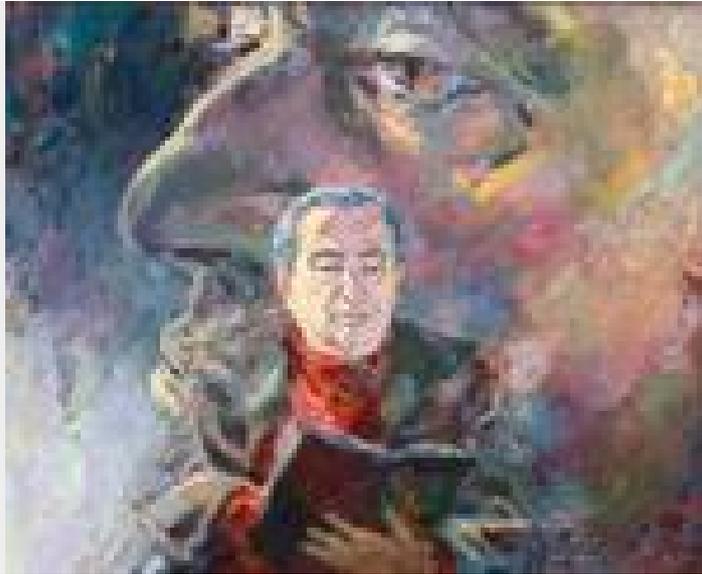


TURKEY SUBSIDIZES SUMPTUOUS GALA NIGHT

Posted on November 7, 2010 by Keghart



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Prof. Hovhannes I. Pilikian, London UK, 7 November 2010

The days of scratching and scraping for the annual Turkish Film Festival seem to be over. 

They seem now to be awash with money. It took Miss Vedide Kaymak, the Founder and Artistic Director 16 very long years to travel the half-hour on the London Underground from Stoke Newington Rio Cinema to the sumptuous lush and plush soft red seats of the Empire Cinema in Leicester Square, and a glorious Gala Night (4th November, 2010) opened by His Excellency the Ambassador of Turkey.

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Although the 15th Festival last year was as sumptuous at the Bafta Viewing Theatre, also in Piccadilly, but nowhere the presence of Turkish officialdom was as marked as this year, which I welcome wholeheartedly, with positive hope and expectation, but with the usual very wise British caution and suspicion of heavy financial involvement by Big Government (s).

The Ambassador said he felt "humble" before an artist like Şener Şen, who was given a Lifetime Achievement Award to great public applause and acclaim. Unfortunately Mr. Şen spoke in Turkish - I asked my neighbor to translate only the first sentence - he said, Mr. Şen wanted to speak in Turkish, saying, why should he speak English when everybody in the audience was Turkish .

Obviously everybody like me was not Turkish. Mr. Şen could not have been so ignorant. If he was being funny, then indeed he was being funny! If it was a joke, it sure was a tasteless one, insulting the host community. If it was not a joke, then it is serious indeed, as it may be a bone thrown to the dogs of ultra-nationalism, and does not augur well for the take-over of the Festival by the Turkish officialdom.

The Ambassador's emotional humility is not enough - his Excellency needs to persuade his Government to once and for all eliminate by now the world-famous Article 301 of the penal code racist to the core, for the mere use of the Nationalists, to imprison people for "insulting the Turkish identity". The creative spirit, like fish out of water, needs freedom of speech and expression in any culture. Depriving it of its water, the post-modern Turkish cinema will die before it can help its own people and the world to higher consciousness and democratization.

Those (especially Big Business) who pay the Piper always, like Mephistopheles, seek to buy the Piper's Soul, his Pipe, and his ass too . only to abuse it and eventually to take it to the capitalist Hell, to consumerize the 'nation', depoliticizing its multi-ethnic people, dumbing them down for whoring and drugging, who then will be primed for placid hamburgerization - too stupid to protest and rebel against their post-modern mafia-capitalist rapists.

There is little doubt that official Turkey is going through the birth-pangs of European-style Democracy. There is an undoubted enlightened stratum of Turkish officialdom that grasps the vital necessity and worth of a vibrant multi-ethnic culture to forge the civilized democratic soul of a country and its inhabitants. The Turkish cinema today is a magnificent example of a culture that can save the soul of a nation; cleanse it from its fascist past, and build a decent humanitarian civil society.

Used as a tool for cultural consciousness - meaning freedom of thought and democratic expression - Turkish cinema can contribute immensely to the noble intentions of a government of people, by the people, and for the people (as for example in President Chavez's Venezuela today). Highly evolved, it can also serve as an example to other cinematic cultures in the developed world - like Hollywood, where the film industry is rotting in the paths of mindless drug-induced violence and pornography - Tarantino, whose very own foul-mouth stinks worse than his films - and in the developing countries trying to survive the onslaught of American cinematic perversions.

I am certain (although only guessing, as I know only what is in the public domain - the news-media) that the enlightened Turkish intellectual government elite understands this very well. The Ergenekon trials are a brave and necessary political-military laxative towards the European Union style democracy.

But it also contains the seeds of immense explosive danger - it is incredible, and inconsolably depressing that 300 people - not illiterate peasants, not uneducated drug addicts and pimps - but writers, professors, editors, and high-ranking military officials are detained for plotting assassinations, like the murder of the Armenian Hrant Dink, but also a dozen other Turkish left-wing journalists before him, similarly a failed attempt on the very life of Orhan Pamuk, who may not have been worthy of a Nobel Literature Prize, but whose life (never mind bank-balance) was definitely saved because of it. Those evil intellectuals continuously worked for military coups, which in countries like Turkey means a form of State-Terror with ordinary people disappearing right left and centre, dead bodies rotting in forests and rivers , ethnic groups of women and children raped and their men-folk genocided!

The recruiting of intellectuals who should know better, as criminals, was a British Empire invention, adopted by the CIA and KGB, still practiced by the CIA and MI6 (or is it MI5, I can never tell the difference! Let's say both anyway) and their Turkish counterparts. I do not know what they are called!)

Here is a historical fact impossible to deny - in the first 5 decades of the 20th century, the well

educated military elite in Turkey has overthrown not one, but 4 democratically elected Turkish governments. hence my concern about the sudden take-over of the Turkish Film Festival started by the deeply intelligent Miss Vedide Kaymak, humbly, sweetly, struggling day and night to help the cause of an extraordinary cultural value - modern Turkish cinema, post-modern and innovative in content, but universal in humanitarian worth .

Ottoman diplomacy is very subtle and is a direct product of the notorious Byzantine tradition of knifing you while kissing you, poisoning you while entertaining you sumptuously with wine and women and culinary delicacies. It is how they murdered the 200 intellectuals of the Armenian elite in 1915, apologizing to them for their 'accidental' arrest, or the rats in the prisons, all of them Writers, Doctors, Lawyers, Parliament Members, Freemason brothers of the Young Turks - Krikor Zohrab, a very prominent French educated and published Lawyer and MP and a Chekhovian short-story writer in Armenian is thought to have been the Grandmaster of the lodge to which Talaat and Enver and Djemal, the genociding Triumvirate of the Young Turks belonged.

The poor 'brother' Zohrab, their very own Worshipful Grandmaster frantically wished to send the news of his arrest to them hoping to be released immediately as he was not even told the crime for which he was arrested , and he was not told it, because none existed! He had morning tea with Talaat, who lacked any ounce of humanity in his Neanderthal brain. Talaat, the then Prime Minister, had declared notoriously to the Jewish Morgenthau, the American Ambassador in Turkey, that only a single Armenian must remain to be skinned alive and stuffed dead in a Museum-case - case for a Young Turk taxidermist!

On this sumptuous night of the opening of the 2010 Turkish Film Festival, I pray that the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism helps the blossoming of modern Turkish cinema, for the sake of its people's spiritual health and political democratization rather than its gradual destruction into American hamburgerization and cultural death.

