

Prelude to the 1908 Revolution: The Ottomans in Paris
October 14 - December 31, 2008

The 100th anniversary of the 1908 Young Turk Revolution is being celebrated throughout Turkey with a number of exhibitions and books. Most of these focus on events of that period and their effect on Ottoman politics. Wishing to adopt a different approach to the topic and examine the cultural and ideological context that laid the groundwork for the revolution, the Ottoman Bank Museum chose to have an exhibition that centered on the Ottomans living in exile in Paris and on the impact they would have in events that occurred later.



In this sense, the exhibition is entirely focused on Paris and attempts to display the significance that the city - considered the heart of civilization - had on 19th century mentalities. It thus highlights the intense symbolism of the city and the impact it had on a number of progressive-minded Ottomans who applied its principles of civilization to their own country. At the same time, it evokes the darker side of Paris and the fears it provoked as a city with a reputation for sin and decadence. Reports kept by the French police also shed light on how and where these people - most of whom had gone into voluntary exile - lived during their time in Paris. The exhibition reveals as well that the French press considered the 1908 revolution an outcome of the efforts of the Ottomans in Paris, who had struggled for years to overthrow Abdulhamit II.

The exhibition is complemented by a 45 min. long documentary by Frangois Georgeon entitled "The Paris of the Young Turks."