

Ç. Benhür¹, T. Zholdassuly^{2*}

¹Selçuk University, Konya, Turkey

²Korkyt Ata Kyzylorda University, Kyzylorda, Kazakhstan

*e-mail: zholdassuly2018@gmail.com

WAR AND RUMORS IN THE TURKISH PRESS: THE BEGINNING OF OPERATION BARBAROSSA

Operation Barbarossa, the most important turning point of the Second World War, was also of great importance for Türkiye, which was in danger of going to war at any moment. The German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact signed on 23 August 1939 did not last long. As a matter of fact, Germany attacked the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, and this started a new era for the Second World War. This situation, which further increased Türkiye's uneasiness about the war, was followed closely by the Turkish press, and the war discourses expressed just before the attack were constantly brought to the agenda. Document analysis, one of the qualitative research methods, was used in the study. In this study, the views of the Turkish public on this great front that shook the whole world were followed through Ak am, Cumhuriyet, Tan and Ulus newspapers. News and columns about the subject in newspapers were included in the study. Thus, it was aimed to develop a perspective that has never been put forward by the press on the subject before. As a result, it has been determined that the Turkish press, which does not want Türkiye to actually take part in this war, uses cautious, peaceful but realistic discourses.

Key words: Germany, Operation Barbarossa, Soviet Union, Turkish Press.

Ч. Бенхүр¹, Т. Жолдасұлы^{2*}

¹Селчук университеті, Кония, Түркия

²Қорқыт Ата атындағы Қызылорда университеті, Қызылорда, Қазақстан

*e-mail: zholdassuly2018@gmail.com

Түрік баспасөзіндегі соғыс және қауесет: Барбаросса операциясының басталуы

Екінші дүниежүзілік соғыстың ең маңызды бетбұрыс нүктесі болған «Барбаросса» операциясының кез келген сәтте соғысқа кіру қаупі төнген Түркия үшін де маңызы зор болды. 1939 жылы 23 тамызда қол қойылған Неміс-совет шабуыл жасамау пактісі ұзаққа созылмады. Ақыры, 1941 жылдың 22 маусымында Германия Совет Одағына шабуыл жасады және осылайша Екінші дүниежүзілік соғыстың жаңа дәуірі басталды. Түркияның соғысқа қатысты алаңдауын одан әрі арттырған бұл жағдайды түрік баспасөзі де мұқият қадағалап отырды және шабуылдың дәл алдында немістердің советтерге қарсы шабуылға дайындалып жатқаны туралы әңгімелер талқылана бастады. Бұл зерттеуде немістер мен Кеңес Одағы арасында 1939 жылы шабуыл жасамау келісіміне қол қойылғаннан кейін көп ұзамай немістер жүргізген Барбаросса операциясының түрік баспасөзіндегі көріністері қарастырылды. Екінші дүниежүзілік соғыстың басында және одан кейінгі кезеңде түрік баспасөзінің бұл ұлы соғысқа деген көзқарасы мезгіл-мезгіл өзгеріп, бұл айдар мен жаңалықтарда көрініс тапты. Соғысқа белсене араласудан қашқақтап, әр мүмкіндікте соғыстан тыс қалғанын мәлімдеген түрік үкіметінің шешімі түрік баспасөзі тарапынан қолдау тапқаны белгілі. Сондықтан бұл зерттеуде бұғаздардағы талаптары мен соғыстың басында Германиямен тығыз қарым-қатынаста болуына байланысты Кеңес өкіметінен сақтанып жүрген түрік баспасөзінің көзқарасы зерттеуде хронологиялық тұрғыдан қарастырылып, нәтижелер талқыланатын болады.

Бұл зерттеуде шабуылдан бұрынғы соғыс қауесеттері де, шабуылдан кейінгі тақырыпқа қатысты түрік баспасөзінің талдаулары да қарастырылады. Осы мақсатқа жету үшін аталған кезеңде жарияланып тұрған «Акшам», «Жумхуриет», «Тан» және «Улус» газеттері секілді түрлі көзқарастағы түрік баспасөздеріне талдау жасалады.

Түйін сөздер: Германия, Барбаросса операциясы, Совет Одағы, Түрік баспасөзі.

Ч. Бенхур¹ Т. Жолдасулы^{2*}

¹ Сельчукский университет, г. Конья, Турция

² Кызылординский университет имени Коркыт Ата, г. Кызылорда, Казахстан

*e-mail: zholdassuly2018@gmail.com

Война и слухи в турецкой прессе: начало операции «Барбаросса»

Операция «Барбаросса», важнейший переломный момент Второй мировой войны, имела большое значение и для Турции, которая в любой момент могла вступить в войну. Германо-советский пакт о ненападении, подписанный 23 августа 1939 года, просуществовал недолго, по сути, 22 июня 1941 года Германия напала на Советский Союз, и это положило начало новой эпохе Второй мировой войны. За этой ситуацией, которая еще больше усилила беспокойство Турции по поводу войны, внимательно следила турецкая пресса, и незадолго до нападения начали обсуждать, что немцы готовятся к нападению на Советский Союз. В этом исследовании были рассмотрены отражения в турецкой прессе операции «Барбаросса», которая была проведена немцами вскоре после подписания пакта о ненападении между Германией и Советским Союзом в 1939 году. В начале Второй мировой войны и в период после нее взгляд турецкой прессы на эту великую войну время от времени менялся, и это отражалось в колонках и новостях. Известно, что решение турецкого правительства, которое избегало активного участия в войне и заявляло, что оно выходит из войны при каждой возможности, было поддержано турецкой прессой. Поэтому в этом исследовании позиция турецкой прессы, которая уже остерегается Советов из-за их требований к проливам и ее тесных отношений с Германией в начале войны, будет рассмотрена в хронологическом порядке в исследовании, и будут обсуждены результаты.

В этом исследовании были изучены как слухи о войне до нападения, так и оценки турецкой прессы по этому вопросу после нападения. Для достижения этой цели в течение указанного периода времени был проведен анализ газет «Акшам», «Джумхуриет», «Тан» и «Улус» – известных представителей турецкой прессы с разными точками зрения.

Ключевые слова: Германия, План «Барбаросса», Советский Союз, Турецкая пресса.

Introduction

The severe military, political and economic restrictions imposed on Germany by the Treaty of Versailles, which Germany signed with the allied states after Germany lost the First World War, caused Germany to not be able to recover for a long time (Graebner, Bennett, 2011: 58.). The government's inability to produce any solution in the face of the economic crisis and the difficult situation of the German people weakened the trust in the democratic administration. Adolf Hitler, who made good use of this political vacuum, came into power in 1933 with his ultra-nationalist rhetoric that promised to save Germany from the trouble it was in (Uçarol, 1995: 530-531). After coming to power, Hitler acted in a short time, ignoring the military restrictions imposed by Versailles, increasing the number of soldiers, and giving importance to the war industry, and became the undisputed leader of Germany. The silence of England and France to Germany's military preparations and expansionist discourses further encouraged Hitler, first Austria was annexed by Germany (Armaoğlu, 2020: 213), and then Czechoslovakia was occupied (Hobsbawm, 2011: 207). In this period, the appeasement policy followed by the British Prime

Minister Neville Chamberlain and the inclusion of France in the policy caused Hitler to become more and more aggressive. Hitler, trusting the silence of the Western democracies, signed the *Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact* with the Soviet Union on August 23, 1939, to eliminate the only important danger that could come from the East, just before the invasion of Poland, and secured the eastern borders as well (Hart, 2015: 16.). Shortly after, on September 1, 1939, Germany attacked Poland, and thus the Second World War began (Gilbert, 1991: 1-2). On September 3, 1939, England and France declared war on Germany, while the United States announced to the public that it was neutral in this war (Keegan, 2019: 51).

The Soviet Union started to invade Poland from the east on September 17, 1939, and with the agreement of these two great powers, Poland was occupied and divided in a short time. Although England and France declared war, they were unable to provide any military assistance to Poland during this period. In other words, they did not want to provide. As a matter of fact, according to England and France, the Nazis, who spent all their money on armament, would experience a shortage of raw materials and the economic system would collapse. This idea pushed the Allies to remain on the defensive

by imposing a strict land and sea blockade against Germany (Sander, 2016: 126).

The exchange between Germany and the Soviets on September 28, 1939 included secret protocols regarding the Baltic countries as well as Poland. Accordingly, if there was a rearrangement in the territory and political situation of the regions belonging to the Baltic States (Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), the northern border of Lithuania would constitute the border of the areas of interest of the USSR and Germany. In this respect, interests in the Vilna region were recognized by both parties. In case of a rearrangement of the territory and political situation of the territory belonging to the Polish State, the border between the spheres of influence of Germany and the USSR would be approximately the Narew, Vistula and San rivers. Regarding Southeastern Europe, the Soviet side demanded that its interests in Bessarabia be respected, while the German side declared that it had no political interest in these regions (Binns, 2022: 50). With this incident, it was realized that the treaty was not just a non-aggression pact and that the parties were trying to create a new map by accepting each other's spheres of influence (Armaoğlu, 1993: 294). However, the misconceptions on this theory lost their validity with the start of the war between the two countries. As a matter of fact, it was revealed in the statements made with the declaration of war that the parties turned a blind eye to each other in a planned manner and that mutual interest relations were pursued.

Based on the agreement it made with Germany, the Soviet Union first added Estonia, then Lithuania and Latvia to its sphere of influence. Following the Baltic States, the diplomatic pressure of the Soviets, who concentrated on Finland, was inconclusive and they declared war on Finland. The war with Finland put great strain on the Soviet Union both diplomatically and militarily. The Soviet Union, which was expelled from the League of Nations during the two and a half months during which the war actually continued, could not achieve the success it expected in the field and could only capture a few regions. This situation of the Soviet army created the impression that the Soviets had a weak army and was effective in Hitler's decision to declare war on the Soviet Union in the future (Armaoğlu, 1993: 278). During this process, Germany remained silent against the initiatives of the Soviet Union and abided by the pact they signed. Germany, on the other hand, began to invade Western Europe after invading Denmark and Norway, and captured Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Belgium, and France (Nevins, Commager,

2021: 484). Nearly two years of peace between the Soviets and the Germans ended with the German attack on the Soviets on June 22, 1941 (Tekeli, İlkin, 2014: 200), and this situation led to the opening of one of the most important fronts of the Second World War.

Materials and methods

In this study, the reflections of Operation Barbarossa, which was carried out by the Germans not long after the non-aggression pact was signed between the Germans and the Soviet Union in 1939, in the Turkish press were examined. At the beginning of the Second World War and the period after it, the view of the Turkish press on this great war changed from time to time, and this was reflected in the columns and news. It is known that the decision of the Turkish government, which avoided being actively involved in the war and stated that it was out of the war at every opportunity, was supported by the Turkish press. Therefore, in this study, the attitude of the Turkish press, which is already beware of the Soviets due to its demands on the straits and its close relations with Germany at the beginning of the war, will be examined chronologically in the study and the results will be discussed. As a result of the study, it is expected that the newspapers examined will approach this new situation very cautiously due to Türkiye's position and reservations in the war. Even though they have different ideologies, they are expected to publish in line with Türkiye's interests, and on the other hand, they are expected to act in accordance with Türkiye's foreign policy principles in order not to conflict with the government's policies. In this respect, the newspapers *Akşam*, *Cumhuriyet*, *Tan* and *Ulus*, which had the most circulation the period and were known to have different perspectives, were selected (Weisband, 2002: 60). Being able to include various ideological perspectives in the Turkish public opinion is the reason for this choice. *Tan*, who published articles in support of the Soviet Union as of the period, *Cumhuriyet*, which is known to be close to Germany, *Ulus*, which is the official publication of the government, and *Akşam*, a newspaper that followed a more moderate policy but was close to Allies, were chosen with the above-mentioned concerns. At the same time, the Turkish Diplomatic Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and various copyrighted works were gotten benefit from in the study. In addition, newspaper articles, which constitute the main source, were used in the study.

Research and results

The fronts of the Second World War had gradually expanded since the beginning of the war and had taken the whole world under its influence. On June 1941, while the attention of the Turkish press was on the Syrian operation that the Allies were carrying out on the borders of Türkiye, rumors about German-Soviet relations began to appear on the pages of the Turkish press. The first news in this regard was published on 13 June 1941. The newspapers *Akşam*, *Tan*, *Ulus* and *Cumhuriyet* claimed that Germany had strengthened its military units on the Soviet border, citing the *Times* newspaper on its first page (*Tan*, 13.06.1941: 1; *Akşam*, 13.06.1941: 1; *Cumhuriyet*, 13.06.1941: 1; *Ulus*, 13.06.1941: 1). According to the shared news, Hitler himself stated that he would launch an attack on the Soviet Union in 1941, without fear of secrecy. According to the Turkish press, this showed that the Germans fully believed in such an operation and victory, or that it was a bluff. As claimed by the *Times* writer, three possibilities stood out in this direction. First, the broad plains of Eastern Europe were well suited to accommodate Germany's large armies present. Thus, the movements of the Soviet Union would be kept under control and the impression that the operation to be made on England would be postponed would be created, causing Britain to send its forces to other fronts. Another possibility was that Hitler only showed his strength to scare Moscow and gain important concessions from the Soviet Union. Finally, Hitler might have really wanted to invade the Soviet Union to obtain Ukrainian wheat and Caucasian oil (*Cumhuriyet*, 13.06.1941: 5). However, the following days would reveal that the *Times* writer, who argued that the strongest of these possibilities was to obtain concessions by following Hitler's policy of fear, was wrong.

Necmeddin Sadak, writing in *Akşam* newspaper on the same days, said that Germany's real intention was different and focused on the issue of where the real target was. Based on this, Sadak, who caught some clues in Mussolini's last speech, stated with reference to Mussolini that the German soldiers in Greece, Crete and Bulgaria were taken back and retreated towards the North, and that he did not expect a new movement in the south of Europe. According to Sadak, who also expressed another possibility and rumor, the activity on the Polish and Romanian borders and the British summoning of the Moscow ambassador to London could be considered signs of where the war would take place. "Is this silence and preparations the beginning of a peace initiative or

a new aggression on unexpected fronts? It is neither right to attempt prophecy nor to fall prey to illusions. But we won't have to wait long. We will probably witness important events soon." As can be seen, Sadak revealed that various possibilities could come true based on the movement in Europe. Although he was not persistent in his claims, he predicted that a major war would begin soon (Sadak, 12.06.1941: 1,7).

Retired General H.Emir Erkilet stated in his article that the Germans could attack the Soviets by directly targeting them. According to Erkilet, Germany did not want to do anything in the Eastern Mediterranean. The Nazis did not even prepare for an attack on Syria and Cyprus, but they would not spend the summer of 1941 idle either. Saying that the most important and intriguing question of the day is what Germany would do now, Erkilet evaluated the rumors of an operation against England, but stated that Germany cannot attempt such an operation without weakening England materially and morally. Then he announced the idea of an attack against the Soviets, in which he also participated. Stating that Germany would want to destroy the Soviets sooner or later, Erkilet thinks that this would first happen in the summer of 1942. However, Germany's activity in the Eastern Mediterranean convinced him that the Soviet expedition could be made this summer. While Erkilet put forward his ideas on this point, the dispatch of new German forces to Romania was based on the large troop concentrations in Prussia and Poland. He believed that Germany would first make an offer to the Soviet Union to join the triple alliance, and if it did not accept, it would attack Moscow to seize Ukraine and the Caucasus (Erkilet, 13.06.1941:1,5)

In the news that was reflected in the Turkish press the next day, it was seen that the Soviet Union government made a statement through TASS agency that the news that Germany would attack the Soviets was unfounded. While all these allegations were described as meaningless, it was stated that the claimants were ineptly organized propaganda activities by the parties that were enemies of Germany and the Soviet Union and had interests in the expansion of the war (*Ulus*, 14.06.1941: 3). In addition, the issues that are particularly emphasized in the disclaimer published are summarized as follows:

"1. *Germany has not made any new demands to the Soviet Union and has not offered any new wider agreements.*

2. *According to the information obtained by the Soviet Union, Germany is as unshakably loyal to*

the provisions of the Soviet-German non-aggression pact as the Soviet Union.

3. *The Soviet Union follows a policy of peace and decides to stick to the provisions of the German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact.*

4. *The training and maneuvers of the Red Army reserves in the summer headquarters and the maneuvers to be carried out soon have no other purpose than to prepare these reserves and to control the current organization.*" (Tan, 14.06.1941: 5)

After this disclaimer, M. Anten made evaluations about the events in his column titled *The Political View of the World* in the *Tan* newspaper. According to Anten, it did not seem possible for the Germans to engage in an armed struggle against the Soviets or the Soviets against the Germans. As a matter of fact, Britain, and Germany, who were already at war, would wear out militarily and economically as the war continued, and the Soviet Union would gain advantage from this. Otherwise, if the Soviet Union were to go to war with Germany, Germany would have to send a significant part of its air and ground forces to the Soviet Union, so England would find relief and find a place to move. Based on these points, the author, who claimed that Britain had an interest in wanting to disrupt the relationship between Germany and the Soviet Union, emphasized that this war would not benefit either of the sides (Anten, 15.06.1941: 3).

On the other hand, Ömer Rıza Doğrul, who wrote an article in the newspaper *Cumhuriyet*, shared allegations in this direction with the public from a different perspective. Doğrul first presented a reality about the current situation in Europe and stated that the axis was now dominant in all of Europe and only the Soviet Union was left out. According to Doğrul, the Axis Powers considered Spain as one of their own and did not see it as a risk. Therefore, England was the only country in Europe that was currently at war with Germany. Germany wanted to remove the Soviet Union to ensure that it would not receive a blow from the back in Europe, before entering an all-out war with England, which Doğrul describes as *the greatest adventure*. For these reasons, it was imperative for Germany to be involved in a war in eastern Europe to eliminate the Soviet threat. In the continuation of his article, Doğrul included another discussion on the subject. Underlining that Germany, which could not establish an order even after occupying the relatively small countries of Europe, would find it harder as the occupation area expands, Doğrul implicitly stated that he did not see it unlikely for Germany to declare war on the Soviet Union under these conditions. On the other hand,

the author, who finished his article with cautious expressions by considering every possibility, said that while searching for ways to get rid of the trouble experienced, this could cause unpredictable events in Europe (Doğrul, 16.06.1941: 3).

During the days when rumors were increasing and various allegations about the Soviet-German conflict were constantly on the agenda of the world, the Turkish press continued to evaluate it with great interest. *Cumhuriyet* writer H. Emir Erkilet, who is also a retired General in the Turkish Armed Forces, brought the conflicts to his corner with their military aspects. In this article, contrary to what he had said before, Erkilet stated that the Germans would launch a decisive attack on either the British or the Russians, referring to the summer of 1941, but he emphasized that, from his perspective, it was more plausible that the Germans would turn to the Soviet Union after sharing their trump card with the British and would launch an attack in the spring of 1942. He claimed that in the summer of 1941, they would only continue the Atlantic war and try to invade the island by sea and air by wearing England down both morally and materially. According to Erkilet, who also said that Germany was in a hurry on this issue, Hitler did not want the accelerating and increasing American aid to make this invasion difficult. However, he also stated at the end of his article that if the preparations for the attack on England could not be completed and postponed, there was a possibility that the Germans could attack the Soviet Union in order not to waste this time (Erkilet, 18.06.1941: 5).

According to one of the rumors emphasized by Erkilet, who detailed the possibilities he had previously discussed, Romania and Finland would apply to the Soviet Union for the return of the lands taken from them, and Germany would also want to be involved in the issue by taking on the role of arbitrator in the dispute. Germany would also make demands from the Soviets, such as withdrawing its army from Ukraine, having authority over the Caucasian oil, and control of the railways between the Caucasus, Ukraine and Germany, and if not accepted, an attack would take place. Erkilet, who says that in order to know these things, it is necessary to get inside the mind of Hitler, is in favor of a more cautious approach to the issue. Despite all these rumors, Erkilet stated that Germany still did not give up on the possibility of a war with England. He stated that if this did not happen, the Soviet-German war would take place on a 3000 km line from Finland to the Black Sea. In such a war, Germany would benefit from Romania and Finland not only as bases but also from their armies. Because both countries had

a deep grudge against the Soviets. Commenting on the plan based on this, Erkilet said that in a possible war, the German-Romanian army would advance towards Kiev, Konotop and Kharkov, while the Finnish-German army would advance towards Leningrad. Erkilet, who also analyzed the issue militarily, then questioned what Germany's purpose was in a Soviet expedition. According to him, three possibilities particularly stood out. The first is, since the only states that can defeat Germany are England, the USA and Soviet Russia, to secure itself by removing one of them from the field. Secondly, to seize the agricultural and mineral raw materials and oil resources of Soviet Russia in the Ukraine, Caucasus and Ural regions in order to gain the power to continue the war against England and the USA for many years. Finally, to completely eliminate the USSR's aid to China, as well as its influence in the Far East, so that Japan can make its moves against England and the USA more easily. If Germany did not realize these demands in cooperation with the Soviets, then a war with the Soviets would become plausible. However, Erkilet said that if Germany did not attack the Soviet Union, it would be understood that it would definitely attack England this summer. Later, he changed his mind again and stated that he saw a Soviet attack as more likely (Erkilet, 22.06.1941: 5).

It was around the same time that the news from the Reuters agency were seen on the pages of the Turkish press. According to the news, the commander-in-chief of the German armies in Romania was transferred to 25 km from Bucharest, and a significant number of German troops were transferred to Romania. At the same time, it was shared with the public that new classes were recruited in Romania and military anthems were constantly played on the radio (Ulus, 22.06.1941: 1-3). Despite all the preparatory news and the tension between the two countries, the Turkish press acted cautiously. Although it was generally accepted that there was a disagreement between the Germans and the Soviets, it was foreseen that the Germans would not dare to take an action against the Soviets, or the possibility of convincing the Soviet Union for neutrality with an agreement without conflict prevailed.

While evaluating these possibilities, the writer of the *Akşam* newspaper, Necmeddin Sadak, opened for discussion what kind of excuse Germany could put forward to fight the Soviets in addition to all the open preparations. According to Sadak what reasons could justify Germany's attack on the Soviets when there is already an official non-aggression pact between the two countries and there is no apparent problem? While Sadak is presenting this question

to the public, on the other hand, he does not ignore the fact that the two sides harbor hostility towards each other. In the framework of all these possibilities, Sadak stated that Germany contacted with the Soviets and had demands. He claimed that the outcome of all these events would depend on whether the Soviets accepted these demands or not (Sadak, 22.06.1941: 1-6).

While the situation between Germany and the Soviet Union remained unknown to the Turkish press until June 22, 1941, various inferences were made by considering all the possibilities until the last day. However, finally, on the morning of June 22, Germany's attack and mutual notes created a bombshell effect in the Turkish press. The Turkish press turned all its attention to the events that took place there, and the news were first shared with the Turkish public in the newspaper *Akşam* on the same day. Announcing the news with the headline that goes *Germany declared war on Russia*, *Akşam* gave place to the declaration prepared by Hitler for the German nation in the continuation of the news (Akşam, 22.06.1941: 1). The declaration, which was read on the radio by the propaganda minister Goebbels at 06:40 in the morning in Türkiye, used a language accusing the Soviet Union from the very first moment. It was stated that the Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov was invited to Berlin to reach an agreement, but the minister asked them questions implying various conditions. Among the questions that included Germany's attitude on various issues, the most striking one for Türkiye was what would be Germany's attitude if the Soviets wanted bases in the Dardanelles and Black Sea straits (Akşam, 22.06.1941: 1). On the other hand, Hitler replied that some changes could be made in the Montreux Convention in favor of the friends on the Black Sea coast, but that the Soviet Union was not willing to seize bases in the straits (Akşam, 23.06.1941: 7; Parker, 2005: 72-73).

On the morning of June 23, the war had a wide repercussion in the Turkish press and mutual statements made by the parties were shared with the public. All the newspapers firstly published the neutrality decision taken by Türkiye at the beginning of their first pages (Ulus, 23.06.1941: 1; Cumhuriyet, 23.06.1941: 1; Akşam, 23.06.1941: 1; Tan, 23.06.1941: 1; DİAD: 501-31560-124815-72; DİAD: 501-31560-124815-88.). On the same day, Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov made a statement against Hitler's statement. Molotov first stated that at around 05:30 in the morning, the German Ambassador to Moscow, von Der Schulenberg, announced that Germany was at war with the Soviet Union.

Molotov underlined that all of Hitler's statements on the inability to protect the Soviets from the pact were lies and provocations (DİAD: 67781-297007-47), and said that the Soviets always remained loyal to the pact, and therefore the entire responsibility of the war was on Hitler, whom he defined as the fascist leader of the Germans (Ulus, 23.06.1941: 4).

In the speech, the message of determination and unity was given by emphasizing historical emphasis such as *Hitler will be defeated just as Napoleon was defeated. Together with the army, the whole nation will engage in a victorious struggle for honor and national freedom* (Cumhuriyet, 23.06.1941: 6). British Prime Minister Churchill also made a long speech and made a statement of support for the Soviet Union. Referring to the fact that they were allied with the Russian armies years ago and that the Russians fought bravely, the Prime Minister (DİAD: 67781-297007-49) guaranteed that they would do whatever they could against Hitler, whom he described as a *Nazi bandit, a monster who can't get enough of shedding blood* (Tan, 23.06.1941: 5).

With the involvement of a great power like the Soviet Union in the war, the leading figures of the Turkish press, which considered all possibilities before the operation, started to discuss the Soviet-German issue in their corners in the face of new and surprising developments. As a matter of fact, according to Falih Rıfkı Atay, the proposals made by Molotov in the Berlin talks created a feeling by the Germans that the Soviets were surrounding them by cooperating with the Slavs. Therefore, Germany, which wanted to secure itself, entered a new negotiation phase and did not want to be exposed to a policy of delay and chose to attack the Soviet Union. On the other hand, Atay evaluated the new operation as the greatest war of the last century, not just this war (Atay, Ulus, 23.06.1941: 1-4).

Yunus Nadi stated that the whole world was surprised by the developments, but Cumhuriyet newspaper had foreseen this situation and interpreted the events from his own perspective. According to Nadi, Germany did not speak out against any actions of the Soviet Union within the framework of its future plans. The Soviets wanted to secure themselves by making an agreement with Germany, but they were wrong in their predictions about the war. As a matter of fact, the sudden collapse of France proved this. However, according to the Soviet Union, the war in Europe would be prolonged and a worn-out Germany would not have the opportunity to attack the Soviet Union again. On the other hand, the more vigorous Soviets would dominate Europe very easily. At this point, Nadi saw all these developments as a re-

sult of insincere agreements made politically. While finishing his article, Nadi said that we should make a contribution on behalf of Türkiye and prevent the war from spreading to our country by increasing the guards at the borders (Nadi, 23.06.1941: 1,5).

While giving information about the German army about the attack, General Erkilet stated that there were at least 15 armored divisions and the same number of motorized divisions. He also emphasized that these rapid forces would advance on the Russian plains in the direction of Moscow, Smolensk and Kiev and try to fragment and separate the Russian armies from each other. In addition, he stated that German aircraft began to weaken the supply force by destroying enemy airfields and bases and disrupting automobile roads from the first moments. On the other hand, according to Erkilet, who also commented on the political aspect of the war, Italy's declaration of war on the Soviet Union was only symbolic. Japan would also take advantage of this war to try to remove the Soviets from the Far East. According to Erkilet, the previously signed Japanese-Russian non-aggression pact was signed only to deceive the Soviet Union (Erkilet, 23.06.1941: 1,5)

M. Zekeriya Sertel stated that with the new developments in the world, the position to be taken not only by the warring states but also by other states is important and he looked at the issue from a different perspective. According to Sertel, as soon as the German-Soviet war began, the world was divided into two warring groups. In the first group, there are Germany and Italy and the small European states that declare their dependence on them, and in the opposite front, there are the three largest states of the world such as Soviet Russia, England and the USA. As a matter of fact, Sertel revealed a reasonable truth in his own way. So much so that England, the USA and the Soviet Union had unlimited resources in terms of both manpower and material. Therefore, they had the ability to fight for many years. However, Germany's resources were limited and it wanted to end the war quickly. While finishing his article after this statement, Sertel stated that the fate of the world now depends on the victory or defeat of one of these two groups. He stated that the war in question was the future of all humanity, and that the issue was not a war in which only the warring parties were involved (Sertel, 24.06.1941: 1,5)

While the first day's notifications and situation report from the front were trying to find a place in the Turkish press, the reasons for the attack continued to be sought in the columns. According to M. Zekeriya Sertel, in his another article, stated that the

reasons put forward by Hitler were mere excuses trying to cover up the truth. Sertel stated that Germany, which predicted that the war would prolong, was faced with the need for raw materials and food-stuffs, and that the Soviet attack was inevitable considering that Europe could not be self-sufficient. So much so that the food and raw materials obtained only from Ukraine and the Caucasus would more than meet Germany's needs for a long-term war. Providing figures on this subject, Sertel stated that Ukraine alone meets 23% of the Soviet Union's wheat production, 73% of manganese, 60% of iron, and 40-60% of the raw material needed by the great war industry. Expressing that Germany has had an eye on these lands since the past, for the reasons explained, the author claimed that Germany deliberately provoked the conflict here (Sertel, 23.06.1941: 1-5). As a matter of fact, Necmeddin Sadak, who wrote in *Akşam*, shares the same view as Sertel on the causes of the war. Sadak bases this war on the German-Slavic struggle that has been going on in Europe since ancient times. He also emphasizes that the essence of the issue lies here by saying *Slavicism has turned into communist danger on the side of Hitler's Germany* (Sadak, 23.06.1941: 1).

As a matter of fact, with the outbreak of the war, the search for its causes shifted the discussions to an ideological basis, and the events were approached through these points. In this regard, an interesting question came from Ahmet Şükrü Esmer. Esmer addressed the following question to the public, *did Bolshevism, which does not recognize the concept of homeland, sufficiently inspire the feelings of courage, self-sacrifice, and renunciation necessary for the defense of its lands?* He stated that this is one of the most important factors that would determine the war (Esmer, 25.06.1941: 3).

With the reactions after the first day, Falih Rıfki Atay stated that the events would become clear in 1-2 weeks (Atay, 24.06.1941: 5). As a matter of fact, the Turkish press continued to inform the public day by day after the start of Operation Barbarossa in line with every new information and development in this direction.

Conclusion

Operation Barbarossa, which changed the course of the Second World War and led to the reshaping of the world politics, has a special importance for Türkiye as well. As a matter of fact, the war took place in the Soviet territory, Türkiye's neighbor, including the Balkans. Türkiye's policy of staying out of the war, which had persistently continued since the beginning of the war, has received full support from

the Turkish public. For this reason, we see that the sensitivity of the Turkish press on this topic is also at its highest level during this period. It has been stated at every opportunity that the clashes on the Black Sea coast should not be allowed to spread to Türkiye in any way, and that Türkiye's neutral position was known to everyone.

On the other hand, the allegations in the international press just before Operation Barbarossa were closely followed and emphasized. The Turkish press did not want such a war. Therefore, while the allegations were being evaluated, it was emphasized that armed conflict did not seem possible for the most part, but that what happened was Germany's moves to make concessions. In these evaluations, the Turkish press to some degree, wrote its intention and wanted the events to evolve in this way.

With the start of the operation on June 22, 1941, the ancient hostilities of the two sides became the main subject of the Turkish press. The reasons published by Hitler would not have been accepted in the Turkish press because the historical foundations of the struggle between the two states and the great grudge that Bolshevism and National Socialism felt for each other were mentioned in the columns. Here, the most striking difference between the newspapers is that while the statements in the newspaper *Cumhuriyet* mostly wrote about the movements of the Soviets that would provoke Germany, in the newspaper *Tan*, the hidden ambitions of Germany against the Soviet Union and its movements in this direction took place. Again, in his columns in the *Ulus* newspaper, Esmer criticizes the Soviet Union implicitly, if not directly. The situation that emerges here, too, is that the press approaches the events within the framework of their own view of life and thinking.

To make a general evaluation, the Turkish press covered this war with its political and military aspects and made evaluations day by day. While the echoes of the non-aggression pact signed between Türkiye and Germany on June 18, 1941, just before Operation Barbarossa, would continue in the Turkish press, it is necessary to say that the Turkish press was cautious about new developments.

Sources

DİAD – Dışişleri Bakanlığı Türk Diplomatik Arşivi (Turkish Diplomatic Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Akşam Gazetesi (1941)

Cumhuriyet Gazetesi (1941)

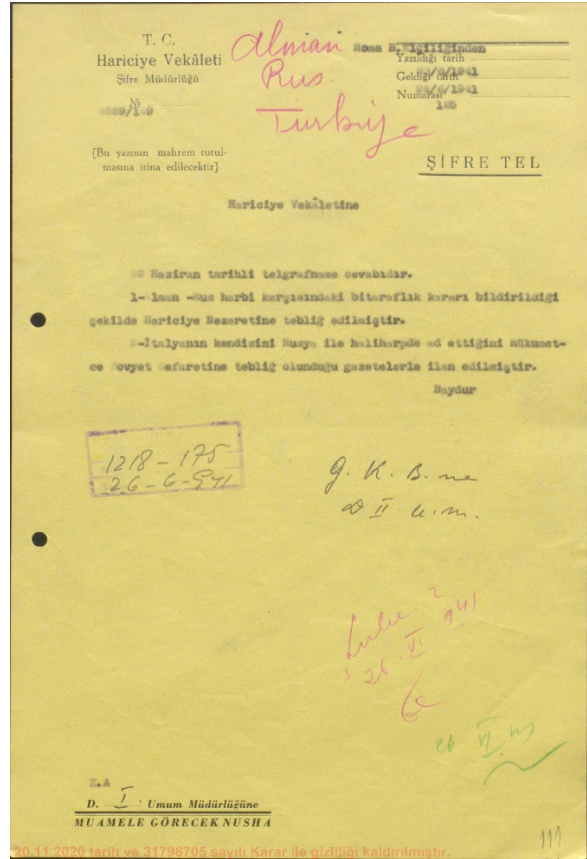
Tan Gazetesi (1941)

Ulus Gazetesi (1941)

Attachments:



Attachment 1: Ulus Gazetesi, 23.06.1941, p.1.



Attachment 2: DİAD, 501-31560-124815-88.

References

Anten M. (1941). Dünyanın Siyasi Manzarası. Tan. 14 June, pp. 3-4.
 Armaoğlu F. (1993). Avrupa Politikasında Polonya. Belleten. 57 (218). p. 285-196.
 Armaoğlu F. (2020). 20. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi (1914-1995), İstanbul: Kronik Kitap. 896 p.
 Atay F.R. (1941). Almanya ile Sovyetler Birliği Arasında Harp. Ulus. 23 June, pp. 1-4.
 Atay F.R. (1941). Harp Etrafında Tahminler. Ulus. 24 June, p. 5.
 Binns S. (2022). Barbarossa ve Tarihteki En Kanlı Savaş. İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınları. 496 p.
 Doğrul Ö.R. (1941). Harb Avrupa'nın Şarkına Sirayet Edecek Mi? Cumhuriyet. 16 June, p. 3.
 Erkilet H.E. (1941). Alman Taarruz İstikameti. Cumhuriyet. 13 June, pp.1-5.
 Erkilet H.E. (1941). Almanya Rusya'ya Teveccüh Edecek Mi?. Cumhuriyet. 22 June, p. 5.
 Erkilet H.E. (1941). Almanya- Sovyetler Harbinin Muhtemel İnkişafı. Cumhuriyet. 23 June, pp1-5.
 Erkilet H.E. (1941). İki İhtimal Karşısında. Cumhuriyet. 18 June, p. 5.
 Esmer A.Ş. (1941). Harbin Mucip Sebepleri. Ulus. 25 June, p. 3.
 Gilbert M. (1991). The Second World War. New York: Henry Holt and Company. 864 p.
 Graebner N. A., Bennett E.M. (2011). The Versailles Traty and Its Legacy. New York: Cambridge University Press. 286 p.
 Hart B.L. (2015). İkinci Dünya Savaşı Tarihi. İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları. 1088 p.
 Hobsbawm E. (2011). Kısa 20. Yüzyıl 1914-1991 Aşırılıklar Çağı. İstanbul: Everest Yayınları. 788 p.
 Keegan J. (2019). İkinci Dünya Savaşı. Ankara: Say Yayınları. 624 p.
 Nadi Y. (1941). Alman-Rus Harbi.Cumhuriyet. 23 June, pp.1-5.
 Nevins A., Commager H.S. (2021). ABD Tarihi. Ankara: Doğu Batı Yayınları. 544 p.
 Parker R.A.C. (2005). İkinci Dünya Savaşı. Ankara: Dost Kitabevi. 332 p.
 Sadak N. (1941). Almanya ile Sovyetler Birliği Arasındaki Gergin Münasebet, Yakında Bir İhtilaf veya Bir Anlaşma İle Neticelenebilir. Akşam. 22 June, pp. 1-6.

- Sadak N. (1941). Çok Mühim Hadiselerin arifesinde Bulunuyoruz. Akşam. 12 June, pp.1-5.
Sadak N. (1941). Hem Askeri Bakımdan Hem Neticeleri İtibarile Avrupa'nın En Büyük Kara Harbi Karşısındayız. Akşam. 23 June, p. 1.
Sander O. (2016). Siyasi Tarih (1918-1994). İstanbul: İmge Kitabevi. 605 p.
Sertel M.Z. (1941). Alman Sovyet Harbi Karşısında Diğer Devletler. Tan. 24 June, pp.1-5.
Sertel M.Z. (1941). Sovyetlerle Almanlar Harp Halinde. Tan. 23 June, pp. 1-5.
Tekeli İ., İlkin S. (2014). Dış Siyaseti ve Askeri Stratejileriyle İkinci Dünya Savaşı Türkiye'si. V. 1. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları. 669 p.
Uçarol R. (1995). Siyasi Tarih (1789-1994). İstanbul: Filiz Kitabevi. 863 p.
Weisband E. (2002). 2. Dünya Savaşı ve Türkiye. İstanbul: Örgün Yayınevi. 303 p.

Авторлар туралы мәлімет:

Чағатай Бенхүр – PhD, тарих бөлімінің профессоры, Селчук университеті, Конья қ., Түркия. E-mail: cag1974@yahoo.com

Жолдасұлы Талгат – PhD, тарих және археология кафедрасының қауымдастырылған профессор м.а., Қорқыт Ата ат. Қызылорда университеті. E-mail: zholdassuly@gmail.com

Сведения об авторах:

Чағатай Бенхур – PhD, профессор отделения истории, Селчукский университет, Конья, Турция. E-mail: cag1974@yahoo.com

Жолдасұлы Талгат – PhD, ассоц. Профессор кафедры истории и археологии, Кызылординский университет им. Кorkyt Ата. E-mail: zholdassuly@gmail.com

Information about the authors:

Çağatay Benhur – PhD, Professor, Department of History, Selcuk University, Konya, Türkiye. E-mail: cag1974@yahoo.com
Zholdassuly Talgat – PhD, assoc. Professor of the Department of History and Archeology, Kyzylorda University. Korkyt Ata. E-mail: zholdassuly@gmail.com

Поступило: 25.03.2024

Принято: 20.08.2024