



international
publishers
association

2017 IPA PRIX VOLTAIRE – nomination form

For exemplary publishing courage and enabling
others to exercise their freedom of expression

1. Name of nominator:

Organization: Den Norske Forleggerforening (Norwegian Publishers Association)

Country where based: Norway

Telephone: + 47 22 00 75 80 Mobile: +

Email: dnf@forleggerforeningen.no

2. Name of nominee (please provide a photo): Cavit Nacitarhan / Evrensel Publishing House

Activity or organization: Evrensel Publishing House

Nationality: Turkish

Telephone: + N/A

Mobile: +0090 532 5580615

Email: cavitnaci@evrenselbasim.com Website:

3. Biographical note about the nominee (use additional pages as necessary):

Evrensel Publishing House (Evrensel Basim Yayin) was founded in 1988 and until its closure it published 689 titles including fiction (novels, poetry, short stories, biographies, etc), non-fiction (philosophy, science, research, social and cultural studies, history), and children and young adult literature. Evrensel has always embraced and advocated progressive and universal values of human legacy, which is a common basis of the diversity of its catalogue. It has been well-known with its qualitative literary translations of the legacy of Soviet literature as well as other examples arising from social movements in Turkey and all around the world against wars, inequality, any kinds of oppression and racism. Apart from these, Evrensel stood for progressive scientific approaches against all kinds of pseudoscience. Its translations of classical and modern works of evolutionary theory and studies encouraged the scientists in Turkey to publish their works in Evrensel.

Considering multicultural social structure of Turkey, Evrensel aimed at being a multilingual publishing house. It published books in various languages including Armenian, Assyrian, Arabic while 10% of its catalogue consists of Kurdish titles.

Following and supporting technological developments in publishing industry, it has organized several digital publishing events and approximately 75% of Evrensel's titles are available in e-book format.

**4. How has the nominee contributed to the defence and promotion of freedom to publish?
(use additional pages as necessary)**

After coup attempts and state of emergency, 29 publishing houses were closed down and assets were seized by the state. With a new decree on 29 October 2016 10 newspapers, 2 news agencies, 3 magazines closed. Among them were Evrensel Kültür Magazine, which was an old and prominent monthly arts, culture and literature magazine, issued since 1991. It was among the three periodicals linked to the company Doga Basın Yayın, all of which were officially shut down with no legal procedure except their names mentioned on the Decree. The just released November issue of the magazine was pulled off shelves. Poets and writers such as Yaşar Kemal, Asım Bezirci, Can Yücel, Kemal Özer, Sennur Sezer who were representatives of Turkey's deep rooted literary tradition were among the founders and writers of the magazine, whose "evrensel" (universal) approach to literature and culture formed the basis of its publishing policy and can be seen as a major reason behind its forced closure. The closure had a big reaction from the readers as well as from the publishing World and its last issue was disseminated by other art-literature magazines as their own supplement to their readers as a sign of solidarity.

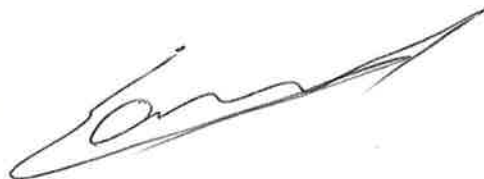
In this process, Evrensel, TPA member and over 20 years old prominent publishing house under the same company (Doga Basın Yayın) was also unable to make trade. Firstly, their bank accounts and assets were blocked. Although this company name was not on the Decree and there was no court decision, after months of ambiguity without any official reply from any government authority about the legal status of Evrensel, finally an official record from the Tax Register was received and understood that Evrensel was also closed down and their assets would be seized. This was announced at the joint press conference with Turkish Publishers Association and Evrensel on 23 Jan 2017.

As TPA, we believe that the situation of Evrensel and the painful process of ambiguity and blockage they faced until they had the bad news is a good symbol of all closed publishing houses and media companies, leaving thousands of people unemployed and destroying the industry. Their de-facto closure reveals the dramatic future of free book publishing in Turkey.

Our hope is that a nomination for Prix Voltaire will signal to all Turkish publishers that the world is following and supporting their important work for freedom to publish.

Date: 6.april 2017

Signature:



EDMUND AUSTIGARD