca ülkedeki radyo yayıncılığını tek başına yürütmüş ve bu süre zarfında Türkiye'de radyo kurumsallaşmasının temelini atmıştır. TTTAŞ'ın kuruluşu, ülkenin iletişim altyapısını modernize etme arzusunun somut bir yansıması olsa da, şirketin yapısı ve işleyişi, liberal bir piyasa girişiminden ziyade, devlet kontrolünde yarı-özel bir mekanizma olduğunu açıkça göstermektedir. Şirket, kağıt üzerinde özel bir girişim olarak yapılandırılmış olsa da, kuruluşundan itibaren yoğun bir devlet kontrolüne ve siyasi güdümlenmeye tabi tutulmuştur. Yayınların denetlenmesi, program içeriklerinin belirlenmesi ve hatta teknik altyapının geliştirilmesi gibi kritik kararlar, doğrudan hükümetin çizdiği sınırlar içerisinde, ulusal çıkarlar ve rejim bütünlüğü esas alınarak alınmıştır.

TTTAŞ'in kuruluş süreci ve yönetim kadroları incelendiğinde, bu derin devlet-radyo etkileşimi daha belirgin bir şekilde ortaya çıkmaktadır. Şirketin yönetim

kadrolarında Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (CHP) çevrelerinden pek çok önemli ismin yer alması, hükümetin radyoyu başından itibaren ideolojik ve stratejik bir araç olarak gördüğünü kanıtlar niteliktedir. Şirketin kurucuları arasında dönemin önde gelen siyasetçileri, bürokratları ve gazetecileri olan Celal Bayar, Mahmut Soydan ve Sedat Nuri İleri gibi isimlerin bulunması, radyo yayıncılığının bir ticari faaliyet olarak düşünülmediğini, aksine siyasetin bir uzantısı ve iktidarın toplumsal mühendislik projesinin bir parçası olarak kabul edildiğini açıkça göstermektedir. Bu kadrolaşma, denetimin resmi değil, bizzat yönetim yoluyla gerçekleştirilmesinin bir yöntemiydi.

Bu sıkı kontrol mekanizması, yayın içerikleri hazırlanırken şirketin özerk bir yayın politikası belirlemesine imkân verilmemesiyle somutlaşmıştır. Radyo yayınlarının içeriği Posta ve Telgraf Teşkilatı (PTT) tarafından atanmış bir görevli aracılığıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. PTT tarafından atanan bu görevli, programları ve içeriklerini titizlikle denetlemiş, içeriklerin hükümetin ideolojik çizgisine ve hükümetin politikalarına uygunluğunu temin etmiştir.

1930'lu yılların ortalarına doğru uluslararası siyasi atmosferde yaşanan gerginlikler, özellikle İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nın yaklaşmasıyla birlikte dünya genelinde radyonun öneminin radikal bir şekilde artmasına neden olmuştur. Totaliter rejimlerin (Almanya, İtalya) ve diğer büyük güçlerin (İngiltere, Amerika Birleşik Devleleri, Sovyetler Birliği) radyoyu etkili bir propaganda aracıolarak kullanmaya başlaması, radyonun iletişim haritasındaki yerini kökten değiştirmiştir. Bu dönemde radyo, sadece bilgi iletme, eğitim ve eğlence aracı olmaktan çıkarak, ideolojik yönlendirme, ulusal birlik duygusunu güçlendirme ve uluslararası propaganda faaliyetlerine karşı savunma amacıyla kullanılan kritik bir enstrümana dönüşmüştür. Küresel çatışma ortamı, medyanın silahlı çatışmalar kadar önemli bir psikolojik savaş alanı olduğunu kanıtlamıştır.

Türkiye'de de bu küresel gelişmeler karşısında, radyonun yalnızca teknik bir yenilik olmadığını, aynı zamanda ülkenin uluslararası propaganda savaşlarında geri kalmaması için stratejik öneme sahip bir araç olduğunu idrak etmiştir. Bu idrak, radyo yayıncılığına bakış açısını temelden değiştirmiş ve TTTAŞ'ın nispeten küçük ölçekli girişiminden, doğrudan devlet mülkiyetine ve kontrolüne dayalı ulusal

yayıncılığa geçişin önünü açmıştır. Bu nedenle, radyo yayıncılığının hem teknik kapasitesinin geliştirilmesi hem de daha sıkı, merkezi bir devlet kontrolü altına alınması gerekliliği, dönemin temel kamu politikalarından biri olarak hızla gündeme gelmiştir.

Bu dönemde Türkiye'deki mevcut yayın altyapısı, uluslararası standartların oldukça gerisindeydi. Ankara ve İstanbul'daki mevcut radyo istasyonlarının yalnızca 5 kilowatt gibi düşük bir güçle yayın yapıyor olması, çözülmesi gereken en önemli teknik sorunu teşkil etmekteydi. Sinyal gücünün düşük olması, ulusal yayınların ülke geneline ulaşmasını ciddi ölçüde engelliyordu. Bu duruma karşı, yabancı devletlerin radyoları Türkiye'ye rahatlıkla ulaşabiliyor, vatandaşlar yabancı radyo kanallarını ulusal yayından daha net bir şekilde dinleyebiliyordu. Bu tablo, hükümet açısından ciddi bir ulusal güvenlik sorunu yaratmıştı. Zira, ulusal radyo yayınları sınırlı kalırken, yabancı devletler Türk halkına yönelik kendi propagandalarını kolayca iletebiliyordu. Türk halkının, ulusal ideolojiyi destekleyen içerik yerine, küresel çatışmanın farklı taraflarının ideolojik söylemlerine maruz kalma riski, devletin radyo politikalarını yeniden şekillendirmesinde ve teknik altyapı yatırımını hızlandırmasında başat bir faktör olmuştur. Radyo, artık yalnızca bir eğlence ve eğitim aracı değil, ulusal güvenlik ve siyasi egemenliğin kritik bir cephesi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

Hükümet, bu teknik ve siyasi sorunlara köklü bir çözüm üretmek amacıyla Ankara ve İstanbul'da 120 kilowatt gücünde yeni radyo istasyonları inşa edilmesine karar vermiştir. 120 kW'lık bir yayın gücü, 5 kW'lık mevcut gücün yirmi kattan daha fazlası anlamına gelmekteydi ve bu, ulusal yayınların ülkenin en ücra köşelerine dahi ulaşmasını sağlayacaktı. Bu istasyonların, hem ulusal yayın kapasitesini ciddi bir şekilde artıracağı hem de yabancı devletlerin propagandalarına karşı Türkiye'nin kendi söylemini etkili ve caydırıcı biçimde yayabilmesini sağlayacağı düşünülmüştür.

Ancak İstanbul'daki istasyonun yapımı ertelenmiş, buna karşın Ankara'daki radyo istasyonunun inşasına öncelik verilmiştir. Ankara'nın hem başkent olması hem de siyasi ve idari merkez olması, ulusal yayıncılığın kalbinin burada atması gerektiği

stratejik görüşünü pekiştirmiştir. Ankara istasyonu, teknik hazırlıklar ve altyapı çalışmalarının ardından Ekim 1938'de hizmete açılmıştır. Bu gelişme, Türkiye'nin modern, güçlü ve ulusal çapta erişilebilir bir radyo altyapısına kavuşması bakımından tartışmasız bir dönüm noktası niteliğindedir. Ankara Radyosu'nun güçlü yayını, hükümetin propaganda, modernleştirme ve ulusal bilinç oluşturma çabalarına teknik bir zemin sağlamıştır.

Ankara radyosunun yapımı sürerken hükümet, ülkedeki radyo alıcı sayısının yetersizliğini de ayrı ve önemli bir sorun olarak değerlendirmeye başlamıştır. Teknik olarak güçlü bir yayın altyapısına sahip olmak, eğer halkın bu yayını alabilecek cihazları yoksa, amaçlanan etkiyi yaratamazdı. O yıllarda Türkiye'de radyo alıcılarının sayısı gelişmiş ülkelere kıyasla oldukça düşüktü ve mevcut cihazlar yüksek maliyetleri nedeniyle geniş halk kesimleri tarafından satın alınamayacak derecede pahalıydı. Bu durum, ulusal radyo yayınlarının toplum üzerindeki etkisini sınırlandırıyor ve hükümetin radyo aracılığıyla geniş kitlelere ulaşma hedefini zora sokuyordu.

Hükümetin bu konuda geliştirdiği çözüm, Halkevlerini radyo cihazlarıyla donatmak olmuştu. Halkevleri, Cumhuriyet'in kültürel modernleşme projesinin ve halkı eğitme misyonunun en önemli kurumsal araçlarından biri olduğu için, radyo dinleme alışkanlığının topluma benimsetilmesi ve yaygınlaştırılması açısından ideal kamusal mekanlar olarak kabul edilmiştir. Halkevlerine alınan radyo cihazları sayesinde, radyonun kolektif bir dinleme deneyimi olarak topluma sunulması ve halkın radyo yayınlarıyla etkileşiminin artırılması hedeflenmiştir.

Bu politika stratejik önceliklendirme içermektedir. Hükümet, ülke genelinde yaygın bir radyolaşma politikasını, Ankara radyosu tamamlanmadan hayata geçirmemeye karar vermişti. Bunun temelinde yatan stratejik kaygı şuydu: Eğer radyo alıcıları halka erken dönemde yaygın bir şekilde ulaştırılırsa, vatandaşlar ulusal yayından ziyade, teknik olarak daha güçlü olan yabancı yayınları dinleyebilir ve bu durum hükümetin ideolojik denetimini ve propaganda kontrolünü zayıflatabilirdi. Dolayısıyla, ulusal yayınların teknik olarak güvence altına alınması ve ülkenin tamamına erişiminin sağlanması, halkın radyo ile buluşturulmasından önce gerçekleştirilen hayati bir öncelik olmuştur.

Sonuç olarak, Türkiye'de profesyonel radyo yayıncılığının 1920'lerin sonundan itibaren gelişimi, yalnızca teknik bir ilerleme süreci olarak değil, aynı zamanda devletin ulus inşa politikalarının ve merkezi propaganda stratejilerininayrılmaz bir parçası olarak görülmelidir. TTTAŞ'in kuruluşu, radyo yayıncılığının devlet denetimi altında kurumsallaşması ve 1930'ların sonunda güçlü radyo istasyonunun inşası, Türkiye'nin modernleşme ve kendi söylemini topluma aktarma yönünde attığı stratejik adımlar arasında merkezi bir yer tutmaktaydı. Radyonun bir kamuoyu oluşturma aracı olarak taşıdığı önem, özellikle dış propaganda tehditlerinin arttığı İkinci Dünya Savaşı öncesi ve sırasındaki uluslararası koşullar altında daha da belirginleşmiş ve hükümet, radyo teknolojisine ve yayıncılığına ulus-devletin bekası için hayati bir stratejik politika olarak yaklaşmıştır. Bu süreç, Türkiye'de radyo yayıncılığının sadece teknik bir hizmetten ibaret olmadığını, aynı zamanda devletin toplumla kurduğu iletişim biçimini, kültürel dönüşümü ve siyasi kontrol mekanizmalarını şekillendiren temel bir unsur olduğunu açıkça göstermektedir.

Tezin Üçüncü bölümünde radyonun İkinci Dünya Savaşı sırasındaki kullanımı üzerinde durulmuştur. Savaşın patlak vermesiyle birlikte, propaganda faaliyetlerinin kamuoyunu şekillendirmedeki ve uluslararası algıları yönlendirmedeki hayati önemi giderek daha görünür hâle gelmiştir. Özellikle basın ve radyo gibi iletişim araçları üzerinden yürütülen propaganda, devletlerin hem kendi vatandaşlarını mobilize etmesi hem de dış politika hedeflerine uygun bir uluslararası kamuoyu yaratması bakımından merkezi bir rol oynamıştır. Bu dönemin global atmosferi, medyanın stratejik bir güç unsuru olarak yeniden tanımlanmasına yol açmış; Türkiye de bu gelişmeler ışığında, tarafsızlık politikasını koruma ve iç kamuoyunu kontrol altında tutma ihtiyacıyla basın ve radyo üzerindeki denetimini artırma ihtiyacı hissetmiştir. Radyo yayıncılığı, geniş kitlelere hızla ulaşabilme kapasitesi nedeniyle savaş döneminin en etkili propaganda aracı olarak öne çıkmış ve devletin bu alandaki düzenleyici tutumunu daha da pekiştirmiştir.

1928'den 1938'e kadar Türkiye'de radyo yayıncılığını yürüten TTTAŞ'in radyo yayıncılığı anlaşmasının hükümet tarafından yenilenmemesinin ardından, Türkiye'de radyonun idaresi tamamen devlet kontrolüne geçerek Posta, Telgraf ve Telefon

İdaresi'ne (PTT) devredilmiştir. Bu devirle birlikte devlet tamamen radyo yayıncılığını üstlenmiştir. TTTAŞ'ın tasfiyesinin ardından, 1940 yılının ilk yarısına kadar PTT, hem radyo yayıncılığını yönetmek hem de radyoya ilişkin teknik, idari ve mali faaliyetleri yürütmekle sorumlu tutulmuştur. Bu geçiş, teorik olarak bir merkeziyetçilik hamlesi olsa da, beraberinde birtakım ciddi yapısal ve kurumsal sorunları da getirmiştir. PTT'nin radyo yönetimi, içerik üretimi ve propaganda stratejileri konusundaki kurumsal tecrübesi son derece sınırlıydı. Ayrıca, kurumun zaten geniş ve yoğun olan iş yükü, İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nın patlak vermesiyle ortaya çıkan olağanüstü koşullar nedeniyle katlanarak artmıştır. Özellikle birçok erkek çalışanın askere alınmasıyla ortaya çıkan iş gücü açığı, PTT'nin hem genel iletişim altyapısını hem de radyo yayıncılığı gibi stratejik ve hassas bir alanı sağlıklı biçimde yürütmesini ciddi ölçüde zorlaştırmıştır.

Savaşın giderek yoğunlaşan ve kritik bir hal alan propaganda ortamında radyonun stratejik bir araç olarak etkili bir şekilde kullanılamaması, Türk hükümetinin dikkatini çekmiş ve ülkenin bütün basın, yayın ve propaganda faaliyetlerini tek bir örgüt çatısı altında toplama gerekliliğini acil bir konu olarak gündeme getirmiştir. Nitekim 1939 yılında hazırlanan CHP programında, radyo yayıncılığının daha etkin ve merkezi bir koordinasyon içinde yürütülmesi amacıyla yeni bir kurumun oluşturulmasının gerekli olduğu açıkça ifade edilmiştir. Bu siyasi iradenin somutlaşmasıyla, devletin propaganda ve basın politikasını merkezileştirmek ve tek elden yönetmek üzere Matbuat Umum Müdürlüğü (MUM) kurulmuştur. Bu kuruma, medyayı ulusal politikalar doğrultusunda yönlendirmek ve kontrol etmek amacıyla geniş kapsamlı bir denetim yetkisi verilmiştir.

MUM'un kuruluşundan önce dahi, hükümet zararlı gördüğü yayınların incelenmesi ve denetlenmesi amacıyla önemli adımlar atmıştır. Bakanlar Kurulu kararıyla bir komisyon kurulmuş ve bu komisyon, ulusal çıkarlara aykırı olduğu düşünülen veya propaganda niteliği taşıyan çeşitli yayın organlarını denetlemeye başlamıştır. Türkiye, bu dönemde ulusal güvenliği tehdit ettiği veya dış politikaya zarar verdiği değerlendirilen bazı gazeteleri geçici olarak kapatma yoluna gitmiş; birtakım kitapları, dergileri ve sinema filmlerini ise doğrudan Bakanlar Kurulu kararıyla yasaklamış ve toplatmıştır. MUM'un kuruluşundan önce bu tür yasaklama

kararları İçişleri veya Dışişleri Bakanlıkları tarafından hazırlanan yasaklama tezkereleri aracılığıyla Bakanlar Kurulu'na sunulurken, MUM'un kurulmasıyla birlikte bu süreç kurumsal bir merkezileşme yaşamıştır. Yasaklama başvuruları artık merkezi otorite olarak MUM tarafından yapılmış ve bu doğrultuda Bakanlar Kurulu kararlar almıştır. MUM, bu yetki çerçevesinde dönemin basını ve radyo yayınları üzerinde yoğun ve sistematik bir kontrol mekanizması uygulamış, bu da yayın politikalarının tamamen resmi söyleme tabi olmasını sağlamıştır. İkinci Dünya Savaşı dönemi, dünyanın birçok ülkesinde olduğu gibi Türkiye'de de radyo cihazlarına yönelik talebin kayda değer ölçüde artmasına neden olmuştur. Savaş haberleri, uluslararası gelişmeler ve propaganda yayınlarının yarattığı ilgi, halkın bilgiye ulaşma arzusunu tetiklemiştir. 1939 yılı itibarıyla Türkiye'de 50.246 ruhsatlı radyo alıcısı bulunmaktaydı; ancak savaşın başlamasıyla birlikte bu sayı hızla yükselmiştir. 1940 yılına gelindiğinde radyo cihazı sayısı 73.249'a ulaşmış, Ekim 1941'de ise bu sayı 97.008 olmuştur. Bu artış eğilimi devam etmiş; 1942 yılının Şubat ayında sayı 102.966'ya, bir ay sonra ise 107.834'e yükselmiştir. Nisan 1942'de sayıda hafif bir düşüş 105.653 gözlense de, Haziran 1942'de yeniden artış kaydedilmiş ve radyo cihazı sayısı 111.747 olmuştur. 1943 yılı sonuna gelindiğinde radyo alıcılarının sayısı 113.595'e yükselmiş, savaşın son yılı olan 1945 yılında ise 151.175'e ulaşmıştır. Böylece 1940'ta 4,4 olan bin kişi başına düşen radyo alıcısı sayısı, 1945'te 8,4'e çıkarak önemli bir artış göstermiştir.

Radyo kullanımındaki bu artış, Türkiye'nin karşı karşıya kaldığı dış tehditlerle de yakından ilişkilidir. Özellikle 1930'larda Akdeniz'de İtalya'nın giderek artan saldırgan ve yayılmacı politikası, Türkiye açısından ciddi bir dış politika ve güvenlik endişesi oluşturmuştur. Faşist İtalya'nın genişleme hedefleri, özellikle 1939'da Arnavutluk'u ilhak etmesiyle Türkiye'nin güvenlik algısını derinden etkilemiştir. Arnavutluk'un işgali, İtalyan askeri varlığının Türkiye'nin batı sınırlarına tehlikeli biçimde yaklaşmasına neden olmuş ve bu durum, Türkiye'de hem siyasi hem de askeri düzeyde ciddi kaygılar yaratmıştır; zira İtalyan tehdidi artık somut bir coğrafi yakınlığa ulaşmıştı. İtalya'nın saldırgan politikaları yalnızca askeri alanla sınırlı kalmamış, aynı zamanda ideolojik ve psikolojik etki yaratmak amacıyla propaganda faaliyetlerine de yoğunlaşmıştır. Propaganda, İtalya'nın jeopolitik hedeflerini yumuşatmak ve bölgedeki Türk etkisini kırmak için kullanılan kritik bir araç haline

gelmiştir. Bu çerçevede, özellikle Bari Radyosu'nun Türkçe yayınlara başlaması, Türkiye açısından açık bir ideolojik ve kültürel tehdit olarak değerlendirilmiştir. Bari Radyosu, Türk halkını etkilemeyi, Türkiye'nin dış politikasını sarsmayı ve İtalyan Faşizmini bölgede meşrulaştırmayı amaçlayan yoğun propagandalar yapmış; Türkiye, gerek hükümet düzeyinde gerekse medya aracılığıyla bu faaliyetleri yakından ve endişeyle izlemiştir. Dönemin önde gelen gazetecilerinden Zekeriya Sertel gibi isimler de, İtalyan propagandasının içeriklerini ve amacını eleştiren yazılar kaleme almış, kamuoyunun bu yabancı etkilere karşı bilinçlendirilmesine katkı sağlamıştır. Türkiye, Bari Radyosu'nun propaganda faaliyetlerini yalnızca izlemekle kalmamış, aynı zamanda bu yayınların toplumsal ve diplomatik etkilerini de yakından takip etmiştir. Örneğin, 23 Mart 1939 tarihli bir Türk polis raporuna göre Mersin İtalyan Konsolosluğu'nda İtalya Başbakanı Mussolini'nin radyo konuşmasını dinlemek amacıyla kırk kişilik bir davet düzenlenmiş; bu davette İtalyan ve Alman ailelerin de bulunduğu belirtilmiştir. Bu tür faaliyetler, yabancı radyolar üzerinden yürütülen propaganda çalışmalarının Türkiye içindeki diplomatik ve azınlık çevreler üzerinden destek noktalarına ulaşabildiğini ve kamuoyu üzerinde fiili bir etki yaratabildiğini göstermekteydi.

Türkiye, MUM, Dışişleri Bakanlığı ve yurtdışı temsilcilikler gibi çeşitli diplomatik ve istihbarat kanalları aracılığıyla yalnızca Türkçe propaganda yayınlarını değil, yabancı ülke radyolarının diğer dillerdeki yayınlarını da dikkatle takip etmiştir. Bu kapsamlı izleme faaliyeti, yalnızca doğrudan tehditleri değil, bölgesel dinamikleri ve diğer büyük güçlerin propaganda stratejilerini anlamayı da hedeflemiştir. Örneğin Amerika'nın Sesi Radyosunun Bulgarca yayınları, Londra Radyosu'nun Bulgarca programları ve Berlin Radyosu'nun Hırvatça yayınları da Ankara tarafından düzenli ve sistematik bir şekilde dinlenmiş ve analiz edilmiştir. Bu takip süreci, propaganda savaşında bilgi akışının ve istihbaratın kritik önemini ortaya koymakta; Türkiye'nin yabancı yayınları sistematik biçimde sınıflandırarak raporlamasını ve analiz etmesini gerekli kılmaktaydı. Ankara, global propaganda atmosferini tam olarak anlayarak kendi karşı stratejisini oluşturma çabası içindeydi.

Bu bağlamda, Ankara Radyosu'nun uluslararası propaganda faaliyetlerinde üstlendiği rol giderek belirginleşmiştir. Devlet, ulusal güvenliğini ve tarafsızlık

politikasını uluslararası kamuoyuna açıklamak amacıyla Ankara Radyosu'nu Türkiye'nin sesini uluslararası topluma ulaştıracak bir araç olarak konumlandırmış ve çeşitli yabancı dillerde yayın yapmasına karar vermiştir. Ankara Radyosu, bu dönemde Fransızca, İngilizce, Bulgarca, Sırp-Hırvatça, Arapça, Farsça ve Urduca gibi birçok dilde yayın yaparak Türkiye'nin uluslararası görünürlüğünü ve diplomatik erişimini artırmıştır. Türkiye, kendi propaganda yayınlarını diğer devletlerin yayınlarından ayıran özellik olarak, bunların objektif haber verme amacı taşıdığını iddia etmiş; diğer devletlerin manipülatif ve çarpıtıcı propaganda yöntemlerinin aksine, Türkiye'nin yayınlarının yalnızca olayları olduğu gibi, tarafsızlık ilkesine uygun bir şekilde aktarmayı hedeflediğini savunmuştur. Türkiye'nin propaganda anlayışının bir diğer özgün ve dikkat çekici yönü, yabancı dilde yapılan yayınların metinlerinin ülkelere ve hedef kitlelere göre farklılaştırılmamasıydı. Aynı metin, hangi ülkeye yönelik olursa olsun tüm yabancı dil yayınlarında kullanılıyordu.

Savaş öncesinde dahi Ankara Radyosu'nun yabancı dildeki yayınlarının etkili olabildiği görülmektedir. Nitekim Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin ilanının on beşinci yıl dönümü için 1938'de yapılan özel radyo yayını, özellikle Balkanlar'daki Türk ve Müslüman topluluklar arasında büyük ilgi uyandırmıştır. Türkiye'nin Üsküp Başkonsolosu Safvet Ürfi Betin'in Dışişleri Bakanlığı'na gönderdiği telgrafa göre, Güney Yugoslavyadaki Müslüman ve Türk topluluklar sabahın erken saatlerinden itibaren Ankara Radyosu'nu dinlemek için toplu hâlde kahvehanelerde bir araya gelmiş, yayın halk üzerinde yoğun bir duygusal etki ve ulusal bağlılık hissi yaratmıştır. Birçok kişi yayını gözyaşları içinde dinlediğini ifade etmiştir. Bu olay, Ankara Radyosu'nun, diplomatik hedeflerinin yanı sıra, yurt dışındaki Türk soylu topluluklar üzerindeki kültürel ve moral etkisinin ne kadar yüksek olabileceğini kanıtlamaktadır; bu tür yayınlar, aynı zamanda bir yumuşak güç aracı olarak da işlev görmüştür.

Türkiye, yabancı radyoların propaganda faaliyetlerinin yaratabileceği olumsuz etkilerin ve algı manipülasyonlarının farkında olduğundan, bu yayınları üç temel ve sistematik kanal üzerinden izlemiştir. Birincisi, Türk büyükelçilikleri bulundukları ülkelerdeki radyo yayınları hakkında Dışişleri Bakanlığı'na ayrıntılı analiz ve çeviri

raporları göndermiştir. İkincisi, Dışişleri Bakanlığı İstihbarat Dairesi bünyesinde kurulan dinleme servisleri, radyo yayınlarını düzenli biçimde takip etmiş ve raporlamıştır. Üçüncü kanal olarak, MUM bünyesinde günün 24 saati yabancı yayınların izlendiği profesyonel bir dinleme servisi oluşturulmuştur. Bu servis yaklaşık yirmi kişilik özel bir kadroyla çalışmış ve bazı günlerde on raporun üzerine çıkacak kadar yoğun bir izleme ve deşifre faaliyeti yürütmüştür. Bu organizasyon, Türkiye'nin istihbarat toplama ve karşı propaganda üretme konusundaki ciddiyetini yansıtmaktadır.

Bu kapsamlı izleme ve analiz raporları, Türkiye'nin dış propaganda faaliyetlerine karşı koyabilmesi için stratejik bilgi sağlamış ve Türk hükümetinin karşı propaganda yöntemleri geliştirmesine, yayın içeriklerini ve diplomatik tepkilerini ayarlamasına zemin hazırlamıştır. Ayrıca Türkiye, ulusal birliği ve moralini korumak amacıyla kendi halkına yönelik propaganda faaliyetlerini güçlendirmeyi de hedeflemiştir. Bunun için radyo yayınlarının niteliği ve işlevi yeniden tanımlanmış; radyo, yalnızca bir haber aktarım aracı olmaktan çıkarılarak eğitim, kültür, eğlence ve propaganda amaçlı çok yönlü bir kitle iletişim aracına dönüştürülmüştür. Halkın radyoyu daha etkin kullanmasını sağlamak ve programların geniş kitlelere ulaşmasını garanti altına almak amacıyla yayın saatleri yeniden düzenlenmiş; hafta içi günlerinde yayınlar 07.30'da başlayıp 23.00'te sona ererken, Pazar günleri yayınlar 08.30'da başlamıştır. Bu uzatılmış yayın saatleri ve çeşitlendirilmiş içerik, radyonun toplumsal yaşamdaki merkeziliğini pekiştirmiş ve devletin topluma erişimini artırmıştır.

Türkiye radyo yayıncılığında tüm bu düzenlemeleri yaparken radyo aracılığıyla politikalarını hem kendi halkına hem de uluslararası kamuoyuna aktaracak, aynı zamanda da kendisini hedef alan propagandalara karşı söylev üretecek güçlü bir sese ihtiyaç duyuyordu ve bu ses Burhan Belge'ydi.

Tezin dördüncü bölümünde Burhan Belge'nin *Günün Meseleleri* adlı radyo programı incelenmiştir. Bu program Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin İkinci Dünya Savaşı yıllarındaki resmi söylemini kamuoyuna aktarması ve ülkeyi hedef alan yoğun yabancı propaganda faaliyetlerinin etkisizleştirilmesi bakımından son derece kritik ve

merkezi bir rol üstlenmiştir. Program, sadece bir siyasi yorum platformu olmanın ötesinde, Türk Devleti'nin uluslararası çatışma ortamındaki propaganda ve karşı-propaganda stratejisinin en görünür ve etkili araçlarından biri olarak işlev görmüştür. Savaşın başlamasıyla birlikte Türkiye, önemli jeopolitik konumu ve bölgesel önemi nedeniyle, Mihver ve Müttefik Devletlerin yoğun psikolojik savaş ve propaganda faaliyetlerine maruz kalmış; bu kampanyalar, Türk kamuoyunu kutuplaştırmayı, Türkiye'nin dış politika tercihlerini yönlendirmeyi ve Türkiye'nin büyük önem verdiği tarafsızlık politikasını zayıflatarak ülkeyi savaşa çekmeyi hedeflemiştir. Bu bağlamda, *Günün Meseleleri*, Türkiye'nin hem içerdeki moral motivasyonu sağlamlaştırma hem de dışarıdan gelen ideolojik saldırılara karşı akılcı ve savunmacı bir cephe oluşturma çabasının somut bir yansımasıdır.

Günün Meseleleri, MUM bünyesinde çalışan ve dönemin entelektüel çevrelerinde önemli bir figür olan Burhan Belge tarafından hazırlanmış ve bizzat kendisi tarafından sunulmuş, yaklaşık on beş dakika süren kısa fakat etkili bir radyo programı formatına sahiptir. Program ilk kez 1939 yılında Ankara Radyosu'nda yayımlanmaya başlamış ve yaklaşık altı yıl boyunca kesintisiz biçimde sürdürülerek dönemin en uzun soluklu ve etkili yayınlarından biri olmuştur. Yayın hayatının ilk döneminde haftada bir kez dinleyiciyle buluşan program 1943 yılından itibaren iki haftada bir kez yayımlanmaya başlamış ve genellikle Cumartesi günleri saat 21.45'te dinleyicilere ulaşmıştır. Bu zaman dilimi, radyonun ailece ve toplu halde dinlendiği bir saat olması bakımından özellikle stratejik olarak tercih edilmiş ve programın kırsal kesimler dahil olmak üzere ulusal erişim kapasitesini maksimize etmiştir. Belge, programda yalnızca Türkiye'nin resmi görüşlerini ve diplomatik pozisyonlarını aktarmakla yetinmemiş; aynı zamanda savaşın seyri, uluslararası güç dengeleri ve büyük devletlerin politikaları hakkında kendi entelektüel analizlerini ve yorumlarını da dinleyiciyle paylaşmıştır. Bu durum, *Günün Meseleleri*'ni, katı devlet söylemi ile entelektüel analiz ve ikna edici retorik arasında konumlanan özgün bir propaganda ve kamuoyu bilgilendirme platformu hâline getirmiştir.

Burhan Belge'nin bu programdaki etkinliğini ve programın neden bu kadar güçlü bir etki yarattığını anlamlandırabilmek için, onun entelektüel geçmişi ve mesleki kariyerinin detaylıca incelenmesi gerekmektedir. Burhan Asaf Belge, 1899 yılında

Şam'da, varlıklı ve iyi eğitimli bir bürokrat ailede dünyaya gelmiştir. Babasının Osmanlı bürokrasisi içindeki çeşitli görevleri nedeniyle çocukluk ve gençlik yıllarını imparatorluğun farklı şehirlerinde geçirmiş olması, Belge'nin erken yaşlardan itibaren çok kültürlü ve geniş bir perspektife sahip olmasını sağlamıştır. Birinci Dünya Savaşı sırasında, Osmanlı Devleti'nin müttefiki olan Almanya'ya eğitim amacıyla öğrenci gönderme politikası kapsamında, 1916 yılında ilk etapta gönderilen 250 öğrenci arasında yer almıştır. Henüz 17 yaşındayken Berlin'e giden Belge, daha sonra Kassel'e geçerek burada lise öğrenimini tamamlamış ve 1917 yılında mezun olmuştur. Lise eğitiminin hemen ardından Karlsruhe Teknik Yüksekokulu'nda mimarlık eğitimine başlaması, onun teknik ve analitik düşünce yapısının temellerini atmıştır.

Belge'nin entelektüel yolculuğu, Türkiye Komünist Partisi'nin yayın organı olan Aydınlık çevresine katılmasıyla daha da derinleşmiştir. Bu dönemde Nazım Hikmet Ran, Şevket Süreyya Aydemir ve İsmail Hüsrev Tökin gibi dönemin önde gelen sol entelektüelleriyle kurduğu yakın dostluklar ve iş birlikleri, Belge'nin düşünsel dünyasını kökten şekillendirmiştir. Özellikle sınıf, ekonomi, ideoloji ve propaganda kavramlarına olan ilgisi bu çevre içinde derinleşmiş, ilerideki kamu hizmetleri ve radyo yayıncılığı kariyeri için sağlam bir teorik zemin hazırlamıştır. Ancak 1925 yılında Şeyh Said İsyanı sonrasında Aydınlık'ın kapatılması ve rejim üzerindeki baskının artmasıyla birlikte, Belge entelektüel aktivizmden uzaklaşarak Hariciye Vekaleti'nde göreve başlamıştır. Ancak 1927 yılında Türkiye Komünist Partisi'ne yönelik operasyonlar sırasında evinde arama yapılması, Belge'nin sol geçmişi nedeniyle devletle olan ilişkilerinde kritik bir kırılma noktası yaratmıştır. Bu süreçte dönemin etkili gazetecisi Falih Rıfkı Atay aracılığıyla Mustafa Kemal Atatürk'le görüşme ayarlanan Belge, Çankaya'da yaklaşık dört saat süren kapsamlı bir görüşmeye katılmıştır. Görüşmede Belge'nin geçmişteki sol çevrelerle ilişkileri, Sovyet Devrimi, Almanya'daki siyasal gelişmeler ve genç Cumhuriyet'in ideolojik yönü gibi konular derinlemesine ele alınmıştır.

Bu siyasi onay ve güven ortamının ardından, 1929 yılında Belge, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi'nin yarı resmi yayın organı olan Hakimiyet-i Milliye gazetesinde köşe yazıları yazmaya başlamış ve burada Falih Rıfkı Atay, Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu ve

Şevket Süreyya Aydemir gibi dönemin etkili kalemleriyle birlikte çalışmıştır. 1929 Dünya Ekonomik Bunalımı'nın ardından bu entelektüel kadro, ekonomik krizi analiz eden, devletçilik ve milli iktisat politikalarını savunan ve kalkınma için çözüm önerileri geliştiren makaleler kaleme almış; bu çalışmalar zamanla Kadro dergisine dönüşmüştür.

Belge'nin kariyerindeki bir sonraki kritik aşama, 1933 yılında Vedat Nedim Tör'ün Matbuat Umum Müdürlüğü'nün başına getirilmesiyle başlamıştır. Tör'ün MUM'a atanmasının hemen ardından Belge de bu kuruma geçmiş ve 1945 yılına kadar on iki yıl boyunca burada görev yapmıştır. Belge, MUM'da çalışırken aynı zamanda gazetecilik faaliyetlerini de yoğun biçimde sürdürmüş; Ulus, Vatan ve Tanin gibi dönemin önde gelen ve etkili gazetelerinde yazılar yayımlamıştır. Bu iki yönlü kariyer, Belge'nin hem resmi politikaların belirlenmesinde hem de bu politikaların kamuoyuna ulaştırılmasında kilit bir aracı olmasını sağlamıştır.

Belge'nin 1939 yılında gerçekleştirdiği kapsamlı Avrupa gezisi, onun radyo ve propaganda konusundaki farkındalığını ve uzmanlığını derinleştiren bir dönüm noktası olmuştur. Paris, Londra, Berlin ve Sofya gibi dönemin siyasi açıdan en hareketli şehirlerini kapsayan bu gezide Belge, özellikle İngiltere'de BBC'de bir radyo programına katılmış ve radyonun kitleler üzerindeki gücünü ve yayıncılık tekniklerini doğrudan gözlemleme fırsatı bulmuştur. Radyonun coğrafi engelleri aşarak, okuryazarlık seviyesine bakılmaksızın yüz binlerce insana aynı anda ulaşabilme yeteneği, Belge'nin zihninde radyoyu, modern propaganda savaşlarının vazgeçilmez birincil aracı olarak kesin biçimde konumlandırmıştır. Bu geziden edindiği bilgi ve tecrübe, daha sonra Günün Meseleleri programının kuramsal ve pratik temellerini oluşturmuştur.

Bu derin entelektüel birikim, siyasi tecrübe ve uluslararası gözlem, Günün Meseleleri programının içeriğine ve söylemine doğrudan ve belirleyici bir şekilde yansımıştır. Programın ilk temel teması, propaganda olgusunun doğasını açıklamak ve kamuoyunu yabancı propaganda faaliyetlerine karşı bilinçlendirmek olmuştur. Belge, programında propagandanın ikna edici dil, duygusal manipülasyon, seçici bilgi sunumu, hakikatlerin çarpıtılması ve sembollerin

araçsallaştırılması gibi yöntemlerle işlediğini ayrıntılı biçimde analiz etmiştir. Ona göre propagandanın temel amacı, yalnızca bilgi vermek değil, karşı tarafı ahlaki, siyasi veya askeri açıdan gayrimeşru göstermek ve kamuoyunun algısını bu yönde kalıcı biçimde şekillendirmektir. Bu, dinleyiciyi eleştirel düşünmeye davet eden, ancak aynı zamanda resmi söylemi kabul etmeye hazırlayan sofistike bir yaklaşımdı.

Programın ikinci ve belki de en kritik ana teması ise, Türkiye'yi hedef alan propaganda kampanyalarına doğrudan ve sistematik karşılık vermek ve ülkenin aktif tarafsızlık politikasını ulusal ve uluslararası düzlemde savunmak olmuştur. Belge'nin benimsediği Türkiye'nin tarafsızlık politikasını aktif tarafsızlık olarak tanımlanabilir; bu politikanın pasif bir bekleyiş değil, gerektiğinde askeri ve diplomatik hazırlığı da içeren, ulusal çıkarları maksimize etmeyi amaçlayan dinamik ve bağımsız bir strateji olduğunu vurgulamıştır. Belge, yayınlarında özellikle Almanya'yı savaşın başlıca sorumlusu olarak görmüş ve Müttefiklere daha yakın, temkinli bir söylem benimsemiştir. Almanya'nın uluslararası anlaşmaları ihlal eden yayılmacı tutumunu ahlaki bir mesele olarak sunarken, Türkiye'nin uluslararası hukuka ve normlara olan sıkı bağlılığını sürekli olarak öne çıkarmıştır.

1943 sonrasında Almanya'nın savaş cephelerinde yaşadığı geri çekilmeler ve Mihver'in gücünün azalmasıyla birlikte Belge'nin söylemi daha da sertleşmiş, Müttefiklere yönelik sempatisi daha belirginleşmiştir. Savaşın son aşamalarında ise, özellikle Sovyetler Birliği'nin yayılmacı politikalarının ortaya çıkmasıyla birlikte Sovyet tehdidi algısıda programın gündemine girmiş; Belge bu konuyu, mevcut Müttefik ilişkileri nedeniyle daha temkinli ve ölçülü bir dilkullanarak ele almıştır. Sovyetler'e yönelik eleştirilerde dikkatli bir denge gözetmiş, Batı'ya yakınlaşma eğilimi örtülü bir şekilde vurgulanmıştır. Tüm bu yönleriyle *Günün Meseleleri*, Burhan Belge'nin zengin entelektüel birikimi, siyasi pragmatizmi ve Türkiye'nin savaş dönemi propaganda ve karşı-propaganda stratejilerinin kesiştiği, dönemin medya, siyaset ve dış ilişkilerini anlamak açısından son derece önemli ve çok katmanlı bir inceleme örneği olarak değerlendirilebilir.

B. THESIS PERMISSION FORM / TEZ İZİN FORMU

(Please fill out this form on computer. Double click on the boxes to fill them)

ENSTİTÜ / INSTITUTE

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Natural and Applied Sciences ☐

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Social Sciences ☒

Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Applied Mathematics ☐

Enformatik Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Informatics ☐

Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Marine Sciences ☐

YAZARIN / AUTHOR

Soyadı / Surname : Şen
Adı / Name : Baran
Bölümü / Department : Uluslararası İlişkiler / International Relations

TEZİN ADI / TITLE OF THE THESIS (**İngilizce** / English): RADIO PROPAGANDA IN TURKEY IN WORLD WAR II

TEZİN TÜRÜ / DEGREE: **Yüksek Lisans** / Master ☒ **Doktora** / PhD ☐

1. **Tezin tamamı dünya çapında erişime açılacaktır. /** Release the entire work immediately for access worldwide. ☒
2. **Tez iki yıl süreyle erişime kapalı olacaktır.** / Secure the entire work for patent and/or proprietary purposes for a period of **two years. *** ☐
3. **Tez altı ay süreyle erişime kapalı olacaktır.** / Secure the entire work for period of **six months**. ***** ☐

***** *Enstitü Yönetim Kurulu kararının basılı kopyası tezle birlikte kütüphaneye teslim edilecektir. / A copy of the decision of the Institute Administrative Committee will be delivered to the library together with the printed thesis.*

Yazarın imzası / Signature ..... **Tarih** / Date .....
(Kütüphaneye teslim ettiğiniz tarih. Elle doldurulacaktır.)
(Library submission date. Please fill out by hand.)

Tezin son sayfasıdır. / This is the last page of the thesis/dissertation.