

Tunisian film director spoke at the EMU: “We don’t want an Islamist dictatorship”

Gündem News

“The revolution is here. Ok. But now we have to be careful not to regress,” the Tunisian film director Walid Tayaa said at a film screening at the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies. The Tunisian Film Screening, which took place in the Green Hall on March 13th, covered two short films, and a documentary by three young Tunisian film directors, Walid Mattar, Elyses Baccar and Walid Tayaa himself. The films depicted the ordinary life in the post-revolutionary Tunisia, After the screening, Walid Tayaa answered the questions of the audience. Comparing

Tunisian cinema before and after the revolution, Tayaa said that, before the revolution, it was difficult to make films and have discussions about them because everyone was in a state of fear. “If we had a screening here in Cyprus before the revolution, they would have sent someone from the embassy to report about the event, and I would be interrogated at the airport on my way back home. Now, we are not afraid anymore” Tayaa said. However, the young director was cautious about the rise of Islamist extremism taking place in his country after the revolution. “For sure, we don’t want to change one dictatorship by another. We don’t want an Islamist

dictatorship,” Tayaa said. He described secularism as the new battlefield in the country. Tayaa criticized the state’s interference in the private lives of the citizens. “The state should not interfere with people’s lives. When the state decides, how you would live your life, it becomes a problem. And this is secularism for me. That is why I think the religion must stay in the mosque, but not in the parliament. When we introduce religion to politics, it becomes a very big problem because we start the discussion from a metaphysical point of view. But we need real solutions for our problems such as poverty, unemployment, women’s rights or human rights,” he said.



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Humanitarian aid to Syria sold in the black market

Hussein Alrajab

Since the beginning of the Syrian Revolution on March 15, 2011, the Syrian regime cut the flow of urgent materials to the rebellious areas as a deterrent attempt and a provocative disciplinary method to urge them to stop the revolution, causing severe distress and pain on the Syrian people. The regime’s attempt has been vain. The fighting has only intensified, especially in Homs and Damascus.

The humanitarian assistance, containing these urgent materials, especially the essential ones such as food and medicine, were donated by a number of charitable organizations and friendly countries, and were

delivered to Syria through the neighboring countries, especially Jordan and Lebanon.

But unfortunately, after long investigation it has been discovered that only a part of this humanitarian aid reaches its destination. The other part is either sold in the Syrian black market because of the high prices of these rare goods, or sold in the neighboring countries, with the revenue returning to the state. For example, we visited Jordan and made inquiries about the relief materials. To our surprise, we found some of these commodities sold in the stores. The situation is not much different in the refugee camps. The tent camp Zaatari is notorious.



Some of the medical aid sent to the country is said to be expired.

Refugees suffer from a bad situation, which gets worse in the cold winter and the dusty summer. The aid is sent to monopolists who sell them to increase their personal gains at the expense of Syrian people. In our visit to one of the field hospitals in Kvrjsna, a village in the countryside of Edlib, we found scarce medicines and medical supplies needed to treat the injuries caused by shelling or clashes. However, the director of the hospital Dr. Abdul Razzaq Subaih said that some of the medical aid they received was either expired or was only valid for a short time, ranging from a week to a month. As such, the specter of death threatens the lives of the patients. Some of the friends of the Syrian people have sent expired medical aid; and some of the medical aid is stolen and sent to neighboring countries, particularly to Jordan and Lebanon. Those who commit this crime deprive thousands of Syrian patients of their right to treatment. They die slowly with all the accompanying pain.



Dr. Subaih also said that they do not receive any external support, neither from the dissident National Council nor from the international parties. The aid they receive is scarce. In addition, he said that the hospital lacks many of the medical equipment, especially the ones used in surgeries, and the medicine used to treat burns or injuries, caused by shrapnel. In most cases, medication is not available in the hospital, forcing the hospital management to buy medicine from Lebanon and at their own expense.



Only part of the humanitarian aid reaches the needed.

Amateur theater groups need support

Abtin Badie

Famagusta Youth Center (MAGEM) Theater Group started its activity as an amateur group in August 2007 as Iskele Culture and Arts Society Theater Group in the Iskele city area. Its initiators are Bilen Kılıç and Sami Yakar. Sami Yakar has been the director of this group ever since. The theater group exists of 20 actors from which many are graduates of the Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU). The reason for establishing a theater group in Iskele was that in that area there was no such group or activity. Their aim is to spread the interest and passion for the art and culture of theater just for the sake of theater itself and not for anything in return such as money or fame. The first play that was staged was a comedy called 'Kadınlık Bizde Kalsın' by the Turkish writer, director and actor Yılmaz Erdoğan in 2007. After this the theater group prepared and performed a new play every year up until today. They have participated in many local theater festivals as they have performed in festivals in Turkey each year.

The success is frequently growing!

This theater group is growing year by year and it is becoming more professional. It has achieved popularity among the audience. The media and theater lovers have positive feedback and comments. The success of this group is proven each year by the awards they receive for their performance. One of the awards is the 'Direklerarası Seyircileri Tiyatro Ödülleri' from Istanbul, which they have received for the last 3 years. This year the theater group has transferred to

MAGEM in Famagusta and will continue its artistic work under the new name MAGEM Theater Group (MAGEM Tiyatro Topluluğu). Their current play is called 'Hangisi Babası', an adaptation from the adult comedy play 'Run for Your Wife' written by Ray Cooney in 1983.

I have interviewed one of the members of this theater group, Kamil Saldun, who has been performing in this group since 2007. Kamil is also a graduate of the EMU.

Why did you join this theater group?

I was acting from before. My friends and I were looking for a possibility to form our own theater group where everybody shares the same interest and love for theater. So, when we had this chance I decided to join the group.



The group continues its activities under the name Famagusta Youth Center (MAGEM) Theater Group.

worst one?

I have many funny memories from my theater performances but one of them was in a small village, where a mentally disabled young man all of a sudden jumped on the stage and started to talk to us. We were wondering what will happen but we were forced to continue with our performance and the young man became a part of the performance. It was really funny to interact with him and this made everyone laugh and enjoy the performance even more. One of my worst experiences was when we were again in a small village and some kids started to throw stones at us while we were performing. They were especially interested in hurting the girls on stage. Later during the performance we tried to take revenge from them and tried to catch them but without success.



Kamil Saldun

Would you go to abroad for a theater project?

If there would be a project that would support the art of theater and has a serious influence on it then I definitely would.

Do you and other members of your group go to other plays? And how do you feel about it?

Yes, of course, we do. It is very important to see the work of other theater groups. Watching a play is as exciting as performing in a play. It is also important to support other theater activities. I think we as performers ourselves can understand and feel the people on stage the best since we feel their excitement and joy.

How can somebody know if she/he is capable of performing in a theater?

You have to be a good observer and a good audience for theater first. If someone is really passionate about performing and theater then I suggest trying out performing and finding out if she/he is able to perform.

Do you like to remain as an actor or are you thinking of becoming a director or even both of it?

We are actually not only performing in our theater group. We direct each other while preparing for a play. I do not know what the future brings but everything is possible. I also would like to experience the directing of a theater play.

What are your expectations and wish regarding theater in Cyprus?

I wish that the authorities and organizations would support the amateur theater groups much more than they do now. There is not even a little budget or financial support for the amateur theater groups. We are forced to find sponsors for our projects ourselves. So far we did not have any support from the authorities or governmental organizations but we still continued for 5 years to work as a theater group without getting paid. We started as an amateur theater group but our work has become more and more professional through hard work and under hard conditions. We have worked on ourselves and managed to become professional with every play that we prepared without getting paid. Therefore it is disappointing to see that here in Cyprus, people governing and being in charge of culture, education and politics do not do what they get paid for. They should be aware of the lack of cultural and artistic activities here and support independent cultural and artistic activities and groups instead of focusing on governmental events only.



The amateur theater group has received many awards

What do you feel before and after your performance? Are you excited or afraid before going on stage?

Theater is live performance and therefore you should not do any mistakes on stage while performing. This is why, of course, all of us are very excited and a bit afraid of making mistakes. But this excitement, at the same time, fills you with joy, and makes you motivated to go on stage and perform. Before going on stage you slip into the character that you will be performing and leave your 'real' self behind the stage. This continues until the end of the play. After the performance all the stress, excitement and tiredness are gone because of the reactions of the audience. I am filled with happiness because I have shared all the hard work and the emotions with my audience. When I see happy and satisfied people then this makes me feel really good.

What is the funniest event that has happened to you and what is the

Acting in theater involves memorizing a lot of text. How long do you need usually to memorize your text?

This depends on the role you play. It needs a lot of practice. The thing is that you have to adapt to the character you will play. The sooner you adapt to the role the faster you can memorize your text.

What if one of you did not memorize the text well?

Then we have to help her/him because the performance gets stuck otherwise. It damages the play of course if someone forgets the text. There are some ways to help your fellow theater member to remember the text because this is a team work and it is not enough to memorize your own text and focus only on yourself. You have to cooperate with everyone on stage.

Would you like to do a career in theater or do you prefer to leave it as a hobby?

I would prefer to turn my hobby to my career. There is nothing more pleasant and enjoyable than earning money and being successful at what you really love to do. I really enjoy performing as an actor in the theater and I wish I could turn it to my actual job.

Worldwide dancing campaign to end violence against women

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hanife Aliefendioğlu

In 200 different countries and hundreds of cities around the world women danced this year to stop violence against women. In the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), Famagusta Municipality Youth Center (MAGEM) and Nicosia Feminist Atelier (FEMA) participated in the campaign. Women danced with the same music and choreography to show cross cultural strength and solidarity. One Billion Rising is a campaign to end violence against women. Every year on the 14th of February it invites one billion women to raise their voice and demands. Who are these one billion women? They represent the number of women who face violence in the world because 'one in three women on the planet will be raped or beaten in her lifetime.' They managed to reach governments and other decision mechanisms in many parts of the world including the US Congress to pass The Violence Against

Women Act. The campaign did not forget the intersection between violence against women and other oppressive mechanisms such as patriarchy, poverty, environmental plunder, militarization and immigration. Behind this creative event is V'Day College Community and Campaign. V'Day is a 15 years old activists' network whose activism has spread to 140 different countries fighting to stop violence against women by increasing awareness and raising money with creative events. They started to raise money by Eve Ensler's Vagina Monologues which until now has been performed 5500 times all around the world. Vagina Monologues appears to be the most wanted performance by supportive audiences so far. In addition to that, they use literary texts, reading groups, documentary film screenings and many other awareness raising activities and events. They say they will continue these activities until the violence stops. <http://www.onebillionrising.org/news>



Women in 200 different countries and hundreds of cities danced to stop violence against women.

Hello... Is there anyone else from my home country?

Andrew Mpepo

My name is Andrew Joseph Mpepo. I am from Tanzania located in the

eastern part of Africa and I am the only Tanzanian on the campus. My experience of being the only Tanzanian at the EMU has been amazing. I

have been able to make friends with so many people from all over the world and I think it's because I was the only one here and everyone was so excited when I told them I am from Tanzania. To be honest, being the only one here from my country has been the best experience for me because it was easy to make friendships with other people. I have had a good experience because everyone is so friendly and people don't really judge you regardless of where you come from or who you are. At first it was very difficult for me because I really started missing my home country and especially the language (Swahili) but I felt more welcomed when I met students from Kenya, which is Tanzania's neighboring country, and we share the same language. The other thing is that the food is somehow different. So, it wasn't easy to adapt to the local food but as time went on I started to get used to it and now I can't complain. I like the university and especially academically. The lecturers are very nice and close to the students unlike back home or the previous universities I have been before. The only difficult thing I am facing at the EMU is the Turkish language. It is so hard

to communicate with people if you can't speak it. To me this has been the biggest task lately. As much fun as it is to be the only Tanzanian at the EMU but I think if we had more students from my country, it would be better because, in this way, I wouldn't miss my home country too much like the way I do now.

This is my experience as being the only student from my country. There is another student at the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies who has a similar experience. She is also the only student from her country. Her name is Nicki Cillie. She is from South Africa. I also interviewed her, and asked her about her experience as being the only student from her country. This is what she told me:

"My experience of being the only South African on the campus has been very fun so far because, unlike in South Africa, I can be anywhere at any time without anyone asking me where I am, but the big thing about being the only one here is that I miss my people and my language so much. What I miss the most is the life style because the people in Cyprus are not as friendly as in South Africa. Whenever I try to

smile at someone then the person looks at me with confusion like 'why is she smiling at me'. I like to make friends and say hello to people and chat a little. So, it's kind of hard for me when people around here don't do that but I like the people's values here and this might be because in my country there are so many fake values, so I really do respect their values here but, all on all, I really miss my people. I really like the university because in South Africa you can't find the course I am doing right now, which is Public Relations and Advertisement, and the main problem is that you can't do the two courses at once whereby you have to do advertising in college, then public relations in university. So, this is very ideal. Another thing is that I need space and here I feel free, which I like. It is fun being the only South African but I really don't think it's a good thing to be the only one. I kind of think it would be much better if there were more South Africans because then the university would be more recognized in South Africa. All in all, it's too early to say if I've made the right decision but I believe that I did."



Andrew Joseph Mpepo is the only EMU student from Tanzania.

IV. Futsal Cup of Nations

Andrew Mpepo

The first international futsal tournament at Eastern Mediterranean University was organized in the Spring Semester of the 2009-2010 Academic Year. This year, EMU Social and Cultural Activities Directorate, whose mission is to arrange and coordinate all social, cultural and sports activities, organised the Fourth Futsal Cup of Nations, with men and women playing in two different categories.

The tournament started on March 12, 2013 in EMU's Lala Mustafa Pasha Sports Center, and lasted for 15 days with 26 student teams participating, both males and females, from different parts of the world. The tournament was organized in the forms of groups for men and league for women. There were 4 groups in the tournament. Group A consisted of Nigeria, Azerbaijan, Guinea, Ghana and Pakistan; Group B of Turkey, Lebanon, Cameroon, Krygyzstan and Palestine; Group C of Iran, Kazakhstan, Libya, Tajikistan and Iraq; and Group D of Zimbabwe, Jordan, TRNC, Sudan and Turkmenistan.

On the opening day the sports center was full with students from different countries each supporting their teams. The first game in the men's category was played by Turkey against Lebanon, with the first goal this year coming from Turkey at the 11th minute and the game ended with the score of 5-2. In the women's league, the first match was between Nigeria and TRNC with the first goal scored by Ayşe Mullacuma from TRNC making her team win by 4-2.

In the men's category only 8 teams were able

to go for the quarter finals. They were Nigeria, Cameroon, Palestine, Guinea, Libya, Iran, Jordan and TRNC. In the women's category, TRNC, Russia, Cameroon and Nigeria all went through for semifinals.

On 25th of March the semifinals were played whereby the fixtures were Nigeria vs. Palestine and TRNC vs. Iran for men with Iran and Nigeria making their way to the finals for the second year in a row. On the women side Nigeria beat Cameroon, and TRNC beat Russia making their way to the finals.

On the final day of the tournament, the EMU Rector Prof. Dr. Abdullah Y. Oztoprak was there to witness the success of the new champions. Only four games were played that day. For

the third place, Russia played against Cameroon in the women's category, and Palestine played against the TRNC in the men's category. Cameroon and Palestine defeated their rivals.

After the two games, there was a shot break in which the fans watched live performances and dances. Then that moment that everyone had been waiting for had come with two final games from the best teams in EMU. The final games were TRNC vs. Nigeria for the women and Nigeria vs. Iran for the men.

In the women's category the TRNC team won the title. The last game of the tournament was between Nigeria and Iran in men's category.

The game was very dramatic with the Iranian



team showing some weakness in their defense giving a chance to Nigeria to score some remarkable goals and to win the game by 3-1. After the game it was time for the closing ceremony and the trophy presentation. In men's category, Palestine was awarded the third position, Iran took the second position and Nigeria became the champion again. On the women side, Russia took the third position, Nigeria the second position and the TRNC became the champion. Harun Saad from Nigeria and Ayşe Mullacuma from the TRNC were awarded as the most valuable players. Top scorers were Mehmet from TRNC (men) with 13 goals, and Ayşe Mullacuma from TRNC (women) with 9 goals. Adedayo (women) and Jude Nwachukwu (men), both from Nigeria, were awarded as the best goal keepers. The best fair player award went to Arina Vasilenko from Russia (women) and Hazem from Libya (men). Libya (men) and Cameroon (women) were selected as the best fair play teams.



Palestine was awarded the third position in men's category. Iran took the second position and Nigeria became the champion again.

Norooz Mobarak*



Norooz table- Haft Sin

Elnaz Nasehi

We all miss home. While preparing “Haft Sin” (Norooz Table) to welcome the Persian New Year, Norooz, all Iranian students at the EMU miss Iran and their families. Norooz is one of the oldest festivals, which has been celebrated from ancient times as the beginning of the new year in the first day of Spring. It is usually on March 21st or the previous/following day depending on when the astronomical Northward equinox is observed. The United Nations General Assembly recognized the International Day of Nowruz in 2010 as a spring festival of Persian origin which has been celebrated for over 3,000 years.

From the very beginning of its social life, human beings noticed the repetition and return of natural events in the form of different seasons, and that's how the beginning of a new year among ancient people mostly correspond to the planting or harvesting time. Although Norooz is associated with 3 different, and at the same time connected, origins, it undoubtedly has roots in natural changes as the beginning of spring.

Norooz is rooted in Persian religion, monarchy, and myth. It is known as the holiest Zoroastrian (ancient Persian monotheist religion) celebration. According to Zoroastrian texts, Jamshid, the Persian mythical king saved mankind from a lethal winter. Therefore, Norooz marks the first day after this long winter in which all the universe rejuvenate. This

religious festival was combined with monarchical celebration in the Achaemenian era (548-330 BC) in which kings from different nations under the Great Empire of Persia used to bring gifts to the King of the Kings (Shahanshah) in Persepolis, the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid Empire.

Norooz and Sadeh (celebrated in the mid-winter) are two Zoroastrian festivals which have survived in Iranian society after the attack of the Arabs in 650 AD and other invading tribes. Nowadays Norooz with its cultural potential, although being robbed from its religious implication, is celebrated as a New Year not only in Iran but also in many countries from China to Balkans, especially in Azerbaijan, India, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Turkey, and Uzbekistan. Nowadays in Iran we get prepared for Norooz by “Khouneh Tekouni” (shaking home) as a welcoming spring cleaning in which all members of the family attend. The house will be cleaned; the yard will be cultivated again; so all Iranian families get together around the “Haft Sin” in their cleaned houses and their new clothes. Haft sin (seven “s”) consists of seven growing food which are the symbol of

new life: Sib (Apple), Sabze (grass), Senjed (buckthorn), Somagh (sumac), Sir (garlic), Serke (vinegar), and Samanoo (a kind of dessert made of wheat germ). In addition, a mirror, candles, dyed eggs, goldfish in the bowl of water, flowers, coins and religious books (Quran or Zoroastrians' Avesta, etc) also decorate the Haft Sin.

During the 13 days of Norooz holiday which are the most important part of the year for Iranian people, they visit relatives and friends and travel to other cities. In the 13th day of Fardardin (the first month in Iranian calendar) which is called “Sizdah Bedar” (literally meaning ‘passing the thirteen day’) the family collect the Haft Sin and leave home in order to avoid the bad luck associated with number thirteen by spending time outside and reconciliation with nature.

Although being far from their homeland and families, all Iranian around the world celebrate Norooz by gathering around Haft Sin, visiting one another, and going on a picnic on Sizdah Bedar. I'm sure you can find many Iranian students and families celebrating Sizdah Bedar on 2nd of April in Salamis picnic camp having Persian Kabab or Ashe Reshte (traditional Iranian soup).

The fortress of immortals

Jamshid is one of the most mythical kings in ancient Iranian culture that was first been admired by people for his faith and justice but soon he arrogantly claimed to be God. Therefore, God removed his celestial blessing and he lost his reputation. The story of Norooz goes back to the time of his glory at the beginning of his reign when angels informed him that Ahriman (the Zoroastrian Devil) was planning to demolish all live creatures by a dreadful long winter. Jamshid who is in this Persian story comparable to Noah was ordered to build an underground city in order to protect all God-created species of animals, plants and human beings. This city is titled “Vara Jam-Kard” (literally means the city that Jamshid built) in Avesta. Norooz is the first day after this long winter in which human beings celebrate their



Dyed eggs for Norooz table

freedom from underground life with the start of spring. According to archaeological findings, there are many places associated with it mostly in Iran and even in western Asia, e.g. the ancient underground city of Derinkuyu in Cappadocia, Turkey. This city not only has special association with the beginning of human civilization but also has been anticipated to have a crucial role in Armageddon before the resurrection day in which all immortal ancient heroic inhabitants would come out to help the promised saviour – a descendent of Zoaster and Jamshid.

Charshanbe Soori

We set small fire and jump over it in the last Wednesday night of the year while singing “zardi-ye man az to, sorkhi-ye to az man”, which literally means “my yellow paleness is yours, your warm red energy is mine.” We celebrate this fiery night of “Charshanbe Soori” (Wednesday eve) as a celebration of creation of fire and humans. Our long happy night will be colorful with fire, dyed eggs, and Ajeel (mixed nuts).

*** Happy Nowrouz**

Ashe Reshte, the magical taste of Persia

The taste of this Persian soup brings back many memories for us from our childhood when we gather in the cold nights of winter to share the miraculous velvety experience of Ashe Reshte.

It is better to soak grains overnight in order to prevent bloating. Boil Chickpeas and beans in a big pot. When they get softer add lentils and let them boil for 1 more hour. In this step add all the minced greens with 1 cup of fried chopped onion. You should know that Ashe Reshte is not so watery so add enough water if necessary. When the color of greens changed and they got boiled, the last step is adding Reshte. It's better to add Reshte 20-30 minutes before serving time. To make it thicker you can solve 1 table spoon of flour in cold water and pour it to Ash before adding reshte. It's optional to add kashk to the Ash



before serving it or just to decorate it on top of it. I usually don't add salt because Kashk is salty enough but it depends on your taste. Your Ash is ready. Now decorate it with remained fried onion, fried garlic, fried mint powder and kashk. Afiyet olsun my friends

Ingredients

1 cup chickpeas
1 cup lentils
1 cup red beans or red kidney beans
1/5 cup fried chopped onion
2 spoonfuls fried chopped garlic
1 spoonful mint powder
400 g reshteh (noodle)
1 cup kashk (whey)
1 bunch minced greens include parsley (3 packages), cilantro (2 packages), spinach (1 large bundle), leek chives (2 packages), dill (3 spoonfuls).
Salt/pepper desired amount



Faravahar, the symbol of Zoroastrian religion



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