# *Yasak*/Banned:

# Political Cartoons from Late Ottoman and Republican Turkey

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# *Yasak*/Banned: Political Cartoons from Late Ottoman and Republican Turkey
# Duke University Libraries collections

The present catalogue documents the exhibition *Yasak*/Banned: Political Cartoons from Late Ottoman and Republican Turkey, on display October 30, 2017 – March 24, 2018, in the Mary Duke Biddle Room of the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library at Duke University. The exhibition showcased the complex history of the late Ottoman Empire up to the present Republic of Turkey through the lens of political cartoons and satirical journals.

Duke University Libraries contains some 160 cartoons and satires from around the globe and specifically for Ottoman and Turkish cartoons and satires approximately 40 titles. The collection begins with *Diyojen* (1870) and continues to the present, including such titles as *Akbaba*, *Cem*, *Kalem*, *Limon*, *Bayan Yanı*, *Gırgır*, and *Penguen,* to name a few. It has become one of the strongest and most diverse collections of its kind in North America, offering the researcher a plethora of opportunities to explore the historical, political, and social changes from the late Ottoman Empire to the contemporary Republic of Turkey. The collection continues to grow.

Beginning in 2010, Duke University Libraries began acquiring the collection of Osman Nuri Karabıyık. Mr. Karabıyık is a dedicated collector based in Izmir, Turkey, who had amassed a strong private collection of Ottoman and Turkish materials over some forty years. His collecting interests ranged greatly, from Ottoman political satire and cartoons to the history of medicine, the history of the modern Turkish language, the history of literature, and more.

In the summer of 2017, I was fortunate to visit with Mr. Karabıyık, who provided some details about his collection, now held at Duke. In 1928, as part of a larger reform movement enacted by the Turkish government, the Alphabet reform drastically altered the language of Turkey. The Ottoman language of the six-hundred-year-old empire was written in Arabic script. Alphabet reform supplanted this with the modern Turkish language written in Latin script. This had drastic effects on the Republic of Turkey's reading public, but more than this it also suggested to some that there was no need to maintain or keep Ottoman materials. Unfortunately, many people disposed of—or worse, burned—their Ottoman books and collections. However, from such tragedies are born opportunities. Mr. Karabıyık's father began acquiring books he could easily find and hid them in the attic of their home. When Mr. Karabıyık was a teenager, he began reading Ottoman and caught the desire to intensively collect. For the next forty-plus years, Mr. Karabıyık spent days and nights perusing *sahaflar* (second-hand book stores), mostly in Izmir but also in Ankara, Istanbul, and other cities. Mr. Karabıyık noted it is the language reform and its effects on these historical and cultural archives that prompted him to collect. We are deeply grateful to Mr. Karabıyık not only for spending most of his life collecting these materials but also for his willingness to let Duke University acquire them. Without Mr. Karabıyık, Duke's Ottoman and Turkish collection would be rather insignificant, and this exhibition would have been impossible. This catalogue is dedicated to him. I also wish to thank those at Duke who made it possible to acquire the collection: Deborah Jakubs, Bob Byrd, Christof Galli, Andy Armacost, Kristina Troost, Erdağ Göknar, Timur Kuran, Rachel Lundberg, Sarah Schmidt, Lauren Reno, Fouzia El Gargouri, Bill Verner, and many others. A special thank-you to Meg Brown for her patience and willingness to create new deadlines for each and every one that we missed.

Sean E. Swanick

Librarian for Middle East & Islamic Studies, Duke University

# *Yasak*/Banned: Political Cartoons from Late Ottoman and Republican Turkey
# An Overview

*Yasak*/Banned: Political Cartoons from Late Ottoman and Republican Turkey highlighted the diverse and profuse political cartoons in Ottoman and modern Turkish. The exhibition displayed cartoons spanning the earliest cartoon, *Diyojen* (1870) to recent publications of *Penguen* and *Bayan Yanı*. Over 100 years of Ottoman-Turkish cartoons demonstrate the diversity of artistic works from simple renditions of characters to grotesque.

The exhibition had three overarching themes: Political Satire, Gender and Historical Change. Gender dealt with the role in which women were portrayed and displayed; historical change illustrated the different epochs in recent Ottoman and Turkish history most prominently through an Abdülhamid - Erdoğan complex, and the resurgence of a form of Neo-Ottomanism; and political satire showcased select political issues that have affected Ottoman and Turkish culture and society in the past hundred or so years. Because of the breadth of the time period covered, we see a variety of tropes, innuendos, and dichotomies used to juxtapose current events with those of the past, or to mock aspects of society or government.

The themes weave through the generally recognized periods of End of Empire/ Constitutional periods: 1876-1922, the early Republic: 1923-1960, the Era of coups/Transition: 1961-1996 and the Erdoğan era: 1997-present. The transition from the Late Ottoman Empire to the present Republic of Turkey has witnessed dramatic changes that have affected every aspect of life from traditions, identity, language, history and, of course politics. In weaving between these changes, the exhibition also highlighted the diversity and popularity of Ottoman and Turkish cartoons.

The profusion of Turkish cartoons and satires provides the onlooker with highly visual access to Turkey's past 100 years or so. The artists of these works, despite censorship and threats from government officials to be sued, or worse; educated the public alike through short, compelling narratives and remarkable illustrations of prominent figures, characters and social changes.

This diversity of themes, subjects and objects provided the exhibition with a myriad of dimensions upon which the onlooker could interpret particular episodes or subjects. The title, *Yasak*/Banned invokes the nature of political cartoons and satires. These forms of expression elicit strong opinions, they provoke by animating the absurd, the ridiculous and they challenge perceived perceptions of events. Because cartoons and satires are so visual, they may be interpreted in a multitude of ways--which can be a boon or detractor alike.

A special thanks to our sponsors, in no particular order: Duke University Libraries, Josiah Charles Trent Memorial Foundation, E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation, and the Duke Middle East Studies Center.

## Curators

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## Political Satire: *Dün ve Bugün;* Issues of Freedom and Censorship

Political cartoons and satirical journals offer a contextualized and highly visual understanding of events that have shaped history. This works particularly well for the literate and illiterate in a given society. A fine example of this interplay from the exhibition is in the journal *Penguen* (30 August 2012), which depicts Bülent Arınç, the former Deputy Prime Minister, at a press conference with the following dialogue:

*Penguen*, 2012.

> Arınç: There is enough press freedom in Turkey.
> Journalist: What do you mean enough?
> Arınç: There was a bit, your friend used it. Now shut up!

The short give-and-take provides enough written and visual information to conjure this recent episode in censorship and freedom of the press, an issue that has dogged every government since time immemorial. Political cartoons are meant to get a reaction out of the reader, one that will provoke a strong emotion or feeling. The appeal of the genre lies in its ability to capture and persuade readers, to ambiguously dramatize events, and to employ layered meanings, thus providing space to criticize and challenge dominant narratives.

Cartoons have a distinct ability to walk the thin line of humor and criticism, striving to obfuscate government criticism through complex innuendos. Cartoonists derive pleasure from bringing to the fore subtle and not-so-subtle critiques of current events, from outlandish ideas of how women ought to behave to questionable political policies and even wars. Cartoonists do their work well aware of the potential consequences. Indeed, from the earliest nineteenth-century cartoon editor represented in this exhibit, Teodor Kasap (*Diyojen*), to current cartoonist Dogan Güzel (*Özgür Gündem*), cartoonists have been arrested, exiled, and sued by Ottoman and Turkish governments.

The Ottoman Empire existed for six hundred years before its demise in 1918. In its place emerged the modern Republic of Turkey, formally founded in 1923. The drastic changes that have taken place are plentiful and include a new constitution, several coup d'états, political upheaval and war in the region and the world, cultural changes from a defined Muslim state to a *laic* (secular) state, efforts at Europeanization and modernization, and language reform, to name a few. The political cartoons and satires shown here offer insights and popular interpretations of the changes that have shaped the end of empire to the present Republic of Turkey.

The late-nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire gave rise to dramatic changes, from the explosion of print materials to new notions of freedom and political dissidence. On the political front, resistance to a number of significant reforms enacted by the Sultan took many forms. A new censorship law known as *Matbaa Nizamnamesi*, inspired by French laws, was enacted in 1857, regulating the printing and publishing of materials. The law was concerned with protecting the state from harmful publications and criticisms. The notion of protecting the state is a theme that continues to the present. However, despite the government's overarching fears and attempts at censorship, Turkish cartoons and satires exploded. In the early twentieth century, for example, because of the reading public's demand for newspapers, books, satires and cartoons, there was a paper shortage, leading printers to use packaging paper.[1]

1 Efrat E. Aviv, "Cartoons in Turkey – From Abdülhamid to Erdoğan" *Middle Eastern Studies* 49, no. 2 (2013): 224.

*Karagöz*, 1911.

Perhaps the most influential characters in the history of cartoons and satires during this period are the shadow puppets Karagöz and Hacivat. These two characters, well known to the general public, may be seen as populist interpreters of current events. Beginning in 1908, the journal *Karagöz* used the character of the same name "either as a passive narrator or an active participant in its cartoons."[2] Karagöz and Hacivat were able to elide government censorship as they "became spokespersons for the Ottoman press... since the ambiguity of language enabled journalists to challenge and ridicule authority." Indeed, Karagöz and Hacivat "symbolize a cultural tradition of storytelling that is considered indigenously 'Turkish' rather than Ottoman or Islamic."[3] Thus, the two characters were able to navigate the different social and cultural strata and be enthusiastically read or viewed by the general Turkish population. Other satires such as *Kalem*, *Akbaba*, and *Cem* strove to educate the public on different ideas, as Asli Tunç noted: "The range of themes of the Ottoman varied from a critique of European imperialism and urban problems, to social issues, while the dominant theme always remained the imperialist intervention."[4]

2 Yasemin Gencer, "Pushing Out Islam: Cartoons of the Reform Period in Turkey (1923-1928)" in Visual culture in the modern Middle East: rhetoric of the image, ed. Christiane Gruber and Sune Haugbolle Bloomington : Indiana University Press, 2013, 103.

3 Ibid

4 Asli Tunc, Pushing the Limits of Tolerance: Functions of Political Cartoonists in the Democratization Process: The Case of Turkey" *Gazette: The International Journal for Communication Studies* 64, no. 1 (2002): 53.

It may be said that no matter the issue, political cartoons and satires were published to provide a different perspective, one that cut to the chase, so to speak, and provided an alternative narrative.

Cartoons flourished for a variety of reasons, despite low literacy rates in the empire. The images permitted all peoples to interpret that which was being satirized. Indeed, "cartoons were passed around, hung on walls, and read aloud in coffee shops."[5] Later, after the founding of the Republic of Turkey, this is all the more important because of the dramatic effect of the Alphabet reform in 1928. The new Republic's Alphabet reform changed the Arabic script alphabet into the Latin script we see today. However, this reform created an even larger illiterate society almost overnight. The importance of cartoons and being able to engage with this new society that was trying to learn a new alphabet cannot be underestimated. The inability of readers to read newspapers and circulars led to a reliance on graphic material, which were mostly cartoons.[6]

*Amcabey*, 1944.

In exploring Turkish cartoons, one witnesses the great diversity of topics discussed, criticised, mocked, and even ridiculed. At different times, the currents ranged from ideas of modernity, as we witness many strips in the early Republican days contrasting *dün ve bugün*, or today and yesterday. The sketches of yesterday illustrate a conceptualized backwardness of living and impoverished-looking characters, contrasted with the sophistication of modern living with its glamourous clothing, consumption of alcohol, and scenes of fancy homes, hotels, or suites. At other times, especially in the 1930s with the coming of World War II, one witnesses grotesque characters, such as the figures of Communism and Fascism fighting for the "love" (or loyalty) of Lady Avrupa (Europe).

5 Aviv, 225

6 Tunc,53

Later, with the 1980s war between Iraq and Iran raging, Turkish cartoons mocked both sides for their stances and actions. Turkish politicians, of course, have not been safe from ridicule. In some cases this has led to cartoonists to being sued or even arrested. Sultan Abdülhamid II famously outlawed the use of the word *lobster* after a European magazine published a cartoon of him as a lobster.[7] In 2016, *Penguen* cartoonists Bahadir Baruter and Özer Aydoğan were found guilty of insulting President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and received eleven-month sentences. The cartoon in question "depicted the president meeting two officials outside his newly completed presidential palace, with the cartoon Erdoğan saying: 'What a bland celebration. We could have at least sacrificed a journalist.'"[8]

Political cartoons and satires may be seen as a significant aspect of a plural democracy's want and tolerance for plurality and diversity of ideas, no matter an individual's political stripes. This has not always happened even in nations where democracy is considered strong. Over the course of the late Ottoman Empire and to the present-day Republic of Turkey, political cartoons have navigated the varying degrees of democratic values espoused by the state while also navigating the various attempts by the government, or the military, at censorship and intolerant attacks.

*Penguen*, 2012.

Cartoons and satirical journals offer new avenues of research. They provide different perspectives on current events, as well as opportunities to exaggerate, poke fun at, and even mock them. Cartoons also provide avenues to critique social norms and practices while at the same time striving to ensure the public is engaged. This exhibition highlights the work and achievements of such public-minded cartoonists through the remarkable collections held in the Duke University Libraries.

Sean E. Swanick

7 Pamela Brummett, Image and imperialism in the Ottoman revolutionary press, 1908-1911 (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), 4.

8 Ayşegül Usta, "Turkish cartoonists sentenced to jail for insulting Erdoğan," Hürriyet Daily News (Istanbul) March 25, 2015.

## A Double-Edged Sword: Humor and Gender in Ottoman Turkish Political Cartoons

Through political cartoons, the exhibition *Yasak!* Banned traces the transformation from empire to nation-state in modern Turkish history. From the mid-nineteenth century until today, cartoon journals have been the space of dissident voices and new ideas, reflecting not only the rapid changes in the political and social structure but also reactions to those changes in the popular imagination. The unsettling effects of the engineering of modern Turkish society reveals itself in the cartoons through comic scenarios. The humorous and essentially gendered discourse, consistently used in these cartoons for over a century, signifies a double function: a shield against authorities and a trigger of a cathartic laughter. Humor helps the cartoonists to remain ambiguous and lighthearted about the serious subjects that they tackle—as if they were only making a joke. Focusing on this discourse reveals that the cartoons tell both the history of modern Turkey as well as the process of gender construction. Almost exclusively produced by male cartoonists, the discourse survives various political agendas, only to be interrupted by women cartoonists in the late twentieth century.

The early examples of these journals, such as *Karagöz, Cem,* or *Kalem*, were not interested in transgressive humor. Nevertheless, they still made use of the traditional definitions of femininity and masculinity. Images of women rarely appeared in the drawings. When they did, they represented a nation in struggle, such as Crete in the late nineteenth century portrayed as a lost beloved. Or they appeared in an iconic scene, such as the goddess of liberty representing the Ottoman state. This reference to liberty as a female figure implies that the cartoonists were aware of ideas of revolution and freedom in the French and American cases.

*Yeni Gazete*, 1908.

Male figures, on the other hand, represented the countries in power in their glorious military uniforms. This use of traditional gender does not dissipate even with the appearance of sexualized and grotesque bodies in later periods. Representation of democracy as a vulnerable female child in the 1960s, for instance, suggests the viability of the discourse throughout history.

*Akbaba*, 1960.

The journals from the early Republican era, such as *Akbaba* or *Büyük Gazete*, demonstrate a consistent interest in the new, rapidly changing gender roles appearing alongside the cultural revolutions. The top-down modernization of social norms is reflected in certain recurring images, such as the grotesque female body or the mockery of traditional relationships between husband and wife, or mother and daughter. Instead of the pure female figure of the earlier periods, such as the goddess of liberty or democracy as a female child, in this period women are unruly characters: cheating wives, bad mothers, or misguided daughters.

*Cem*, 1911.

There was also an interest in cross-dressing—women with beards and men with make-up—suggesting a juxtaposition between modern and traditional men and women.

*Karikatür*, 1936

These grotesque bodies function as alarm bells, implying the need for men and women to remain within the boundaries of traditional roles. Although there was a slight mockery of the new effeminate man, the new woman was under particular scrutiny. She had changed dramatically in everything from what she wore to what she did in her daily life. She wore swimsuits or pants. She played sports and read novels.

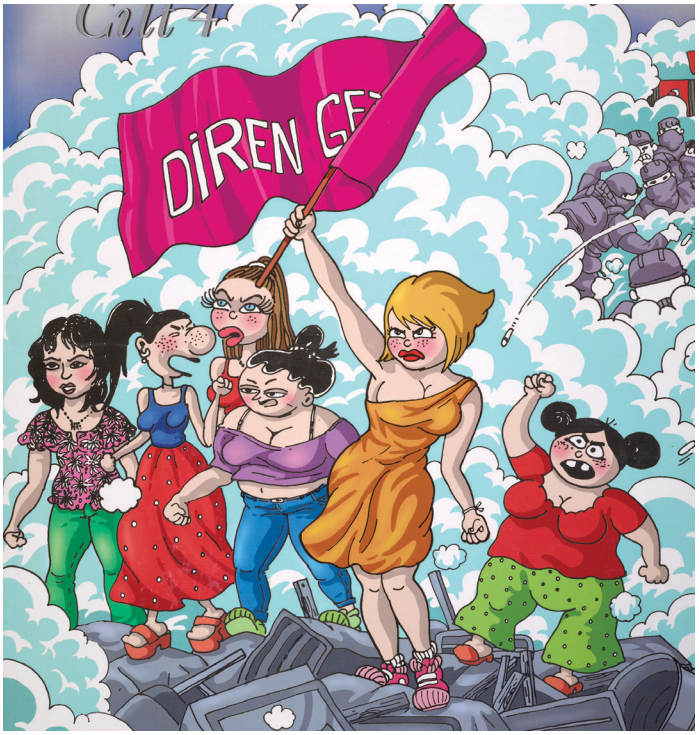
*Akbaba*, 1957.

More important, she took her place in the workforce. Her appearance in public space was problematized in these cartoons with scenes of her sexualized body and unwanted sexual attention from her boss. The irony in these cartoons suggests a concern and gives voice to people's feelings of disorientation while entertaining their male audience.

With the evolution of the critical discourse in the 1980s and 1990s, women cartoonists began to assert their voices within the male-dominated profession. One of the leading cartoon journals, *Gırgır,* took the lead in giving women a space of their own, resulting in a strip called "Bıyıksızlar" (The Ones without Moustaches). These women artists did not shy away from the dominant gendered humor in cartoon media, but they also

took this opportunity to manipulate that discourse. They did so by bringing in alternative female representations and through a focus on their own issues, such as education, marriage, and motherhood. This new image of womanhood overturns the imposed traditional roles and challenges the definitions of femininity and masculinity.

The unruly and wild girl from earlier periods was transformed into a body of resistance with her witty malice and keen intelligence. A significant turning point in the evolution of this humorous discourse was the publication in the 2000s of the cartoon magazine *Bayan Yanı* (Next to a Lady, a reference to a gendered practice of public transportation in urban centers: women sit next women, men sit next to men). The publication was produced and administered exclusively by women. They created various female characters from all walks of life in order to show the diversity of women's lives in Turkey and to reflect their various political, social, and economic interests. By doing so, they took their place in the larger political arena as active members and dissident voices. The cartoon representing a group of women protesters in the Gezi Protests of 2013—in particular the woman carrying the flag with the writing, "Gezi Resistance," with her angry face, modern clothes, and sneakers—subverts through transforming the iconic image of the goddess of liberty.




*Bayan Yanı*, 2013.

By bringing together examples from different periods, the exhibition allows a glimpse into the tradition of political dissent in modern Turkish history and an opportunity to witness its continuity and pervasiveness. The evolution of its humorous discourse can be traced through the process of modernization and the gender construction.

Didem Z. Havlioğlu

## Political Cartoons and the Ottoman Legacy of Turkish Modernity

Scholars debate the degree to which rupture or continuity defined the transition from late Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Turkey, as well as the degree to which an "Ottoman legacy" influences the present political moment. Broadly, the *Yasak*/Banned exhibit addresses such issues through political satire as cultural production and as a means of protest. In the process, *Yasak* makes its own subtle critique about dissent and freedom of speech, relying on the historical record of caricatures. The exhibit highlights political cartoons from Duke University's Karabıyık collection of Ottoman and Turkish texts dating from the late nineteenth century to the present—archival images that display over a century of social and political critique. The caricatures not only take aim at leading government figures, but significant historical events, lampooning the effects of modernization as well as changing gender roles, censorship, and other aspects of Ottoman-Turkish identity in transformation.

The journals, from the earliest like *Diyojen* and *Hayal* to the most recent ones like *Bayan Yanı* and *Penguen*, consistently represent the perspective of the everyman, trickster, satirist, marginal, and wise fool, always returning to dominant tropes: censorship, authoritarianism, modernization, gender inequality, social injustice, political violence, and tensions between secular and Islamist politics. As wry advocates for basic human rights—crude and erotic images notwithstanding—these journals and their caricaturists are often targeted by the state for censure.

The *Yasak* exhibit is framed by two periods. The first is the rule of Ottoman Sultan-Caliph Abdülhamid II in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He was considered one of the last powerful sultans, with a reign of over three decades. This period is juxtaposed with the rule of former Prime Minister and current President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*/AKP), which has led Turkey for the last fifteen years. These two periods offer a revealing trajectory of Ottoman-Turkish continuity and change that captures some of the enduring dilemmas of modernization, gender roles, and political transformation in Islamic societies. For some, Sultan Abdülhamid went down in history as a despotic, pan-Islamist Ottoman sultan who resisted the secular-reformist Young Turk movement until it finally overthrew him in 1909. Others see him as a strong Islamic leader of the last great Islamic empire. Ironically, his reign is now often compared to the current worldview of President Erdoğan – who in many caricatures appears as a sultan (see *Penguen,* 2012). Some have even characterized his rule as being "neo-Ottoman." The AKP embraces the comparison, putting itself in a political genealogy that includes conservative leaders such as Sultan Abdülhamid (1876-1909), Prime Minister Adnan Menderes (1950-60), Turgut Özal (1983-89 prime minister; 1989-93 president), and Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan (1996-97; 1970-2011 leader of a series of Islamist parties). Abdülhamid, Atatürk and Erdoğan form a triumvirate as the three longest-serving leaders in late Ottoman and Republican Turkish history – with a combined rule of over sixty years. The factor that unites them is authoritarianism.

In both the Hamidian and AKP periods, caricatures exposed the threats to a free press and liberal democracy. From the conservative perspective, such liberal values are recast as manifestations of foreign powers, non-Muslim religious minorities, and "godless" liberals, and ultimately serve to erode Turkish national and Islamic identity. During his reign, Abdülhamid banned the journalistic use of words such as "revolution," "liberty," and "republic" as well as the word "nose"—his was particularly large and became a focus of caricaturists who turned it into a symbol of authoritarian rule. Erdoğan, for his part, has targeted caricaturists with a variety of charges from defamation to terrorism, continuing the trend of making them targets of state violence from exile to imprisonment.

*Limon, 1986.*

In this framework, the cartoons that I highlight present the perspective of the progressive liberal press in the dissident role of critiquing authoritarian rule. The first cartoon from *Karagöz* celebrates the deposition of Sultan Abdülhamid in 1909 (see *Karagöz,* 1909). Karagöz (figure of the Turkish "everyman") and his companion Hacivat greet the rising sun emblazoned with the words "The Army of Action and Liberty." This refers to the dawn of a new constitutional era after the 1909 pro-sultanate counter-coup was put down. A related image appears in the late Ottoman weekly magazine *Kalem* in 1911 and depicts an imprisoned, sinister-looking Sultan Abdülhamid against the background of massive street crowds celebrating liberty in the wake of the Young Turk constitutional revolution. The caption has him regretfully conceding after his thirty-three-year reign, "As the times change so does morality." The image with the exaggerated nose was drawn by Pahatrekas, who was probably an Ottoman Greek caricaturist.

The next image of note, from *Aydede* in the year 1922, shows how social change is reflected in a blurring of gender boundaries. The caption states, "Differences between the modern woman and the modern man," and the drawing shows a hybrid half-man-half-woman figure with hardly any distinction between them except a few articles of clothing, such as the pant leg for the male half of the body. The anxieties around changing gender norms are conveyed here, with modernity being transposed as androgyny, something which is understood as not only being a threat to the old order, but to traditional masculinity in general. Androgynous figures of modernity appear in journals from 1908 through the cultural revolution until WWII, after which traditional gender roles are reasserted. As another example of gendered political commentary, the next image is an evocative 1930s cover from the political satire and literary journal *Akbaba* that depicts the personification of communism and fascism as aggressive men – one covered in swastikas and the other in hammer-and-sickles – imposing on Europe, portrayed as an innocent woman in white. The caption has her saying, "To which of them should I belong?"

*Akbaba*, 1957.

*Penguen,* 2012.

Finally, *Bayan Yanı* in its February-March 2014 issue shows Erdoğan and Fetullah Gülen as childhood friends playing with "toys" that symbolize recent government scandals. The mother states, "Son, what have you done! You've laid it all out in the open… I just tidied up." Little Erdoğan, evoking the claim that Gülen has constituted a "parallel state" in Turkey, says, "It wasn't me, it was the parallel child!" Little Gülen, mimicking Gülen's actual curse against Erdoğan, says, "May those who call me parallel be hindered! May fire descend upon their homes! Ohh!" Here, a number of points convey Erdoğan's complicity with Gülen and his followers during the first decade of AKP rule.

*Bayan Yanı*, 2014.

As these examples illustrate, the exhibit reveals continuity with regard to the tension between forces of authoritarianism and liberal values such as freedom of the press, thought, and religion. However, changing gender norms reveal a rupture with the Ottoman past. Nevertheless, gender continues as a dominant problematic with issues of Turkish women entering the public realm for the first time giving way to more specific matters of women's rights with regard to education, career, and social welfare.

Satire is the pulse of freedom and political critique. As curators, it is our goal to give viewers of the *Yasak* exhibit a sense of the longstanding function of satire as a form of social commentary and political protest in late Ottoman and Republican Turkey. Like all forms of dissent, this has a cost. In the last year, for example, the caricaturist Musa Kart had been detained for nine months without trial and as of this writing faces overblown charges of "aiding an armed terrorist organization without being a member." His crime was drawing cartoons critical of government corruption. This exhibit, it will come as no surprise, would have been banned in Turkey, a fact we reflected in the title, *Yasak*.

Erdağ Göknar

# Political Satire

The materials in this case provide an overview of some of the primary political themes in late Ottoman and Turkish politics from 1870 to the present. Censorship, for example, is still as contentious today as it was back then. Turkey has suffered through four coups and several military interventions, including an alleged failed coup in 2016. Each of these events led to increased censorship and a crackdown on civil society. Similarly, the changes enacted by the Alphabet Reform, which sought to replace the Arabic script of Ottoman Turkish with a more "modern" Latin alphabet, remain contentious. Learning Ottoman Turkish in the early Republic was frowned upon. But sentiments change with time, and political satire sees no boundaries. Today there is a renewed interest in Turkey in Ottoman language and history, as the current regime sees itself as a new leader of the Middle East. The cartoons often display these conflicting trends and issues. The past that was characterized as backwards yesterday is held up as new, modern, and chic today.

1. *Diyojen*, 1870.

*Diyojen* is considered the first satirical journal printed in Ottoman. It was founded by the Anatolian polyglot Teodor Kasap, who was later forced into exile. The image mocks the arbitrary press laws of the time. The journal was banned in 1873.

2. *Karagöz*, 1911.

The issue of censorship is as relevant today as it was in the past. Perhaps the first official censorship law in the Ottoman Empire, known as *Matbaa Nizamnamesi*, was codified in 1857. This illustration makes reference to a heightened censorship law enacted by the Young Turks shortly after the coup they led in 1908.

> Caption: "Oh, please, Hacivat! Seal my mouth, there is no other way while the situation is like this. I cannot stop speaking. However, with the censorship law I will be in trouble."

3. *Karagöz,* 1911.

Exposing the issue of censorship.

Here we witness Karagöz being sealed shut by Hacivat exposing the issue of censorship.

> Caption: "Oh, Karagöz, oh! I told you to seal it well, I told you several times…because it would explode.
> Hacivat: "It's not my fault. No screws and no locks work for these.."

4. *Yıldız,* 1924.

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, founder of the Republic of Turkey and former Ghāzī (Muslim soldier/warrior) is pictured. His garb is both Eastern (traditional hat) and Western (three-piece suit) from a famous picture.

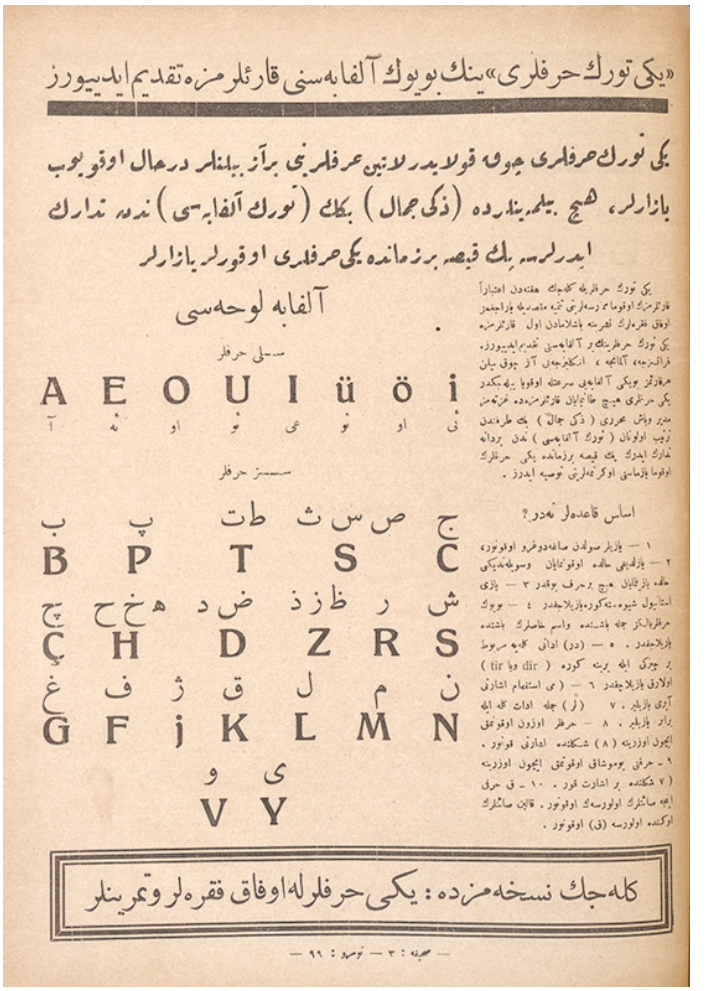
5. *Cem,* 1927.

Three men are caricatured with a note reading: "Each

has his way." The men represent different political ideologies, according to their head-wear and dress: conservative (the man in the turban), progressive (the man in the fez), and liberal (the man without a hat).

6. *Büyük Gazete*, 1928.

The new alphabet (*Yeni harfler*) was introduced in 1929. Here we have the contrast between Ottoman Turkish (in Arabic script) and modern Turkish (in Latin script. This was paraded as another form of modernity, which we also note women reading as an emphasis of modernity.

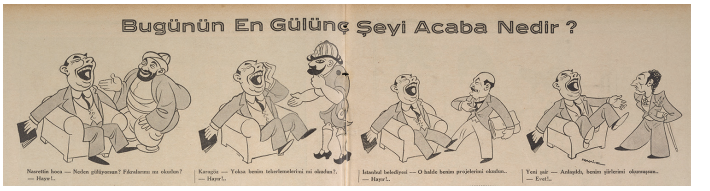



7. *Büyük Gazete*, 1928.

The new alphabet is contrasted with the old. Here we witness a popular satirical publication striving to teach its readers of the changes to come. While the alphabet reform was applauded by many, it had the immediate effect increasing illiteracy, as the Latin alphabet was foreign to the majority of the population.

8. *Akbaba*, 1935.

The five-year plan, illustrated as a progression from soldier to statesman to white collar man. The year 1925 is written in Arabic next to the soldier. By 1930, the year is written with Latin numerals, and the statesman holds a document that reads "New Alphabet." In 1935 the white collar man is reading a popular Turkish language journal.




9. *Karikatür*, 1936.

A man is asked why he's laughing by four different characters: Nasertin hoca, the famous Turkish jester who wanders the world teaching and joking; Karagöz, a famous shadow puppet; an Istanbul municipal worker; and a new poet. The man responds that he's laughing because he's read and understood the new poet's poems.

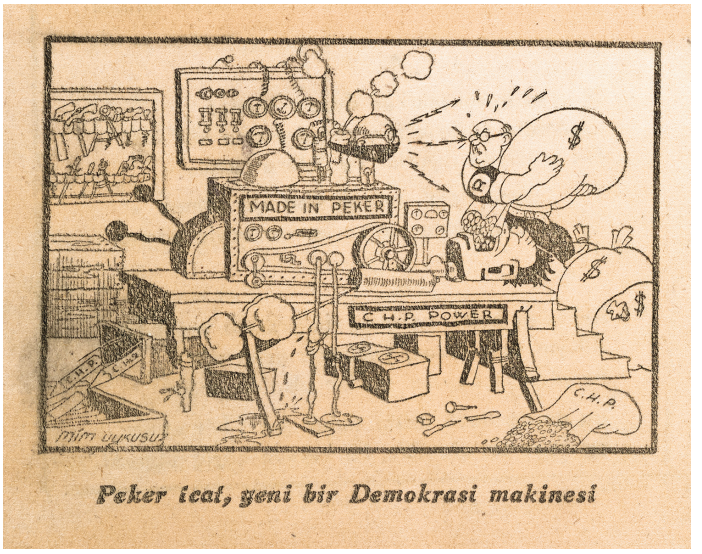
Caption: "What is the most ridiculous thing today?"

10. *Amcabey*, 1943.

A frequent theme in Turkish cartoons is the contrast of yesterday and today (*dün ve bugün*), stemming from Republican idealism of the founding of a new and modern nation. These two images exaggerate what it was (*ne idi*) and what has happened (*ne oldu*). The modernity brought by the Republic has permitted a more robust society to flourish.

11. *Amcabey,* 1944.

The alphabet reform of 1928 essentially made a low-literate society illiterate overnight. Illustrated here is the *hicret* (migration) of the old alphabet from Ottoman Turkish to the Latin-based alphabet of modern Turkish.




12. *Markopaşa*, 1947.

This was once the most circulated newspaper in Turkey, with 60,000-70,000 copies being regularly purchased. It was the leader of the 50 kuşağı, the "1950 Generation" or Middle Generation that focused on daily life and politics. The image presents the press, or perhaps press freedom, as an agent for democracy.

Caption: "The discovery of Peker, a new democracy machine."

13. *Çarşaf*, 1980.

After the 1980 coup, political leaders in parliament were arrested and stripped of their privileges and power as parliamentarians.

Caption: "O, beloved, your hair is curly… goodbye."

14. *Leman*, 2005.

After being arrested, former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein was photographed in his underwear. This image of George W. Bush coming from Saddam's underwear suggests a mockery of his "manliness" as well as mocking the depiction of Saddam.

Caption: "For the first time in news, Leman found the photo of Bush in his underwear after Saddam."

15. *Penguen*, 2008.

In his hostility towards journalists, current Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has acted similarly to current U.S. President Trump.

Caption: Erdogan's seven journalists were forbidden by the Prime Ministry.
"If you are well-behaved, you will get to see Tayyip one day."

16. *Penguen*, 2012.

Freedom of the press, like academic freedom, remains under attack in Turkey. Here the former Deputy Prime Minister, Bülent Arınç, silences a journalist who asks for clarification.

Caption: Arınç: There is enough press freedom in Turkey.
Journalist: What do you mean enough?
Arınç: There was a bit, it was used by the previous one. Now shut up.

17. *Cafcaf*, 2014.

This conservative, Islamist cartoon pokes fun at the neighborhood pressure (*mahalle baskısı*) that some families thrust upon their neighbors.

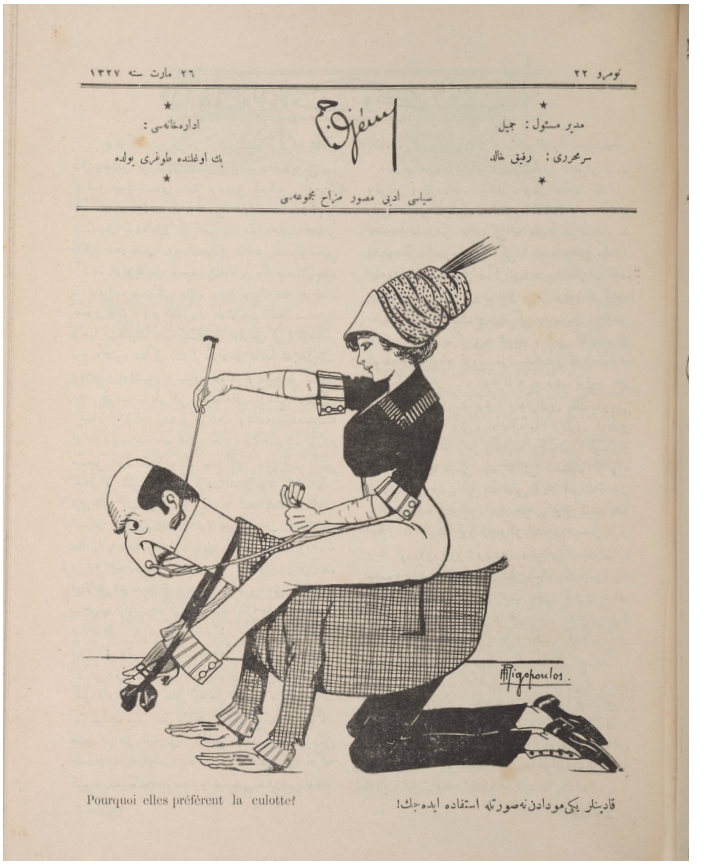
The middle frame reads: "Hey, brother, don't be afraid, we are friends."

# Humor and Gender in Ottoman Turkish Cartoons

Over the course of a century and through various political regimes, Turkish cartoonists have used a gendered humor to grapple with drastic changes in their society. While examples from the late Ottoman period feature traditional representations of femininity and masculinity, the use of gender becomes more subversive in the early Republic period. Images of sexualized female bodies and crossdressing serve to criticize political instabilities and the unsettling effects of societal changes. Contemporary examples by women cartoonists represent new models of female figures and their engagement with the political agenda.

1. *Yeni Geveze*, 1908.

This cartoon represents the region of Macedonia as a nude female under the attack of Greece, Italy, Austria, France, Britain, and Germany. The Ottoman rule in the new era of the second constitution is depicted as the goddess of liberty who carries the peace flag to save Macedonia.




2. *Cem*, 1910.

The new fashion of women's pants was associated with power, control, and changing gender roles. This cartoon asks, "How are women going to benefit from the new fashion?"

3. *Cem*, 1911.

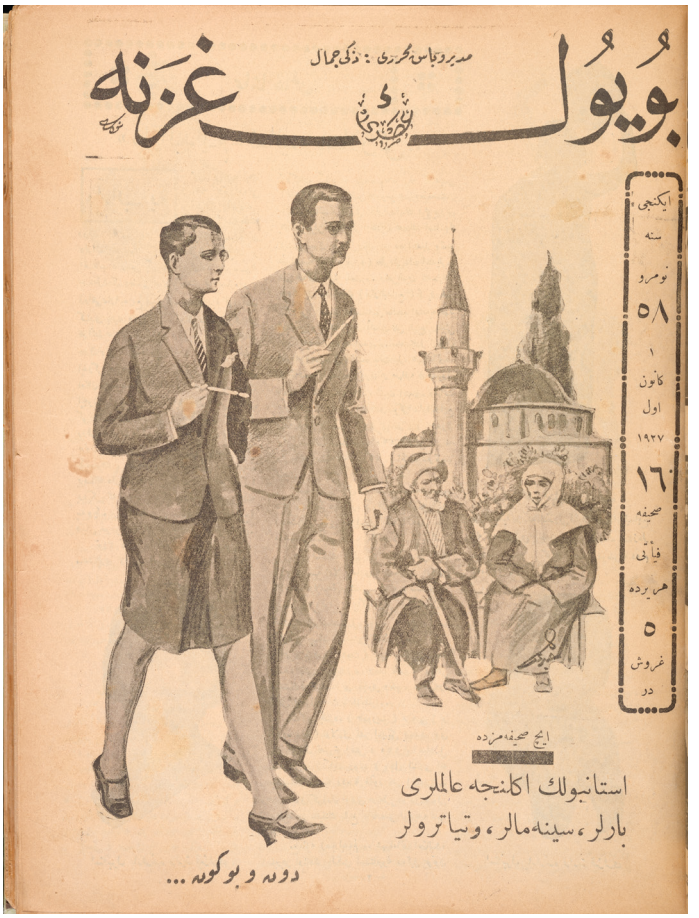
The degeneration of women is the subject of a number of cartoons, with the mothers often implicitly accused of bringing up daughters with no traditional values.

Caption: "Your outfit is so chic. But if your mother sees you in it, she would be upset."
"Only upset? She would be furious. This is her outfit. I picked it from her closet without her knowing!

4. *Büyük Gazete*, 1928.

In the early Republican Period, women took their part in the workplace. The recurring image of the working girl suggests her physical beauty.

Caption: "The new beauty in your offices: a beauty from among the typewriter girls."




5. *Büyük Gazete*, 1928.

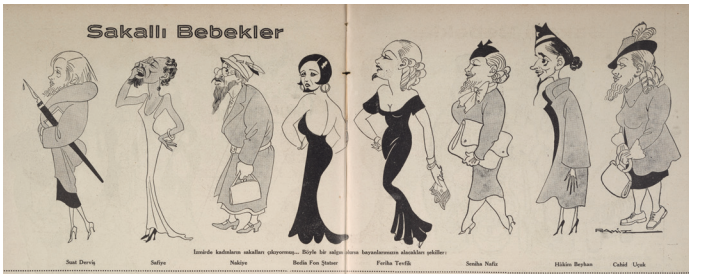
The juxtaposition of old and new couples—yesterday and today (*dün ve bugün*)—highlights changing gender roles and the changing meanings of femininity and masculinity.

6. *Büyük Gazete,* 1928.

The new woman of the Republican period is represented as a masculine, male-bodied figure. The fluidity of gender roles points to a change in society.

7. *Büyük Gazete,* 1928.

The modern Turkish woman is represented in the nude with horns, suggesting her desirability and danger.




8. *Karikatür,* 1936.

The bearded woman is a recurring image in the early Republican period. Izmir was a progressive city, and women from there were represented with beards to highlight their liberal values. The women listed here were intellectuals of the time: teachers, writers, magazine editors, and actresses.

Caption: "Bearded Babes. Apparently women grow beards in Izmir. If this epidemic takes place, here are the models our women will take after: Suat Derviş, Safiye, Nakiye, Bedia Von Statzer, Feriha Tevfik, Seniha Nafiz, Judge Beyhan, Cahid Uçuk."

9. *Karikatür, 1936.*

In this cartoon, a bearded woman is chased by an effeminate man. The new images of men and women represent fluid gender roles not only in terms of physical appearance but also behavior in intimate relationships.

Caption: "Apparently women grow beards in Izmir."

Man: "My darling, give me at least a couple of strands of your silky beard!"

10. *Akbaba,* 1957.

The new woman, as represented in a sexualized female figure, reads popular novels. The implicit message is that women are the desired new member of the intellectual circles.

Caption: "The sweetest and closest friend on lonely nights is Akbaba publications!"

11. *Akbaba*, 1957.

The new woman in her modern clothing strolls down the streets as men express their dislike of this new fashion.

Caption: "Ah, these pants!"

12. *Akbaba,* 1957.

Women in the office space was a complicated issue for Turkish cartoon journals. Here the office, where women would have to interact with men, is represented as a dangerous place.

Caption: "No, thank you, sir. I absolutely don't want a raise!"

13. *Gırgır*, 1974.

Two leaders of opposing political parties, Süleyman Demirel and Necmettin Erbakan, fight to be the mother of the nation on Mother's Day.

Caption:
Mother 1: "I am the mother of the government."
Mother 2: "No! I am the real mother…You are the step-mother!"

14. *Gırgır*, 1975.

This cartoon alludes to an anarchist movement primarily by the young generation who were the supporters of the political leaders Süleyman Demirel, Necmettin Erbakan, Aplarslan Türkeş, and Turhan Feyzioğlu. The answer plays with the double meaning of "provoking" and ironically presents a naked woman called Perihan as the main reason behind the anarchic movement.

Caption: "The question of the week…who is provoking the youth to riot? Is it Süleyman? Is it Erbakan? Is it Alparslan? Is it Feyzioğlu Turhan?… You could not guess... It is not Süleyman, Erbakan, Alparslan, or Turhan...It is Perihan who is provoking the youth!"

15. *Leman*, 2005.

This cartoon criticizes Turkey's problematic relationship with the U.S. by portraying Turkish President Erdoğan and U.S. president George W. Bush as husband and wife, alluding to a popular Turkish TV show Foreign Son-in-Law. It is dated 2005, after the second inauguration of President Bush.

16. *Bayan Yanı*, 2011.

Bad Girl (kötü kız) is an iconic female character created by Ramize Erer, a leading woman cartoonist. In this cartoon she defies traditional roles imposed on women.

> Caption: Bad Girl: "Look, this is Bircan. At least fifteen, twenty years of ironing, washing dishes, cooking, and child raising are guaranteed. If you don't leave her she will never leave you. She is an ideal wife. So forget me, bro…"

17. *Bayan Yanı*, 2013.

A group of women in the trenches of the Gezi resistance movement of 2013 highlights women's participation. The woman carrying the banner reading "Gezi Resistance" alludes to the goddess of liberty.

18. *Bayan Yanı*, 2013.

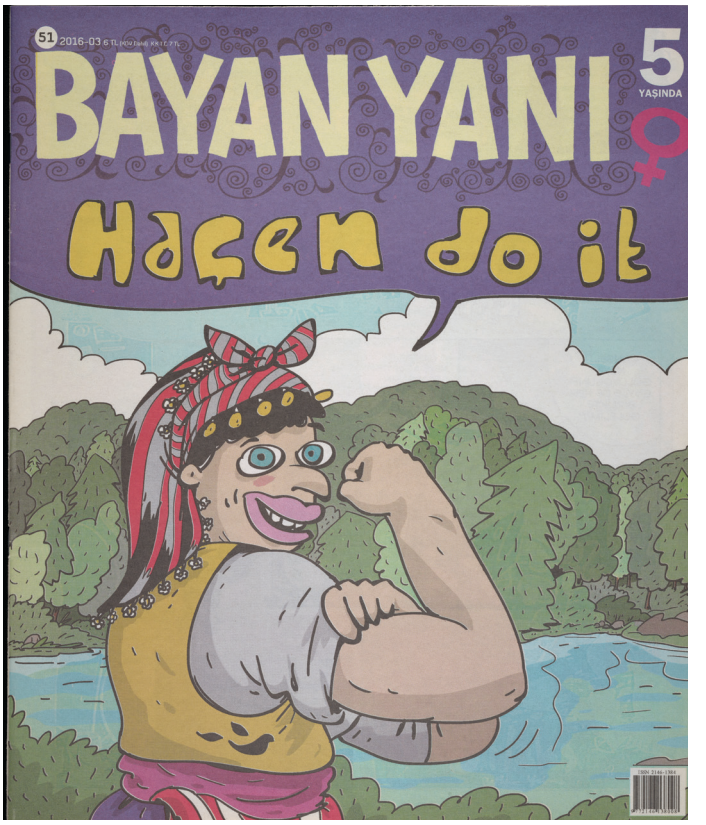
The issue of child marriages and honor killings are criticized in this cartoon through the story of Hasret. In this tragic scene, the mother of Hasret is imagined to be preparing her daughter's bridal chest, which includes her body bag to be used after her murder.

> Caption: "Hasret, who was forced by her family to marry, wanted to come back home only to be raped by her cousins, impregnated, and murdered in honor killing, was buried in a body bag instead of a shroud."
> The mother says, "As we add the body bag, the bridal chest will be complete…"

19. *Bayan Yanı,* 2014.

After decades of headscarves being banned in public universities, they are now allowed not only in higher education but also in primary schools. In this cartoon, women cartoonists express their concern for female children in elementary schools, who are treated as women and wear headscarves.

Caption: "We refuse the gendered idea which covers a girl in elementary school and turn her into a little woman." "YES."
The student screams, "Mrs. Teacher! Berkecan pulled my headscarf!"




20. *Bayan Yanı*, 2016.

Alluding to the iconic image of Rosie the Riveter, this cartoon represents a villager woman from the Black Sea region who adopts the "We Can Do It!" spirit of strong women and makes it her own with the Black Sea colloquial language.

Caption: "Let's do it!"

## Empire to Republic

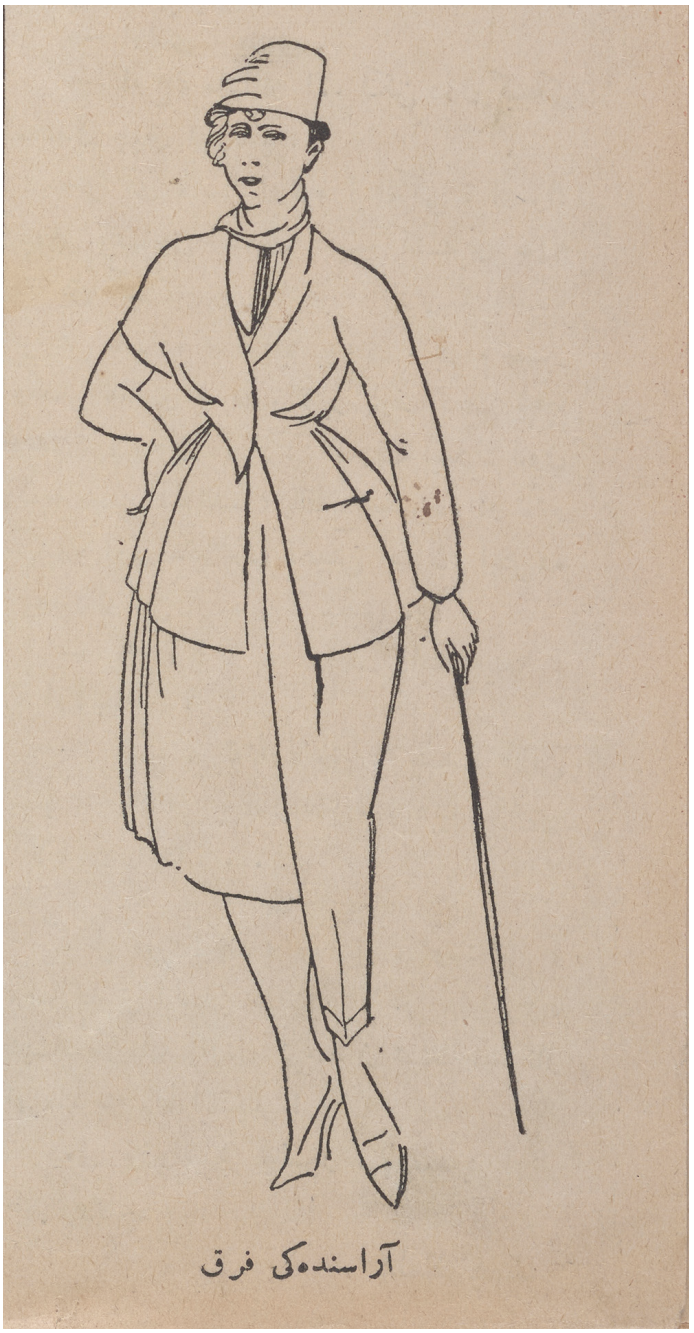
Two key historical periods frame this exhibit and bring late Ottoman and contemporary Turkey into conversation. The first is the rule of Ottoman Sultan-Caliph Abdülhamid II (r. 1876-1909). He was considered one of the last powerful sultans, with a reign of over three decades. His reign is juxtaposed to the leadership of current President Erdoğan and the Justice and Development Party, which has governed Turkey for the last fifteen years. These two eras offer a revealing cycle of Ottoman-Turkish history that captures some of the enduring dilemmas of modernization and political change in secularizing Islamic societies. For some, Abdülhamid went down in history as a despotic, pan-Islamist Ottoman sultan who resisted the secular-reformist Young Turk movement until it overthrew him in 1909. Others see him as a strong Islamic leader of the last great Islamic empire. Ironically, his reign is now often compared to the current worldview of President Erdoğan—who actually appears as a sultan in many caricatures. Some have even characterized Erdoğan's rule as "neo-Ottoman." These caricatures, symbols of social critique and political protest, not only target leading government figures, but also significant historical events, lampooning the effects of modernization as well as changing gender roles, censorship, and aspects of Ottoman-Turkish identity.

1. *Karagöz,* 1909.

A banner announces the first "Happy National Holiday!" and the image shows Abdülhamid and Karagöz hanging lanterns. The "İyd-i Milli" holiday was celebrated annually from 1909 to 1934. In the exchange, Abdülhamid claims he loves the country's people while Karagöz dismissively asks him to hang a lantern on his nose.

2. *Karagöz,* 1909.

Karagöz (figure of the Turkish "everyman") greets the rising sun emblazoned with the words "Army of Action and Liberty." This refers to the dawn of a new constitutional era after the 1909 pro-monarchy countercoup was put down.



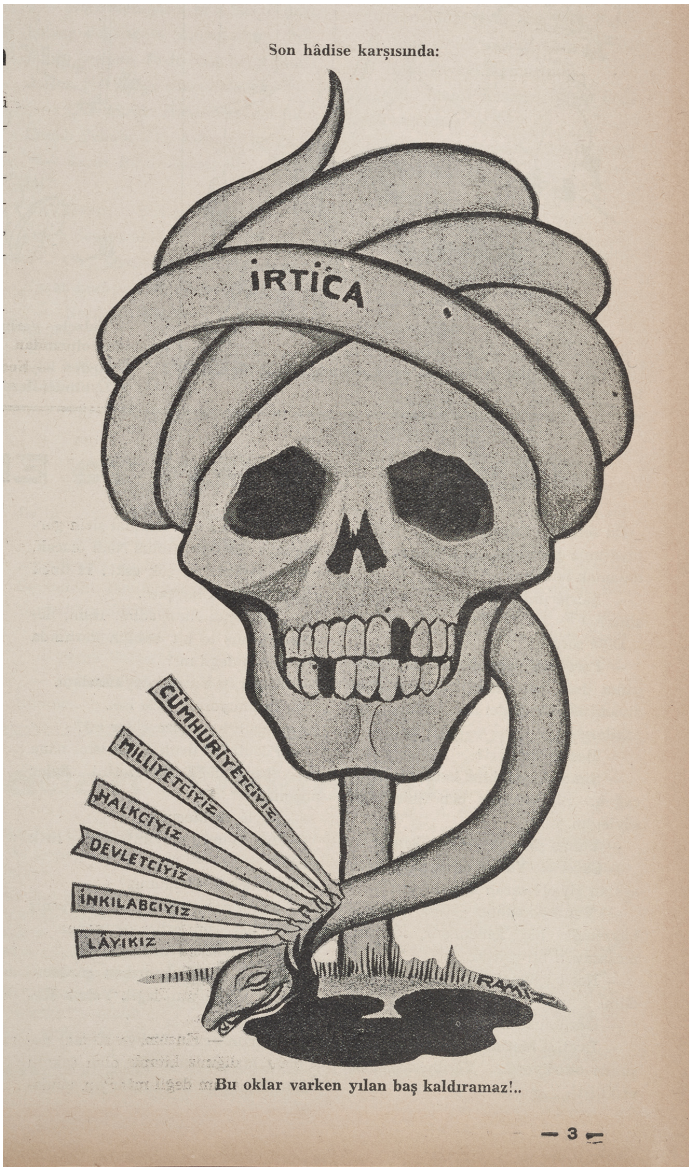

3. *Aydede,* 1922.

A half-man, half-woman conveys the anxieties around late Ottoman modernization as androgyny.

The caption states, "The difference between the modern woman and the modern man," but the figures are identical except for a few articles of clothing.

4. *Büyük Gazete,* 1927.

Sultan-Caliph Abdülhamid writes out "31 March?" with bloody hands. It is the date of the late Ottoman "countercoup" of 1909 that attempted to restore the sultan's power after the "Young Turk" revolution of 1908. The image conveys a warning against the threat of religious reaction during the secularizing cultural revolution.



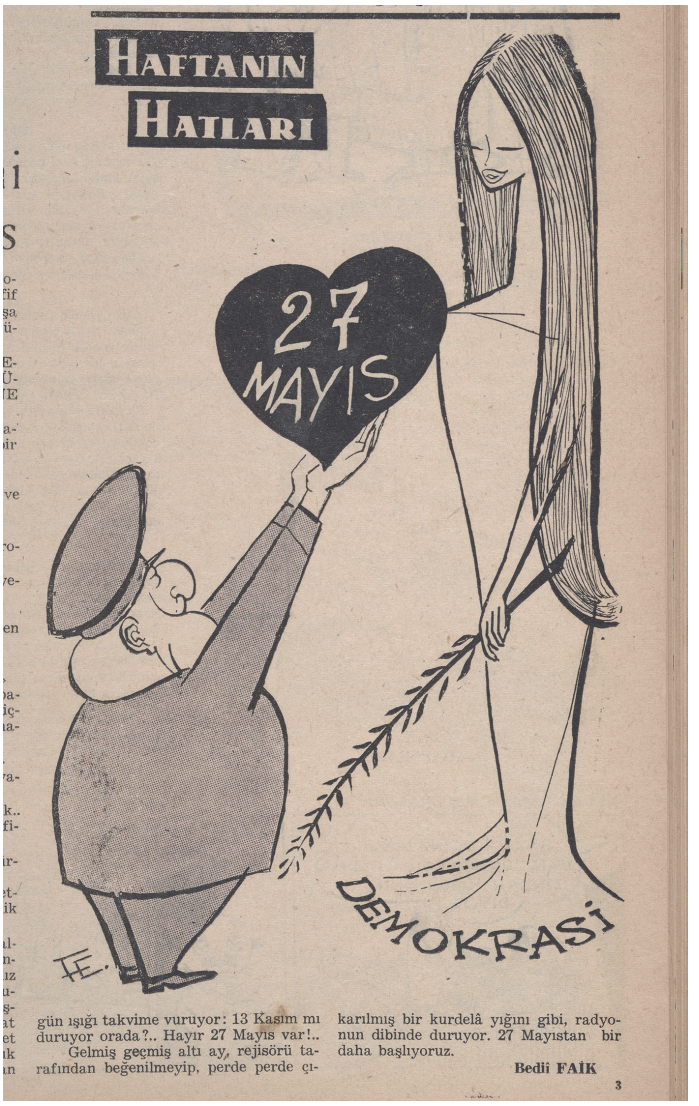

5. *Akbaba*, 1935.

A snake-cum-turban labeled irtica (reactionary Islamism) is killed by the six arrows of Kemalism: republicanism, nationalism, populism, statism, reformism, and secularism.

The caption reads, "A response to the latest incident" (top) and "As long as these arrows exist, the snake can't raise its head!" (bottom). An assassination plan against Atatürk was uncovered later that year.

6. *Akbaba*, 1957.

With the caption, "Democracy Guaranteed" the image shows the timid figure of democracy as a woman encircled by male officers. Given the political turmoil of the late 1950s, this is an allusion to the 1960 military coup meant to restore the democratic order.




7. *Tef,* 1960.

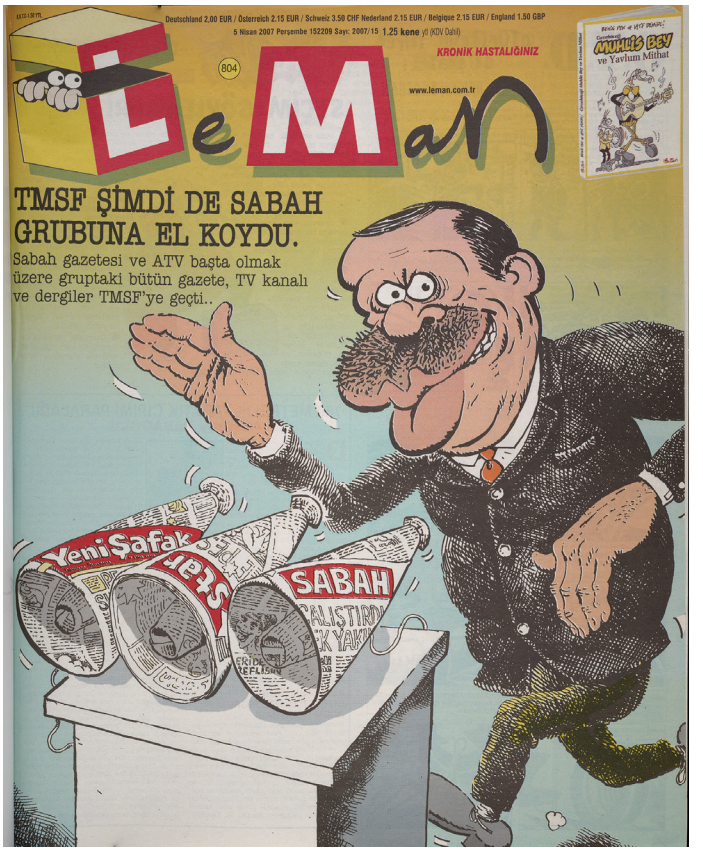
A general is shown handing a heart to democracy, depicted as a woman. The heart bears the date May 27, the date of the 1960 military coup, the first in Republican history, which would be followed by other military interventions in 1971, 1980, 1997, and most recently a failed coup attempt against the AKP in 2016.

8. *Limon*, 1986.

Abdülhamid, whose caricature is a trope of anti-secular rule, rises from the grave and ironically demands to be buried at Atatürk's mausoleum. This is a parody of the call by some politicians to have the late Celal Bayar, a founder of the conservative Democrat Party, and the third President of Turkey, buried in the same mausoleum.

9. *Limon*, 1987.

Turgut Özal, a conservative president and prime minister who opened Turkey to neoliberalism after the 1980 coup. Here, he is advocating for the overturning of the head-scarf ban. He is shown holding a flag made of a headscarf and shouting, "Come, Citizen, we're gathering under this banner…" The title says, "The first türban (or head-covering) jihad has begun."

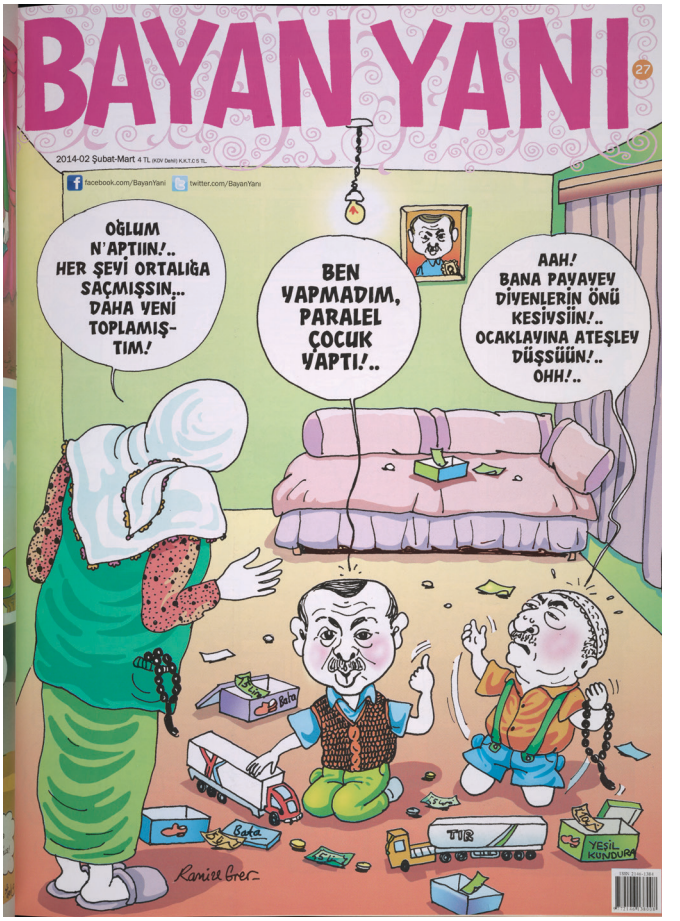



10. *LeMan*, 2007.

Erdoğan is shown grinning after the Sabah group of media outlets was placed under the control of the State Deposit and Insurance Fund. The effect was a consolidation of newspapers and TV stations, which were now amplifying a pro-AKP stance. The process continues into the present.

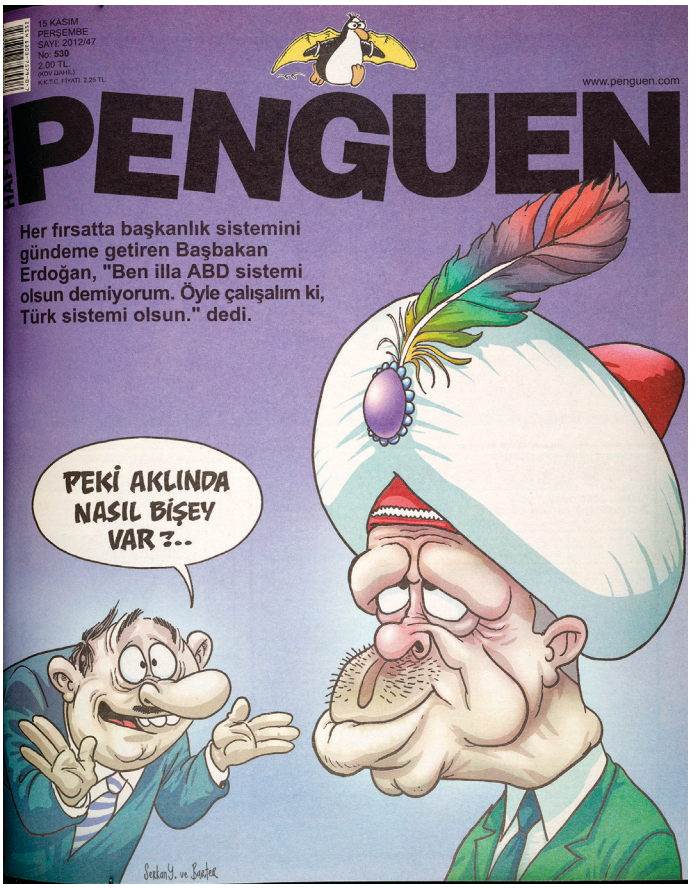
11. *Penguen,* 2008.

A family of six, all with Erdoğan faces, labeled, "The Nuclear Tayyip Family." The caption states, "One day everyone will be Tayyip! Prime Minister Erdoğan declared that 'Every woman should have at least three children.'"




12. *Bayan Yani*, 2014.

Erdoğan and Fetullah Gülen shown as childhood friends playing with "toys" that symbolize government scandals. The mother states, "Son, what have you done! You've laid it all out in the open… I just tidied up." Little Erdoğan, evoking the claim that Gülen constituted a "parallel state", says, "It wasn't me, it was the parallel child!" Little Gülen, mimicking Gülen's actual curse against Erdoğan, says, "May those who call me parallel be hindered! May fire descend upon their homes!"




13. *Penguen,* 2012.

This image depicts Erdoğan contemplating a more centralized presidential system. An inquiring citizen asks, "What kind of political system do you have in mind?" Erdoğan answers, "I'm not saying it has to be an American style presidency, let's work on creating a Turkish system." But he wears a turban as if advocating for the establishment of a sultanate.

14. Penguen, 2014.

In response to protests, Erdoğan states, "I have a dream!" The captions evoke his claim that a veiled woman was assaulted and beer was consumed in mosques by protesters: "In the Kabataş district, protesters assaulted my veiled sister while holding bottles of beer…" The last statement recasts his claim as an erotic fantasy: "And they were naked from the waist up!"

15. *Penguen*, 2016.

In a comment on press censorship, a citizen is shown pondering, "I haven't died today either… my God, how strange!" Then he continues, "Wait, or maybe I've died and due to media censorship I haven't received the news yet?!"

# Timeline

## 1299-1922 Ottoman Empire - Republic of Turkey 1923-Present

This exhibit weaves through four generally recognized periods of Turkish history: the End of Empire/Constitutional Period (1876-1922), the Early Republic (1923-1960), the Era of Coups/Transition (1961-1996), and the Erdoğan era (1997-present).

**1299-1918** Ottoman Empire.

**1923-Present** Republic of Turkey.

## End of Empire/Constitutional Period (1876-1922)

**1876** First Constitution. The reign of Sultan-Caliph Abdülhamid II (1876-1908) is often characterized as autocratic, much like that of Turkey's current president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Abdülhamid was brought to throne by the Young Turks, a group of nationalist politicians, intellectuals, army officers, and exiles living in Europe, who formed the empire's first constitutional government. However, by 1878 Abdülhamid had suspended parliament and the constitution, returning the country to an absolute monarchy.

**1908** Coup d'état by the Young Turks. A group of disaffected politicians, army officers in Ottoman lands, and a vibrant exiled Ottoman community in Europe orchestrated a coup against Abdülhamid II. The sultan re-instituted the Constitution in 1908, but by then it was too late. The Young Turks come to power promising more freedom and democracy. Despite the censorship laws, there was a significant rise in demand for print materials, particularly cartoons and satires. The demand actually outstripped the supply of paper, leading some printing houses to publish their newspapers and journals on wrapping paper and packing paper. The Young Turks ruled from 1908 to 1918 and oversaw the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire.

**1914** Assassination of Archduke Ferdinand; commencement of World War I. The Ottoman Empire, led by the Young Turks, chose to side with the Central Powers.

**1918** End of the Ottoman Empire 1918

**1920** Treaty of Sèvres. The Treaty of Sèvres ratified the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and allowed for the occupation of Turkey by Britain, France, Greece, and Italy. Greece, for example, occupied modern-day Izmir (formerly Smyrna) and the Dardanelles. Britain occupied Istanbul. The occupations were rejected by Turkish nationalists. This same year, a new Turkish government formed in Ankara led by Mustafa Kemal.

**1921** Turkish government, unrecognized by the European occupying powers, adopts a new Constitution and National Pact, confirming the right of full Turkish sovereignty over lands with a Turkish majority.

**1922** Abolition of the Ottoman dynasty by the newly formed Republic of Turkey.

**1919-1923** Turkish War of Independence: Mustafa Kemal, who became known as "Atatürk" (father of the Turks) and leader of the Republican People's Party, is named President of the new Republic of Turkey. Ankara, or Yeni Şehir (new city), is declared the capital. The war concludes with the Treaty of Lausanne: the Allied forces recognized Turkey's sovereignty within its newly defined borders, and Turkey gives up all claims on former Ottoman lands.

## The Early Republic (1923-1960)

**1924** A new constitution is written, granting all power to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, and the Caliphate (religious leader of [Sunni] Muslims) is abolished.

**1925-1935** The new republic undergoes a period of reforms and attempts at modernization known as the Kemalist reforms, after Mustafa Kemal. Turkey declares itself a secular state following the French concept of laïcité, strictly separating government affairs from the influence of religion. Numerous reforms are in fact aimed at diminishing the role of religion, specifically Islam, in everyday life. Medreses (Islamic religious schools) are abolished, as is the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Pious Foundations. Restrictions are announced on the use of the Fez (a traditional hat often associated with pious men), and women are discouraged from wearing headscarves except during prayer. The call to prayer, always done in Arabic, is Turkified. Sunday is declared as the new weekly day of rest, rather than Friday. Western fashions are encouraged, including suits and hats for men and short dresses for women. Family names are introduced, based on Western naming traditions. Women are encouraged and given greater freedom to participate in public life, to a degree.

**1928** Alphabet Reform. Ottoman Turkish, written in Arabic script, is transformed into modern Turkish written in Latin script. The immediate effect was to make Turkish society illiterate almost overnight. In the long run, it would infuse the language with traditional Turkish words, eliminating some Arabic and Persian loan words.

**1938** Atatürk dies at the Dolmabahçe sarayı (palace).

**1939-1945** Turkey is a neutral country for World War II.

**1946** First democratic and multi-party election. The ruling Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi) wins.

**1950** The Democratic Party (Demokrat Parti) wins the general election, marking the first time the Republican People's Party has been out of power.

**1960** Coup d'état. After years of political turmoil, and out of fear that the ruling Democratic Party had grown too authoritarian, the military seizes power in order to "prevent fratricide." The coup is orchestrated by

the National Union Committee, led by General Cemal Gürsel. President Celal Bayar and Prime Minister Adnan Menderes are arrested, and Menderes is executed. After the military takeover, General Gürsel is appointed President, Prime Minister, and Minister of Defense. This is also the beginning of a generally recognized Second Republic.

## The Era of Coups/Transition (1961-1996)

**1961** A new constitution is instituted after a democratic vote by Turkish citizens.

**1971** Military Memorandum. Like many other countries in the 1960s, Turkey witnesses a surge in political activism, with new groups forming on the far right and far left. The decade is also marked by a difficult economic recession. The government, led by Süleyman Demirel, becomes weakened by defections and essentially paralyzed. Rather than sending tanks into the streets, as it did in 1960, the military sends a memorandum, demanding the formation of a strong government and an end to the political strife. It is essentially an ultimatum. Demirel resigns and a new government is formed.

**1980** Coup d'état. Political activism in the 1970s grows deadly, with assassinations and counter-assassinations. Minority groups such as Armenians, Kurds, and Shi'is, whose place in Turkish society is complicated, actively discuss separatist ideas. When the state government essentially stops functioning, the military once again seizes power. A number of purges follow. Through a new "public clothing regulation," women's headscarves are officially banned in public institutions, (government offices, schools, and universities). The 1980 military coup is generally recognized as the beginning of the Third Republic.

**1982** A new constitution is instituted after a democratic vote by Turkish citizens.

**1990s** The Gülen movement, or *Hizmet* (Service), grows in popularity and influence. An Islamic civil society movement, it is named after Fethullah Gülen, a popular Muslim preacher. Hizmet owns schools and universities all over the world and has a significant publishing industry, including newspapers, books, and a television program.

**1994** Rise of the Refah Party, an Islamist party. This is the first instance of official political Islam in the Republic of Turkey.

**1995** Necmettin Erbakan, leader of the Refah Party, becomes Prime Minister, marking the first time the country is ruled by an Islamist political leader.

## The Erdoğan Era (1997-Present)

**1997** Turkish military memorandum. With the role of Islam in the public sphere increasing, the military purges some 160 officers and other personnel on suspicion of Islamist leanings. The military leads a "soft coup," pressuring Erbakan to resign. The headscarf ban, enacted after the 1980 coup, is more strictly enforced. Fethullah Gülen, the popular preacher, is charged with inciting religious hatred and goes into self-exile. He currently lives in Pennsylvania. The Kemalist doctrine is reinstated.

**1998** The Refah Party, and Necmettin Erbakan individually, are banned from politics. In February, Istanbul mayor and Refah member Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is charged with inciting religious hatred after quoting a poem by Ziya Gökalp (1876-1924), a Turkish sociologist and influential writer. Erdoğan receives a ten-month jail sentence. Eventually, Erdoğan and Abdullah Gül form the new Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi/AK Parti).

**2003** Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is elected Prime Minister of Turkey. He holds the position until 2014, when he becomes President.

**2010** Ban against wearing headscarves in universities is lifted. Similar bans against headscarves in public institutions and high schools are lifted in 2013 and 2014.

**2013** Gezi Protests. A peaceful sit-in protest is organized by groups opposed to the government's plan to demolish Gezi Park in central Istanbul. After a violent police reaction, a number of other protest movements develop. Gezi Park remains a watershed moment in contemporary Turkish politics. Protest groups originally galvanized by the 2013 sit-in have developed into several splinter groups willing to oppose the government on its different controversial plans. The government continues to discuss ways of removing the park, including discussion this past summer of bulldozing it and building a large mosque.

**2016** Alleged attempted coup d'état. In a series of bizarre events, factions within the military attempt a coup. The coup is halted by protests in the streets after President Erdoğan, via Facetime, calls for the Turkish population to defend democracy and the country against the plotters. Erdoğan almost immediately blames Gülen and Hizmet with attempting to lead the coup. As a means of suppressing Hizmet, books by and about the group have been destroyed in book burnings. The daily Hizmet newspaper, *Zaman*, has been outlawed, its archive destroyed, and finally the group has been labelled a terrorist organization. More broadly throughout Turkey, the government has since used the incidents of *Onbeş Temmuz* (July 15, the day of the alleged coup) as a means of solidifying more power, attacking all sectors of society, including freedom of the press and academics/educators. The purges continue in Turkey today, unabated and with no end in sight. It is for these current reasons this exhibition is named *Yasak*/Banned.

The three curators, Erdağ Göknar, Sean Swanick and Didem Havlioğlu with *hardak çay*.

## Bibliography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