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PROVINCIAL NEWSPAPERS AS A HISTORICAL
SOURCE: *BÜYÜK CİHAD* AND THE GREAT
STRUGGLE FOR THE MUSLIM TURKISH
NATION (1951–53)

The article argues that to move beyond the standard nationalist narrative of Turkish history, scholars must employ new sources such as the provincial newspaper. Through a study of a religious nationalist provincial newspaper—*Büyük Cihad* (The Great Struggle)—from the early 1950s, it is possible to appreciate the extent and importance of a vibrant public debate concerning secularism and the place of Islam in Turkish society immediately after World War II. This debate has gone almost completely unnoticed, yet it constitutes an important foundation for understanding the present prominence of political Islam in Turkish society. Central to this debate is the person of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk: ultimately it was criticism of Turkey's founding president rather than any real threat of "religious reaction" that prompted the government's decision to suppress religious publications in early 1953.