As of the end of the 18th century and parallel to the Ottoman Empire's decline, the Rumelian Turks who had inhabited Balkan lands for centuries began to suffer persecution at the hands of Balkan Christians and the unrest they created. While paving the way for Bulgarian and Russian aggression towards Balkan Turks, the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78 also triggered the initial migrations towards Istanbul and Anatolia. As stated in Namık Kemal's letters, Balkan Christians were further agitated against Turks, and separatist activity increased. The Balkan War of 1912-1913 and the purge of Balkan Turks and Muslims carried out by Bulgarian and Greek guerillas in this war have been recorded in domestic and foreign sources. Further evidence that such practices preceded the Balkan Wars is the 14-page brochure titled Bulgaristan'daki Osmanlıların Âh ü Figâni, published in 1906. This brochure describes the various acts of aggression carried out towards the Turks in Bulgaria. Attacks against Turkish writers and the Balkan newspaper that was published in Turkish and defended the rights of Muslim Turks are also touched upon. This study will introduce the brochure titled Bulgaristan'daki Osmanlıların Âh ü Figâni, which we will evaluate within the scope of a cautionary/propagandistic/informative work.

Keywords: The Balkans, Bulgaria, Balkan Newspaper, Bulgaristan'daki Osmanlıların Ah ü Figâni
Introduction

As of the 19th century, many revolts against the Ottoman Empire were staged among Balkan nations, and these rebellions turned into a revolution. Other great European states such as Austria, Hungary, England, France, Italy, and primarily Russia incited non-Muslims against the Ottoman Empire and supported their uprisings and rebellions. The Greeks, Serbians, Bulgarians, and Montenegrins who revolted against the Ottoman Empire could be said to have spearheaded these rebellions. Despite all three nations gaining independence with the aid of European states, especially that of Russia, the victors remained unsatisfied and contended over the remaining Ottoman lands in the Balkans for many years. Within this context, the introduction of our essay will first touch upon the decolonization processes of Greece and then Serbia, Bulgaria, and Montenegro, and the slaughter campaigns they conducted against Turks.

With the aid of European states, particularly Russia’s, Greece gained independence in the Treaty of Adrianople, signed at the conclusion of the 1828-1829 Russo-Turkish War. (Oğuz 2006: 91) The borders of Greece were firmly established in the London Protocol of 1830. With the Sublime Porte’s concession, Greece gained the status of the first state to be separated from the Ottoman Empire. (Akalin 2000: 61) Thus, in 1830, Greece emerged as the first Balkan State. This can be shown as the first serious step in the gradual slackening of Turkish control and monopoly in the region. (Öztuna 2006: 21)

With time, Greek governors, soldiers, and intellectuals began to feel underwhelmed by these borders. They now championed a thesis they called the “Megali Idea” or Great Idea. Predicating on nationalist principles, they desired to annex all Greek-inhabited lands to Greece. (Karal 1995: 112) With this thesis, Greece adopted a form of expansionist policy and attempted to procure a number of places including Euboea, Samos, Macedonia and especially Crete. On account of this ideal, Greece entered into continuous and long-lasting conflict with the Ottoman Empire. (Hülagü 2000: 321-359)

Hoping to realize these ambitions, the Greeks were ever fomenting the Rûm populace under Ottoman governance and toiling to join their lands to Greece. The foremost of their efforts took place on Crete and proved to be an enduring vexation for the Ottomans. Crete had become a matter of importance for the Ottoman Empire since 1821. The Rûm of the island were often in revolt. Once the Greek state was established, the island’s annexation became the aligned purpose of Greek and Rûm affiliates. (Karal 1995: 118)

In 1876, Greek-backed Rûm rebels first declared that they wanted reform and then, upon discovering the Ottomans’ Achilles’ heel, announced that they had annexed Crete to Greece. As a solution, the Sublime Porte suggested granting Crete its autonomy, but the Rûm never abandoned the idea of joining Greece. In order to prevent these disputes, the Ottoman Empire and the Cretan nobles, who were daring a new revolt, signed the Pact of Halepa on October 25, 1878. With this agreement, the provisions of the charter from the year 1868 were expanded and thereby the island’s internal jurisdiction was devolved to Cretan Rûm and Muslim folk.1 (Oğuz 2006: 91)

At the signing of the Treaty of Berlin in the aftermath of the 1877-88 Russo-Turkish War, the Greek delegate requested on behalf of his government that all Greek-inhabited lands along with Thessaly, Epirus, and Crete be handed over to Greece. While the Ottomans fiercely opposed this requisition, England had opposed the part concerning Crete. Whereupon the Congress attempted to appease Greece by inviting the Ottoman Empire, through a record it put in the 13th protocol of the treaty, to redraw the border around regions of Thessaly and Epirus together.

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1 For a few items of this pact, which was accepted as Crete’s new constitution, see: (Toprak 2012: 130-131).
with the Greek government. It was deemed suitable for this boundary to follow the Salambris valley and the Greek part of the sea over the island seas. Although the great states wanted to intervene on the matter and add an item into the treaty for the preservation of their rights in case the Ottomans and Greeks could not reach an agreement at the final gathering of the Congress, the Ottoman Empire refused this. However, the chairman of the Congress, Bismarck, persuaded the Ottoman Empire by communicating that the addition of this item into the treaty was only a request, bearing no compulsion. After the Treaty of Berlin, the Ottoman and Greek states met for negotiations in February 1879 in Preveza and in August 1879 in Istanbul; however due to Greece’s insistence on accepting the boundary prescribed by the Berlin protocol, the negotiations remained inconclusive. Nevertheless, on June 16, 1880, the states of the Berlin Treaty arranged a conference with Greece and the Ottoman Empire. They reached an agreement on the matter of border redraw and notified the Ottoman minister of foreign affairs by issuing a memorandum. In March of 1881, the conference of ambassadors finally met in Istanbul and redrew the border so as to concede Thessaly to Greece and Epirus to the Ottomans. With the signing of a treaty between the Ottomans and Greeks on June 24, the conflict was temporarily settled.

Holding fast to the Great Idea, the Greeks kept waiting for an opportunity to realize the border promised in the Treaty of Berlin. Thus, the Deli Yani government took advantage of the East Rumelia crisis and the ensuing Serbo-Bulgarian War and made military preparations for the annexation of Epirus and Southern Macedonia. Undesirous of the disruption of peace, European states sent a fleet to Greek waters and blockaded Greece. The Greeks rejected the counsel of the Europeans, especially that of France, and refused to withdraw. Though they took up arms and tried to cross the border at Thessaly, the Ottoman forces led by Ahmed Eyüb Pasha repelled them. With that, the Deli Yani government resigned and trade had stagnated because of the blockade, even leading to famine in many places. When Trikoupisz disbanded his army, the Ottoman state notified the European states that the coast was clear and on June 8, 1886, the blockade was lifted. (Karal 1995: 112-115)

As is seen, Greece never gave up on her ambitions but kept biding her time and taking every opportunity. One such opportunity arose when Greece organized Filiki Eteria or Society of Friends, with an aim to add places like Crete, Epirus, and Macedonia to its territory. To complete its goals, the society employed such methods as establishing other “friends of Greece” societies in Europe. Thus, the efforts of this society, following 1894, began to change public opinion in Europe in favor of Greece, and adventurous Europeans started to display sympathy for Greece in various ways. In fact, 100 members of the English parliament sent a message to the society in Athens, stating that England would support Greece against the Ottoman Empire. In the meantime, a society formed in Athens that comprised of Cretans began cooperating with Filiki Eteria towards the annexation of Crete. As all these events transpired, the people of Crete, reckoning on the promises of foreign support and aid, revolted once more. The people of Greece were also desirous of their government invading Crete by means of force.

Knowing that such an act would provoke a war between the Ottoman Empire and Greece, European states proposed that the Ottomans grant Crete new rights of autonomy. Although the Europeans sent warships to the island on February 3, 1897, and tried to stop Greece from seizing Crete, the Greek government dispatched a fleet carrying its army of several battalions for the island’s invasion and conducted a landing under Captain Vassos, thereby declaring the island’s annexation to Greece. But the European States would not accept this fait accompli, exacting that the Greek forces leave Crete. The Greek government subsequently turned its attention to the Balkans and beginning from April 9, the Militia, organized by Filiki Eteria, began to attack Ottomans located in Macedonia and along the
border of Thessaly.
The Ottoman ruler at the time, Abdul Hamid II, was against war. However, his failure to reciprocate the attacks of Greece on Crete, Macedonia, and Epirus would further discredit his already damaged reputation. As a result, the emperor ended up declaring war against Greece on April 17, 1897. The Ottoman public also wanted war at any cost against the violation of state honor and dignity. A number of European states would also choose to stand on the sidelines for the sake of their interests. In accordance with their interests, Bulgaria and Serbia would opt for remaining neutral towards Greece's conduct in Macedonia, while, on the other hand, taking objection to its expansion into territory acknowledged to be under Austria's sphere of influence. Germany would take up the role played in the past by England and France, defending the principle of Ottoman territorial integrity. England and France did not want to see a great Greek state established just yet. Finally, when it comes to Russia, it could not afford to help Greece for fear of injuring its relations with Germany and Austria. All of this created a favorable political climate and, as a result, the government saw fit to declare war on the Greeks.

The Greco-Turkish War of 1897 took place in regions of Thessaly and Epirus and on the seas. The Ottoman forces consisted of 192 battalions under Edhem Pasha's command and 350 cannons. Moreover, the Ottoman army was organized by the German officers of General Von der Goltz. The Greek army consisted of approximately 40,000 men under Constantine's command. Initially, the Greek army was excited and in high spirits as well as keener on guerilla warfare across rough terrain than proper combat. Despite having the superior navy, Greece did not have the might to occupy the islands that we owned. As a result, the war was mainly fought in Thessaly and Epirus. (Karal 1995: 115-117)

Another reason why Thessaly and Epirus were the main stage of the war was the suitable geographic features of the region, in that it was divided into Thessalia and Epirus by the Pindus mountains. Furthermore, the Ottomans fought according to Goltz Pasha's battle plan, which he designed in 1886. (Ölmez 2009: 81)

The plan was to move from the Thessaly region towards Athens, and finally conclude with the capture of Athens. The region of Epirus would be a battlefront of secondary status. Moreover, in order to avoid the intervention of Western states, the plan was to achieve an outcome in a short amount of time.

Whether out of cowardice or military incompetence, the Greek fleet was incapable of exploiting the Ottoman fleet's shortcomings in naval warfare. The success they were unable to achieve on land evaded them on the seas as well.

The Greek fleet was more powerful than the Ottoman one. In fact, the Greeks entered this war primarily because of the might and size of their fleet at the time.

Throughout the war, their fleet accomplished nothing more notable than attacking some defenseless ports and places, excluding Preveza, and it failed to take advantage of the Ottoman fleet's shortcomings as well. So it continued until the signing of the peace treaty. The Greek's lethargy on the seas left the fate of the war in the hands of the Greek land forces. But because they received no aid from their navy and suffered repeated defeats at the hand of Ottoman land forces, Greece had become destined to lose. (Hülagü, 2002: 830)

The situation was different in the land forces. The opposing sides were greatly unequal. The Greeks were anticipated to vex the Ottomans in mountainous regions, but within three short weeks of successive Ottoman victories, the war came to an end.

The Ottoman Empire and Abdul Hamid II rose in popularity with the war's triumphant conclusion, while the weakness of the Greek army revealed. In contrast, King George II of Greece fell in popularity. When war reparations were added on top of the precarious financial standing that came with their defeat, the Greek economy was in dire
strait. But in spite of all this, Greeks remained faithful to the Megali Idea and continued to toil for the annexation of Crete, which was under occupation from great states. (Karal 1995: 117-118)

The Greek and Rûm duo harbored the same ambitions for the Island of Crete. After the island was rented to England in 1878, the Rûm who had been subjects of the Ottoman Empire for centuries, intensively participated in the Enosis campaigns. Rûm Cypriots still ignore the presence of Turkish Cypriots on the island and continue to practice the same ideology. Through the Treaty of Berlin signed at the conclusion of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78, Serbians also gained independence and in 1882, they announced the Kingdom of Serbia. Serbians were the first nation to revolt against the Ottomans and precipitate independence movements. They lit the spark, so to speak. The rebellion of the Serbians who revolted against the Ottoman Janissaries in 1804, would later become a national infatuation and spread out further, with support from the European States and Russia, and under the influence of Pan-Slavism movements. (Savrun 2016: 12) Slav nationalism began with Serbian and Montenegrin revolutions and ended with Bulgarian independence. (Ortaylı 2005: s.73-75) Serbian historian Milan St. Protiti remarks that two million people migrated during the Serbian-Ottoman War of 1876-1878 and characterizes this as the biggest migration period in the 19th century. (Özkan 2016: 26) After the Treaty of Berlin, signed in 1878, the English ambassador in Belgrade, Gould, states in his report on the demeanor of the Serbians, that they had seized all the pack and farm animals, tools, and all the produce and seeds in the fields and storehouses, shops, and houses of the Muslims living in Niš, Pirot, Leskovac, Ivrova, Prokuplje, Kuršumlija, and Akpalanka. The Leskovac immigrants who petitioned De Ring, the French delegate in the East Rumelia European Commission, had also stated that the Serbians had driven them from their land and vandalized all of their property, seizing whatever remained. As a result, the Serbians exiled Muslims through various acts of intimidation. The banishment of Muslims from areas occupied by Serbians continued over the following years. In the report that consul general of Serbia in Thessalonica, P. M. Karastoyanoviç, sent to the Serbian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on May 7, 1887, it was stated that Turks who had been forced out of Vrenja and Serbia's other towns, were now settled in Presevo. But Muslims found no reprieve here either. Neither the pedestrian Muslims nor the ones who stayed indoors were safe. Those working in the fields were under threat as well. The motive behind all of this was to tire the Muslims out, so as to force them into migration, and to showcase the Ottoman Empire's incompetence. Through the Treaty of Berlin, signed at the end of the 1877-1878 Russo-Turkish War, Bulgaria also gained its independence and then united the Eastern Rumelia Province to its territory in 1885. After the Second Constitutional Era, it declared its independence on October 5, 1908. Bulgaria's gaining autonomy was the most glaring indicator that the Balkans were slipping out of the Ottomans' grasp. (Aydınl 1999: 47) In the aftermath of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78, Bulgarians began to carry out their agenda of "exile" and "extermination" against Turks on their own, whereas, in the past, Russia had worked with them. Supervised and endorsed by the Russians and Europe, the Bulgarians unabatingly pursued their agenda of exterminating Turks, until the Balkan Wars. The "genocide", "exile", and "oppression" exercised over Turks living in Bulgaria were the product of the Bulgarian administration's Slavism agenda. Bulgarian guerillas and committees organized raids on Turkish villages and practiced various methods of torture. Bulgarian guerillas imprisoned Muslim men, raped the women, and sacked and pillaged their homes. Some Turks were forced to convert, while worshippers in mosques were dragged out to be tortured and reviled. Others were burned, maimed, drowned, or shot to death by Bulgarian guerillas. The Turks who had endured the cruelty of Bulgarian guerillas had no
one to file complaints to. The entire world seemed content with turning a blind eye to the plight of the Turks. (Köse 2006: 246-249)

All of this torment and oppression was meant to scare away the Turks and force them to migrate. Hence, from the first year of Bulgaria’s independence, Turks began to migrate, and these migrations continued rapidly until the Balkan Wars.²

With the signing of the Treaty of Berlin on July 13, 1878, Montenegro declared its independence, just as Serbia did. Thus, having been subject to the Ottomans since 1479, Montenegro gained independence after the 1877-78 Russo-Turkish War. The Muslim folk of Montenegro began to face numerous problems once the principality gained independence and Prince Nikola moved forward with his agenda. Through this agenda of subjecting Muslims to religious, national, and economic oppression, Nikola compelled many of them to move out of Montenegro. In a nutshell, the problems and migrations that began with Montenegro gaining independence continued from the year 1878 to the final year of the Balkan Wars, 1913.

The Muslim population presented a major obstacle to the national state Nikola wanted to create. Nikola had two options for removing the encumbering Muslims: Assimilate them or force them to migrate. Nikola tried to achieve his goal by doing both of these between 1878 and 1913. Education, nationality and religious issues were among the problems most commonly faced by Muslims in Montenegro after 1878. It will also be befitting to talk about the conflicts between Muslims and Christians who lived in Montenegro after 1878. The Montenegrin government’s distribution of arms and ammunition to Berean Christians and its incitement of rebellion against Muslims can be given as examples. Another place where conflicts between Christians and Muslims took place was Kolasin. An incident of burglary was used as an excuse for these skirmishes which happened in June of 1905. Up to 30 or 40 Muslim villages were burned down. What’s more, Christian Montenegrins laid hold of the animals that belonged to Muslims. (Temizer 2013; Özdem 2012)

The slaughter campaigns led by Montenegrins against Muslims continued before and during the Balkan Wars. Montenegrins burned down a large number of Muslim villages and killed many of the Muslims they captured. These massacres undoubtedly incentivized a significant number of Muslims to migrate. (Halaçoğlu 1994)

From the Russo-Turkish War, in which such practices first began, until the Balkan Wars, Ottoman-Turkish intellectuals were unable to make themselves be heard, and they could not use propaganda factors by forming a serious public opinion. This situation could also be summarized by the quarrels of tyranny and constitution that the Ottoman Empire was caught up in. While expressing in his letters the great sorrows he experienced during the Russo-Turkish War, Namık Kemal had been unable to publish his works and write his thoughts in the newspapers, because he had been prohibited publication. (Tansel 2013: XVII, XXV) Namık Kemal, who refers to the turmoil and squabbling within the Ottoman Empire in his letter to Rifat Bey of Menemen, condemns this turmoil and quotes this verse from Deli Hikmet (Crazy Hikmet) which quite nicely relates our lot:

We assassinated our homeland
And defamed its glory
We’ve damned our souls collectively
We are such shameless dogs.
(Tansel 2013: XVIII)

During the Balkan Wars, war literature was unable to transcend dry poetry on heroism, some diaries, and mementos. No great literary opuses relating these tragedies to the world were published. (Duman 1991)

² For an important study on the Turks who migrated from Bulgaria, see H. Yıldırım Ağanoğlu, Osmanlı’dan Cumhuriyet’e Balkanların Mâkus Tahtı Göç, Kum Saati, Istanbul, 2001.
Press Activities of the Young Turks and Their Impact in the Balkans: In the second half of the 19th century, the Young Turks were of a mind to establish a constitution-based system within the Ottoman Government and to enter a free election with the declaration of the Ottoman constitution. They aimed to surrender the future of the country to the new parliament they would form and to imitate the West. The common name of Ottoman intellectuals, “Young Turks”, was first used in a petition published by Mustafa Fazıl Paşa and, later on, adopted by Namık Kemal and Ali Suavi as the equivalent of New Ottomans. This name was also used for the community during the First and Second Constitutional Eras. The Young Turks movement, coming to fruition at the final stage of the Ottoman Empire, left its mark in Ottoman-Turkish history as a social-political community, influential between 1890-1918. (Burak 2003: 291)

Though the activities of the Young Turks still have not been fully illuminated, hundreds of works have been penned down about this movement-community. Plenty of researchers and academicians still conduct comprehensive studies on the topic and debate it.

Dispersing all over Europe because of Sultan Abdul Hamid II's tyrannical regime, the Young Turks published newspapers and magazines in prominent European cities such as Paris, London, and Geneva, and also in Cyprus3, Egypt, and Balkan lands. Chief of these was Macedonia, known as the headquarters of the Young Turks. The primary target of Young Turks' publications was undoubtedly Sultan Abdul Hamid II. In newspapers they published in various parts of Europe and places like Egypt and Cyprus, they wrote extensively about political developments taking place in the Balkans and the Ottoman Empire's future. It can also be said that they were in close contact with each other. The writings and poems published by Ahmed Tevfik Efendi in his Cyprus newspapers, Kokonoz, Akbaba and Mir’ât- Zaman are a vivid example of this. Being an adversary to Abdul Hamid II, in Ahmed Tevfik Efendi's writings and poems, events such as the Cretan Revolution and, by extension, the Greco-Turkish (Thessaly) War, developments in Bulgaria, the Macedonia problem, and events in Bosnia and Herzegovina were thoroughly discussed. This is an indicator of how closely interested the Young Turks were with events in the Balkans.

The piece from Ahmed Tevfik Efendi's Akbaba newspaper criticizing the sultan and titled “Zat-ı Şahaneye Açîk Arıza” is remarkable. Here, Tevfik Efendi virtually airs his grievances to the sultan and speaks of how he deviates to tyranny through acts of persecution and oppression, despite the people’s desire for equity, justice, liberty, and freedom of press; points out the lack of progression in land and sea expansion; and tells of Thessaly’s reinstatement. (Tevfik 1898: 77-78)

Ahmed Tevfik Efendi does not refrain from criticizing Western states and Greece, censuring their attempts at parceling Ottoman lands between themselves in a satirical tone. Through the interpretation of images appearing in the Pagallu newspaper, each European state's agenda and the territories that they covet are discussed. Tevfik Efendi writes that there are depictions of Italy embracing Germany, Germany arm in arm with Austria, Austria holding Greece, Greece catching Crete, Bulgaria hugging Macedonia, Russia putting its arms around other parties, France providing aid, and so on. Furthermore, he mentions that Greece wants to capture Crete, Bulgaria wants Macedonia, and Russia wants Turkey.

- You see, sir, what the newspaper means to

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3 Newspapers Kokonoz, Akbaba and Mir’ât-ı Zaman, published by Ahmed Tevfik Efendi, who was recognized on the island of Cyprus as a strong Young Turk, were in opposition to Sultan Abdul Hamid II. Tevfik Efendi harshly criticized Sultan Abdul Hamid II in the writings and poems he published, and, consequently, his satirical newspapers Kokonoz and Akbaba were banned in Ottoman lands. The newspapers were later shut down. After two years, Ahmed Tevfik Efendi went back to publishing such writings and poems in his political newspaper, Mir’ât-ı Zaman. For an important study on this subject, see: (Onuş 2017).
say is Greece wants to capture Crete, Bulgaria wants Macedonia, and Russia wants Turkey. (...)  
- What about the dogs? 
- Is it not known that: 'If the prayers of dogs were heard, bones would rain from the sky.'?" (Tevfik 1898)

The press activities of the Young Turks in Bulgaria were also considerably effective. Newspapers published in Plovdiv such as Âfâk-ı Şarkiyeden Tulu Eden Malûmat, Altın Kalem, Bedreka-i Selâmet, Emnîyet, Gayret, Hâkîmîyet, Hilâl, Muvazenene, Rumeli, Şahîd ül-Hakîk can be listed. Another important newspaper that shows up is the Young Turk newspaper published in Plovdiv—Balkan. Its author is Ethem Rûhi Bey.

Who is Ethem Rûhi?

Ethem Rûhi was born in 1873, in the Atikali neighborhood of Istanbul. His life is full of adventure. A student of Military Medical School, Ethem Rûhi also studied law. Establishing a relationship with the Committee of Union and Progress, he became a member of said committee in 1895, through the agency of Dârü'l-aceze (Old people’s home) doctor, Emin Bey of Thessaloniki. Later, in the year 1897, Ethem Rûhi was arrested and exiled to Tripolitania. Being an active person, Ethem Rûhi did not remain idle in Tripolitania either and released a newspaper named Merhale. Ethem Rûhi maintained good relations with the Governor of Tripolitania, Marshal Rexhep Pasha. In fact, with his help, Ethem Rûhi was able to escape to London. The martial law policy applied by Abdul Hamid the Second, aiming to preserve the country's integrity, caused many dissident intellectuals to flee the Empire and take sanctuary in the West. Ethem Rûhi also entered the ranks of these intellectuals who gathered in Western countries and labored to have their ideas heard. In 1904, in Geneva, Dr. Abdullah Cevdet, Ethem Rûhi, and Kamil of Varna created the Committee of Union and Reform with themselves at the helm. Rûhi actively participated in the activities of the Committee. He was typesetter and instigator at the Osmanlı newspaper which was released with the financial support of Said Halim Pasha, a statesman and thinker who was an admirer of the unionists in London. He left for Paris and settled there because of unfortunate events that led to the newspaper's abolition.

Working for a brief time in a pharmacy in Paris, Ethem Rûhi did not stay there for too long and departed for Egypt. In Egypt, he worked as Said Halim Pasha's English interpreter. Towards the end of 1904, he arrived in Bulgaria. After arriving in Bulgaria, he settled in Plovdiv, which was deemed the Turkish cultural center at the time, and conformed to the city's cultural life. Once in Bulgaria, Rûhi began to practice journalism, which would later become his profession, and for around a year, published the newspaper named Rumeli Telgrafları, in newsletter fashion. In 1906, Rûhi published the Rumeli newspaper, and from 1907 on, the Balkan newspaper. In short, with the newspapers he published in Bulgaria, Ethem Rûhi became the dauntless advocate of Turkish people.

The Balkan was printed daily, except on Mondays and Fridays, for more than 10 years, with a few interruptions. It was the longest-running Turkish newspaper in the Balkans prior to 1944. The newspaper was issued with a circulation of 1600 copies, a large sum at the time. We can better understand the enormity of this sum if we consider the fact that, in those days, over half of the population was illiterate. The Balkan newspaper mainly dealt with the state of Bulgarian Turkish folk, striving to protect their national rights and to awaken the people. He harshly rebuked the violation of these rights in some situations and, as a result, cases were opened both against the newspaper and against Ethem Rûhi's person. Without hesitation, Ethem Rûhi published installments of Zagora mufti Hüseyin Râci Efendi's famous memoir of the Russo-Turkish War's heart-rendering ordeals titled “Tarihçe-i Vak'a-i Zağra”, even before it got published in book form. By doing so, he undoubtedly made some circles uncomfortable.

The Balkan newspaper was read and valued as a source on Bulgaria Turks not just in Bulgaria
but also in other Balkan countries and Ottoman lands too. An indicator of this is that the newspaper Sırat-i Müstakîm, published in Turkey and very much in demand, would quote the Balkan in its publication. The Balkan newspaper was issued until the final days of the year 1920 and it did a great deal of service for the Bulgaria Turks.

In 1911, Ethem Rûhi was arrested for his active journalism and incarcerated for 3 years. Though he was released after a very brief sentence, Rûhi faced arrest once more when the Balkan Wars began, and he was locked up in Plovdiv's Taşkışla prison for 9 months.

Moving to Sofia as a Komotini member of parliament in 1914, Ethem Rûhi began to publish the Balkan newspaper again. During his years in parliament, Ethem Rûhi would frequently bring up the concerns of the Muslim people in Parliament, especially educational issues, and request solutions. Besides being a member of parliament and the owner and writer of the Balkan newspaper, Ethem Rûhi published the Eyyâm newspaper and the Resimli Balkan magazine and wrote in Çiftçi Bilgisi, the Ahâli newspapers published by Mehmed Behçet (Perim), and Türk Muallimler Mecmuasi, under his own name or peculiar pen names. In Çiftçi Bilgisi, the author used the pseudonym Adnan.

Because of World War I's tragic outcome, Ethem Rûhi got arrested once more, along with some rulers. He was released in 1919, after publishing an affidavit in the Balkan newspaper about how he had cut all ties with Radoslavov's party. At the time of the Farmer Party's accession, Ethem Rûhi took up the duty of General Inspector of Bulgaria Turk Schools for a short time. Within this brief period, Rûhi contributed to many good services, establishing a commission and preparing a program for the Ottoman School of Islam (Mekâtib-i İslamiye). Famous Turkish teachers Osman Nuri (Peremeci), Süleyman Sirrî (Tokay), and Hasip Safvetî (Aytuna) joined this commission. But when he grew estranged from the Minister of Education Omarchevski, Ethem Rûhi was dismissed from duty.

Shortly after his arrival in Bulgaria, Ethem Rûhi married a woman from the lineage of Emin Paşa of Zagora. According to Osman Keskinolu, who made great contributions to the Islamic-Turkish culture of Bulgaria, his father-in-law was Hafiz Şükrü Efendi, Mufti of Plovdiv.

In 1921, Ethem Rûhi returned to the motherland and settled in Istanbul. From Istanbul, he would send letters of longing to Bulgaria Turks. These letters were serially published in the Delorman newspaper, with the name "Istanbul Letters". After arriving in Turkey, Ethem Rûhi worked as an instigator in the İleri newspaper and later began to practice law. Together with the famous journalist Mahmut Necmettin Delorman, who was forced to migrate from Bulgaria to Turkey in 1946 and with a couple of other people, he founded the Turkey Worker and Farmer Party. While the party was left-leaning, it can be gathered from the party plan Ideolocya that it aimed for an agenda far from socialist and communist ideas.

Devoting his life to the preservation of rights, Ethem Rûhi died on July 13, 1949, in Boğaziçi, Sarıyer. Due to his poverty, his funeral was held only by favor of the municipality.

Ethem Rûhi left a legacy of hundreds of articles in newspapers and magazines. Along with this, some of his books were published as well. Here are the names of some of the books that we could identify.

1. Şehid Evlâtları, Plovdiv 1913. A novel he wrote while in Plovdiv prison, concerning the Balkan war.
2. İslamiyet Yaraları, Plovdiv 1913. A harsh response to the writings of the Plovdiv rüşdiye headmaster Halil Zeki in the Tunca newspaper.
3. Rüyâ, Sofia 1919.5

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4 Mir'ât-i Zaman, a Young Turk newspaper issued in Cyprus would also cite news from the Balkan.

Now we may introduce the cautionary/propagandistic/informative brochure titled Bulgaristan’da Osmanlı’ın Âh ü Figâni, which was published in 1906 as an exceptional example aimed at enlightening the Turkish nation before the Balkan Wars.

The writer of this fourteen-page propaganda brochure titled Bulgaristan’da Osmanlı’ın Âh ü Figâni is Edhem. The owner and publisher is Huseyin Sami. The place where the brochure was issued is not mentioned. This brochure is in the format of a mutual conversation (discourse) between a Bulgarian prosecutor and a Turkish journalist who advocated the rights of Turkish people in Bulgaria, in the articles he wrote for the Balkan. In this context, it’s not wrong to say that as much as the work is a historical document, it also has a literary aspect. The Bulgarian prosecutor is criticizing the Turkish journalist because of his articles in the Balkan newspaper. This brochure aimed at laying bare the various ways Turks had been persecuted in Bulgaria, prior to the Balkan Wars. It has been emphasized that Turks had even been in danger of losing their freedom of press. This is how the author mentions that the Balkan newspaper advocates the rights of Turkish peoples living in Bulgaria:

"I strongly oppose your accusation that there was any violation in my statement. The articles of the Balkan are not in violation of the law; on the contrary, it defends the law by defending the rights of six hundred thousand Muslims whose freedom and citizen rights are infringed, speaks for the law, and seeks justice based on the law."

(Rühî 1906: 4)

Firstly, the title of this brochure “Bulgaristan’da Osmanlı’ın Âh ü Figâni” is meaningful in that it serves as a propaganda tool. In his work titled A Criticism of Turkish Culture, Umay Türkeş Günay says, “If the world emanating from beyond good and evil is not properly comprehended and if organization and knowledge are not approached accordingly, sooner or later decadence will be inevitable. Despite all their achievements, Selim the Grim and Suleiman the Magnificent had been heedless of the portents of great transformations unfolding across the world.” Based on Türkeş’s implied words, before the Balkan Wars, Turkish leaders and intellectuals had failed to fight back against anti-Turkish propaganda in the West, move towards structuring and development, and shaping public opinion through deliberate propaganda. This brochure aimed to awaken and enlighten the people to some extent, at a time when the press and the means and opportunities of communication were limited. Thus, we find meaning in the title of this brochure that aims at awakening Turkish people, “Bulgaristan’da Osmanlı’ın Âh ü Figâni”, and the words of the author seem to verify our sentiment:

"The evidence is clear. There are not one, not one hundred, not five hundred, but thousands of proofs. If only one percent of the sad incidents published within these past five months (.....?) and each written under the signature and confirmation of the population, had happened in Turkey or Macedonia, agencies of Sophia would fill all of Europe with cries of ‘Turkish Atrocities’ and ‘Turkish Barbarism’. “(Rühî 1906: 5)

In his discussion with the prosecutor, the Turkish journalist touches on the atrocities committed against Turk-Islam affiliates and criticizes Bulgarian authorities.

“Tell me, Mr. Prosecutor, tell me. Which of these tragic incidents under the label of ‘atrocities’ can you disprove, and which one are you capable of refuting? Did I conjure all of these verbal abuses, these insults against religion, against ummah, Muslim places of worship, our mosques, our graves, our funerals; or were they perpetrated by the free folk of free Bulgaria? But you will tell me that every nation has decent folk and indecent folk...which is true. But what of the government’s duty? So many indecencies took place. I wonder which one of them the government punished with the sword of justice as a warning for others? Who among those that reviled the religion, faith, and rites of Muslims have you rightfully punished in the name of humanity and neighborliness?”

(Rühî 1906: 6)

In this brochure, the Bulgarian prosecutor
criticizes the Turkish journalist for his writings. He reminds him that he wrote about the desecration of graves and the absence of Constitution, and points out that such writings could potentially create tension between Ottomans and Bulgarians.

In response, the Turkish journalist criticizes the prosecutor back, saying that it's very funny how even such news disturbs them. Additionally, the author emphasizes that the Balkan newspaper does not belong to Ottomans but to the Muslims living in Bulgaria and makes a covert allusion to the Ottoman Empire.

"Secondly, you tell me, but would it not be unseemly before the court to accuse an Islamic newspaper such as the Balkan of causing enmity and harm between Turkey and Bulgaria? The Balkan is not the newspaper of the Ottoman Empire, but the Muslims living in Bulgaria. Do you believe that the Ottoman Empire will arrange and conduct its policies according to some specific statements of the Balkan newspaper and similar press?" (Rûhi 1906: 12-13)

This is how the author criticizes the Bulgarian newspapers that pushed anti-Turkish propaganda and infringed on the rights of Turks:

"If that is your opinion, who can deny that your Sophia newspapers that play with the pride of Turks even before the Balkan newspaper deserve a greater accusation of enmity and crime?" (Rûhi 1906: 13)

**Conclusion**

Bulgaristan'daki Osmanlılar'ın Âh ü Figâni was published in 1906, before the Balkan Wars. Its aim was to warn and inform the Turkish people about the various injustices perpetrated against Turks in Bulgaria. In the Turkish War of Independence, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk gathered Turkish intellectuals around him and their conduct was more mindful compared to past wars. Together with the speeches given from all corners of the homeland, the writings and poetry in the newspapers, the published works vitalized the nation's resistance. Before and during the Balkan Wars and World War I, the inability of Turkish intellectuals to shape public opinion and push propaganda was one of the major factors in the loss of these big wars and the empire's disintegration. When we look at the tragedies experienced before the Balkan Wars, we see how important and valuable these types of exceptional books and brochures are, within the context of propaganda.

**References**

5. Rûhi, Ethem (1906). Bulgaristan’daki Osmanlıların Âh ü Figâni. Sahip ve Neşri Hüseyin Sami, y.y.y.

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6 In the Principality of Bulgaria, most of the Turkish newspapers published between 1878-1908 were Young Turk publications. Fleeing from the tyranny of Abdul Hamid II and taking refuge in Bulgaria, the Young Turks published around 25-30 Turkish newspapers and magazines and criticized Sultan Abdul Hamid II for his tyrannical regime. Ahali, Balkan, Doğru Yol, Ferhad, Gayret, Resimsiz Emniet, Sada-i Millet are among these. See Türkiye Dışındaki Türk Edebiyatları Antolojisi 8 Bulgaristan Türk Edebiyatı, T.C Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, Yay.Haz. Hayriye Süleymanoğlu Yenisoy, Ankara, 1997, p.30.


Appendix 1

Bulgariştan’daki Osmanlılar’ın Âh ü Figâni

-The Prosecutor: It’s one thing to seek justice for a nation and another to violate a country’s law. In your entire statement, you have crossed the line of violating a country's laws. What is your purpose in doing so?

-Me: Pardon me but your question has a peculiar fallacy. I am neither bandit nor revolutionary. I am a journalist who recognizes the law of the land and speaks truth within its lawful limits. If seeking justice is in violation of the law and if your law makes such an assertion, pray enlighten us.

I strongly oppose your accusation that there was any violation in my statement. The articles of the Balkan are not in violation of the law, on the contrary; it defends the law by defending the rights of six hundred thousand Muslims whose freedom and citizen rights are infringed, speaks for the law, and seeks justice based on the law. If this lawful, this courageous endeavor draws attention because it is done by a Muslim Turkish journalist, then that is different.

-The Prosecutor: This is not about Turks, Bulgarians, or Rûm. Bulgaria is free. Where in France, England, Europe can you find such freedom as is yours in Bulgaria?

-Me: I implore you, Mr. Prosecutor, do not bring up France and England for I have lived in the exquisite homeland of those nations. I have fully comprehended their gratuitous freedom and civilization. We Eastern nations need more time to appreciate their freedom and justice, and the spirit of their social laws.

Indeed, we cannot say that there is no freedom in this country; but it is exclusive to Bulgarians. For all people besides Bulgarians, the full force of the law is in word only. When it comes to execution, things get complicated.

-The Prosecutor: How can you prove this?

-Me: The evidence is clear. There are not one, not one hundred, not five hundred, but thousands of proofs. If only one percent of the sad incidents published within these past five months (......?) and each written under the signature and confirmation of the population, had happened in Turkey or Macedonia, the agencies of Sophia would fill all of Europe with cries of “Turkish Atrocities, Turkish Barbarism”. Because acts of cruelty and crimes were committed against Muslims, a helpless people, even a Muslim newspaper publication seeking justice and crying out with anguish draws attention, the newspaper's editor is unlawfully and unjustly accused of crime. Tell me, Mr. Prosecutor, tell me. Which of these tragic incidents under the label of ‘atrocities’ can you disprove, and which one are you capable of refuting? Did I conjure all of these verbal abuses, these insults against religion, against ummah, Muslim places of worship, our mosques, our graves, our funerals; or were they perpetrated by the free folk of free Bulgaria? But you will tell me that every nation has decent folk and indecent folk...which is true. But what of the government's duty? So many indecencies took place. I wonder which one of them the government punished with the sword of justice as a warning for others? Who among those that reviled the religion, faith, and rites of Muslims have you rightfully punished in the name of humanity and neighborliness?

-The Prosecutor: Watch your words. In Bulgaria, the Government will never leave the rights of any citizen who appeals to the court unattended and unprotected. This has never happened and never will. Did the Government ever ignore anyone's complaint? Can you show at least one example of anything that resembles an attack on Turks or Muslims?

-Me: Mr. Prosecutor! I will not search through millions of incidents and thousands of events that happened in the past. I can show you one clear example that is happening right before your eyes.
Is not the voice and tongue of every nation its press? Don't you read your newspapers widely circulated in Sophia and Bulgaria in general? Don't you read your newspapers that play with the honor and dignity of Turks and Muslims, binding our wives and sending them to Baghdad, and exiling us to Asia every minute of every day? Are these not attacks? Is the criticism of law-abiding Balkans injurious to Bulgaria or is it the savage attacks of those journalists? Just the other day “Tarudta Duma”, a democratic newspaper of the current government wrote so many bad things. They demeaned us as fruit sellers and Zeybeks.

Even if we ignore that, what can be said of Shangov's ceaseless humiliation of our religion, faith, nation, and everything we hold sacred?

-The Prosecutor: This is the concern of the Prosecutor of Sophia. Let's focus on ourselves.

-Me: Are the laws and obligations of each town Prosecutor different?

Are not all magistrates a single organ of justice?

Or are obligations different in Plovdiv and Sophia? Or does the law of justice allow each newspaper to commit indecencies by attacking and humiliating Turks and Muslims while turning a blind eye to Muslim newspapers demanding justice?

During this answer, the interpreter added to his words and the discussion immediately went off the rails.

-The Prosecutor: In your issue number 625, under the title "Is There No Peace Even For The Dead?", beneath the letter written from New Zagora, there is an anecdote related to the Balkan newspaper. Did you write this anecdote?

-Me: Yes, I wrote that.

-The Prosecutor: In this letter from New Zagora, it is said that the local government occupied and sold a Muslim cemetery without their consent. And you got very angry over this and with much outrage, wrote, "Would someone explain to me how this is Constitutional, how this can be allowed? How is it lawful to grudge a Muslim village its cemetery, due to their minority status? These may be Bulgarian lands but isn't every nation's dwelling, property, and religion protected by law from attack?"

First of all, it is a violation on your part to accuse the Government, in this statement of yours, of occupying a Muslim cemetery in New Zagora. In the first place, you should have found proof that after the occupation of this cemetery by the local government, the Muslim community appealed directly to court and their case never went through a court of appeal, and then you should have voiced your opinion. Did this community appeal to court?

Secondly, by using such a cemetery as reason to cry, "What manner of law is this? There is no Constitution in Bulgaria!" you have committed another violation, another crime.

Thirdly, in dealing with such a suspicious affair and using hypocritical language with the potential to evoke enmity between Turkey and Bulgaria, you are committing a third crime.

-Me: That letter was written to our editorial room by the community of Karaca and Muradlı villages, subject to New Zagora. In the letter, those poor wretches say they appealed to the Government Office, which is called the village chancery, and demanded to know on whose authority their cemetery had been sold. They returned despondently from the hearing, where the reasoning they were given was that the Muslim population had declined. They say they appealed to a commissioner of the Ottoman Empire located in Sophia. This is certainly a circumstance. In that case, it is not my business to await the results of the court appeals and lawsuits of the same pitiful Islamic Community. And to leave the people's rights suppressed by waiting for news of a result from this fictitious court is also a crime in my opinion. According to the Law of the Freedom of Press, such an authoritative
action by the government gives me the right, as a Muslim journalist, to criticize and protest. To regard this right as a crime is the actual crime. If seeking such justice is considered a crime, a violation of the law, then even saying "I breathe the air of freedom," is a crime in this country.

In order to interpret the words "What manner of law is this, what manner of Constitution or freedom is this?" as a statement that there is no law in this country, you should either know as little Turkish as your interpreters at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or you have to have hidden intents and biased motives to conjure up such a crime.

The words "What manner of law is this?" or "What manner of Constitution is this?" were written to claim that the blow inflicted on the local and current law is unjust and especially to protect existing laws. That is what the sentence means; you cannot prove otherwise. For if you find someone fluent in Turkish and ask him, you will discover the truth and be ashamed. In that case, what you deem a violation of the law is a violation of many a Muslim journalist.

Secondly, you tell me, but would it not be unseemly before the court to accuse an Islamic newspaper such as the Balkan of causing enmity and harm between Turkey and Bulgaria? The Balkan is not the newspaper of the Ottoman Empire, but the Muslims living in Bulgaria. Do you believe that the Ottoman Empire will arrange and conduct its policies according to some specific statements of the Balkan newspaper and similar press? If that is your opinion, who can deny that your Sophia newspapers that play with the pride of Turks even before the Balkan newspaper deserve a greater accusation of enmity and crime? I do not come up with the incidents that I write about. The people cry out. They make me cry out for them as a journalist of the people; I consider it my duty to raise my voice as loud as I can. If you consider it your duty to preserve Turkish and Bulgarian friendship, do not raise your children with such sentiments starting (n...?) (with your publications?) from your elementary schools to high schools, (peers?) do not allow (incidents…………… government?), do not provide the Balkan newspaper with the means of poisoning the well so that you should be forced to look for a scapegoat for your errors and negligence!

Appendix 2

Figure 1: The cover of the brochure Bulgaristan’daki Osmanlılar’ın Âh ü Figâni, published in 1906.