

## **DİYET (Blood Money) 1974**

Lütfi. Ö. Akad

### **Overview**

Diyet is the last feature film of the migration trilogy, as well as the last feature film by Lutfi Akad for cinema.

As in previous films of the trilogy, in Diyet, Akad focuses on the lives of a group of people who migrated from village to city. The characters of the previous films are more devoted to traditional and make a living by trade. However, here, he discusses the birth of a new urbanite type. These people have been completely cut off from their traditional circles, where they meet factories and trade unions from the important elements of modern society and the city.

The film also coincides with a dynamic period in terms of workers' rights and trade union struggle in Turkey. During the period, political debate and conflict between left and right are concentrated. The influence of this era on the director is evident.

### **People**

<i>Hacer</i>	She is a factory worker woman with her two children.
<i>Hasan</i>	He is a poor worker who just came to the factory and later married Hacer.
<i>Bilal</i>	Foreman at the factory.
<i>Salim Bey</i>	Owner of the factory.
<i>Mevlüt</i>	He is a worker working in the factory and engaged in trade union activities.
<i>Yunus</i>	He is father of Hacer.
<i>Mustafa</i>	He is a young worker who was injured in an accident. He is Hacer's neighbor.

### **Synopsis**

In the events that have developed around a group of factory workers, one of the workers is crippled by a bad accident at the factory where he works. Workers are disturbed by these repetitive accidents. They repeatedly applied to their boss for a solution to this situation, but they have not received any results. Salim, the owner of the factory, cares more about profitability than the safety of the workers. Workers also try to be organized in the factory through the union. Hacer is a worker who has emigrated from Anatolia and has been working in this factory for two years. Abandoned by her husband, Hacer struggles to raise her two young children and take care of her elderly father. A young man named Hasan takes a job to work on the same machine instead of another worker who had an accident. Hacer and Hasan get close to each other and married after a while. Union workers try to win Hacer, while Bilal, the foreman at the factory, tries to prevent the organization of unionized workers and protects the boss's interests. Hacer initially tried to avoid a conflict of interest between the boss and the workers. However, she is concerned about Hasan and begins to assess what is happening, allowing her to change her mind over time and make decisions.

### **Scenes**

*Accident* Workers work at dangerous tasks in the factory. Mustafa has an accident and is taken to the hospital. Foreman Bilal orders others to return to their work. A group of workers argues with Bilal about the danger of the machine. The workers go to the boss to talk to him. They demand the renewal of the dangerous machine. The boss rejects their demands.

*The new worker* Unemployed Hasan looks for work and is hired by the factory on the advice of the foreman Bilal. The foreman warns Hasan to be careful with the machine.

*Being a union member* Hacer's friend advises her to join the union. Unionist workers say Mustafa can not get compensation because he was not a member of the union. Hacer does not trust the unionists.

*Factory exit* The first encounter. Hacer forgets the shoes while packing Mustafa's belongings from his closet. Noticing this, Hasan catches her up and gives the shoes to Hacer.

*Union activity* A union manager visits the union room at the factory. He says more workers are required to be persuaded to get stronger. They complain the workers are afraid. Unionized workers secretly hand out leaflets to win members. Foreman Bilal finds brochures. He asks Hasan about their source. Hasan does not know who hands them out. Foreman and workers argue.

*Shoes* Hacer gives Hasan shoes that Mustafa can no longer wear. Hasan tries to wear shoes with great enthusiasm. He looks very happy.

*Unemployment* Hacer's father, Yunus, suffers from unemployment. Hacer recommends selling something. Having heard their speeches, Hasan recommends selling balloons. Although Yunus hesitates, Mustafa's mother supports this idea.

*Wage* Hasan has got his first wage, which is shorter than he expects. He is upset.

*Balloons* Hasan brings balloons to Yunus to sell. The incoming landlord informs they need to evacuate the house soon for the construction of an apartment block.

*Dertleşme* Hacer tells Hasan how her husband left him and her children, how she came to work in the city. Hasan advises Yunus to be strong.

*Proposal* After work, Hasan asks Hacer to marry her.

*Informant* The foreman questions Hasan about the union. Hasan says that he does not know anything but he can gather information about them. Hasan mentions his marriage plan. Bilal is pleased and promises to support him.

*Mustafa comes to home* Mustafa returns home from the hospital. He is paralyzed, and cannot walk. His friends from the union visit him. They inform they have agreed to the union to seek Mustafa's right. They want Hacer to join them. Hacer refuses again. His father, Yunus, points out that solidarity is also valuable in terms of religion.

*Bribery* Bilal gives money to a group of workers, including Hasan. He wants them to get him all kinds of information. Hasan is in a good mood.

*End of the shift* After work, Hacer goes to the workshop where Hasan works. She sees the machine that injured Mustafa and now Hasan works. She is scared. Hasan donates his entire wage for a wheelchair for Mustafa.

*Work* Mevlut brings Mustafa with cardboard, etc. materials where he can make simple toys at home. He tries to encourage him.

*New home* Hasan takes Hacer to the land where they will build their new home, says the boss will help them and give them extra money. Hacer is worried about this unexpected goodness. She expresses her concerns about the dangerous machine. Hasan calms her down.

*Accounting* Salim, the boss, accounts. He concerns that he will lose half of his profit when he pays for overtime. His father, the founder of the company, warns his son to be ruthless to the worker.

*Unity* Mustafa states he begins to think that Muhsin Usta and Mevlut are right. If they were united, maybe he would still be healthy. Hasan arrives and says Mustafa is still responsible for his injury. They argue.

*Conflict* Salim comes to the canteen and asks employees to work at night for a month to keep up with the new orders. Muhsin Usta and Mevlut oppose. They say overtime will be dangerous on the old machine, and more than one shift is needed. Hasan gets angry. He works on the machine and says he will not share his earnings with anyone. His boss likes his attitude. An argument starts among the workers.

*At the picnic* Hacer, Hasan, and the children have a picnic over the weekend. Hasan is very happy. He says he is going to work hard and make money; also, his friends are going to help build the house.

*Death of father* Yunus sells balloons and talks about the difficulties of being abroad with his friend. Old Yunus dies with balloons in his hand on a bench where he sits in the children's park.

*Funeral* At Yunus's funeral, Bilal delivers the money sent by his boss Salim to Hacer. He tells her to get to work as soon as possible.

*New home* The married couple works day and night in the factory and tries to build their own home when they have an opportunity. Hasan assures Hacer there is nothing to worry about and their home will be fine. Hacer is tired of working. Hasan says she should be thankful that their boss gives them everything.

*Visit* Bilal visits his employer. Salim's father informs that they have new tasks and the workers should work hard for one more month. Salim promises Bilal a share from the profit.

*Another visit* Hacer talks to workers of the union. She expresses concern for Hasan. Bilal learns her visit and questions Hasan. Hasan goes to the union in anger. The argument turns into a fight. He argues with Hacer.

*Accident* Salim forces workers in the factory yard to choose their sides. Hacer prefers unionists when Hasan chooses the anti-union group. Therefore, Bilal begins to blame Hasan. He insults. Hasan hits Bilal. Hasan continues to work on the machine in panic and has an accident.

## **Themes**

*Solidarity* Solidarity has an important place in Diyet. Hacer supports her neighbor Mustafa who had an accident. His friends help Mustafa to find a new occupation. Hacer gives Hasan old shoes. Hasan, on the other hand, finds a job for Hacer's father. Workers come into solidarity through union organization.

Solidarity is also part of the emotional relationship of the main characters. Hasan and Hacer like each other and decide to get married. However, the needs of a spouse to help overcome the difficulties faced in their lives play an important role in this because both Hacer and Hasan are alone. Hacer was abandoned by her husband with her two children and her elderly father. She needs support in this great city where she emigrated and live under severe conditions. Hasan similarly needs a partner.

This solidarity between acquaintances is at a fundamental level. The trade unionists involved in the film represent a group that has taken this solidarity to a higher level and improve it. They struggle with it throughout the movie. When they come to visit Mustafa, who was paralyzed, they state that "We should have been united and said none of us would work if you didn't bring that machine."

They want to convince Hacer to join them. Initially, Hacer sees it as an unfair attempt, "domination of someone else's property by force". She does not want to participate. However, the union workers state this is not the essence of the issue. This is the way to

make demands from the powerful through solidarity. Hacer is considered as an important gain for the union with her strong personality.

Hacer also emphasizes solidarity in his outcry in the final. Workers and the oppressed will not be able to save themselves unless they are united.

*Work* The work and production appear as a phenomenon that connects characters to life but also consumes them when they are extreme.

Mustafa, whose legs were harmed at the beginning of the film and was unemployed, lay in his home in a depression, while his fellow trade unionists from the factory created an occupation that he could do. They teach him to make toys for children from cardboard and plastic. This connects Mustafa to the life again. Here, Akad emphasizes the spiritual power of producing more than the monetary dimension of the work. In other words, it is shown that producing is not only a source of the make a living but also a humanitarian need. However, the job, which turns into a tool of exploitation when it is excessive and in poor conditions, is what also causes Mustafa to be disabled.

*Money* Money is a prominent theme here, as in other films of the trilogy. It is something most characters desire in various proportions and compete for it, and in this respect, the film reflects the basic characteristics of today's capitalist system. In the narrative, the connection of the characters with money can be evaluated in two main categories: the employer -money relationship and the relationship of employees with money.

The boss (Salim) wants to make more profits, goes even further, disregards the safety of workers as long as the cost of the worker is lower than the cost of the machine. He also tries to cut employees' other earnings. In various scenes in the Diyet, the relationship between profit and money is discussed in this respect.

Salim tries to maximize his profit trough making the workers work non-stop. When it comes to money, he is cruel to his employees. The workers also receive their earnings short. Taxes that are payable by the employer are deducted from the workers' wages. Also, overtime fees are unpaid. When Hasan receives his first wage, although he is frustrated, he does not demand anything. Salim does not approve of the union that could prevent this injustice and cut his profit. He does his best to intimidate union workers and those who approach the union. From time to time, he is generous to the foreman and some workers, preventing larger monetary losses at a more modest cost.

While dreaming of marriage and a new home with Hacer, Hasan says the boss gave him two hundred liras more. Hacer is surprised. Her suspicion and anxiety are visible on her face. Hasan distinguishes this and says they gave this money because they were happy with his work. Hacer is a smart woman. She realizes that this money was not merely for work. While the rights of other hard-working workers are being defeated, there should be another reason why Hasan is overpaid.

On the other hand, the relationship of employees with money has a few ways. Some employees who see they are oppressed and exploited are trying to protect their rights by entering into solidarity through unionization. The aim of getting the wages they think they deserve and the boss paying the necessary costs for improvements in working conditions is one of the eseential components of this.

Another segment embodied in Bilal, the foreman, also strengthens its place by standing by the boss and preventing those who are seeking rights. The boss gives these workers bonuses. Such workers are the ones who try to save themselves individually and follow their personal interests. Hasan, who initially had good intentions, eventually becomes one of them. The financial opportunities provided to Hasan, which other employees could not have, cause him to be changed. The foreman uses Hasan as an informant for the activities of the union.

Another segment of workers, like Hacer, wants to protect themselves by staying out of all these conflicts, working with their forces for fear of losing their jobs, and competing with each other, looking for salvation in their efforts.

*Class struggle* Diyet reflects a slice of life of a group of workers working under heavy conditions in the factory. These workers are in two groups as those who have class-conscious and who have not got. On the one hand, some workers who try to cooperate and maintain unity in the workplace. On the other hand, those who try to survive alone with individual efforts.

Those who are alone, try to exist in an intense competition by getting ahead of each other, standing over it. Unionists believe it is a dead-end. They realize they can only be stronger with cooperation. Thus, the two types of the struggle for existence in the film are confrontational. Akad contrasts between these two groups and prefers his side in favor of those who aim for success through solidarity. He exhibits the weaknesses and faults of individual emancipation.

The main character, Hacer, is a person that evolves from one group to another. Hasan, who does not have class-consciousness and who thinks he will save himself on an individual level, sees all the workers as rivals. He believes that if he works hard enough, he can achieve all his dreams.

The type of worker embodied in the character of the foreman symbolizes those who try to save themselves by standing side with the powerful, working against members of their class for money and status. In the film, Bilal is far angrier with workers who believe in the union than his boss. In the beginning, Bilal describes Hacer as "good" because he knows that Hacer stays away from the union, and when he sees the change in her attitude, he confronts her and even his husband, Hasan, who disagrees with her thoughts.

### **Character Analysis**

*Hacer* Hacer is a young woman who has been working in the factory for a while by emigrating to Istanbul. She lives with her father and two children. She was abandoned by her husband. She is insecure and worried. She dreams of a happy, beautiful life with her loved ones.

*Anxious* Hacer enters that part of the factory after work to see the machine that Mustafa was injured and Hasan replaced. There is no one. Only Hacer and cold, still metals. Hacer gets nervous when faced with the machine that caused many workers to be injured and is currently working with Hasan. Hacer and machine contrast through consecutive shot-counter shots. No dialog. Just silence. Hacer touches the machine. The noise of the stationary, lifeless, cold machine heard in the soundtrack creates a contrast. It is a sound that not audible, but only Hacer and the audience hears. Hacer is affraid. The scene gives a concrete statement of her concerns. This anxiety of Hacer is spread throughout the film.

*Hesitant* Hacer has been working in the factory for two years. A small number of workers try to be organized in factories. His colleagues try to convince her to join the union. Hacer is afraid of that, even though he is not happy with the working conditions. She says "We're expats, this is a business we don't know."

Her future husband is also anti-union. This increases her hesitation. She does not want to contradict Hasan. However, she worries about him, who does not care about the danger of his work. She begins to weigh whether the union can cure it. However, Hasan's decisions prevent her from taking action.

Despite Hasan's hopes and optimism, Hacer is unsure of a beautiful future when she and Hasan meet where they will build the house they dreamed.

Hacer: "I don't know Hasan, work, and work... day and night. We're out of humanity". Hasan: "What do you say, Hacer? As long as I've got a job, I'll squeeze the stone and get its water." Hacer continues her critical stance against Hasan, who has questioned her about whether

she has approached the union. Hasan sees her thinking as ungrateful, saying everything they have was given by his boss and that even their relationship was established in this way.

In the end, Hacer goes to the union with hesitation. She looks for answers to address the questions in her head. Workers explain the importance of cooperation and solidarity. Hacer confesses that it is not about money; it is Hasan's safety.

**Hasan** Hasan is a young, hopeful, ambitious, and hard-working person who just got a job at the factory. He marries Hacer. He is loyal to his recruiter and his boss. He does not like the union and its defenders.

**Naive** Hasan is indifferent to what is happening around him and cannot see the facts behind the events. Thus, he is unaware of what can happen. But his dreams are big and he targets the high. He thinks hard work is enough to achieve his wishes. He thinks he can find a way out by working harder and harder, achieving a better life. He believes everything he possesses is thanks to the employee and the foreman. According to him, the work, the money, even their marriage, and the house they make all exist because of them. Hasan sees a counter-argument as ungrateful.

When Hasan learns from Bilal that Hacer went to the union, gets angry and fights with the workers. He also hits Hacer. From Hasan's point of view, he is humiliated before the man who has given him his bread and everything.

**Hopeful** Hasan works with pleasure at the machine. He dreams of growing the construction of the house and renting out the upstairs. He believes in the boss's promises. He is optimistic and has full of hope.

Hasan takes Hacer to where they will build up the house and lets her imagine the floor plan. He comforts Hacer, who is upset that she will be removed from her home. He says their own home is going to be even better and kids are going to have a room.

**Ambitious** Mustafa is no longer be able to walk. Hasan takes his shoes. As Hasan tries to fit the shoes, his friend standing there says he will take them if they do not fit. Mustafa forces and manages to wear the shoes on his feet. The man upsets. Hasan wears them with a great joy.

In an advancing scene, Mustafa makes toys while Hacer helps him in the garden. Mustafa says "I thought. Muhsin Usta, Mevlut, I guess they're right. We didn't get what they said. If we had united that machine would be removed. And I'd be upright on my feet".

At that time, Hasan's voice is heard from outside the frame. He yells: "It's not the fault of that machine. You cannot make anything by force."

Mustafa: "Not by force, by agreement they say. By a deal."

Hasan: "Deal happens on the market. Is it possible to deal with the man you work for? Why isn't anything happening to me? You're gonna open your eyes. It takes attention; if you don't pay attention..." (he cannot complete his sentence). Mustafa has seen his own shoes on Hasan's feet. Hasan is ashamed of what he says.

Although Hasan initially had no idea about the union, he soon became a union enemy and a spy in exchange for extra money paid to him. The information about the activities of the union is transmitted to the boss through the foreman.

Hasan sees high apartment blocks when they return from the picnic. He shares his ambition about living there one day with Hacer.

**Bilal** He is the foreman at the factory. He forces workers to work for long hours under difficult conditions. He also tries to prevent solidarity among the workers. He is obedient to his boss. He has financial benefits that other workers cannot have. He is a hypocrite, oppressive, and sneaky.

*Hypocrite* Bilal, a member of the working class, hierarchically sees himself on top and tries to differentiate from the others. He acts as an agent of the boss's interests rather than the interests of the workers, and in return obtains financial concessions.

The plot opens with the workers in the factory and one of them has a bad accident. Bilal describes it as the will of Allah and wants to portray the ongoing accidents as an ordinary situation for the workers.

When Bilal visits this worker in one of the advancing scenes, he repeats the same rhetoric: For Mustafa's condition, he says, "What can you do? It is fate". Mustafa replies that even if he does not find it credible: "Let's call it fate."

*Oppressive* Bilal tries to prevent union member workers from being organized in the factory in various ways. He tries to sack the workers who are in union activity. He rewards some workers who obey the boss's wishes, causing workers to be divided among themselves.

One of the moments related to this takes place at Hacer's father's funeral. Hacer's employer sends Hacer money for the funeral and as the wedding gift together. Thus, a funeral and a wedding are mentioned together in this scene in a contrasting manner. She is also surprised because she knows that her boss would not pay for anything without his interest. Then she realizes that the money was sent because of Hasan, a docile worker, as the boss wanted.

Bilal pressures Hacer to return to work as soon as possible, even at the funeral. Hacer, who is tired of working day and night, begins to understand the mechanism of the system that destroys human relations and replaces them a relation of exploitation. With Hacer's awareness, Bilal's attitude towards her becomes hostile.

With the increase in the workload in the factory, the owner of the factory, Salim, wants workers to work at night for a month. Bilal becomes the agent for that to happen.



*Hasan works*



*Hacer walks away*



*Hacer and Hasan talks about their new home and life*



*Hasan and Bilal (The foreman)*