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Benevolent conquerors, besieged homelands, threatened state: the reproduction of political myths in cold war Turkey

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CHAPTER IV: The Disengagement between Masses and the Elites: 1965-1980

4.1. Introduction:

The 1965 nationwide elections led to the rise of AP, the heir of the DP vis-à-vis the May 27 coalition of the military/bureaucratic elite. This was a big shock for the urban elite, and therefore its members started attempts to bring a bottom-up perspective into politics and culture. As a result, understanding the wishes and desires of the masses, so the ‘common man’ became a significant motivating force for both politicians and intellectuals. In the realm of cinema, this led to the flowering of intellectual discussions about what and how Turkish cinema must depict. This also coincided with the emergence of a new and younger generation challenging older military/bureaucratic elites. The echo on the streets was felt as social movements, with one of the most dynamic groups being university students, besides the growing business sector and the trade unions. The main questions in many students’ minds were about the origins of social inequalities and why Turkey had not been as developed as the West. To discover the answer, both rightist and leftist intellectuals turned their faces to the Ottoman past. This interest reflected in cinema and led to the production of various action/adventure films based on the stories of late Ottoman folk heroes fighting against corrupted Ottoman bureaucrats.

Meanwhile, through time, the confrontations between the older and younger generations, as well as the rightists and leftists, became sharper and hurtful. The increasing tension was interrupted with the military memorandum of March 12, 1971. The victims of the memorandum mainly were the leftist youth, and their ideology was crushed severely. The result was the domination of Islamist and nationalist elements in everyday political discourse as reflected on the formation of National Front governments by the rightist political parties. In fact, the international political atmosphere was also very convenient for the rise of these elements of political discourse. Turkey had been isolated by its western allies in its foreign policy, and the US had an embargo against Turkey mainly because of Turkey’s proactive policies in the case of Cyprus. One should also add the impact of the oil crisis and the economic downturn into the picture. As a result, the 1970s became the years in which protest waves and political violence swept the country. Now, a polarized, aggressive, and militarist society living through first a disengagement, and later a cut, between different groups was on the stage. Of course, this transition had an impact on the depictions of nationalism through political myths in nationalist action/adventure films with historical settings.

Thus, the current and the following chapter attempt to explain the context and the reproduction of political myths in a selected corpus between 1965 and 1980. I have created two

separate chapters because the ones in this chapter constitute a minority and focus on the defense of Anatolia or protecting the interests of the Anatolian people. However, the overwhelming majority of the movies in the next chapter are mostly about conquest with characters expanding the borders of the state. In addition, those in the next chapter are mostly part of several series, unlike the films analyzed in the current chapter. In this respect, the films of this chapter could also be divided into two groups. The first group depicts local folk heroes in the late Ottoman period. The second group includes movies about the War of Independence. Here my research question is how action/adventure films directly responded to the aggressive context as reflected in the political myths produced by them. By discussing the context that was primarily shaped by the rhetorical shift in the political balance of power, I aim to reveal the evolution in different political myths, such as the myth of the leader, warrior, and others. The context I mention here also facilitates the comprehension of the reproduction of political myths in the movies of the following chapter

4.2. *The Rise of the Masses:*

Although the urban intellectual elite, as part of the May 27 Coalition, wanted to embrace Anatolia represented with soldiers and civilians in the films depicting the War of Independence, the realities were different. In fact, it was not the CHP or its allies as the key groups supporting the coup, but the AP, which gradually attracted the masses. This new political party took advantage of the liberal atmosphere created by the 1961 Constitution that guaranteed freedom of thought, expression, and organization and enabled the easier entrance of new ideas and new actors into Turkey's political life. This led to a multiplication of voices in the political arena, which showed itself in the form of new political parties or the heirs of older ones. The newly established parties included the Labour Party of Turkey (*Türkiye İşçi Partisi*, TİP) with Marxist orientation, the Republican Peasants' Nation Party (*Cumhuriyetçi Köylü Millet Partisi*, CKMP) with far-right inclinations, and the New Turkey Party (*Yeni Türkiye Partisi*, YTP), which had recruited several DP members. Yüksel Menderes, Menderes' son and later majority of its members joined the AP. In the first free elections in 1961, the AP gained 34.8 per cent, the CHP got 36.7 per cent, the CKMP's share was 14 per cent, and the YTP received 13.7 per cent of the votes. A crude calculation here reveals that 62.5 per cent voted for the rightist parties meaning that even just after the 1960s coup, the rightists were much more appealing to the masses than the May 27 Coalition's leftist orientation. Consequently, after three coalition governments headed by İnönü in the 1965 general elections, 52.9 per cent voted for the AP, whereas the

CHP's votes dropped to 28.7 per cent.⁵⁵⁰ Thus, it seems that the AP achieved to consolidate the right, unlike the divided left.

One of the significant causes of the AP's success was its perception as the DP heir by both its supporters and opponents. In fact, amnesty for the DP members in prison was one of its political goals, and its flag had a white horse that was directly borrowed from the DP logo. Given these, it would be too naïve not to think that these positively influenced the party's popularity. Moreover, the consecutive coalition governments of 1961-1965 could not respond to the country's growing discontent. For example, peasants were doubtful of losing various improvements in their living conditions that they attained in the DP era, such as the construction and extension of rural highways, water services, and government support of agricultural prices. Besides, poor migrants from villages were trying to cope with unemployment and poverty in the squatter settlements of the big cities. Therefore, the AP was able to unite a considerable portion of these voters under its umbrella. In the end, AP's election victory led to the flourishing of conservative nationalism in the country. This also meant at least a rhetorical rebalance in the political spectrum in favor of the 'common man' and a challenge to the May 27 Coalition's attempt to orient Turkish politics towards the ideals and aspirations of urban intellectual classes. Besides, many intellectuals had started to question the ongoing political developments to understand and represent the feelings and the wishes of the newly rising groups. This also included attempts to make cinema consumable by the new groups.

4.3. Defining National Cinema as an Attempt to Understand the Masses:

"After such bloody struggles, could not we defend anything? This is being damned...Why has God left us like that in the lurch? Why has hope closed its doors to us? What have we done? Could you please tell us what horrible crime we have committed that we cannot be forgiven?"⁵⁵¹ Thus, quotes Halit Refiğ, the leading spokesman of social realist directors of the early 1960s, from Kemal Tahir's novel *Esir Şehrin İnsanları* (*People of the Enslaved City*) at the beginning of his piece about *Ulusal Sinema* (National Cinema). Like many other intellectuals allied with the military/bureaucratic elite, for Refiğ, the 1965 victory of the AP was a severe blow to the social realist filmmakers. This made them question what they had missed or, in Tahir's words, "what horrible crime" they "had committed." As a result, a group of filmmakers, most of whom had an urban bourgeois background, started to produce movies with an attempt to understand and depict the masses. These movies were about the impact of

⁵⁵⁰ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 149-153.

⁵⁵¹ Halit Refiğ, *Ulusal Sinema Kavgası* (İstanbul: Hareket Yayınları, 1971), 125.

social and economic developments such as feudalism, migration, unemployment, poverty, and religious fundamentalism. In terms of the content and the form, their directors, including Metin Erksan, Ertem Göreç, Halit Refiğ, Atıf Yılmaz, and Duygu Sağıroğlu, adopted a social realist approach that they borrowed from Italian Neo-Realist cinema of the post-World War II period.⁵⁵² These filmmakers believed that they could transform the society from above and create ideal Turkish citizens out of villagers, workers, and beggars; essentially, the masses. Theirs was a Jacobin approach inherited from the modernizing elites of the early Republican period and renewed by the junta of 1960. This approach also marked the emergence of conceptual and theoretical discussions about what and how the Turkish cinema should depict for grasping the hearts and minds of the masses.

First, Refiğ coined the concept of *Halk Sineması* (People's Cinema) and argued that Yeşilçam should be considered as the true example of *Halk Sineması* because it was not financed by foreign capital of imperialist powers or bourgeoisie or the state; but depending on people's demands and their money.⁵⁵³ Here, Refiğ refers to the Yeşilçam bond system, where movies were produced after the regional distributors and movie theater owners ordered films specifically to meet the consumers' demands. This system led to the idea that whatever was produced was shaped by the audience,⁵⁵⁴ hence considering these films as examples of *Halk Sineması*. Therefore, after 1965, Refiğ and his disciples started to believe that Yeşilçam was the representation of common man's feelings, dreams, and wishes. They also stated that Yeşilçam was corrupt now due to the remakes of some foreign movies and the fact that Turkish people hesitated to represent themselves as they were because they were not confident of themselves.⁵⁵⁵

The second aspect of Refiğ's argument was inspired by Sencer Divitçioğlu's and Kemal Tahir's emphasis on the Marxist theory of Asiatic Mode of Production. According to this theoretical foundation, the Ottoman Empire had been an eastern despotic state that did not have private property, personal capital accumulation, and social classes in western terms. According to Tahir, this history made Turkey significantly different from western societies in many aspects. Moreover, instead of content-based borrowing from Hollywood or European cinema,

⁵⁵² Aslı Daldal, *Art, Politics and Society: Social Realism In Italian and Turkish Cinemas* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2003), 196. Some of the films were: *Gecelerin Ötesi* (*Beyond the Nights*, Metin Erksan, 1960), *Otobüs Yolcuları* (*Bus Passengers*, Ertem Göreç, 1961), *Şafak Bekçileri* (*Watchmen of Dawn*, Halit Refiğ, 1963), *Gurbet Kuşları* (*Birds of Exile*, Halit Refiğ, 1964), *Suçlular Aramızda* (*Criminals are Among Us*, Metin Erksan, 1964), *Bitmeyen Yol* (*The Never-Ending Road*, Duygu Sağıroğlu, 1965), and *Karanlıkta Uyananlar* (*Those Awakening in the Dark*, Ertem Göreç, 1965).

⁵⁵³ Refiğ, *Ulusal Sinema Kavgası*, 91.

⁵⁵⁴ Refiğ, *Ulusal Sinema Kavgası*, 87.

⁵⁵⁵ Refiğ, *Ulusal Sinema Kavgası*, 87-88.

it is precisely this uniqueness from which the Turkish cinema should take its root to create *Ulusal Sinema*. Therefore, what mattered was whether a film was ‘Turkish’ in its core, meaning, and message.⁵⁵⁶

Refiğ also argues that since *Halk Sineması* is a close-to-real representation of the Turkish people, its artistic origins should be paid attention to when producing national films. He shows traditional folk arts such as pictures of Anatolian people, folk tales, storytelling, theater in the round, and shadow play as the origins. Here, he makes no connection with theater, music, and painting because they are perceived as imitating the West in terms of both form and content.⁵⁵⁷ Given the importance of these other artistic branches in the early Republican era, what Refiğ says could be interpreted as a challenge to the domination of Western ideals in the cultural realm. At this point, Refiğ also attacks Muhsin Ertuğrul and argues that he mainly depended on western sources and so imitated the West. He also emphasizes how superficial the single party’s modernization attempts were. However then, he adds, Yeşilçam cinema had been a positive step in opening cinema to the people, similar to the DP’s victory, which subsequently opened politics to the people.⁵⁵⁸ These references show that Refiğ was pragmatically trying to find a space in the new political atmosphere. This should be why he calls the social realist films, including those directed by him in the early 1960s, as marginal and crippled due to their use of western concepts such as capitalism, class, or bourgeoisie.⁵⁵⁹ Thus, Refiğ argues that the duty of the producers of *Ulusal Sinema* is to make movies reflecting the values, cultures, and habits of Turkish people⁵⁶⁰ by basing them on Turkish folk art and the community consciousness of the Turkish people.⁵⁶¹ Therefore, instead of searching for universal or western cinematic values,

⁵⁵⁶ Refiğ, *Ulusal Sinema Kavgası*, 96-97. Asiatic type of production (*Asya tipi üretim tarzı*, ATÜT) was a term first used by Karl Marx in his work *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*. Marx, by using this term, tried to point out the difference between historical differences of property ownership between European and Eastern societies. In the 1960s, ATÜT discussions played a significant role in the formation of socialist theories. For an analysis of the relationship between the Marxist concept of Asiatic Mode of Production theory and the views on the Ottoman Empire, see: Suraiya Faroqhi, “Introduction,” *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 18, Issue 3-4, (1991): 3-17; Halil Berktaş and Faroqhi (eds.), *New Approaches to State and Peasant in Ottoman History* (New York: Routledge, 1992); Suavi Aydın and Kerem Ünüvar, “ATÜT Tartışmaları ve Sol” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce*, Vol. 8: *Sol*, ed. Murat Gültekinçil (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2008), 1082-1088; Sencer Divitçioğlu, Sencer, *Asya Üretim Tarzı ve Osmanlı Toplumu* (İstanbul: Köz Yayınları, 1971); Kurtuluş Kayalı, “ATÜT Tartışmalarının Hafife Alınmasının Nedenleri ve Bu Tartışmaların Atlanan Ruhu” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce*, Vol. 8: *Sol*, 1089-1094; Heper, *Türkiye Sözlüğü Siyaset, Toplum ve Kültür* (İstanbul: Doğu Batı Yayınları, 2006), 142. Sencer Divitçioğlu, *Asya Üretim Tarzı ve Osmanlı Toplumu* (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1967); Bülent Ecevit, “Devlet Ana,” *Kitaplar Arasında I* (Apr. 1968): 4-5; Emin Özdemir, “Osmanlılık Özlemi,” *Varlık*, No. 755 (Aug. 1970), 4; İlber Ortaylı, “Bir Siyasi Hikaye Olarak Devlet Ana,” *Dost* (Jan. 1968): 20-22.

⁵⁵⁷ Refiğ, *Ulusal Sinema Kavgası*, 89.

⁵⁵⁸ Refiğ, *Ulusal Sinema Kavgası*, 89.

⁵⁵⁹ Refiğ, *Ulusal Sinema Kavgası*, 88.

⁵⁶⁰ Refiğ, *Ulusal Sinema Kavgası*, 91.

⁵⁶¹ Refiğ, *Ulusal Sinema Kavgası*, 97.

they should look for what makes Turkish people unique. This point is significant for its encouragement of nationalist political myths in action/adventure films of the period even though these films were not produced by any of the directors associated with Refiğ's line and, in fact, they were not even made for conforming the vision of a particular cinema movement.

Moreover, Refiğ and his friends were in a rivalry with another camp gathered around *Sinematek*, which was established in August 1965 by mostly western-educated intellectuals such as Onat Kutlar, Şakir Eczacıbaşı, Hüseyin Baş, Cevat Çapan, Nijat Özön, and Henri Langlois, the founder of Cinémathèque Française.⁵⁶² Since its members wanted to be politically and economically independent, this group did not accept outside support.⁵⁶³ Inspired by French New Wave Cinema, Italian Neo-Realist Cinema, and Brazil's Cinema Nuovo, the group organized film screenings by auteurs of European cinema such as Jean-Luc Godard, Luchino Visconti, and the films of the Soviet Revolution Cinema and Eastern European Cinema; and American cinema. According to Kutlar, on the very first days, only three films had been shown in a week, but later that number reached up to twenty, proving increasing interest.⁵⁶⁴

Sinematek was also a meeting place for the educated urban elites, including students and intellectuals who shared their ideas and goals on that platform. At this point, by referring to Kutlar's participation in the Chile Solidarity Night organized by the TİP, Başgüney argues that the members were primarily supporting the TİP.⁵⁶⁵ In this regard, *Sinematek* functioned like a leftist debating society idea club as existed in universities where people discussed films and political developments, and students met significant intellectuals of the time. Although Atilla Dorsay mentions how the screenings of Czech, Italian, Hungarian and French films were important social events also for the upper classes,⁵⁶⁶ the majority of the audience was composed of university students and leftist intellectuals. Therefore, the understanding of the *Sinematek* circle could be associated with the urban elite searching for the causes of the AP victory.

For *Sinematek* members, national cinema should synthesize European high culture and the original and popular culture of Anatolia, meaning that the country's social and political particularities should be attached to universal culture. They argued that cinema should be

⁵⁶² Hakkı Başgüney, *Türk Sinematek Derneği: Türkiye'de Sinema ve Politik Tartışma* (İstanbul: Libra Kitap, 2009), 66.

⁵⁶³ Zeynep Avcı, "Onat Kutlar ve Şakir Eczacıbaşı Sinematek Dönemini Anlatıyor: İstanbul Film Festivali'ne Ulaşan Yol" in *Onat Kutlar Kitabı*, ed. Turgut Çeviker (İstanbul: Türsak Yayınları, 2006), 173-191.

⁵⁶⁴ Avcı, "Onat Kutlar ve Şakir Eczacıbaşı Sinematek Dönemini Anlatıyor: İstanbul Film Festivali'ne Ulaşan Yol," 178.

⁵⁶⁵ Başgüney, *Türk Sinematek Derneği: Türkiye'de Sinema ve Politik Tartışma*, 83.

⁵⁶⁶ Atilla Dorsay, "Sinematek sosyete'yi bile etkileyen bir modaydı," *Sabah*, (26.02.2006); https://www.sabah.com.tr/yazarlar/pazar/dorsay/2006/02/26/sinematek_sosyete'yi_bile_etkileyen_bir_modaydi

produced independently of the current capitalist system based on a primitive supply and demand relationship. Different modes of production, such as festivals and competitions, should be used following an auteur policy.⁵⁶⁷ In this context, one of the main targets of *Sinematek* was Yeşilçam. The group believed that Yeşilçam was “associated with worn-out formulas, plagiarism, escapism, and exploitation.”⁵⁶⁸ Therefore, creating a national cinema in international terms requires being free from capitalist concerns, unlike the cinemas of Hollywood and Yeşilçam.⁵⁶⁹ This is, at the same time, a way to reach universal cinema.⁵⁷⁰

Although both groups criticized the current situation of Yeşilçam, the National Cinema group found *Sinematek*’s approach too elitist and western-centered.⁵⁷¹ They argued that the Turkish people’s characteristics and needs could not be reached by taking European art cinema with all of its aesthetics and cinematic values as the model.⁵⁷² This ignores national values and culture while arbitrarily building upon western traditions.⁵⁷³ Here, a debate arises between universalism and authenticity through different definitions of ‘national.’ For Refiğ’s line, it was simply what comes out of Anatolia, whereas for *Sinematek*, ‘national’ was united with a certain universality in relation to westernization. Thus, Refiğ’s line could be interpreted as much more in the direction of the ideology of the DP/AP. In contrast, *Sinematek* seems to be in the same framework as the ideology of the early Republican elite. Nevertheless, both were born out of the so-called ‘necessity’ to define what ‘national’ was to grasp the tastes and demands of the ‘common man.’ This shows the power shift in favor of the ‘common man.’ Thus, the 1965-1980 period’s highly militarist and aggressive nationalist action/adventure films with historical settings were born into this particular intellectual atmosphere.

4.4. The New Generation of Leaders:

Meanwhile, Turkish politics was becoming much more competitive and richer due to the rise of a new generation of leaders. This could be interpreted as a reinforcement of the myth of the national leader in the minds as a self-made, non-elite, fresh, and young man in line with

⁵⁶⁷ Erdoğan, “Narratives of Resistance: National Identity and Ambivalence in the Turkish Melodrama between 1965 and 1975,” *Screen* 39:3, (Autumn 1998): 262.

⁵⁶⁸ Erdoğan, “Narratives of Resistance: National Identity and Ambivalence in the Turkish Melodrama between 1965 and 1975,” 261.

⁵⁶⁹ Erdoğan, “Narratives of Resistance: National Identity and Ambivalence in the Turkish Melodrama between 1965 and 1975,” 262.

⁵⁷⁰ Şengün Kılıç Hristidis, *Sinemada Ulusal Tavrı ‘Halit Refiğ Kitabı’* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2007), 145-150.

⁵⁷¹ Başgüneş, *Türk Sinematek Derneği: Türkiye’de Sinema ve Politik Tartışma*, 63.

⁵⁷² Erdoğan, “Narratives of Resistance: National Identity and Ambivalence in the Turkish Melodrama between 1965 and 1975,” 262.

⁵⁷³ Hristidis, *Sinemada Ulusal Tavrı ‘Halit Refiğ Kitabı,’* 145-150.

the DP/AP values. One of the most prominent representatives of the new generation was Süleyman Demirel (1924-2015), the AP chairman, who played a significant role in the 1965 victory with his popularity against the ‘privileged’ military/bureaucratic elite of the May 27 Coalition. The first main reason for the applaud in the darkness for him was his young age. When he became the Prime Minister in 1965, he was only 41 years old and, therefore, the youngest Prime Minister in the history of modern Turkey. Given that İnönü, the main opposition party’s leader, was 81, and the ages of the other leaders, the youngest being Alparslan Türkeş (1917-1997), the head of the CKMP as 48, Demirel was a fresh breath for Turkish politics. The second very significant reason for his popularity was that he came from a lower-middle-class conservative family from İslamköy of Isparta province in Western Anatolia. Taking benefit of all the educational advantages provided by the Republican regime,⁵⁷⁴ after primary school in İslamköy, Demirel went to the boarding schools in Muğla and Afyon. There, he also started to learn English, fitting well into the increasing US influence in Turkey. When he graduated from İstanbul Technical University (ITU), he was a civil engineer who upwardly socially mobile thanks to his education, and hence a perfect fit for a developing country.⁵⁷⁵ This background made him radically different from previous leaders with mostly elitist family backgrounds, as well as law school or military association. Therefore, Demirel was neither an elitist nor from the military; but a young, successful self-made engineer who could be an ideal role model for the ‘common man.’⁵⁷⁶

Demirel climbed the career ladders rapidly, and he gained Adnan Menderes’ support due to his success. After graduate studies in the US Bureau of Reclamation, he became the Director of the State Hydraulic Works, supervising the construction of dams, power plants, and irrigation facilities. Later, he worked for the State Planning Organization being responsible for implementing national development plans to decrease regional differences.⁵⁷⁷ His final stop was a US firm named Morrison & Knudsen Construction Company. All these, in the end, gave him significant assets as a political leader appealing to the masses and the needs of a developing country. People started to call him ‘Shepherd Sülü’ due to his village background, ‘the King of Dams,’ and ‘Morrison Süleyman’ due to his educational and employment backgrounds. He

⁵⁷⁴ Deniz Cenk Demir, “Altmışlı Yıllarda Merkez Sağ: Demirkırat’tan Adalet Partisi’ne Merkez Sağın Sancılı Serüveni” in *Türkiye’nin 1960’lı Yılları*, ed. Mete Kaan Kaynar (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2017), 506.

⁵⁷⁵ Murat Arslan, “Erken Yıllar (1924-1960),” “Yükseliş (1960-1964),” *Süleyman Demirel* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2019), 17-43; 45-73.

⁵⁷⁶ Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy 1950-1975*, 236.

⁵⁷⁷ Korel Göymen, “Milestones of Regional Policy and Practice in Turkey,” (2008), 2, http://myweb.sabanciuniv.edu/goymen/su_yayinlar-2/; He was a technocrat and as Sherwood mentions, even “a modern, pragmatic executive and organizer”; W.B. Sherwood, “The Rise of the Justice Party in Turkey,” *World Politics*, Vol. 20, No.1 (Oct. 1967): 54.

essentially became the symbol of a self-made man with whom peasants, and the newly arrived migrants living in squatter settlements, felt they could identify with. He was, clearly, the embodiment of the aspirations of the ‘common man.’ Unlike other party leaders of the period, such as İnönü and the TLP’s leader Mehmet Ali Aybar, he was more of an insider in the people’s eyes.⁵⁷⁸

In addition to Demirel’s appeal to the ‘common man’ with his own life story, the AP’s strategies of opening new mosques, permitting religious instruction at schools, helping migrants contact official authorities, finding jobs and housing were quite influential. Meanwhile, Demirel made influential aphorisms such as, “All qualified Turkish citizens could own factories.”⁵⁷⁹ These words instilled hope in the masses by conveying that they could gain money and respect if they worked hard. In fact, the economic environment also helped this understanding gain strength because between 1965 and 1969, the country experienced 6.9 per cent growth thanks to a planned economy and import substitution policies.⁵⁸⁰ This was also accompanied by the construction of Keban and Gökçekaya hydroelectric dams, the countryside’s subsequent electrification, and the first national TV channel’s introduction, which started test broadcasting in 1968.⁵⁸¹

On the other hand, increasing class distinctions due to rapid modernization and capitalist industrialization during the period gave birth to another leader from the new generation: Bülent Ecevit (1925-2006). He was one year younger than Demirel and had been the youngest minister of Turkey to date with his service as the Minister of Labor in three consecutive coalition governments led by İnönü between November 1961 and February 1964. Unlike Demirel, Ecevit had an elitist background. His mother was a painter, and his father was a university professor and served as the Kastamonu deputy between 1943 and 1950. The family descended from some local notables of Kastamonu. After studying at American Robert College, Ecevit worked as a translator at the General Directorate of Press and Publication. He was first employed in London by the BBC as a translator, and later in the US as a journalist.⁵⁸² With this background in hand, Ecevit had all the assets of the country’s traditional elitist class.

⁵⁷⁸ Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy 1950-1975*, 236.

⁵⁷⁹ “Kabiliyetli her Türk vatandaşı fabrika sahibi olabilir,” *Milliyet*, (8 July 1968), cited in Murat Arslan, *Süleyman Demirel*, 92.

⁵⁸⁰ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 269; Murat Arslan, *Süleyman Demirel*, 93.

⁵⁸¹ Mihalıs Kuyucu, “Historical, Economic and Political Development of Television Broadcasting in Turkey and An Industry Analysis,” *International Journal of Management and Applied Science*, Vol. 1, Issue: 9 (Oct. 2015): 45.

⁵⁸² Mustafa Çolak, “Çocukluk ve Gençlik Donemi” *Bülent Ecevit: Karaoğlan* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2016), 27-80; Can Dündar and Rıdvan Akar, “Birinci Bölüm: ‘Bambaşka Düşleri Vardı’ *Karaoğlan* (İstanbul: Can Sanat Yayınları, 2015), 19-48.

Thus, both Demirel and Ecevit were members of a new generation of political leaders. This fact underlined one of the ideal leader's features reflected in action/adventure films with young protagonists as the community's saviors. In this regard, since the mythical leader is counted as the embodiment of the nation and the state, older politicians are associated with the decaying power of both the state and the nation. Demirel and Ecevit, however, could be representing hope and dynamism. Moreover, Demirel's rise from a relatively disadvantaged background to a self-made man obviously challenged the dominance of the Western-oriented military/bureaucratic elite. This might have strengthened common man's imaginings of the leader as anti-bureaucratic and anti-intellectual and different from the military/bureaucratic elite.

On the other hand, what made Ecevit politically successful was his bottom-up perspective embracing workers and peasants, and therefore those who were not from the military/bureaucratic elite. Particularly his contribution to the formation of a new labor law which for the first time sanctioned collective bargaining and the right to strike made his party, the CHP, extend its voting base while at the same time orchestrating a change in the ideology of the party as left-of-center that he mentioned in his 1968 book, *Bu Düzen Değişmelidir (This Order Must Change)*.⁵⁸³ The Cold War ideological climate also influenced the competition between the two young leaders as the representatives of the new generation of politicians. For the AP, Ecevit's positioning as left-of-center indicated the CHP's leftist leanings on the road to Moscow,⁵⁸⁴ therefore threatening the country's unity. In fact, the AP took nationalism and anti-communism as its fundamental values and believed in nationalist harmony and collaboration between different segments of the population for economic growth. However, the capitalist transformation of the country thanks to import substitution policies had already brought class conflicts to the fore. The working classes, a portion of civil servants, peasants, and students were mobilized during this period. To cope with all these, the AP tried to limit freedoms by purging schools and universities and even by bringing translators of foreign socialist works into the trial. These had already made urban intellectual classes discontent with the AP.⁵⁸⁵ All of these incidents caused Demirel to lose his popularity, while polishing Ecevit's image as an

⁵⁸³ Bülent Ecevit, *Bu Düzen Değişmelidir* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2011); *Ortanın Solu* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2009).

⁵⁸⁴ A popular campaign slogan of the AP at this time was "Ortanın solu, Moskova yolu" (left of center is the road to Moscow) as mentioned in F. Michael Wuthrich, *National Elections in Turkey: People, Politics, and the Party System* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2015), 123.

⁵⁸⁵ "Report by Parker T. Hart, 'Attitudes of some young Turkish instructors,' dated December 9, 1966" in *Turkey in the 1960s and 1970s Through the Reports of American Diplomats*, ed. Rifat N. Bali, (İstanbul: Libra Kitapçılık ve Yayıncılık, 2010), 119-124.

enthusiastic supporter of student movements in addition to the workers' and peasants' protests. Meanwhile, the army also started to see Demirel as incompetent. The AP's winning of the absolute majority in the 1969 general elections was also subjected to questions because of 60 per cent participation. In fact, the country had been carried into political turmoil as society became increasingly polarized and society's demands were diversified.

4.5. Generational Encounters and the Rise of New Role Models:

Complying with the rise of a new and young generation of politicians in Turkey, the second half of the 1960s also witnessed the loud voice of the youth heard in different parts of the world with student mobilization.⁵⁸⁶ Through time, with their demands of change regarding political and economic inequalities,⁵⁸⁷ students also inspired peasants and civil servants, leading to strikes and demonstrations in different parts of Turkey. Although the number of students was not that high compared to the population, the change their movement created was significant in designing the country's political culture. They, in fact, provided new role models for the reproduction of the myth of the national leader.

In this regard, besides increasing societal demands such as higher wages and a decrease in taxes, the social protest wave initiated by students was shaped by a generational encounter between those who had been raised on economically and politically depressive days of the Second World War and the others who were living in relatively free and prosperous societies of the post-war period. Despite the previous generation's conservative attitudes in favor of stability, the younger ones were self-confident optimists believing that they could change society for the better. A reflection of those winds of youth in Turkey could be Demirel's and Ecevit's rise as young politicians who challenged other politicians' established visions and instilled hopes in their electorates. They were like intermediaries between the younger and the older generation. Moreover, the student movement also gave birth to the rising popularity of several charismatic university students, who would be the new heroes of their own circles but interpreted as 'disloyals' by previous leftist generations and political elites in general. This difference in their perceptions defined the boundaries of the young national leader myth in the minds of both the political elite and the 'common man.'

⁵⁸⁶ Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century 1914-1991*, 446-447.

⁵⁸⁷ The number of university students was 65,000 in 1960, 97,000 in 1965 and 159,000 in 1970. İlhan Tekeli, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'ndan Günümüze Eğitim Kurumlarının Gelişimi" in *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 3, ed. Murat Belge (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1983), 666.

In his autobiography *Olaylı Yıllar ve Gençlik*, Harun Karadeniz, a student activist and the chair of the Student Union of ITU in the late 1960s when he was in his twenties, described the main goals of the student movement as the following: “We have adhered to May 27 as if we were the ones who made it. We adhered to it more than those who realized it. We would protect it if those others did not.”⁵⁸⁸ As these lines reveal clearly, the students had adopted the mission given to them by the May 27 Alliance. With their self-confidence influenced by their privileged status besides the army’s support,⁵⁸⁹ they perceived themselves as the owners and protectors of the revolutionary values, hence the society's saviors. This understanding was not different then what social realist films of the early 1960s depicted. However, this view also led to generational conflicts and even disagreements between students and political parties sharing similar opinions.

The most significant reason for disagreement was the release of the imprisoned DP cadre under an amnesty. Most university students were firmly against amnesty legislation; they criticized the CHP’s conciliatory attempts, especially during the CHP, YTP, and CKMP coalition formed after the second general elections in 1962. Nevertheless, this coalition granted amnesty and released the former President, Bayar. The stance of the students was at this point quite evident as they pointed out in the January 1964 declaration of the Turkish National Student Federation (*Türkiye Milli Talebe Federasyonu*, TMTF): “We have not forgotten hateful attacks against the youth that resisted those who wanted to terrorize the country to take the nation back to the darkness of the Medieval times. We want to remind you that those who lost their legitimacy due to their unconstitutional and unlawful conduct and behaviors on May 27 will very close encounter the same end. The mentality of pre-May 27 has been imprisoned forever because it betrayed the principles of Atatürk.”⁵⁹⁰ As these lines show, students perceived themselves as inheritors of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, whereas followers of the DP line were considered traitors. This discourse was nurtured by another source of disagreement between generations: university regulations. In their successive protests, students demanded

⁵⁸⁸ Karadeniz, *Olaylı Yıllar ve Gençlik*, 26.

⁵⁸⁹ “Milli menfaat mihverinde gençlik ve ordunun kucak kucağa olduğunu ve olacağını bir kere daha ispat etmiş bulunuyoruz” “MTTB Declaration,” 28 March 1963, *Ulus*, cited in Karadeniz, *Olaylı Yıllar ve Gençlik*, 29.

⁵⁹⁰ “Milleti ortaçağ karanlığına sürüklemek isterken, keyfi idareyi bir terör havasıyla yurttan estirmek isteyenlere direnen gençliğe karşı girişilen menfur hadiseleri unutmamak. 27 Mayıs’ta, anayasa ve hukuk dışı tutum ve davranışlarıyla meşruluğunu kaybettiklerinin sabitliği dünyaya ilan edilenlerin, icap ettiği takdirde tekrar aynı akıbeti göreceklerinin yakın olduğunu hatırlatmak isteriz. 27 Mayıs öncesi zihniyet Atatürk ilkelerine ihanet ettiği için ebediyen mahkum edilmiştir.” “TMTF Declaration,” 24 January 1964, *Ulus*, cited in Karadeniz, *Olaylı Yıllar ve Gençlik*, 27.

radical changes in the educational system, including examination methods.⁵⁹¹ This situation created a conflict between university professors and students, primarily because of boycotts, which frequently disrupted education. As a result, in the fall of 1964, the student union head's traditional speech in the opening ceremony of İstanbul University was canceled. As a reaction to that, students organized their own alternative opening ceremonies and started to criticize their professors for working in the private sector besides the university. The students argued that professors were making monetary gains, in fact, personal benefit by using science.⁵⁹²

With all these protests paired with public forums and meetings, students were destroying formal methods of making politics. They were trespassing the borders of opposition by challenging hierarchical mechanisms and, at the same time, democratizing decision-making.⁵⁹³ Meanwhile, the political party that students found opportunities for voicing their demands was mostly the TİP, which had 47 per cent support in the 1965 elections in student dormitories in İstanbul and Ankara. This, in fact, was more than passive support based on votes; according to Genç, the METU Student Association had even spent 35,000 Turkish liras for the election campaigns of the TİP.⁵⁹⁴ In the 1965 elections, the party got 3 per cent of votes and 15 seats. According to the party leader, Aybar, this result was a victorious step towards realizing a Marxist Revolution within a democratic legal framework.⁵⁹⁵ In fact, Aybar was in favor of convincing workers and peasants by vigorous powers⁵⁹⁶ and then capturing the means of the state with these groups.⁵⁹⁷ Many students, however, did not share this idea and found Aybar somewhat outdated and slow. This difference in opinion led to another group's emergence, the National Democratic Revolution (*Milli Demokratik Devrim*, MDD), within the TİP. It was a dominantly Maoist group headed by Doğan Avcıoğlu and Mihri Belli, which supported alternative means to come to power, such as anarchism, activism, and street protests. They believed that in the absence of a bourgeois class, which could be the driving force of the revolution, the only chance for revolutionaries to seize the means of the state and realize a

⁵⁹¹ Nadire Mater, *Sokak Güzeldir* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2009), 18-19; Gün Zileli, *Yarılma (1954-1972)* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2000), 288-291.

⁵⁹² *Milliyet* 14.12.1964 cited in Turhan Feyizoğlu, *Türkiye'de Devrimci Gençlik Hareketleri Tarihi 1960-1968*, (İstanbul: Belge Yayınları, 1993), 205.

⁵⁹³ Yiğit Akın, "Uluslararası Etkileşim Yapısı İçinde Türkiye'de Sol Hareketinin Önemli Polemikleri" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce*, Vol. 8: Sol, 86-113.

⁵⁹⁴ Süleyman Genç, *12 Mart'a Nasıl Gelindi, Bir Devrin Perde Arkası* (Ankara: İleri Yayınevi, 1971), 102.

⁵⁹⁵ Mustafa Şener, "Türkiye İşçi Partisi" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce*, Vol. 8: Sol, 360.

⁵⁹⁶ Artun Ünsal, *Umuttan Yalnızlığa: Türkiye İşçi Partisi 1961-1971* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2002), 5; Mehmet Ali Aybar, *Türkiye İşçi Partisi Tarihi*, Vol. 1 (İstanbul: BDS Yayınları, 1988), 291, cited in Sevgi Adak and Ömer Turan, "Mehmet Ali Aybar" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce*, Vol. 9: Dönemler ve Zihniyetler, 136.

⁵⁹⁷ Adak and Turan, "Mehmet Ali Aybar," 151.

national democratic revolution is to adopt new and extraordinary methods. Besides, the MDD saw the army as part of a possible revolutionary coalition that also included the national bourgeoisie. For Aybar, the MDD's stance rested upon some adventurous ideas and, therefore, impossible to be adopted. It should also be noted that Aybar might have been afraid of the party's closure due to extremist action. Consequently, he reemphasized hierarchies by discharging some members and imposing new disciplinary measures. He did not even allow the formation of more autonomous youth branches and the party's young members' participation in the congress of 1964.⁵⁹⁸ This attitude gradually made the youth feel alienated from the TİP. At one point, this situation was followed by an attack on Çetin Altan, a prominent TİP member, by rightist MPs after he commented on possible secret agreements between the ruling AP and the US. Other TİP representatives were, too, continuously backfired in the assembly. In fact, the TİP's voice was turned down significantly with the adoption of the D'hondt formula in the allocation of seats, which gave the TİP to two deputies in the 1969 general elections.⁵⁹⁹ Within this atmosphere, the youth's belief in traditional methods of coming to power decreased. This was the sign of a generational conflict as well, which showed in the form of a rebellious youth standing against the traditional methods of older leftist political elites called as 'old guns' (*eski tüfekler*).⁶⁰⁰

In the meantime, there was an anti-imperialist fervor, which became a powerful argument of student movements. The Cyprus issue and the US president Johnson's letter to Prime Minister İnönü in 1964 had already created a widespread feeling that Turkey had been betrayed by the US.⁶⁰¹ For students aware of the Palestine Independence Movement, Vietnam War, the Cuban Revolution, the civil independence wars in Congo and Algeria, the US was an imperialist power aiming to exploit dependent countries. The presence of the US navy in the Eastern Mediterranean was the other issue of the student movement. Therefore, students organized protests against Turkey's dependency on the US, the visits of the US sixth fleet to Turkish coasts, and for the nationalization of oil and mines.⁶⁰² In this context, the students saw theirs as the Second War of Independence fought for the country's national and independent development. As Deniz Gezmiş, the student leader executed in 1972, wrote in a letter to his father: "You raised me with Kemalist ideas. I grew up listening to the memories of the War of

⁵⁹⁸ Ünsal, *Umuttan Yalnızlığa: Türkiye İşçi Partisi 1961-1971*, 276.

⁵⁹⁹ Suavi Aydın and Yüksel Taşkın, *1960'tan Günümüze Türkiye Tarihi* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2020), 174.

⁶⁰⁰ Lüküslü, *Türkiye'nin 68'i: Bir Kuşağın Sosyolojik Analizi* (Ankara: Dipnot Yayınları, 2015), 155.

⁶⁰¹ Veysel Ergüç, "Johnson Mektubu" in *Türkiye'nin 1960'lı Yılları*, 257-274; Gencer Özcan, "Altmışlı Yıllarda 'Dış' Politika" in *Türkiye'nin 1960'lı Yılları*, 210-237.

⁶⁰² Karadeniz, *Olaylı Yıllar ve Gençlik*, 37.

Independence. Since then, I have hated foreigners. We are the fighters of Turkey's second War of Independence."⁶⁰³ With these lines, Gezmiş did emphasize not only the nationalist and anti-imperialist goals of the student movement but also expressed the continuity between his generation and his father's generation. This reveals the students' confirmation and adoption of the mission given to them by the May 27 Alliance and their adoption of Atatürk as their leader. For these students, Atatürk was the anti-imperialist savior of the nation.

In addition to Atatürk, students referred to activists such as Che Guevara, William Pomeroy, Carlos Marighella, Alberto Bayo, and Douglas Bravo besides Lenin, Mao, and Trotsky.⁶⁰⁴ Most of the sources written by these activists supported guerilla movements and very much appealed to the left-wing student leaders who could be interpreted as the new, young, brave, self-confident, and idealistic heroes of contemporary politics, reinforcing the myth of the national leader in students' minds. Therefore, the other inspiring heroes other than Atatürk were Che Guevara, a significant figure of the Cuban Revolution, and Ho Chi Minh, a symbol of Vietnam's struggle for independence and unification during a long conflict with anti-communist South Vietnam and the US.⁶⁰⁵

The rightist youth, on the other hand, felt associated with Turkist and anti-communist Alparslan Türkeş,⁶⁰⁶ who was the spokesman of the May 27 coup but was later exiled by the junta because he and his thirteen friends had not been in favor of leaving the power in the hands of civilians before solving the country's structural problems. In 1965, Türkeş became the chairman of the CKMP, which was later renamed as MHP. In 1967, his Nine Lights Doctrine was accepted as the party's program. These were targets for the party listed as nationalism, idealism, moralism, societalism, scientism, liberalism, ruralism, developmentalism/populism, and industrialization/technology.⁶⁰⁷ Thus, for extreme-rightists, Türkeş was quite significant also with his doctrinal contributions to the nationalist movement. He was found quite charismatic as well, according to Dündar Taşer, a retired major and a close associate of Türkeş, who argued that Türkeş was the *başbuğ* (chief of the Turks) because he "could get up and walk

⁶⁰³ *Cumhuriyet*, 29 January 1971 cited in Feyizoğlu, "Deniz/Bir İsyanının İleri," No.9, *Cumhuriyet*, (14 May 2004), 9.

⁶⁰⁴ Yiğit Akın, "Uluslararası Etkileşim Yapısı İçinde Türkiye'de Sol Hareketinin Önemli Polemikleri" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce*, Vol. 8: Sol, 96.

⁶⁰⁵ Hamit Bozarslan, "Türkiye'de Siyasi Şiddetin Fikri Kaynakları" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce*, Vol. 9: Dönemler ve Zihniyetler, 370-385; Ertuğrul Kürkçü, "Türkiye Sosyalist Hareketine Silahlı Mücadelenin Girişi" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce*, Vol. 8: Sol, 494-542; Ömer Laçiner, "Kopuş Düşüncesi: 1960'lı Dönem Bir Kop(ama)ma mıdır?" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce*, Vol. 8: Sol, 525-535.

⁶⁰⁶ Fatmagül Berktaş, "Türkiye Solunun Kadına Bakışı: Değişen Bir Şey Var mı?" in *Kadın Bakış Açısından 1980'ler Türkiye'sinde Kadınlar*, ed. Şirin Tekeli (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1990), 291-293.

⁶⁰⁷ For Türkeş biography see: Zübeyir Barutçu, "Alparslan Türkeş" in *Türkiye'nin 1960'lı Yılları*, 571-577.

where everybody falls.”⁶⁰⁸ Therefore, although Türkeş was not new to the Turkish political arena and was a man of the military, he could still be considered in the same category as new young leaders of the time given his impact and his younger age than İnönü. He was even able to instill energy on right-wing students with his adoption of Islam and Turkish nationalism as unifying elements of the nation. He was, in fact, in line with official nationalism, along with an adherence to traditional values and Islam as a moral source. This understanding also reproduced the myth of the strong state as the protector of the homogeneous nation from communism.⁶⁰⁹

Therefore, the period witnessed a divergence between the ‘old guns’ and leftist students who started to prefer young and radical student leaders such as Deniz Gezmiş, Harun Karadeniz, as they perceived the older leaders to be slower and not idealistic enough. These students turned their faces to militarist activists from around the world. For the rightist students, the extreme-rightist MHP and its comparably young leader Türkeş were the sources of energy. All these were accompanied by the radicalization of politics in the country and increasing nationalism as a reaction to the Cyprus crisis.

4.6. Folk heroes of Anatolia in the Ottoman Empire as Inspiring Sources:

Regardless of their ideological orientation, students’ interests in societal inequalities took them back to Ottoman history. Thus, both right-wing and left-wing students revisited the Ottoman past to explain how to deal with social inequalities. In this regard, besides contemporary leaders, as mentioned in the previous section, the most significant inspiring sources for the leftist students were Anatolian and/or Ottoman folk heroes such as Dadaloğlu, Köroğlu, and Sheikh Bedrettin.⁶¹⁰ For instance, students transformed a folk song about Köroğlu’s fight against the unjust feudal lord of Bolu into a political one about the imperialist NATO and the US.⁶¹¹ Therefore, what aroused students’ interest was that these heroes were all known for their fights against cruel political authorities, wicked bureaucrats, and oppressive feudal lords in a time of Ottoman decline. Among them, Sheikh Bedrettin, with his disciples Börklüce Mustafa and Torlak Kemal, had been brought back into the spotlight by the communist poet Nazım Hikmet in the 1930s and then became a symbol of communal ownership of property and equality for the leftists of the late 1960s and the 70s. Unsurprisingly, the focus

⁶⁰⁸ Osman Çakır, *Nezat Kösoğlu ile Söyleşiler Hatıralar yahut Bir Vatan Kurtarma Hikayesi* (İstanbul: Ötüken Yayınevi, 2008), 221.

⁶⁰⁹ For a review of MHP’s pragmatist ideological stance, see: Alev Çınar and Burak Arıkan, “The Nationalist Action Party: Representing the State, the Nation or the Nationalists?” *Turkish Studies*, 3:1, (2002): 25-40.

⁶¹⁰ Leyla Neyzi, “Object or Subject? The Paradox of ‘youth’ in Turkey,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 33, (2001): 421.

⁶¹¹ Gökhan Atılhan, “‘68’in Kapıları” in *Türkiye’nin 1960’lı Yılları*, 338.

on Anatolian heroes opened the gates of Ottoman history for the students as they started to search for the origins of inequalities and differences of Turkey from the Western world in terms of its economic development.

The folk heroes were appealing to the right-wing youth, also. A significant example is Haluk Kırıcı, a militant student who later became the convicted murderer of seven university students in the Bahçelievler incident in 1978. In his autobiography titled *Zamanı Süzerken*, he mentions his love for the spirit of epic folk heroes, which made him ready to become a martyr.⁶¹² Besides, the Ottoman Empire was the core of their ideologies as unifying nationalism and Islam for the right-wing students. The second man of the MHP, Taşer, also stated that the empire was an Islamic state established by Turks and different from European societies with feudal origins. According to him, the Ottoman decline started during the siege of Vienna in 1683, and ended with the Battle of Sakarya in 1921 with the expulsion of Greeks from Anatolia. Therefore, the focus on the Ottoman Empire provided an opportunity for bringing both Islam and Turkish nationalism under the same umbrella. It also served to the myth of strong state by implying a continuity between different states established by the Turkish nation.⁶¹³

Complying with the young rightists' and leftists' search for a role model, several movies depicting late Ottoman folk heroes were shot. Some of these films have *efe* figures known for leading rebellions against the late Ottoman period's local pressures as outlaws and later contributing to the army in the Turkish War of Independence. Therefore, this group of movies served both the official nationalist discourse and the spirit of the period shaped by social rebellion. Through the lives of *efes*, the filmmakers reproduced the societal demands of the late 1960s without referring to any particular Sultan. In this vein, the four available *efe* films analyzed in this part are *İzmir'in Kavakları: Çavdarlı Murat* (dir. Sırrı Gültekin, 1966), *Kozanoğlu* (dir. Atıf Yılmaz, 1967), *Köroğlu* (dir. Atıf Yılmaz, 1968), and *Çakırcalı Mehmet Efe* (dir. Yılmaz Atadeniz, 1969).

4.6.1. The Warrior:

Unlike the action/adventure films of the 1960-1965 period with plural heroes, the *efe* movies narrate the lives of singular heroes. Instead of a band of heroic soldiers as in *Silah Arkadaşları* (*Brothers in Arms*) of 1960-1965, for example, there is a lone warrior named Köroğlu. This transformation from groups to lone warriors complies with the country's

⁶¹² Haluk Kırıcı, *Zamanı Süzerken* (İstanbul: Bilgeoğuz Yayınları, 2012).

⁶¹³ Ziya Nur Aksun, *Dündar Taşer'in Büyük Türkiye'si* (İstanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat, 2012), 33.

increasing aggressiveness and social turmoil, which might have elevated the image of saviors by reinforcing the leadership myth. Besides, at the beginning of the movies, all protagonists are described as ordinary young men; let us say the ‘common man,’ who are no different from the rest of society. Then, at some point in the story, these men turn into folk heroes, thus proper role models for the youth of the 1965-1980 period, when they encounter the oppression of a beg, aga, or wicked Ottoman bureaucrats. In some cases, they first set the road to take their father’s revenge, who himself was an *efe* and got killed by oppressors, as in *Çakırcalı Mehmet Efe*. Either way, the folk heroes adopt the role of saving their people, and their transformation from a ‘common man’ gives the populist message that all men can be heroes because heroism is an intrinsic feature of an ordinary Turkish man. This, of course, complies with the myth of warrior nation.

4.6.2. The National Homeland and The Leader:

Unlike previous movies depicting the late Ottoman Empire except those connecting it with the War of Independence, the films about folk heroes take place in rural areas so in the periphery of the empire. This nurtures the myth of the fatherland as a place that is not only constituted by the center. “Even the Sultan forgot these places” (3:44), as Kozanoğlu character states in *Kozanoğlu*. This spatial choice might indicate a re-embrace of the Ottoman state while providing the opportunity to blame for the Ottoman decline on bureaucratic or military representatives of the Sultan instead of the central state structure. In this vein, these representatives are described as corrupted and abusive of the state’s power and sources in their hands as they wanted to oppress people by seizing their properties, receiving bribes, and collecting unlawful taxes. In *Çakırcalı Mehmet Efe*, cruel military officers threaten peasants with death and take their money, although they have already paid their taxes. Similarly, in *Kozanoğlu*, a mufti issues a fake fatwa to support a pasha collecting unlawful taxes, and local judges make their decisions in favor of richer ones. The anti-bureaucratic perspective, which is one of the main lines of Turkey’s political culture, could easily be followed here. In this picture, when an *efe* says that he does not trust ‘the Ottoman’ (01:01) in *Çakırcalı Mehmet Efe* and *Çavdarlı Murat*, he means the bureaucrats and military. Therefore, the heroes never fight against the state or its embodiment, the Sultan, but fight against those who exploit the state, and hence the Sultan. Besides, these rural people are also crushed by evil landlords or agas/begs who make them work on lands in return for nothing and may even want to take their women forcefully, as it happens in *Çavdarlı Murat*. In *Köroğlu*, Bolubeyi, the landlord of Bolu, blinds Köroğlu’s father Yusuf because he thinks that the horse given by Yusuf to him is not good

enough. Yusuf says that these landlords are no longer respectful to the Sultan (2:54-2:57). Therefore, like state representatives, the landlords misuse rights granted by the state to oppress people. In this manner, oppressing people automatically brings exploiting the state and the Sultan. Therefore, when fighting against oppressors, folk heroes also protect the state. This representation nurtures the myth of the strong state while at the same time increasing the power of the Sultan. From another perspective, it could also indicate either censorship by the state or auto-censorship and so the impossibility of challenging the state.

The anti-bureaucratic approach also reveals that anything that belongs to them is sacred since the state and the Sultan are sacred. For example, in one scene, Çavdarlı Murat stops a mail coach to seize and give the peasants any valuables that it carries. However, he does not take anything when he learns that the coach is bringing the salaries of state officers. The same happens in *Çakırcalı Mehmet Efe* when the *efe* takes only a portion of the money. This portion equals the worth of peasant houses burned by Ottoman military officers who also imprisoned those peasants that failed to pay their taxes. He leaves the rest of the money for the state officers saying that orphans even have rights to this money. These examples show that neither bureaucrats nor the military are perceived as the true representatives of the state. In fact, the interests of the people's interests are before those of the others according to these representations. This, however, does not create tension between the state/Sultan and the people. In this picture, the folk heroes are seen as the real representatives of the people. What is missing, according to these films, is the Sultan's accessibility. According to this movie baggage, the military and state officers block the connection between the Sultan and his people and make the ruler unreachable. In accordance with this, Kozanoğlu wants people to inform the Sultan about the corruption in this town. This anti-bureaucratic view also works to absolutize the Sultan's rule. It is also an indication of the hero's loyalty to the state, hence its embodiment. Then, the hero formula goes as follows: the *efe* or folk hero is an ordinary man, and despite his bravery and charisma, he fails to approach the ruler. The ones who can approach are the much more aggressive ones, mainly fighting against the Christian enemies, the Greeks in particular, as mentioned in the following sections.

4.6.3. The Warrior Nation:

As in other nationalist action/adventure films or war films, in folk hero films, there are civilians that turn into heroes due to hardships they experience. Once they become heroes, they automatically start to use guns and display their physical strength. In folk hero films, the heroes all fight in their local traditional clothes, strengthening the characters' ordinariness. Since most

of these local heroes are from western Anatolia, filmmakers make some characters speak in the west Anatolian accent. The accent is underlined with local costumes and local folk songs. This kind of localization is unique in the sense that it did not happen before. It probably reveals the contemporary interest in folk culture in a period of social turmoil. In addition, there might have been a lot more familiarity with local cultures at that time, due to migration. Most importantly, this is a precise reproduction of the myth of the warrior nation. In addition, these folk heroes always hang out in the periphery where there is a lack of central authority. There, the hero rides horses, practices shooting, kills oppressors together with other members of his gang, and finally distributes the oppressors' properties to the oppressed peasants as Robin Hood may have done. He displays his masculinity and shows the audience the power of the common man. This kind of representation could give the audience more reasons to feel attached to a period of rapid industrialization, migration, and social turmoil in Turkey's late 1960s and 1970s.

4.6.4. External Others:

The historical mythmaking through folk heroes evolved into a nationalist reaction with the revitalization of the Cyprus issue. In November 1967, Greek Cypriots raided the towns of the Turkish minority in Boğaziçi and Geçitkale and killed 24 people. Both rightist and leftist students criticized Demirel for his passive attitude and then organized various anti-imperialist meetings, some of which were attended by more than 100,000 people. The rightist students even organized a voluntary army and went to the border between Greece and Turkey. Their demand was the 'liberation' of Cyprus and Eastern Thrace by the Turkish army.⁶¹⁴ In fact, for them, the Cyprus issue stood as an opportunity to go back to the great and glorious days of the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, the leftist students argued for military intervention to guarantee the rights of both Turks and Greeks and the Federal State of Cyprus.⁶¹⁵ Complying with this nationalist atmosphere, the only external enemy in folk hero films is the Greeks of both Anatolia and Greece. In a way, folk heroes fight against contemporary enemies. In this context, Greeks are depicted negatively. For example, the character Nikolai Çorbacı in *Çavdarlı Murat* is a merciless man who forcefully takes the belongings of an old Turkish man. Before killing Nikolai, Çavdarlı blames him for feeding somebody else by stealing Turks' money. Then, in the next scene, we see four Greek men waiting in a boat for Nikolai to take what Nikolai would bring them to Greece. While killing them, Çavdarlı repeats that all money, properties, and land belong to the Turks. He also adds, the Turks are not coming to these men's

⁶¹⁴ Milliyet, 25.11.1967 cited in Feyizoğlu, *Türkiye'de Devrimci Gençlik Hareketleri Tarihi 1960-1968*, 372.

⁶¹⁵ Feyizoğlu, *Türkiye'de Devrimci Gençlik Hareketleri Tarihi 1960-1968*, 178.

country, and they should do the same thing (43:28-44:18). Here the hero never uses the word ‘Greek.’ Despite that, the audience could quickly get the message from the characters’ accents, the Greek language, and Greek music in the background. Such a representation marks the enemy without saying its name but by strongly underlining its identity. It should also be noted that filmmakers do not distinguish Anatolian Greeks from the Greeks of Greece. These two groups are depicted as the same group, and therefore, they are referred to as collaborators. There are not many references to the word ‘Rum,’ which is the word for Anatolian Greeks in this vein. Only in one *meyhane* scene in *Çakırcalı Mehmet Efe*, the cruel and drunken ‘Rum’ gangs say that they watch half-naked ‘Rum *dilbers*’ dancing for them (37:12-28:37). One more point is that these ‘loose Rum women’ smile happily while dancing, contrary to the Turkish girl who rejects dancing. Obviously, this is a one-dimensional representation of the ‘other’ and the Turkish girl, depicting the Anatolian Greeks as negative and the Turkish girl with positive qualities. Moreover, by not distinguishing the two groups, the films reproduce the myth of a homogeneous nation and directly point to the enemy: namely, the Greeks, in line with the day’s political atmosphere. This directness makes the job of nationalist action/adventure heroes easier in their quest to take revenge for all the misfortunes that the Turks had been in throughout history with non-Muslims, Greeks in particular.

4.7. *Guerilla Warfare:*

The overall nationalist reaction against the Greeks does not mean that the rightist and leftist students were collaborating. Students were militarized, and so there were clashes between them everywhere. Contrary to the period before the May 27 coup, the rightist students were much more experienced this time. In fact, thanks to the victory of the rightist parties in 1965, they could find opportunities to organize themselves and even increase their activities in student organizations. They were especially powerful out of campuses thanks to non-student supporters, some of whom were associated with The Associations of Struggle Against Communism (*Komünizmle Mücadele Dernekleri*). These people mostly became the basis of Hearths of Ideals (*Ülkü Ocakları*), which were the youth branches of Türkeş’s MHP. Many were using sticks, guns, and knives, and from 1968 on, they were trained in commando camps to fight against communism, hence the leftist students.⁶¹⁶

⁶¹⁶ For more about commando camps and trainings there, see: Hakan Akpınar, *Kurtların Kardeşliği: CKMP’den MHP’ye (1965-2005)* (İstanbul: Bir Harf Yayınları, 2005), 59; “Interview with Rıfat Baykal, a member of National Unity Committee,” (1 August 1968), *Cumhuriyet* in Hikmet Çetinkaya, “Komando Kampları,” *68’den 78’e Sancılı Yıllar Kuşatılmış Sokaklar* (İstanbul: Cumhuriyet Kitapları, 2010), 81-82.

Under these increasingly aggressive conditions, the sixth fleet protests intensified as well. In one incident in July 1968, the police stormed the ITU campus, causing the death of a student named Vedat Demircioğlu. This was the first death since the April 1960 protests and was perceived as a sign of returning to the pre-May 27 conditions for left-wing students. In addition to the TİP's passive attitude, the death caused some students to feel associated with the MDD line and adopt aggressive methods.⁶¹⁷ All in all, the campuses were like battlefields, and in January 1969, the US ambassador Robert Komer's car was burned by the leftist students during his visit to METU. In February 1969, the left-wing protestors of the sixth fleet clashed with the right-wing in Taksim, which caused the deaths of two leftists.⁶¹⁸ Outside the campuses, there were strikes and demonstrations mostly supported and even participated in by the leftist students. Peasants occupied lands mainly in the Western part of Turkey, and workers occupied many factories, including Derby, Singer, and Ereğli Iron and Steel. These incidents followed one after the other with an increasing number of participants. In June 1970, industrial workers in the Istanbul-İzmit area started a massive march to protest a new law regulating union organization and collective bargaining. The protest turned out to be the largest workers' protest of Turkish history involving over 100,000 demonstrators.

Furthermore, as a reaction to the increasing militarist atmosphere, the MDD line of the TİP was divided due to disagreements between the two groups. The first group was centered around the journal *Aydınlık* and led by Doğu Perinçek, a new doctoral graduate in law. It favored the army's active role in protecting the country from political and economic chaos. The other group, led by two political science students, Mahir Çayan and Yusuf Küpeli, who had been active in debating societies, played leading roles in university occupations. According to them, the Perinçek wing supported the junta, and both the TİP and MDD were passive and ignorant of the peasants' revolutionary potential. Meanwhile, the Federation of Debating Societies' name had been changed into the Revolutionary Youth Federation of Turkey (*Türkiye Devrimci Gençlik Federasyonu*, DEV-GENÇ) to support effective fighting. Besides, the People's Liberation Army of Turkey (*Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Ordusu*, THKO), an armed underground organization founded in METU, started its armed actions such as kidnappings of several US soldiers in Turkey and other persons, in addition to bank robberies to finance their activities. Among THKO members were Deniz Gezmiş, Yusuf Aslan, Hüseyin İnönü, Sinan Cemgil, and Taylan Özgür, all of who were young students executed in the following years. These students all perceived themselves as vanguard warriors, and to realize the revolution, some of them had

⁶¹⁷ Mustafa Şener, "Türkiye İşçi Partisi" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce*, Vol. 8: Sol, 362.

⁶¹⁸ Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy: 1940-1975*, 381.

been trained in Bekaa Valley in Al-Fatah Camps like many of their counterparts in Europe.⁶¹⁹ They all contributed to the myth of the national leader in the masses' minds in two ways. First, their dynamism nurtured myth of the young and dynamic warrior, sacrificing himself for his ideals. However, on the other hand, their rebellious attitudes led to a limitation on what the ideal young warrior should do, or 'is expected to do' by previous generations and the political elites. In this context, the national warrior is assumed to be not only young and idealist but also loyal to the establishment. The same historical political context is also influential in the movies of the next chapter, which mostly depict imaginary characters conquering new places and taking revenge on all the other characters.

4.8. The Anxious Elites and The Immediate Sacrificial of the 'Disloyals' with March 12, 1971 Memorandum:

The overall militarization of student politics increased the anxiety of the political elite. There emerged suspicions about the youth, and the elites thought that the youth was open to foreign ideas imported from foreign lands so that they could be deceived easily.⁶²⁰ So, they believed that the young people had to be shown some borders and taken under control. As a result, the CHP leader İnönü and Ecevit distanced themselves from the youth by criticizing leftist students' illegal activities. They also emphasized that with its mixed economic system, Turkey was not an enemy of the US. The reason for the cautious attitude of the CHP could be the fear of another coup, which could punish the leftists this time. The rightists also shared this fear, who was afraid of a coup similar to May 27. In this environment, there was an evident disengagement of the leftist students from the CHP and TİP. This meant that they conflicted with both the first generation of Kemalists, and the older Marxists known as the 'old guns' (*eski tüfekler*).⁶²¹ This tension is also explained in the account of Karadeniz, in which he mentions how disappointed students were with the behavior of their professors with whom they had shared the same anti-DP views. In his words: "The youth graduated from university as doctors, engineers, lawyers, and teachers. When these young people begin to work, there is only one

⁶¹⁹ Yiğit Akın, "Uluslararası Etkileşim Yapısı İçinde Türkiye'de Sol Hareketinin Önemli Polemikleri" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce, Vol. 8: Sol*, 86-113; Kerem Ünüvar, "Türkiye Devrimci Gençlik Federasyonu (1970-1971)," in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce, Vol. 8: Sol*, 830-833.

⁶²⁰ A booklet published and distributed by The General Staff of the Turkish Armed Forces could be an example of public propaganda conveying anti-communist ideas. Its title is *Komünistler gençlerimizi ve işçilerimizi nasıl aldatıyor?* (How do communists deceive our young people and workers?). It mainly argues that the Turkish youth who wants to something for their sacred nation is being manipulated by communists (İstanbul: T.C. Genelkurmay Başkanlığı 1inci Ordu ve Sıkıyönetim Komutanlığı, 1973).

⁶²¹ Bozarslan, "Türkiye'de Siyasi Şiddetin Fikri Kaynakları" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce, Vol 9: Dönemler ve Zihniyetler*, 379.

ideal in their minds: working honestly, a happy future, a happy Turkey, and the determination to fix Turkey's corrupt order. (However) these young people encounter older men who caused the corrupt order, pessimists about Turkey's progress, and consider working for these as rowing against the tide. These older men always support the idea that Turkey will never get better. By destroying the ideals in the minds of the youth, these older men do the worst harm to the country. As a result, the youth, who have just graduated from university, begin working as older men.”⁶²²

In the face of all these developments, the AP government was paralyzed. Basically, it stopped functioning because it could neither curb the terror in the streets and campuses nor pass any legislation through the parliament. Finally, on 12 March 1971, the generals sent a memorandum to the government and demanded it ended anarchy and chaos and carry out Kemalist reforms. Unlike the May 27 declaration, which emphasized democracy and fundamental rights and freedoms, the memorandum focused on the government's incompatibility and assembly as reflected on anarchy, fratricidal strife, and social and economic unrest put the future of the Republic in danger. It warned that the army would exercise its constitutional duty and take power into its hands if these continued. Consequently, the AP government resigned, and Professor Nihat Erim was given the responsibility of establishing a government of technocrats to implement reforms.⁶²³

Immediately after the memorandum, Deniz Gezmiş was caught. This increased the illegal activities of students, some of whom were turned into urban guerillas. By this time, the National Security Council had declared martial law in eleven provinces, including Ankara and İstanbul. Besides strikes, lockouts, political meetings, or seminars of professional groups or trade unions, political youth organizations had been banned. Two leftist newspapers *Akşam* and *Cumhuriyet*, were suspended for ten days. In addition, some of their writers and some professors were taken into custody. In May 1971, some THKO members captured Efraim Elrom, the Israeli consul general in İstanbul, and later killed him. Ahmad states that this was “a grave blow

⁶²² “Genç kişiler çıkar üniversiteden. Doktor, mühendis, avukat, öğretmen. O genç kişiler ki hayata yeniden atıldıkları anda, tek ülküleri vardır kafalarında. Dürüst çalışma, mutlu yarınlar, mutlu Türkiye ve yine kafalarında Türkiye'nin bozuk bir düzenle dönen çarklarını düzeltme kararı. Bu genç kişiler hayatta çarkların bozuk bir düzenle dönmesine sebep olan, Türkiye'nin kalkınabileceğinden ümitsiz, kalkınma için çalışmayı akıntıya karşı kürek çekmek sayan yaşlı kişilerle karşılaşılır. O yaşlı kişiler ki devamlı olarak Türkiye'de işlerin düzelemeyeceği tezini savunurlar. O yaşlı kişiler ki, genç kafalardaki ülküleri yok ederek bu memlekete en büyük kötülüğü yapmış olurlar. İşte böylece genc kisiler çıkar üniversiteden, fakat yaşlı kişiler olarak hayata atılırlar. Ancak, sevinçle söyleyelim ki, bugünün gençliği, hayatta, yaşlı ve hatta tek kendi çıkarları için çalışmayı amaç edinmiş bencil kişilerce karşılaçağını biliyor ve tedbirini alıyor.” Karadeniz, “Kaybolan Ülküler,” *Yeni Kovan*, No. 1 (18 March 1965), cited in Karadeniz, *Olaylı Yıllar ve Gençlik*, 8.

⁶²³ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 262.

to the prestige of the state.”⁶²⁴ In addition, THKO members also kidnapped three British officers of the NATO base in Ünye. However, after a serious military operation supported by the CIA, the ten members were attacked and killed in Kızıldere village in Tokat. This incident left significant scars on the Turkish left, destroying a large and experienced cadre of revolutionary students. The fact that the government preferred them dead shows that it also wanted to display the state’s power and compensate for the prestige shaken with Elrom’s capture. Another compensating step was executing three THKO members; Deniz Gezmiş, Yusuf Aslan, and Hüseyin İnan, in May 1972. The operations then continued, and İbrahim Kaypakkaya, the founder of the Communist Party of Turkey and one of Turkey’s most prominent Marxist theorists despite his young age, was tortured and died in prison in January 1973.⁶²⁵

All these meant the destruction of the youthful image of the national hero.⁶²⁶ In fact, although the succeeding generations of leftists regarded the dead students as revolutionary heroes who sacrificed their lives for society’s independence, these operations severely crushed the leftists. As a result, a climate of fear was created by strangling the political space and leaving no chance for alternative voices. One other development was the reconstruction in the youth’s image from guardians of the regime to threats to national interests in newspapers by referring to student activists as bandits (*eşkiya*) manipulated by foreign powers to destroy Turkey’s unity.⁶²⁷ Thus, for example, the mainstream *Hürriyet* newspaper writes about Kızıldere as follows: “Rebels killing three innocent British men captured dead.” Similarly, *Cumhuriyet*, a leftist newspaper in line with the CHP, says: “Ten anarchists were captured dead,” “Anarchist killed 3 British men.”⁶²⁸ In these examples, regardless of each newspaper’s ideological orientation, the students are seen as anarchists and rebels who attacked innocent and armless men and intended to destroy the Republic.

Thus, between 1965 and the early 1970s, some students’ independent behaviors from authority figures such as their fathers, university professors, and politicians were not welcomed by the political elite. Furthermore, the increasing militarization of the student movement influenced the youth’s image in their minds and led to its reassurance not merely as the regime’s protectors but also loyal and obedient guardians of both the regime and the state. This situation

⁶²⁴ Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy: 1940-1975*, 294.

⁶²⁵ Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy: 1940-1975*, 292-294.

⁶²⁶ Tezcan Durna, “Yetmişli Yıllarda Politik Şiddet ve Basın” in *Modernizmin Yansımaları: 70’li Yıllarda Türkiye*, eds. Barbaros and Zürcher, (Ankara: Efil Yayınevi, 2014), 246.

⁶²⁷ Feyizoğlu, *Türkiye’de Devrimci Gençlik Hareketleri Tarihi 1960-1968*, 288.

⁶²⁸ “Üç masum İngiliz öldüren şakiler ölü ele geçtiler,” *Hürriyet*; “10 anarşist silahlı çatışma sonunda ölü olarak ele geçti,” “Anarşistler 3 İngiliz öldürdü,” *Cumhuriyet*, (31 March 1972). For a reading of actions of political violence in different newspapers, see Tezcan Durna, “Yetmişli Yıllarda Politik Şiddet ve Basın” in *Modernizmin Yansımaları: 70’li Yıllarda Türkiye*, 230-268.

drew the borders of the ideal hero for the nation, not simply a young and dynamic man but a young nationalist warrior working only for the interests of his nation and the state. This was basically a noble and loyal warrior of the state and the nation who was young and dynamic and listened to the authority figures' advice, including their rulers, fathers, and the elderly. This resonates with the depiction of heroes in historical action/adventure films as loyal young warriors entrusted by the ruler for saving a community.

4.9. 'Men of Action' in Aggressive Post-March 12:

The period following March 12, 1971 Memorandum witnessed the peak of political violence, economic crisis, and nationalist fervor. Contrary to the liberal atmosphere of the 1960 coup, this time, the leftists were mainly targeted.⁶²⁹ Thus, the left had been crushed; universities were taken under central control, state security courts were established. These suppressing measures killed politics outside of the state's sphere and did not allow anything outside the center. On the other hand, the power of the right-wing elite significantly increased as they became much more united in compensating for the rise of Ecevit, whose left-of-center discourse led to positive results for the CHP in the first free elections after the memorandum in October 1973. The CHP was, in fact, the only representative of the pre-1950 military/bureaucratic elite in this period. However, Ecevit's strategy was different, and he aimed to change the party's elitist image by opening it to the grassroots, urban working classes, peasantry, and the nationalist wing of the commercial bourgeoisie.⁶³⁰ This strategy worked well to increase Ecevit's popularity, first, within his party. When he won intraparty pre-elections in provincial congresses, İnönü resigned. Finally, in general congress in 1972, he was elected as the chairman. This marked the beginning of a new era and the lessening influence of the previous generations, as represented by İnönü.

Nevertheless, Ecevit was able to bring a fresh breath to the party and increase his popularity thanks to international crises, such as the opium crisis in which he allowed poppy cultivation despite the US's push to Turkey to stop it, which contributed to the dominance of anti-western and nationalist discourses in the country. This move made Ecevit a popular figure in Turkey as reflected on political slogans of the period: "Ecevit is our hope" and "populist Ecevit" (or "man of the people, Ecevit"). In this context, Ecevit instilled hope of "carrying the nation towards bright days" in people that had been struggling with the political and economic crisis. In this vein, he was widely referred to as *Karaoğlan* (Blackboy), a folk figure who

⁶²⁹ Bozarslan, "Türkiye'de Siyasi Şiddetin Fikri Kaynakları," 380.

⁶³⁰ Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy: 1940-1975*, 314.

somewhat resembled Robin Hood, evoking the images of personal heroism, social justice, and glory.⁶³¹ Finally, despite his very short and limited political campaign due to martial law, in October 1973 elections, Ecevit gained a victory by taking 33.5 per cent of the votes.⁶³² This amount, however, was not sufficient for the CHP to establish a government alone; therefore, a coalition was established with the inclusion of the National Salvation Party (*Milli Selamet Partisi*, MSP), which had gained 12 per cent of votes and 48 seats.⁶³³

The MSP was not new to Turkish politics because it stemmed from the National Order Party (*Milli Nizam Partisi*, MNP), which had been closed down with the Memorandum a year after its foundation. The chairman of both parties was Necmettin Erbakan (1926-2011), another representative of the same new young generation of politicians like his opponents Demirel and Ecevit. Born in 1926 in Sinop on the Northern Black Sea coast, Erbakan had both a traditional and elitist background. His father was a criminal court judge attached to a prominent family of Kozanoğulları from Adana. After attending İstanbul High School, a prestigious high school whose language of instruction was German, Erbakan studied at ITU mechanical engineering department. During his university years, he had a prayer group, including Demirel, one of his classmates. After finishing his undergraduate education, Erbakan pursued his postgraduate studies in Germany, where he also worked for Humboldt Deutz in the motor industry. When he came back to Turkey, he became the youngest associate professor at the age of 27. By 1965, he was a professor at ITU while at the same time working in leading positions in the industry. In 1969, he became the general secretary of the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges (*Türkiye Odalar ve Borsalar Birliği*, TOBB). This family and career background meant that he combined conservatism, science, industry, and elitism. He represented another way of modernization by appealing to the people's imaginings of progress and technology without giving away their traditions and religious beliefs. By the time he became an MP of Konya, a conservative city in Central Anatolia in the 1969 elections, he had already explained his political views in his manifest entitled National View (*Milli Görüş*). In this, he stated that he was against westernism and capitalism but supported the development of the national industry and technology.⁶³⁴ Thus, it could be argued that with his emphasis on Islam and nationalism,

⁶³¹ Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy: 1940-1975*, 329-330; Çolak, *Bülent Ecevit: Karaoğlan*, 164-166. Here the connection with the comic book hero Karaoğlan created by Suat Yalaz 1963 is not clear. This could be just a simple coincidence. In fact, the nickname "black boy" is very common in Turkish society and used for brave boys or boys with black hair.

⁶³² Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 264.

⁶³³ "Turkey," Inter-Parliamentary Union Archive, http://archive.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/arc/TURKEY_1973_E.PDF, 99.

⁶³⁴ Kerem Yavaşca, "Necmettin Erbakan: Lider, Hoca, Mücahit" in *Türkiye'nin 1970'li Yılları*, ed. Mete Kaan Kaynar (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2020), 495-499.

and the support he received from capital holders, Erbakan was a significant building block in the struggle against communism. Despite that, the CHP and MSP coalition lasted only nine months, in which they faced significant economic policy challenges once the fast progress of the early 1970s was replaced by stagnation in the national economy. After 1972, the manufacturing industry's growth rate in production and investment stopped increasing and stayed at the same level until 1978. The negative impact of the 1973-74 oil crisis also deepened economic problems.⁶³⁵

On the other hand, Turkey's intervention in Cyprus was the international crisis that increased Ecevit's support. In July 1974, when the Cypriot President Makarios was overthrown with a coup supported by the Greek government and Cyprus' unification with Greece was declared, Turkey sought effective action from Britain and the US. The answer it received, however, was negative. Consequently, Turkey started a military operation as one of the guarantor states and occupied the island's northern part. For the Turkish public opinion and the leaders, this was a peace operation carried out to bring peace to both Cypriot Turks and Cypriot Greeks. This was a precise reproduction of the myth of benevolent conquerors regarding Turkey's mission. In this vein, in his declaration of the start of the operation, Ecevit stated that: "The Turkish Armed Forces (*Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri*, TSK) will not open fire as long as it is not fired upon, they are in Cyprus not for war but for peace. (The TSK) is in Cyprus not for an occupation but to stop an occupation. With its operation launched at dawn, (the TSK) will save both Turkish and Greek Cypriots from the darkness of the oppressive regime."⁶³⁶

All these increased Ecevit's popularity not only in the eyes of the CHP supporters but also in those of the rightists. He had turned out to be the "second Atatürk" and "the conqueror of Cyprus" as a Cypriot journalist Metin Münir states just three weeks after the operation: "Almost overnight Ecevit has been transformed in many people's eyes from a well-intentioned, idealistic leader of a shaky coalition into a man of authority who could be looked upon to give the country new horizons and, more important, the unity which many Turks have felt lacking since the demise of their father figure."⁶³⁷ These lines reveal that the society had been looking for a father after the death of Atatürk, and Ecevit was, then, perceived as that figure who could take the revenge of the 'oppressed' Turkish nation from the West. With his dynamism, youth, and nationalist messages, Ecevit was able to arouse excitement in the society by fitting well

⁶³⁵ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 270-271.

⁶³⁶ Ali Murat Alhas, "45 years on, Turkey's Peace Operation in Cyprus still echoes," *Anadolu Ajansı*, (20.07.2019), <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkey/45-years-on-turkey-s-peace-operation-in-cyprus-still-echoes/1536769>

⁶³⁷ Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy: 1950-1975*, 343.

into the myth of the ideal national leader, who is more of an Alexander in Girardet's categorization. Then, another historic moment came. Having confidence in his popularity, Ecevit resigned and called for an early election. The other parties, however, responded by not going to an early election but uniting against him.⁶³⁸ As a result, AP, MSP MHP, and the Republican Reliance Party (*Cumhuriyetçi Güven Partisi*, CGP)⁶³⁹ formed a coalition government. With Demirel as the prime minister, this coalition called itself the National Front (*Milliyetçi Cephe*) government and declared its principles as being nationalist and Islamic. Thus, it was a perfect match with the political climate influenced by the aggressiveness of the Cyprus crisis and anti-communism.

Meanwhile, the Cyprus crisis turned out to be a deadlock that would last for a very long time. As a reaction to Turkey's operation, the US implemented a military embargo between 1975 and 1978. This meant Turkey's alienation in international politics. It also harmed Turkey's armed forces, and by the late 1970s, Turkey could not even import the minimum of its army needs.⁶⁴⁰ As a result, the Western alliance gradually lost its credibility in the eyes of the Turkish elites.

Furthermore, due to decreasing industrial investments and economic downturn, İstanbul's economy was shaken, and many people, lower-class migrants, in particular, started to lose their jobs. By the end of the 1970s, living conditions in the city became much more difficult.⁶⁴¹ This brought a wave of political protests by students and workers across the country. Some demonstrations turned out to be violent incidents. In this context, memorable violent incidents include: the 1 May 1977 massacre, which led to the deaths of more than thirty people during the International Workers' Day celebrations in İstanbul; the 16 March 1978 massacre, in which İstanbul University students were bombed at the exit of the school; the 9 October 1978 Bahçelievler massacre, in which seven university student members of the TİP were assassinated; the 19-26 December 1978 Maraş Massacre which targeted the Alawites and finally caused the deaths of more than one hundred Alawites; and the May-July 1980 Çorum massacre, in which more than fifty Alawites again were killed. The overall death toll of the 1970s was 5,000, which makes nearly ten assassinations per day. By this time, the country was dominated by a governmental crisis, as revealed by various coalition governments that did not

⁶³⁸ Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy: 1950-1975*, 344.

⁶³⁹ The CGP had been established by a group separated from the CHP after Ecevit's declaration of his party's position as left-of-center.

⁶⁴⁰ Ali L. Karaosmanoğlu, "Turkey's Security and the Middle East," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 62, No. 1 (Fall 1983): 158.

⁶⁴¹ Erman, "The Politics of Squatter (Gecekondu) Studies in Turkey: The Changing Representations of Rural Migrants in the Academic Discourse," *Urban Studies*, Vol. 38, No: 7 (2001): 983-1002.

last long. In the 1977 general elections, the CHP attempted to establish a minority government but could not get a vote of confidence. Demirel's second National Front government failed, also, due to resignations. Ecevit established the 1978 government, but it was also dissolved because of the vote of no confidence. In the 1979 byelections, the AP was victorious, and a minority government was founded. This government served until it failed to elect the President for six months.⁶⁴² The end result was the September 12, 1980 coup, which still overshadows Turkey's democracy.

During this period of political tensions, street politics was defined by the conflict between leftists and rightists. This conflict, however, was not between equal sides. The 1971 Memorandum had already devastated the entire left, especially by executing charismatic student leaders. The rightists, however, were still quite active. There were the Idealists in the streets as commandos trained in commando camps. After the formation of the first National Front government in March 1975, the Idealists, who numbered between several hundred and a few thousand, started to clash violently with the leftist groups. This group was so confident because there was an unofficial and never acknowledged the connection between them and the MHP, a building block of both National Front coalitions. At this time, the MHP had stripped itself from Pan-Turkist codes to gain more votes. It broke up with its prominent Pan-Turkist members, such as Nihal Atsız and Mustafa Özdağ. The party's emblem had been changed, too, from a grey wolf, which was mythologically known as the ancestor of the Turks, into three crescents symbolizing the three continents dominated by the Ottoman Empire.⁶⁴³ This meant the increase of Islamic and Ottoman elements in politics. All these were not without return, and in the 1977 election, the party's votes increased from 3.4 per cent to 6.4 per cent. Although seemingly negligible, this percentage was critical enough in determining the coalition partners, given the party's informal ties with the streets.

In this context, the Idealists functioned like paramilitary groups fighting on behalf of the state or basically the ones who were in power—the AP and other coalition partners in this case. They were primarily young people, and since what the group did was also beneficial to the other coalition partners, Demirel never tried to stop the violent attacks on the leftists that the Idealists participated in. Here, a closer look at the Idealists' profiles reveals their similarities and differences with the leftist students of the time. Both were the youth groups of the same generation, and their profiles present clues about the mentality that gave birth to the aggressive

⁶⁴² Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 266.

⁶⁴³ Hugh Poulton, *Top Hat, Grey Wolf and Crescent: Turkish Nationalism and the Turkish Republic* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 156-158.

warriors of the nationalist action/adventure films. According to Bora and Can, Idealists in urban centers mainly were young castaways who failed to integrate into capitalism and the early military/bureaucratic elites' westernization project. Some were even second or third generations of migrants who had come to İstanbul from rural areas.⁶⁴⁴ At this point, Kandiyoti's analysis of the transformation of power dynamics in society due to the dissolution of the patriarchal economy in rural areas facilitates the understanding of the mentalities of migrant men who could be the potential supporters of Idealists, as mentioned by Bora and Can. She mentions the dissolution of the patriarchal economy in the 1950s and argues that the patriarchal economy led to a predetermined life thanks to the control of the wealth by the oldest man of the family. The oldest son inherited the wealth after the father's death, and therefore the young ones had to wait in line to get their shares.⁶⁴⁵ However, this picture changed when lands were divided among many siblings, so agricultural profit became insufficient. Then, young men from rural areas started to migrate to urban centers. As a result, "the material bases of classical patriarchy crumbled under the impact of new market forces, capital penetration in rural areas."⁶⁴⁶ This meant not only a decline in the power of the father or the elderly over the son or the youth happened, but life also turned out to be something to be earned, not inherited for the younger generation, Sancar also argues.⁶⁴⁷ Relying on this, one could say that survival anxiety might have been created in this new capitalist world. Moreover, this anxiety might have been magnified in the 1970s due to political and social turmoil. Then, as Bora and Can would also agree, feeling isolated, marginalized, and economically insufficient due to their homelessness and fatherlessness, these migrant men might have embraced their traditions more and more.⁶⁴⁸

To put it clearly, being isolated, homeless, and poor, some migrants could have embraced their ethnic and religious ties and derived a symbolic power out of these connections.⁶⁴⁹ Here it must be noted that not all migrants were Idealists, and not all Idealists were migrants. However, the relationship between the state of being a migrant and embracing traditions correlates well with the increasing nationalism of the 1970s. Thus, extreme-right

⁶⁴⁴ Bora and Kemal Can, *Devlet ve Kuzgun: 1990'lardan 2000'lere MHP* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2011), 67-68

⁶⁴⁵ Deniz Kandiyoti, "Bargaining with Patriarchy," *Gender and Society*, 2(3), (1998): 281.

⁶⁴⁶ Kandiyoti, *Rural Transformation in Turkey and Its Implications for Women's Status, Women on the Move: Contemporary Changes in Family and Society*, (Paris: UNESCO, 1984): 17-29.

⁶⁴⁷ Serpil Sançar, "Chapter 4: Erkeklik Krizi mi?" "Chapter 5: Babalar ve Oğullar: Kuşaktan Kuşağa Erkeklik" in *Erkeklik: İmkansız İktidar, Ailede, Piyasada ve Sokakta Erkekler* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2020).

⁶⁴⁸ Ayşe Durakbaşı, *Halide Edib Türk Modernleşmesi ve Feminizm* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2000), 149; Kandiyoti, *Cariyeler, Bacılar, Yurttaşlar: Kimlikler ve Toplumsal Dönüşümler* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1997), 64.

⁶⁴⁹ For a discussion of symbolic ethnicity, see: Ayhan Kaya, "The Beur Uprising: Poverty and Muslim Atheists in France," *Eurozine*, (3 May 2006), <https://www.eurozine.com/the-beur-uprising/>

nationalism might have provided these ‘castaways’ the necessary tools to reformulate their identities. They might have been resorting to nationalist political myths to resist the challenges of the cultural modernization caused by the modernized city and to survive in urban life.⁶⁵⁰ On the other hand, some of them might have been attaching themselves to the Idealists, who also provided them a space for reperforming their masculinities that had been wounded by their encounters with modern westernized capitalist cities. In this picture, the attachment to a particular mob culture presented by the Idealists probably led to these young men’s reassurance of their identities as ‘men of action,’ who could gain strength in city life.

At this point, both Karaoğlan Ecevit during the Cyprus Operation of 1974 and the Idealists, in addition to radical leftist student leaders, might have contributed to the formation of the myth of the national warrior in an aggressive fashion. As reflected in films made in this period, these warriors are all brave, aggressive, and militarist ‘men of action.’ Besides, they were more loyal to the state than ever. In fact, neither the radical students nor their representatives were perceived as loyal to the state, as shown through the execution of their leaders. Contrary to this, the Idealists, who were also mostly young, could be construed as loyal and obedient soldiers of the state. Here, although it is rather simplistic and problematic to directly consider these ‘loyals’ same as the popular heroes of historical action/adventure films, there is a contextual connection with the rise of Idealists as the obedient role models and the reproduction of the myth of the national warrior through films. This myth forms an ideal warrior fighting within a limited scope shaped not only by the rightists but also by the many leftists of the older generation and the CHP. This connection must not be ignored.

4.10. ‘Cinema in Action:’

The brave, aggressive, militarist and nationalist Turkish warriors were in action on nationalist action/adventure movies centered on the War of Independence. What made War of Independence movies of the 1970s different than those made earlier was their strongly polarized representations of the enemies, contrary to the much vaguer depictions of earlier movies. In recent movies, internal enemies are almost non-existent, and clear-cut messages are given about external enemies, the Greeks in particular, and what tactics Turks should adopt to fight against them. Again, this is an indication of an aggressive nationalist stance. The eight films analyzed in this section are: *Ay Yıldız Fedaileri* (*The Guards of the Crescent and Star*, dir. Semih Evin, 1966), *Dişi Düşman* (*The Female Enemy*, dir. Nejat Saydam, 1966), *Aslan Arkadaşım Kuduz*

⁶⁵⁰ Bora and Can, *Devlet ve Kuzgun: 1990’lardan 2000’lere MHP*, 67-68.

Recep (*My Brave Friend Mad Recep*, dir. Duygu Sağıroğlu, 1967), *Fedailer Mangası* (*The Guards Draft*, dir. İlhan Engin, 1971), *Aşkın Zaferi: Aşk ve Vatan* (*The Victory of Love: Love and Fatherland*, dir. Orhan Elmas, 1973), *Tek Kollu Bayram* (*One-Armed Bayram*, dir. Erdoğan Tokatlı, 1973), *Kahramanlar Bayrak* (*The Heroes Flag*, dir. Remzi Jöntürk, 1974) and *Hora Geliyor Hora* (*Hora is Coming, Hora*, dir. Remzi Jöntürk, 1976).

4.10.1. *The Nation's Continuity:*

It should also be noted that although beyond the limits of the current dissertation, one can also think of the corpus of this part in relation to films depicting the Cyprus crisis.⁶⁵¹ However, the films which are solely depicting the Cyprus crisis have been omitted, and only those which represent the War of Independence or utilize the Cyprus crisis as a sign of the ethnic continuity of Turks through generations are taken into consideration. In this regard, there are examples in which the connection between Cyprus and Turkey is inserted in a historical narrative to build continuity with the past. For instance, in *Hora Geliyor Hora* (*Hora is Coming, Hora*), the life stories of three generations are connected through wars: Kamil, who fought in the Battle of Gallipoli, his son Lieutenant Serdar of the War of Independence, and the grandson Barış, who became the captain of Hora, the ship that was actively used in 1974 Cyprus Operation. The film's most violent scenes depict Serdar's taking revenge on both his father and his wife by beheading many Greeks and even bringing the head of Hristo, the man who killed his wife, to his wife's grave. The grandson Barış, whose name means 'peace' in English, symbolizes the hopeful new generation in favor of peace. This might also be a reproduction of the myth of national warrior, so the message could be that the Turks, as benevolent conquerors, brought peace to the island.

A similar example depicting ethnic continuity is provided by the 1966 film *Dişi Düşman* (*The Female Enemy*), which starts with a war scene depicting the conquest of İstanbul in 1453. After a crowded war scene, the audience sees a Byzantine commander hiding imperial treasures from Turks. It then turns into the story of a female Greek agent named Irene, who aims to find the treasures to sponsor the Greeks in Cyprus against Turks living on the island. This narrative path forms a continuity between the history of the Ottoman golden age and today's İstanbul besides Cyprus.

⁶⁵¹ Some of the available films on the Cyprus issue that contribute to the reproduction the nationalist myth of army nation are: *On Korkusuz Adam* (*Ten Fearless Men*, dir. Tunç Başaran, 1964); *Göç: Kıbrıs Ufuklarında* (*Migration: On Cyprus Horizons*, dir. Remzi Jöntürk, 1974); *Kartal Yuvası* (*The Eagle Nest*, dir. Natuk Baytan, 1974) and *Sezercik: Küçük Mücahit* (*Sezercik: Little Mujahid*, dir. Ertem Göreç, 1974).

4.10.2. The Others:

The emphasis on the nation's continuity also takes the enemy the same through ages and absolutizes it. In this regard, Byzantium and contemporary Greeks are taken as the same in *Dişi Düşman* (*The Female Enemy*). Both *Dişi Düşman* (*The Female Enemy*) and *Hora Geliyor Hora* (*Hora is Coming, Hora*) reproduce the myth of the other by historically identifying the enemy as Greeks clearly and distinctly. Unlike the 1950s' or early 60s' films, which had a much more vague and softer representation of the enemy, as from 1965, the Greeks were depicted in a dramatically negative way. Contrary to handsome, sympathetic, and charismatic Turkish soldiers, the Greeks mostly have a barbarian appearance, as ugly men with messy hair and sometimes toothless, and this physical 'ugliness' also reflects in their characters. It should also be noted that there are no civilian Greek characters except some dancing women and *meyhane* owners. In this context, other than war scenes, the Greeks are put in *meyhanes* where they drink and eat lavishly and force girls to dance for them. The Greek Hrisantos during the War of Independence, in *Ay Yıldız Fedaileri* (*The Guards of the Crescent and Star*), even beats a Greek girl because she does not want to dance. His bad behavior toward the Greek girl increases his evilness in the eyes of the audience.

Moreover, the representation of Greek women as dancers or singers might be working to belittle the enemy. There are also representations of Greek women as dangerous. One is Irene in *Dişi Düşman* (*The Female Enemy*), and the other is Despina in *Ay Yıldız Fedaileri* (*The Guards of the Crescent and Star*), both of whom are Greek agents. On the other hand, with their fighting skills and love for their nations, they could somehow be seen as role models for 'unaware' and not 'sufficiently national' Turkish women. In some examples, such as in *Hora Geliyor Hora* (*Hora is Coming Hora*), Greeks are called "perfidious." What this means is explained in *Ay Yıldız Fedaileri* (*The Guards of the Crescent and Star*) with the scene in which Lieutenant Ahmet threatens Hrisantos in a *meyhane* with the following words: "We will crush those who eat our bread but dare to stab us in the back."⁶⁵² Given the political context, this message dangerously connects the Greeks of Anatolia with the Greeks of Greece or Cypriot Greeks. Besides, it establishes a hierarchy between the Greek minority in Turkey and the Turkish-Muslim majority as Turks made a favor in 'allowing' the Greeks to live in Turkey. As a result, the Cyprus Operation and Turks' arrival on the island is justified, and the story then is

⁶⁵² "Ekmeğimizi yiyip de sırtımızdan vurmaya kalkanları kahrederiz."

formed as the following: ‘barbarians attacked innocent people; therefore, Turkey must be there to protect those people.’

There is also an emphasis on the British through the insertion of Turkish characters educated in Britain, British characters somehow connected to the Turkish ones, or British flags in many scenes. Contrary to the films of previous periods, which do not show any symbols of the enemy, there is high visibility of British flags in these movies shot after 1965. Here, examples include the display of flags in hospitals during İstanbul’s occupation in the First World War in *Aşkın Zaferi: Aşk ve Vatan* (*The Victory of Love: Love and Fatherland*); in Yemen hotels and streets after the Ottomans’ withdrawal from the city and its subsequent occupation by the British, as well as *meyhanes*, mosques in *Kahramanlar Bayrak* (*The Heroes Flag*). In *Fedailer Mangası* (*The Guards Draft*), we see the British army coming to the city carrying British flags. This recognizable emphasis on flags may have two functions. First, it helps to identify the enemy much more clearly through the use of colored film. Second, it could be the filmmakers’ strategy of creating a distance with the more powerful enemy. Thus, through foreign flags, the audience feels the existence of an enemy, but that fear does not turn into a concrete one with an open target and most probably stays at the symbolic level. Interestingly, among those films showing British flags, none of them is centered on the Cyprus crisis, and they focus on the War of Independence and the First World War. This could be a way to distance the enemy in time. Consequently, the concrete and the ultimate enemy are the Greeks, who are represented not merely with their flags but with real evil people, given the Greek flag’s comparably less frequent appearance.

In parallel, although they are represented as supporting the Greeks, the depiction of the British characters is never as negative as that of the Greeks. In *Ay Yıldız Fedaileri* (*The Guards of Crescent and Star*) that takes place during İstanbul’s occupation, Beatrice’s story is told in relation to how she was curious about Turkey in her childhood. Like European characters in the War of Independence films of the previous periods, Beatrice is the British commander’s daughter. For her, İstanbul represents the magical spirit of the East, where ancient chevaliers knew how to love and fight. This is an orientalist point of view based on a romantic nostalgia of the past. At some point, she understands how self-sacrificing Turks are and their love and passion for the nation. Then, thanks to her love for Lieutenant Ahmet, a Guards of Crescent and Star member, she decides to stay in İstanbul and join the Turkish National Forces. The transformation of Beatrice, here, also emphasizes the Turkish nation’s superiority while at the same time reducing the British enemy into a defeatable female character.

4.10.3. *The Warrior, Warrior Nation, National Homeland:*

In this framework, there are different candidates for the ideal national warrior. The first one is the British educated one who has not lost his/her Turkishness. Examples include İhsan Galip, the Oxford graduate member of the National Forces in *Fedailer Mangası (The Guards Draft)*, and Oya of *Aşkın Zaferi Aşk ve Vatan (The Victory of Love: Love and Fatherland)*, who studies in England for her undergraduate education. Both characters are depicted as having taken the technology of the West without forgetting their cultural identities. They are equally heroic, too. Oya, for instance, becomes a member of the National Forces. She disguises herself as a British nurse and then learns about the time of the British arms' arrival to be used against Turks. Here, Oya reproduces is the myth of the warrior nation by giving the message that even our women could defeat the enemy. At this point, Bayram of *Tek Kollu Bayram (One-Armed Bayram)*, who can kill the occupying Greeks in the War of Independence even though he has lost one of his arms in another fight with the Greeks, is also a significant example that serves to belittle the enemy. Bayram's fight emphasizes the myth of the Turkish nation's superiority with the message that even "our crippled men" could defeat the enemy.

Although the above examples contribute to the ordinariness of the hero, the idealized national warrior, according to the films, is neither high-ranking soldiers, the physically disadvantaged ones, nor young women; instead, the heroic, courageous, aggressive, and nationalist representative of the 'common man.' At this point, first, it should be noted that education is never an issue for the common man. Here, an interesting yet complicated example showing 'common man' as a hero is *Aslan Arkadaşım Kuduz Recep (My Brave Friend Mad Recep)*, which tells the story of a disorderly group of National Forces. When some group members try to steal the money carried by the group to the Turkish army, Recep, a common man, kills them. Then, he follows the Lieutenant and, in the final scene, sends away him with the money to catch up with the army. It is like Recep, at some point, organizing things even for the lieutenant. Although Recep and the lieutenant seem to complete each other, and there seems no hierarchy between them most of the time, the finalizing and decisive step is taken by Recep in the final scene. Although he has been wounded, he loads the machine gun, directs it to the Greek gangs, recites "*bismillah*," and fires it (01:12:09). He is the first one to do it among the group. This is a significant scene showing the division of labor between the common man and soldiers; basically, what duties the common man could have and how they may turn into national heroes of the myth of the national warrior. Moreover, in one of the first scenes, Recep and his friends gatecrash a party organized by Ottoman pashas and the occupying countries' generals. There, they steal their jewelry, gold, and money to finance the National Forces. While

doing this, Recep forcefully takes the jacket of an Ottoman Pasha's military uniform, which is full of war medals. Ironically, throughout the film, Recep wears that jacket. This particular scene means that the power is shifted from those exploiting the country for their own interests to the 'common man.' The message, therefore, is that what the Turkish nation needs is not an educated man but a man of action, an ordinary man who is not necessarily educated but brave and aggressive enough.

There are also cases in which the representations of soldiers and common man fuse into each other. Unlike the previous films, even lieutenants do not wear military uniforms in the films made in the post-1965 period. This emphasizes the ordinariness of the hero, and it is definitely in line with the aggressive and militarized atmosphere of the period. An interesting example is Lieutenant Ahmet of *Ay Yıldız Fedaileri (The Guard of Crescent and Star)*. In the first half of the film, he never mentions his military rank and just appears as a member of the National Forces. To complement this, most of the time he is in civilian clothes. In fact, his duty is similar to the other lieutenants in the movies of the previous periods: to transfer guns from İstanbul to Anatolia. His attitudes, however, are similar to district bravados (*mahalle kabadayıları*). He is like a civilian tough guy hanging around in his *mahalle* for the whole day and being involved in some fights with the Greeks hanging around in the same *mahalle*. This representation again contributes to the commonness of Ahmet.

In one scene, Ahmet of *Ay Yıldız Fedaileri (The Guard of Crescent and Star)* saves a street vendor from the hands of the Greeks. Here, the street vendor could be taken as symbolizing the nation, Ahmet is the idealized warrior, and the *mahalle* could be a miniature homeland. This focus on *mahalle* could be an indication of the closeness of the enemy. Thus, the message is that enemy is so close and not only on the battlefield anymore. Therefore, even 'our *mahalle*' is in danger. And since the enemy is near, 'our soldiers' are no longer in battlefields, barracks, or offices. Thus, in the films of the post-1965 period, the warriors are in streets, villages, neighborhoods, essentially the peripheries of the homeland.

Besides, given the proximity of the danger, the Turkish national warrior must be much more aggressive and masculine than he had been previously. This way of imagining the warrior also reflects the vocabulary and the masculine values used in the films. The heroes swear a lot on their honor, and 'manly fighting,' which is defined as not attacking civilians, is continuously praised by the heroes. In this case, women are discriminated against and are expected to serve the masculinity of men. For example, in *Ay Yıldız Fedaileri (The Guards of Crescent and Star)*, İsmail from National Forces gets mad at his wife because she has told the Ottoman soldiers where her nationalist husband's friends are hiding to save her husband's life. İsmail, however,

thinks that she has destroyed the bond of brotherhood and betrayed his friends. The woman, then, kills herself because she has failed to fulfill her nationalist and womanly duty. This act of suicide is quite significant in revealing the gender roles in addition to the closeness of the enemy. In the world created by these movies, the danger is everywhere, and so the enemy even interferes with 'our' women in 'our' houses. This increases the feeling of insecurity, and consequently, much more aggressive heroes emerge to fight against the enemies.

The final point is that heroes' violence is frequently supported by many scenes, including military marches, machine guns, tanks, military ships, and jets. Newspaper headlines about the cruelty of the Greeks are also shown to increase the sense of reality. Besides, wounded people, bloody and violent scenes showing how the Greeks kill Turks or how the Turks kill Greeks are standard. The scenes in which blood spouting out of the bodies of enemies and bloody swords are significantly violent. For example, in *Kahramanlar Bayrak (The Heroes are Flag)*, the Turkish soldier from National Forces cuts the throat of a Greek with a knife, and blood wells out everywhere. Some of these violent scenes, none of which have been censored, include religious references as well. In fact, all films have several scenes depicting muezzins, praying people, azan, and people murdered while reciting the Islamic oath, the Shahadah. All in all, the audience is under a very heavy ideological bombardment because the films reproduce all kinds of political myths to intimidate and even provoke the audience against the Greeks.

4.11. Concluding Remarks:

The 1965 elections brought an increase in the rhetorical power and influence of the 'common man' with Demirel, with whom the masses could identify with. In fact, the electoral success of the AP, which was perceived as the heir of the DP by its electorate, was a shock for the traditional military/bureaucratic elite associated with the CHP. Then, to understand the wishes and desires of the masses who had voted for the AP, the traditional elite started to engage in intellectual discussions about what they might have done wrong. In this vein, various cinema movements arose such as People's Cinema (*Halk Sineması*), National Cinema (*Ulusal Sinema*), and *Sinematek* discussed what Turkish national essence should be represented. The discussions' common point was the elite's belief in transforming society from top to bottom. In this context, they did not hesitate to ignore the commercial cinematic production of Yeşilçam and look for alternatives. However, regardless of their attempts to distinguish themselves from Yeşilçam, what they produced was still in the same ideological pool in that it was nurtured from similar political and socio-economic changes. Therefore, the world they created was significant in the reproduction of nationalist political myths.

It was also the time in which a new generation of politicians started to attract attention. These were mainly Alexander type of leaders that became popular as the rivals of the older and wiser Cincinnatus İnönü, as Girardet would say. In particular, Demirel, Ecevit, and Türkeş were young and dynamic men-of-action, whose backgrounds and visions complied with the aggressive political context. Although followed a relatively low profile yet, Erbakan was a man of this age with his background and a harbinger of the future impact of political Islam. Due to their charisma, these leaders had wholehearted supporters who adopted them as role models. In fact, living the bitter effects of rapid industrialization without a radical increase in living standards, modernization, a severe economic crisis, subsequent social movements, and increasing demands of transforming society, each of these leaders were the ‘Fathers’ or the ‘saviors’ for certain groups. They constituted the embodiments of hopes and aspirations for the ordinary men, whose hearts and minds both the right-wing and left-wing parties were trying to capture.

One of the reflections of the general trend of young and aggressive leaders was the radical leftist student leader Deniz Gezmiş. Although there were not many university students, their impact on political history was tremendous. In addition to inspiring other social movements, students crystallized the generational conflicts within the leftist movement. In contrast to the old leftists, some students were in favor of using aggressiveness instead of non-violent formal methods of making politics to reach their goals. This was in line with the strategies of the new generation of leaders. They believed that only with these methods could they gain power.

The dynamic revolutionary atmosphere, which gradually evolved into militarist aggressiveness, was suppressed by the military memorandum of March 12, 1971. The following period brought political and economic instability in addition to the peak of Turkey’s isolation in international relations that had already started in the late 1950s. Ecevit, the new head of the CHP and later the prime minister, challenged the US in the opium crisis. Benefiting from the aggressive nationalist support he gained, in 1974, Ecevit pushed the button for the Cyprus Intervention. This action nurtured the reproduction of Girardet’s Alexander myth while at the same time creating a convenient atmosphere for the domination of a militarist and aggressive political discourse. Then, the increasing aggressiveness and militant nationalism gave birth to two successive National Front governments, which embraced strong nationalist, Islamic and anti-communist tones. These governments of the post-1974 period dealt with the economic downturn, increasing protests, the 1 May 1977 Incident, and other memorable incidents such as

the Bahçelievler, Çorum, and Maraş massacres against the opposing voices, communists and the Alawites.

The cinematic outcome of all these events was the inflation of action/adventure movies depicting national warriors as if confirming the myth of warrior nation, which considers all members of the nation as warriors. The myths reproduced in this supply were shaped around the anxiety of the nation's survival, militant nationalism, masculine values, aggressiveness, anti-communism, and Islam. There was, in fact, a more explicit depiction of the enemy as Greeks. But, on the other hand, the warrior became a symbol of the common man, that is militant, aggressive, violent, and not necessarily educated. This meant the transformation of the 'common man' into 'men of action.' All in all, as society became more disconnected and polarized, the national warriors of action/adventure movies with historical settings became more aggressive. This can also be followed through the second group of films from the same period, as shown in the next chapter.