

# FILM REVIEW OF PAOLO AND VITTORIO TAVIANI'S "THE LARK FARM".

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Alain NY, NY -- "The Lark Farm", the movie version of Antonia Arslan's novel which has won over 15 awards, has finally reached the shores of the Americas. The story narrates Arslan family's history in Ottoman Turkey in 1915. It puts names, faces, culture in a moving historical perspective.

The film shows real integration of Armenians with Turkish families. They socialize in each others homes and even party together. Government and military officials plant the virus of ethnic cleansing in town. Right away, we see the socialization abruptly cut, vilification of Armenians "rich traitors", where even singing is a critical threat. The official directive makes the taking of lives, confiscations of property, lands and all assets, Legal.

We wanted to feel sorry for the few sympathetic Turks, who themselves are "trapped". They would rather be in their village or on the Russian front instead of being part of deporting through the desert, children and women, whose husbands, brothers and male children were brutally killed.

Students of world history know that the easiest way for a shaky government to strengthen its base, is to implant fear, find a scapegoat, to exhibit examples for those thinking of criticizing it.

Armenians have lived in Anatolia for over 2,500 years, way before Turks. The massive evil committed against them uprooted them, and their culture from their ancestral lands. The Turkish Archives are clear (they say) of any Genocidal intent but Turkey still cannot explain logically what happened to The Armenians. If it was self-defense as Turkey states, which arms were used, which armies and which battles were fought?

Will we ever learn that facts can only be substantiated by objective independent observers? The challenge for today's society asks whether we have evolved or are similar tactics still being used. The simple question is, are Christians, Alawai, or other non-Turks truly equal? Was the environment around Hrant Dink, Father Santoro the catholic priest and three missionaries that lost their lives allowed by the hatred, and racism within the system?

The majority of the Turkish population has learned to self censor itself since any criticism of the system is viewed as an insult. Turkey is still worshiping the dark pages and need to look and learn the lessons that other nations have by opening up their educational, societal and media system.

It is regrettable and painful for many Turks to acknowledge Genocide but it's even more painful to live with it in your soul, having to constantly defend ancestors. When we justify criminal conduct, even if it happens in the context of war, we permanently damage our self. Remaining silent to hatred, racism, or atrocities, not only contributes to the wrong but it finds a way to attach itself to our character.

If Turkey is serious about living in the 21st century environment, it must stop using threats and fear. The 23 countries which acknowledged the Armenian Genocide did not do so to be against Turkey but to help Turkey. It's like telling someone that he is sinking and that he needs outside help and he answers that he does not need anyone's help.

In the last few years, Turkish writers and intellectuals have, with great risks to their lives, attempted to bring respect and honor to their country by promoting its candidacy into the European Union. To their amazement, Turkey, despite its aspirations, finds itself stuck, simply because it cannot escape the Nationalism on one side and Islamism on the other. It's caught in a quagmire, living in denial, and forced to pay enormous lobbying sums to keep the lid on the

Truth.

Friends of mine used to say "In areas where people have not yet seen the enlightenment, they have difficulty putting aside their greedy tribal instincts and will never even consider giving you a slice of the pie." We are fortunate to have a pie big enough so that we can all share, both physically and intellectually.

Reconciliation and Repentance cannot happen on handshakes, not through historians, or even politicians. People need freedom of speech, equal rights, open education, neighborly relations, fellowship, and an even playing field before healing can come about and yes, a real demonstration of redemption.

The one above is watching...

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