PERA PALACE HOTEL

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Category: Did You Know?

Turkish memoirist Ziya Bey wrote that during British/French occupation of Istanbul, Pera Palace hotel (one of the most celebrated hotels of the city and rival of the Tokatlian Hotel which was featured in mystery writer Agatha Christie's work) quickly established itself as a place where "foreign officers and business men are feted by unscrupulous Levantine adventurers and drink and dance with fallen Russian princesses, or with Greek and Armenian girls whose morals are, to say the least, as light as their flimsy gowns." Bey, of course, didn't mention that Armenian and Greek girls could have become prostitutes because of the genocides perpetrated against them by the Turks. Meanwhile, according to another Turk, "Greek and Armenian women donned the costume of the Turkish women in order to defile them in the eyes of the allies…" During the same period, Dr. Yervant Tachdjian was a leading physician treating allied troops for syphilis, gonorrhea, and other genitourinary infections. There were 40,000 prostitutes and 175 brothels in the city.

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