

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE

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Ertem Göreç

Overview

The film, one of Ertem Göreç's early works, was recognized as one of the leading classical works of political cinema in Turkey. It was produced during the era of democratization following the 1960 Revolution and was significantly influenced by the political atmosphere. It is a multilayered film that touches on class conflict, the struggle of lower classes, domestic and international trade relations with their actors, and experience of capitalism in a third world country. The lives of the characters represent various layers of society and their relations with each other.

The events revolve around the conflicts of interest and complex relationships of workers, employers, and foreign investors around a paint factory in Istanbul, as well as the relationship between the main characters. It was influenced by Italian Neorealism and is considered one of the leading works of realism in Turkish cinema with the representation of the different social segments' conditions in Turkey and its cinematic aesthetics. The film was written by novelist Vedat Türkali and produced by Lütfi Akad.

Characters

<i>Turgut</i>	He is the son of a wealthy manufacturer. When his father dies, he has to take over the business.
<i>Ekrem</i>	He is a mechanic at the factory and a close friend of Turgut.
<i>Nuri Baba</i>	An Experienced, old foreman who has worked in the factory for many years. He has fostered Ekrem.
<i>Fahri</i>	He is the manager of the paint factory and the right arm of his boss.
<i>Mahmut</i>	The worker who worked as an informant for the boss and Fahri.
<i>Nevin</i>	She is Fahri's niece. An artist.
<i>Şeref Bey</i>	He is the founder and owner of the paint factory. Turgut's father.
<i>Fatma</i>	She is Nuri Baba's daughter and loves Ekrem.

Synopsis

Turgut and Ekrem have been good friends since their childhood. Turgut's father is a manufacturer who becomes wealthy through entrepreneurship. Ekrem and his other friends work at Turgut's father's factory. The workers have not got a pay raise for a while. Şeref, the boss, ignores the demands of the workers. Workers prepare for a strike.

Turgut's father, Şeref, dies. Turgut then has to take over even if he does not want to. Those around Turgut manipulate him to make decisions against the workers. Turgut and his friends' conflicting interests ruin their relationship. A relationship begins between Nevin, the niece of Fahri (the factory manager), and Turgut. Taking advantage of Turgut's ignorance of the business, Fahri tries to take over the company by making secret business deals. The company goes into a financial crisis. The factory faces bankruptcy. Poverty increases and workers go on strike. As a result of Fahri's intrigues, it is decided to close the factory with a disadvantageous agreement and replace it with a canning plant. The workers take action to prevent the plan. Nevin leaves Turgut for Paris. Completely alone and about to lose his factory, Turgut leaves it to the workers before the business changes hands. As the workers end the strike and prepare to return to work, the new owners of the company intervene. The workers go into resistance.

Scenes

Conflict Workers lower a tank with a crane in the factory. They are satisfied. The engineer next to them proudly shows the varnish they produce to the workers. He compares it to American varnish. The workers laugh. Turgut picks up Ekrem from the factory in a truck. They drive fast.

Challenge Şeref, the boss, would like to thank the workers at the factory for their success. One of the workers (Mahmut) tells the boss that even though they produce the most quality product they do not gain anything. The boss complains that he does not earn enough, too. Nuri Baba demands to be

awarded for their efforts. The boss complains about the workers' union. He challenges them. When the boss leaves, the manager fires three workers.

Slums Fatma and her friend are returning home. Her friend tells Fatma not to worry that Ekrem loves her. Turgut and Ekrem come to the front of the house. Ekrem carries his belongings. Fatma greets him sadly. Ekrem does not mind. Fatma cries, and her friend comforts her.

Beating A mother beats her son in the middle of a street. Ekrem, Turgut, and their neighbors save the child. The woman's husband has been fired. She complains about poverty and cries. Someone says the workers union will help. She curses the union. The crowd disperses.

Move Turgut and Ekrem move Ekrem's belongings to an old house on the outskirts. Turgut complains that workers have not been able to strike for six months.

Discussion in the union Workers discuss the strike. Nuri Baba disagrees, saying that the union has no money to support the workers during the strike. He proposes unity to grow the union first. One of the redundant workers leaves the meeting with fury.

At the tavern The fired worker sneers at Turgut, sitting at the table in front of him in the tavern. He accuses him of being an informant. Turgut gets angry, harasses him. Turgut claims that the informant is one of the workers. One of them says that the recruiter of him is more corrupt than the informant. Turgut agrees. A union worker walks in and announces that they will give a start to a strike tomorrow.

Morning When Ekrem returns home in the morning, he finds Fatma at home. He becomes angry and sends her out. Turgut comes home drunk too.

Strike The workers start the strike. The boss talks to his colleague that the workers' demands are unacceptable. Mahmut, who is an informant, comes in. He informs about the strike and the situation in the tavern on the last night.

Father and son Turgut comes to his father's office. His father, Şeref, says he will send him to Adana for business. Turgut objects. His father grabs Turgut's collar and yells. He gets rid of him.

Painter Fahri's niece Nevin comes to the factory. She paints for the boss. She mentions the wall paint that she has planned for the factory.

Import ban Şeref is very happy to learn that the government has stopped the import of paints. His colleagues who receive the news come to visit. The bosses are very pleasant. They joke. Şeref calls the importers.

Secret deal Importers are unhappy with the ban of imported material. They discuss the situation. Fahri joins the meeting. They make a secret business deal.

Death of the boss Şeref plans to make his factory the largest in the Middle East and the Balkans. His employees report a shortage of raw materials due to the import ban. Fahri offers the use of domestic and low-quality raw materials. Şeref hesitates first and then accepts. Şeref finally accepts the demands of the workers to keep up with the orders. He dies of a sudden heart attack in his office.

This factory is yours Turgut comes to the tavern to meet his friends. Meanwhile, Fahri has his wife sign some partnership documents. Turgut talks to his friends about his old childhood days when he left the tavern in the neighborhood. They get drunk and go to the factory together. "This factory is yours," Turgut says. When Turgut sleeps at the door, the guard gets rid of the workers.

The new boss Turgut is instructed by his circle that he is the new boss and must pay attention to his behavior. The workers who are about to start the strike trust him. Turgut, who comes to the factory, wants Fahri to carry out the work only if the workers' demands are accepted. Fahri explains that is not possible. Turgut gets angry when he learns that Mahmut is the informant among the workers.

Employers His father's friends arrive for the meeting. They talk about economic conditions since it is not possible to accept the wishes of workers. Turgut is overwhelmed by technical matters and wants to postpone the discussion of the subject. However, the managers next to him report that production has to continue.

Discussion Fahri informs the workers that they can make raise a maximum of 5%, while other requests are unacceptable. Workers get angry. They gather for a strike ballot. Mahmut provokes them that it is necessary to seek their rights. They even believe that Turgut, whom they trust, is cheating on them. However, the workers postpone the strike once for Turgut's sake.

At the car Turgut and Nevin leave the factory chatting. Nevin invites Turgut to a house party.

Party Nevin introduces Turgut to her fellow artists. Turgut is confused with the speech and behavior of those around him. There, he meets a journalist named Aydın and chats.

Accounting Turgut and Fahri do accounting. Fahri informs that everything is fine. Turgut raises the issue of workers' rights again. Fahri reiterates that this is not possible.

Right The workers talk about the absence of support from Turgut. Nuri Baba emphasizes that they cannot rely on their friendship, and they should only trust themselves, i.e. the union. Other workers, however, say the union has failed to protect the rights of even those fired.

Two friends Ekrem goes to talk to Turgut about the condition of the workers who were fired. While waiting, he hears Fahri and Mahmut's plans behind the door. Fahri says Turgut knows about this. Turgut emerges and says he will put two of the workers to work. Ekrem does not believe in his words and leaves the room.

Ekrem and Fatma Ekrem comes home angry and drunk. Meanwhile, Fatma visits Ekrem's room to be with him. Ekrem refuses her.

At the police station Ekrem is at the police station because he caused trouble outside. Turgut arrives and helps Ekrem to be released. Ekrem is not happy about it. Turgut wants to talk, but they fight.

Argument Turgut and Nevin argue in the car. Nevin accuses Turgut of being unfair to his friends. Turgut does not accept it. He gets angry.

Morning at home Ekrem is at Nuri Baba and Fatma's house when he wakes up. He kisses Fatma. Nuri Baba talks to Ekrem to help him recover.

Intrigue Fahri, with other businesspersons, sets up Turgut to take away his factory by borrowing money. They talk about how it is better to sell imported paint like a domestic product.

Deal Turgut receives a large order of paint from his client. When they walk around the factory, they say it is all their production. The man congratulates Turgut and Fahri.

At the workshop Ekrem explains to the workers the necessity of the union. He says they have to be brave to fight for their rights, and they are stronger together. Some workers claim it is impossible. They fight among themselves.

Separations Turgut learns from Fahri that Nevin is going to Paris. At that time, the engineer brought the news that Nuri Baba and Ekrem had provoked the workers.

Talk Turgut comes to Nevin to talk. He expresses his agony that the workers turned against him.

Argument Workers hold a union meeting at Nuri Baba's house. Nevin arrives to talk to Ekrem. Nevin says his hostile attitude towards Turgut is unfair. However, they argue with Ekrem. Nevin leaves and goes to Turgut's home. They sleep together.

Morning Nevin explains to Turgut that she went to talk to the Ekrem last night. She says she is not leaving for Paris now, and she has decided to finish the painting at the factory.

Wedding plan Ekrem and Fatma plan their engagement and discuss how to explain it to Nuri Baba. Ekrem cannot talk and runs. Nuri Baba explains to Fatma that he understands the situation. He lets them get married.

Poverty People complain about poverty in the neighborhood. Workers at the factory are nervous and angry. They have disagreements.

Businesses Fahri explains to Turgut that things are not going well. Nevin invites Turgut to the party by phone.

Problems The engineer informs that because the products fail the laboratory tests, the customers will cancel the orders.

Strike Workers who have not been paid for six months want a strike. Mahmut urges workers to be a little more patient so that they do not attempt to strike. Although some abstain, workers decide to strike by a majority vote.

Riot Nevin finds her painting at the factory ruined. She loses her temper and yells at the workers there. After a brawl breaks out, a rumor emerges that workers are being attacked. The workers gather and submit their demands. Turgut begs them for more time. They give one last chance.

Anger Nevin tells his friends what happened. Turgut comes to talk Nevin. They argue. Nevin gets rid of Turgut.

Anlaşma Fahri entertains the American businessmen who want to negotiate. Turgut stumbles upon the casino where they are. Drunk men have fun together. The engineer emerges and informs Turgut that their Turkish client has rejected the product worth three million dollars. Turgut's company goes into a financial crisis.

Intrigue Turgut begs his client not to cancel the contract. The client terminates the contract and demands compensation. Also, he wants to apply for the import of paint. His manager secretly deals with the importer to mix and sell imported paint and Turgut's product.

Riot Demolition of the factory begins. It is planned to start a packaging plant. Workers rise to stop it. Mahmut stops the crowd and convinces them that they will not lose their jobs. He blames the union for the incidents. He invites the workers to join another union. Ekrem exposes Mahmut, and beats him. He makes Mahmut confess to being an informant in front of the workers. The strike begins. The workers and their families are enthusiastic.

Game Nevin hears her uncle, Fahri, and his wife talking. She learns that because of Fahri's setup, Turgut's company has bankrupted. Fahri wants Nevin to leave for Paris.

Contract Journalists ask representatives of the American chemical company about their investments in Turkey. The contract is signed.

Night at the strike Workers at the strike quietly wait in front of a tent. A woman's baby is born. They celebrate. Men who arrive as strikebreakers attack workers.

Separation Nevin calls Turgut and tries to convince him to come to Paris with her the next day. Turgut hangs up.

Climax Nevin leaves for Paris. New workers come to the field to support the striking workers. Fahri visits Turgut revealing his secret partners says that their company has foreclosed on the factory. Turgut beats Fahri and fires him. Fahri and the men leave the factory with the booing of the workers.

Back in work Turgut goes to the workers, tells them to produce for themselves in the time it takes until the factory changes hands, and leaves the factory to them. The workers end the strike, but the new owners arrive. They tell the workers that it is no longer their factory and that they should leave there immediately.

Resistance The workers utter they will not have the factory demolished. They all protest by shouting.

Themes

Class conflict Class conflict between characters is exhibited within the framework of employee and employer relations. Şeref and other employers form alliances to make more profit and act in collaboration against workers. The workers also try to gain bargaining power by coming together through a union to get their rights by representing themselves more strongly.

Throughout the narrative, the workers discuss the need for solidarity, the strike, and the lack of payments for their efforts. Representatives of employers claim that it is impossible to meet the workers' demands for various economic reasons; otherwise, they will lose financially or even bankrupt. It illustrates the base character of the conflict between the two classes.

Friendship The friendship between Turgut and Ekrem, and the transformation of it also depicted. Turgut has been a close friend of Ekrem and some other workers since their childhood. Turgut does not get along with his father. He spends most of his time with his friends and never considers himself different or superior to them.

With the death of his father, the friendship between Turgut and the others begins to be eroded. A previously unspecified conflict of interest appears. Turgut carries his father's role without questioning the comfortable life provided by the workers' labor, and he begins to understand the inner mechanisms of the same order. When his father died, Turgut had not yet been aware of it and naively told his friends in good faith that the factory does not belong to him, but it belongs to his friends. In time, he realizes that it is not the truth. Turgut moves away from his old friends, thinking that he will find a solution to their problems in the beginning while making decisions against the workers by the business people around him who remind him of the rules of business that he does not grasp.

Initially, workers who are happy for their friends to take over the company are disappointed. In the end, Turgut faces the hostility of Ekrem and his other old friends. Nothing will ever be the same again. Thus, the film depicts that friendship disappears when a conflict of interest comes into play; the two sides cannot establish a friendly and honest relationship in the current circumstances of economic exploitation.

Wild capitalizm The director also touches on the games that revolve around the business world while processing class conflict. Various scenes depict complex market balances, conflicting interests of importers and exporters, collusions among companies, intrigue, and betrayals of executives in companies.

Third world problems and underdevelopment The film also touches on the typical problems of underdevelopment and depicts Turkey as a country that has not completed its industrialization on the axis of an externally dependent and import-based economy. The American company first allows the marketing of its products by a domestic paint company under the name of another brand; in return, it holds a significant share in the Turkish company. This process is importing rather than producing. As a result, production cannot develop. It is shown that the winner is foreign capital and developed countries in all circumstances. The fact that the existence of an American company seems to be emphasized intentionally.

Exploitation and poverty Factory workers and their families suffer from poverty. Almost any member of this community who lives on the outskirts of Istanbul works in the nearby paint factory. They produce quality products and have a contribution to the success of the company. However, workers who do not earn enough to meet their basic needs are drawn into deep poverty day by day with their families. While workers can receive neither wages nor raises for months, employers make lucrative deals between them. Şeref is satisfied with the workers' effort and the production quality because he can carry out his work as he wishes. However, he refuses to share this profit with his employees. The company is reluctant to pay even legal obligations. The negative economic trajectory that occurred after Şeref's death makes this situation irreversible. Because instead of facing the losses themselves, the managers do not pay the salaries. In other words, employers who do not want to share the profit expect employees to cover the losses.

Allianated intellectuals Although the Turkish intellectual represented by Nevin sympathizes with the people and their problems, she lacks understanding of them and the source of their problems. She cannot come up with solutions. Nevin and her friends live in an environment distant from the people and their daily struggles. They have turned their faces to Western culture and art without noticing the closer issues. Nevin and her friends find the people primitive. Turgut is culturally near to the public. When he attends the party at Nevin's invitation, he does not understand the talks and behaviors of the "intellectual" characters he meets. He asks the journalist he met there with astonishment who they are. His response is: "These are the ones who will want a sultanate in Turkey when a kingdom is declared in France." Thus, Göreç also touches on one of the most controversial issues of modernization in Turkey, intellectual alienation and admiration for Western culture.

Character Analysis

Turgut Turgut, the son of a manufacturer, is also a childhood friend of many of the workers. Turgut is an honest man, struggles to manage things when the factory is left to him. He cannot grasp the facts.

Honest Turgut spends most of his time with childhood friends who work in the factory while his father runs the business. He knows the rivalry between them and his father. He does not side with his father, but he thinks that the workers are right. It supports them in their struggle for their rights. That is why he clashes with his father. In fact, the informant among the workers is Mahmut, not Turgut. When his father dies, he does not want to run the family business. He does not want to deal with things he never likes and understands. On the first day he comes to work, he announces that he will pay the workers. However, those around him deliberately mislead Turgut to prevent it.

Blind Turgut does not know how to run the firm that he suddenly finds it in his hands. Until that time, he had no interest in business and had no intention of becoming a boss, and no commercial ambition. As a result, he receives advice from Fahri, whom he regards as an expert. However, Fahri acts against Turgut and the company and victimizes workers and Turgut. Turgut signs the documents before him without questioning and does not realize the intrigue. Fahri manipulates him. By the time he realizes that he has lost his company, it is too late.

When the journalist he met early in the film warns him of the possible danger, but he does not understand.

The journalist: *You will have a paint factory; ... if big foreign companies allow it.*

Turgut: *Allow? Why?*

The journalist: *Because your father came into the world too late.*

Turgut: *I don't understand.*

The journalist: *And I don't think you'll have time to figure it out. You missed your chance. Now your workers will understand.*

Turgut cannot say anything with confusion.

Turgut, on the other hand, cannot understand that his friends are becoming enemies by moving away from him day by day. Unable to see the class gap and conflict of interest between them, he feels that his friends misbehave toward him.

Ekrem Ekrem, a childhood friend of Turgut's, is a brave character who is angry at the injustice they have suffered, full of desire to fight.

Öfkeli Ekrem is angry that his trust in his best friend has been squandered. Also, he has been exploited by the employer. He can not stand injustice. He argues and fights with Turgut and the workers who oppose the strike. He gives heartwarming speeches to workers who are afraid to take action for the strike.

Towards the finale, he tells terrified workers: "Would that have happened without our labor? (Shows paint). If we don't take credit for the efforts that created it, who will give it to us? ... What the hell are you going to lose? The law has given you a right. Instead of being scared and trembling like a dog, hold on to each other and look at each other. Would anyone dare to play with your bread and your humanity? ... If we do not fight this war today, we will condemn ourselves and our children to misery."

Fahri Fahri is the factory manager. He has a greedy, sneaky and intriguing personality who works against the business and profits financially from it.

Intriguing and greedy Taking advantage of the authority gap that emerges by the death of Şeref and Turgut's ignorance of business, Fahri secretly deals with other domestic and foreign companies and sets up a dummy company, leading to the collapse of the factory. Fahri wants his own company instead of being the manager, and he acts to make it happen.

Mahmut Mahmut is one of the workers who looks like a unionist but works as an informant for the benefit of the boss. He is a hypocrite and a liar.

Sneaky Mahmut misleads and provokes workers and causes them harm. He speaks and acts in accordance with the wishes of the employer. He resorts to different tactics at various stages of the plot and tries to inflame the disagreements among the workers. As an example, he encourages them to become members of another so-called union after they complain about the union.

Nuri Baba Nuri Baba, who has worked in the factory for a long time, is Ekrem's foster father. He raised Ekrem, who lost his family. Nuri Baba also works for the organization of workers, encouraging them to seek their rights. He is experienced, outspoken, rational, and conscientious.

Conscientious From the beginning, Nuri Baba encourages workers to unite and fight for their rights. When conditions mature, he tries to mobilize workers to strike. Some of the workers fear that if they strike, they will lose their jobs. Nuri Baba explains that they will achieve their goals only if they unite. He is a guiding factor in the discussions among the workers.

Rational Acting with his mind, not his feelings, Nuri tries to direct workers to make rational decisions by explaining the causes and consequences of the issues to them. He says that friendship does not mean anything when it comes to interests; they only can save themselves, not Turgut.

Nevin Nevin is Fahri's niece and is an artistic personality with good intentions, unlike Fahri. Although Nevin represents an intellectual character, she can understand the problems of the community to a limited extent.

Gracious Nevin goes to Ekrem to talk about Turgut, who suffers from his friends turning their backs on him. However, there she gets into an argument with Ekrem and other workers in a way that she

never expected. The next day, when she tells Turgut about the situation, she says, "They kicked me out. ... but I still love them."



Turgut and Ekrem are at the tavern



Slums at the end of the day



Nevin speaks to Ekrem



Turgut is under pressure



The workers strike