

“Walnut Tree”: story of enemies’ sustained evil

Written by Tehran Times

Tuesday, 11 February 2020 16:12 -



“Walnut Tree” is Mohammad-Hossein Mahdavian’s latest film in the docudrama genre. The director has already shown his ability and skill in this genre with “The Midday Event” and “Standing in the Dust”.

In this work, like his previous works, Mahdavian represents not only a historical event but a war crime that should not be easily overlooked.

The movie begins with showing a long line of porters (kulbars) and Quran recitation next to Qader’s body, and flashes back with spiritless narration by Homa, the village’s teacher, to lead audiences to June 1987, when a human tragedy happened.

Payman Maadi, who stars as Qader, is one of the Mahdavian’s best choices and has given his best performance in this movie. Maadi does not play an unfriendly and apathetic role, which he usually lands, instead, he demonstrates a completely emotional, sincere and highly influential character.

On the other hand, choosing Mehran Modiri to co-star with Maadi is one of the major weaknesses of Mahdavian. It is also one of Modiri’s poor performances.

Simple and believable acting of children, remarkable and detailed set, and great music by Habib Khazaifar, who properly used Kurdish songs, allowed the director to portray emotional scenes and present an acceptable film.

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Mina Sadati portrays Homa in a not-so-brilliant performance in the film, narrating Qader’s elegy with repetitive sentences and lifeless voice that make the audiences bored, while the pictures are so explicit that there is nothing else need to be said.

At the beginning of the film, the narrator talks about fighter jets, pointing out that they drop the remained bombs at any place on their way back to hanger in order to land safely. The director overlooks this important issue so easily as if he is trying to justify this act.

A fighter jet flies over Sardasht and drops a chemical bomb, and most of the residents become infected with chemicals, including Qader and his family. It is just the beginning of Qader’s misery.

Qader loses his three children, and eventually his wife. It is such a huge disaster as if the director has forgotten about the main incident and gathered all of the personnel and audiences to mourn for Qader.

The question is why should the main incident be forgotten? Why should the tragedy be put aside and instead Qader’s personal life be focused? This is while Qader no longer just thinks about himself and his family, as after 11 years since the incident he goes to the World Court for the sake of the rights of thousands of people who affected by the war crime.

The chemical bombardment of Sardasht was carried out by the Iraqi Air Force on June 28 using chemical bombs in four crowded residential areas of the city of Sardasht (West Azerbaijan province). 110 civilians were killed and 8000 others were exposed and contaminated in the attack.

Today, Europe and the U. S. after 40 years of hostile acts, have resorted to the most aggressive and multilayered war against the Islamic Revolution and the Iranian nation to overthrow the Islamic Revolution. This is while, as the world has seen today, the Iranian nation will continue to move forward with fast and steady steps and will never forget the Western hostility.