Abstract: The intricate relationship between the cinematic representation of modernist ideologies and their spatial attributes is part of any political program and finds its concrete manifestation in Modern historiography. The new capital city of the Turkish Revolution renders a similar trajectory through which the city itself, Ankara, becomes almost an instrument of that ideological construction through the gaze of revolutionary cinema. However, what is most striking in this historical remaking is the intrusion of the third party, that of the Soviets of the 1920s. Playing a central role, the Soviets not only politically anchor into the Anatolian geography but also aid the ruling elite in their collective effort to fabricating an amnesic environment, all embedded in Modernist architecture and urbanism. Filmed and directed by Yutkevich himself, Türkiye’nin Kallbi Ankara, in this respect, revisits half a century long debate on how representation and ideology coexists in urban space.

Keywords: propaganda films, Turkish revolution, the Soviet Cinema, collective amnesia, modernist urbanism

Prologue
The intricate relationship between the cinematic representation of modernist ideologies and their spatial attributes is part of any political program, and finds its concrete manifestation in modern history (Benjamin 1969; Fiske 1993; Wayne 2005). For some, cinema is the most politically engaged of all cultural media, reflecting a fascinating rendering between representation, ideological construction and the cityscape (Eisenstein 1969; Hay 1987; Jameson 1988). Presenting the ways in which the city has been represented in cinematic forms and how cinema has been influenced by the historical developments of urban environments in particular, contemporary literature on “the cinematic city” offers insightful coverage of cinema and the city, and their political alliances (AlSayyad 2006; Clarke 1997). In tune with previous literature, this article is an original attempt to explore the exclusive role of cinema on the political landscape of 1930s Turkey. The new capital city of the Turkish Republic followed a trajectory through which Ankara became almost an instrument of that ideological construction especially under the gaze of revolutionary cinema. However, what is most striking in this historical remaking is the intrusion of a third party—the Soviets. Playing a central role, the Soviets were not only politically anchored into the Anatolian geography, but also assisted the new administration in their collective effort to construct a cinematic environment of revolution that was embedded in Modernist architecture and urbanism.
The study examines this historically significant era by focusing on a film known in Russian as *Ankara: Serdce Tureckii* by Sergei Yutkevich, a master of Soviet cinema who created the film for the 10th anniversary of the Turkish Republic. The film sets out its original argument in two ways: first, the documentary, completed in 1934, not only masterfully depicts the Turkish Revolution, but also reveals the ideological context attributed by the Soviets to the young Republic; and second, the film, which resembles countless works of Revolutionary Cinema produced by the Soviet Union, is reminiscent of an organized attempt, drawing imagery for its political construct from Ankara’s urban spaces, practices and *urbanite*. The film was constructed around two basic sub-narratives; the first being built around the war-ravaged Anatolia, groaning under the weight of poverty brought about by feudalism; and the second focusing on Ankara and the transformation of an ordinary town into a modern city, which it does so through a careful weaving of images of modern urbanization. Written and directed by Yutkevich himself, *Türkiye’nin Kallbi Ankara* (The Heart of Turkey: Ankara), in this respect, presents important details of the treacherous relationship between politics, the cultural media and urban space, and thus is worthy of an in-depth investigation that revisits the half century-long debate on how representation and ideology coexist.

*Ankara: Serdce Tureckii* is not Yutkevich’s most internationally well known film, nor is it his most important; however, it is of particular significance in that it offers insight into the cultural relationships that came about as a result of the improving Turkish–Soviet ties during the early years of the Turkish Republic. Furthermore, it is a striking piece of cinema, offering a beautiful visual account of the Turkish Revolution and its ideological subtext, cinematically rendered through the city and its architecture. In terms of its significance for cultural history, however, most critics state that propaganda films cannot be referred to as actual cinema. Such a classification, however, reduces the propaganda film to the level of an object that draws its strength from the individual’s fear, nurtured by antidemocratic discourses (Hay 1987). This framework does not seem to apply to our case for two reasons: first, it is not true that the depiction of the 1930s takes an antidemocratic tone; and second, it is known that Yutkevich’s cinema was not predominated by a conscious selectiveness that distinguished between art and politics or prioritized one over the other. The truth in such disparaging statements is questionable for most works identified as propaganda films. For most of the works by the leading names of Revolutionary Cinema, such attitudes in undermining propaganda films are a product of an ideological escape towards simplicity (Wayne 2005). Therefore, it is our duty to re-evaluate them in respect to the Soviet or other political centers (Christie and Taylor 1994).

The subject period spans the first decades of the new Turkish state. Although its political complexity falls in the interest area of many political scientists, their studies fail to adequately explain the complex relation between visuality and cultural geography (Kazgan and Ulçenko 2003). Therefore, it would be an original approach to revisit the city and its urbanization by drawing reference from its political climate and deciphering how the city and its architectural object have been constructed and represented visually in various cultural contexts (Bozdoğan 2001). It is now
a common belief that in the Turkish context urban space underwent a peculiar transition to modernism with all the necessary institutions, becoming a powerful metaphor that symbolized a political ideal. The transformation of the Anatolian landscape into a modern city had always been an important process, one in which the aesthetic was not the primary objective, as it was believed that the modern concept of beauty was based on the political utility that permitted one to know the needs of the revolutionary implications. Those works indeed affirmed that urban space was not a task for the individual and partial intervention, but an instrument for elaborating a political will for further ideological constructions. In this respect, attitudes towards urbanism have long been an important component of institutionalized politics, and constructing Ankara, in this sense, was regarded as part of the Republican ideology, becoming a common ground for the framing of the norms and standards of the Turkish Revolution (Bozdoğan and Kasaba 1997; Çınar 2005). There, its urbanization, envisioned within Western standards akin to those of European examples in terms of its modernity, hygiene and rational, was believed to provide a contemporary environment for empowering Turkey’s new life (Tankut 1992). For the republicans, the contemporary qualities of urbanism and its “social engineering” were of significance, as surely were the subsequent modern practices, ie the overall construction of the city and the cultivation of its vast open landscape for modern practices, which signified progress and change in modernist canons. It was believed that this would provide a continual tendency to become distanced from the political influences of the old regime, which was associated with the Ottoman Empire, the Sultanate, Islam and its 600-year-old capital, Istanbul. The new identity in contrast was regarded as a new ideological positioning. With the proclamation of Ankara as the new capital in 1923 the city entered into a new phase in which the state and the new national bourgeois could mobilize their ideological constructions, both materially and visually.

Act One: Staging

The Turkey of yore known in Germany, which fought in the war as Wilhelm II’s ally under the command of Enver Pasha, is no more. The new Turkey bears no resemblance to the “sick man of the Bosphorus”. The symbol of Turkey is no longer the Golden Horn in Istanbul. New Turkey is defined by Ankara (Ankara, 11 September 1922; Leonid-Friedrich 1999:43).

After a tour of Anatolia in 1922, two members of the European Comintern arrived in Ankara, the center of the Turkish Revolution, for the last stop of their journey. The semi-official letters they wrote in the midst of the war reflected their experiences during their journey, focusing on the political construct of the new state and the relationship that the Turkish Revolution forged amid the regional developments (Leonid-Friedrich 1999). Presenting a tale worthy of reinterpretation in their essays, the Cominterns attend the first party convention of the “Turkish Communists” (Türkiye Halk İşbirliği’nin Fırkası Kongresi), which took place in September 1922. Under clandestine circumstances due to the misgivings of those in power in Ankara, they suggested that, considering the conditions particular to the East, opportunities
for a proletarian revolution in Turkey must be sought that went beyond merely short-
term intentions. However, crucial to this process was the communist organization,
which remained as a keystone of the alliance between the peasants dominating
the countryside, and the working class who were dependent on the development
of industry. The underlying reason for the faith the Comintern representatives had
in the proletarian revolution lay in the developments in Ankara being shaped by
those in the administration. In this context, two important themes were indicated
in their letters: the first was the affinity in new Turkey towards the Soviet Union, and
the second was Moscow’s mood identical to that in Ankara. The observers, in their
letters entitled “Russia and Ankara”, discussed the positive course of the Turkish–
Soviet relationship, underlining the political kinship that had formed between the
Soviet and the Turkish Revolutionaries. As described at length in the Cominterns’
letters, Turkey symbolized the feudal dissolution in the East and was seen as an
emancipatory war being waged against imperialism. In the subsequent letter entitled
“The Turkey of Ankara”, they endeavored to understand the efficacy of the city
within this process of change. The Ankara of 1922 is described as follows: “Like
all Eastern cities, Ankara is also filthy, arid and ridden with dust and insects. It is
extremely difficult for a European to find fresh air to breathe.” The letter included a
proposal of solutions to all of the problems listed and a suggestion that Ankara was
“reconstructing” itself:

It is not surprising that the road of this city of the future begins at a station located
far from the center. Is this not the railroad that comes to the country bearing the
strong winds of industrialized Europe from Istanbul? Wide, straight streets start from this
station and extend into the city. In the same way, work has begun in parts of Ankara
behind these railroad facilities. Starting with wide roads paved with cobblestones near
the modern building of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, new roads are being built
at the site of the old fire and a “new market” is being built to replace the old market
that was destroyed in the fire. It is thus that some houses, some modern roads and some
industrial facilities proclaim the birth of a new city atop Ankara’s ruins (Leonid-Friedrich

The Cominterns described the new Turkey through objects from the
cultural context, citing the contrasts between the old/new, traditional/modern,
conservative/progressive, especially in the city and its architecture. In short, their
narration brought to the fore some realities that had long been internalized and
taken for granted. The perception and public image of Ankara lay hidden in
the imaginary depiction(s) relayed through city and architecture in 1922 by the
Comintern delegates. Similar depictions exist in other contexts; the search for similar
relationalities with reference to “objects of culture” that are yet untouched upon,
but deemed extraordinary, should, therefore, guide studies.

Ankara: Serdce Tureckii, in this respect, is at once the object and the subject, an
agent of the new meanings, signs and symbols attributed to the city, and therefore
Turkey; but in reality, Ankara embodies the objectification of the spatialization of the
long-lasting political complexities of the Turkish Revolution. Moreover, it compels
one to take into account the consecutive relationships forged by the city with
other political formations. The interest of the Soviet Union in the Turkish Revolution
is by no means one sided, and the partnership observed in the film serves as a mediator for the relationship between the two nations that cannot be ignored. In the same way, the Soviet blessing of the Turkish Revolution through the city should be understood as a sign of political mediation. It should come as no surprise that the destiny of the film, a Turkish–Soviet partnership with a kinship forged within Soviet Revolutionary Cinema, is as complicated as Turkish–Soviet relations. In fact, the ties that Turkey formed with the Western world following World War II forced Ankara: Serdce Tureckii to disappear from the public eye for nearly 35 years, and it only resurfaced in 1969 during the global upheavals of the period in which Turkey took part when TRT, the National Radio and Television Network, broadcast the film. For most critics, the airing of the film by TRT was in line with the liberal spirit of 1968. Despite the positive outlook, it was inevitable that a social opposition would arise driven by various political groups. The film, perceived as an Anatolian adaptation of Soviet filmmaking that masterfully reproduced the characteristics of Revolutionary Cinema, was left to face harsh criticisms, especially from conservative organizations. This was partly because of Turkey’s new political climate, under which the early republican spirit was slowly fading, giving way to center-right administrations that were more in tune with the global restructuring. In particular, following Turkey’s transition to a multi-party system in 1946 and the national election of 1950, the conservative parties enjoyed major success, and consequently the first phase of the Turkish Revolution finally came to a partial end. As a result, the three decades of power enjoyed by the Republican People’s Party, which had existed as the only legal political institution since the mid 1920s and had ties with Western-oriented intellectuals, the secular military and the national bourgeois, was now under serious threat. Conservative initiations, principally backed by the Democrat Party, now came forward to challenge the revolutionary agenda, believing that the political trajectory associated with Turkey’s shift from East to West, with all the associated ritualistic, symbolic, aesthetic and spatial manifestations, was an ideological failure; and the conservative administrations began to criticize the revolutionary elite for their perception of Islam and the Ottoman heritage (Çınar 2005; Sargın 2004). Amid a broad range of positions, however, the opinion that the Turkish Revolution and its single-party regime was causing a constant erosion of the pre-republican period was at the very core of their criticisms (Özyürek 2007).

As a result, the backlash focusing on the political identity of the director resulted in the film being taken off the screens for a second time after 1970, and resumed its place in the archives thereafter. Criticisms took aim at its content, the powerful narration and style as well as the political stance of its actors. While Ankara: Serdce Tureckii provides an account of the early years of the Republic, it is also a propaganda movie. These multilayered qualities and the visual construction of the Turkish Revolution by an “other” make this example even more meaningful and worthy of further inquiry. The cultural dimension of Turkish–Soviet relations developed around three periods between 1917 and 1938. Turkey followed the October Revolution with a keen eye, viewing it from a position of privilege and with the support of certain secret alliances (Yerasimos 2000). In the meantime, the relatively consistent administration of the Republic and the influence of Stalinist policies defined the second period. However, within this period was a time of
alienation. Turkey, after 1923, was stimulated by Soviet diplomatic ties at a much higher level, in a sense taking the relationship to a friendly platform. It has been documented that the reforms were supported by the Soviets and that scientific, but nonetheless propaganda-like, publications as well as some scientific reports carrying propaganda intent, had been brought to Turkey. The Great Depression of 1929 overshadowed the third period between 1930 and 1945, and the two nations were forced into a closer alliance (Tekeli and İlkin 2004). This period is recognized as one in which, despite numerous negativities in economy, the cultural affinity between the two countries matured. Official documents provide testament to the largest number of Soviet artists visiting Turkey during this period. Without doubt, the weight of the relationship was borne out of the strength of the Proletarian Revolution and the cultural context surrounding it. Cultural works, especially those targeting workers, women and young people, were at the forefront. The Soviet policy regarding the shaping of mass culture through cinema and the effect of this political expectation, focusing on the young Turkish Republic, were very important. For the Soviets, cinema was a significant cultural medium for conveying the message of the revolution to the masses; thus, reaching Turkey through cinema seemed like a viable strategy. In this context, the only agencies that the Soviets were able to communicate with became the “government and semi-public institutions” (Li 2003).

Various media of communication were mulled over during the legitimization of the new political stance through cultural institutions. There were countless attempts to establish communications with international circles, including the young Turkish Republic, one of which was through VOKS, which was an important Soviet initiative that was formed in 1925. With founding members selected from the Soviet Sciences Academy, the Fine Arts Science Academy, the Education and Health Public Commissariat, the State Book Office and other related organizations, VOKS was given broad local and international authorities. Cultural activities such as artist exchange programs and international meetings quickly became included in VOKS’ scope of operations, through which mass access to broadcast media could be achieved (Tacibayev 2004). Other organizations came into being during this time, among which the Ob’edinennoye Büro Informatsii (OBI) and the United Information Bureau (BEB) undertook tasks of Soviet propaganda and “dealt with” anti-Soviet publications.

There were also civil initiatives with connections to official government bodies, many of which were mass organizations that matured at the beginning of the century and were effective during the early Soviet years. In particular, the “Proletkult” (Proletarian Cultural Educational Organizations—proletarskie kul’turo-prosvetitel’nye organizatsii) and later the “LEF” (The Leftist Art Front—levyi front iskusstv) were unconditionally loyal to the socialist idea, and were deemed as important drivers for the enrichment of the cultural side of the revolution (Mally 1990). The Proletkult’s active attitude is especially worth mentioning here. The movement, whose origins date back to 1906, was organized by the economist Bogdanov (Alexander Malinovsky), and upheld the union of science, industry and art with desire for a St Simonist policy (Frampton 1980). The organization focused its attention on mass cultural endeavors following the October Revolution, and
fought for cultural transformations during the creation of proletarian utopias. The organization’s most important task was to render functional the contexts of the new culture across a broad spectrum that extended from science to the family, and from daily life to all branches of art. In reality, the driving force behind the Proletkult movement was the belief that the central administration was inadequate in cultural affairs. The activities of the movement, which continued to spread until 1920, included workshops, and programs in schools and theaters, and would soon compete with the governing bodies in its expectations of autonomous institutionalization. Under pressure from the Communist Party, the Proletkult transformed into a state instrument after the civil war and gained a bureaucratic structure (Mally 1990), after which its main function was as the official speaker of the October Revolution, especially through graphic arts. This officialization, which also encompassed cinema, theater and architecture, would not balk at the use of certain productivist artists like Tatlin and Rodchenko for propaganda purposes. In this period, products regarded as “nomadic” that could easily be put together and taken apart were upheld as objects of the revolution (Cooke 1989).

LEF, however, was an autonomous movement that was established in the 1920s, and which embodied the common aesthetic values of the revolution through various art groups. The Futurists, led by Mayakovsky; the group called the “industrialists” (proizvodstvenniki) led by Meyerhold; and later the “constructivists” were just some of the important groups that nurtured this formation. Like its predecessor Proletkult, LEF also considered the investigation of the cultural infrastructure and the art of the past as a kind of emancipation. New art would only be as strong as its collaboration with the proletarian revolution. Both the Proletkult and the LEF, as two important cogs in the Soviet mechanism, in reality served to fill an inevitable gap within the October Revolution’s geographical extensions. Despite all this, up until Lenin’s death the two movements, which like their European counterparts became relatively avant garde, turned into bureaucratic instruments of the central authority in the Stalinist period after 1924 and defined the connection between the revolution and art with stricter rules. In April 1932, the “Socialist Realism” adopted by the party organs brought about a new tradition in the industrializing Soviet Union, during which time the avant garde discourse was replaced by “socialist art” (Frampton 1980).

At this point, an analysis of the cultural dimensions of Turkish–Soviet relations would be useful. VOKS president O.D. Kameneva’s visit to Turkey in the fall of 1927 enabled him to establish direct communications following the organization’s official formation. The visit could very well be seen as a sign that a serious political stance was being developed by the Soviets in an effort to forge cultural relations with Turkey. Kameneva was received in Ankara by İsmet Pasha, the prime minister at the time, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Rüştü Bey. Both parties painted an agreeable image regarding collaboration on future projects; and a number of short-term outcomes resulting from their meetings were witnessed within the same year. The 10th anniversary celebrations of the October Revolution were given an international dimension to include Turkey as well; and the “10 Years to October” exhibition, held in Ankara and Istanbul, conveyed the achievements of socialism to the Turkish public. Once again, this exhibition, as a demonstration of the progress made in the economy, industry, agriculture, education and military, was pure propaganda;
however it cannot be denied that the event was an important cultural activity that brought the two nations closer together, as the exhibition was met with a great deal more interest than expected (Ergut 1999).

Within this process of development, cinema enjoyed a privileged position, being seen both as the driving force behind the Cultural Revolution and complementary to socialist propaganda. Despite the obvious technical difficulties, it was used widely to bring ideological images to the popular context. Especially between 1920 and 1930 the tight kinship forged between socialism and scientific truth set the stage for a critical attitude towards unscientific beliefs among the population, and cinema became a powerful political instrument to this end. In this context, 1926 was an important breaking point. It is well known that Soviet propaganda films were shown in some movie theaters, and that the office of the Moscow Trade Attaché, along with VOKS, played an active role in the selection of those films, which were critical about the traditional Turkish society, and were quickly taken to Anatolia (Tacibayev 2004). It is also known that some films did not make it past the censor and were shown only to exclusive audiences in Turkey. For example, a film by famous Soviet director and master of Revolutionary Cinema Eisenstein, “Bronenosets Potemkin” (“The Battleship Potemkin”), caused serious waves among the ruling elite due to its cinematic narration, which was reminiscent of a civil uprising. Although a copy was sent to Ankara to be watched by those in the government, and its screening during the first Soviet Film Festival held in Turkey in 1927 (within the scope of the agreement between Moscow and Ankara, regarding radio communication) was a sellout, mass circulation of the film was later prohibited. The administration, which desired to experience the modernization process to the fullest, regarded the “Battleship Potemkin” as a major threat to Turkey’s political agenda.

In the 1930s, Soviet films being screened in Istanbul theaters were publicized through local advertisements, resulting in a second breaking point. Following the economic crisis of 1929, due to the suppression of differences in the early period and the encouragement of more homogeneous cultural contexts, it can be seen that Soviet art had gained a more political agenda, representing a new type of human and social mechanism. This new period, which brought to the forefront the collective life of the laborer and the villager, despite the reservations of the Turkish government, forced Turkish–Soviet relations into a privileged position after mutual visits to each others’ countries—such as İsmet Pasha’s visit to Moscow between 26 April and 8 May 1931. In a cultural program prepared in 1933 it was stated that work needed to be undertaken in “expediting work on films about Turkey and ensuring the availability of Soviet films in Turkey” (Tacibayev 2004:199). The 1930s will no doubt be remembered for the propaganda films glorifying Lenin and later Stalin; and Turkish cinema, under the influence of Soviet cinema, produced a similar genre, with the first proposition coming from the Soviets who wanted to make film about the Turkish War of Independence. In September 1933 the Soviet film company Soyuzkino sent Soviet filmmaker Zahri to Turkey, where he toured Anatolia with well known Turkish writer Reşat Nuri Güntekin. Despite the common passion of the two parties, the revolutionary nature of the suggested script raised suspicions in the administration once again, and so this first attempt met with failure.
Another film that arrived in Ankara in 1934 under similar circumstances following a request from Turkish President Mustafa Kemal was the propaganda film *Komsomolsef elektrofikatsii*, which depicted the organization of Soviet youth following the October Revolution. The film was well received by members of the government and gained recognition as a masterful tale of ideological choices. It is known that lengthy filming shoots were made in Ankara, Istanbul and Izmir during the same period for another propaganda film entitled “Here comes New Turkey” (“Yeni Türkiye Geliyor”), however this project, which aimed to cinematize a mass revolutionist movement, was put on hold soon thereafter. The cooperation started to influence heavily on Turkish cinema; in particular, the internalization of the Revolutionary Cinema as a genre. The appearance of masters in this field is easily observable in the movies made about the Turkish Revolution from the 1930s to the 1950s. Famous Turkish painter Abidin Dino, for instance, went to the Soviet Union in 1934 upon an invitation from director Yutkevich, where he received training in filmmaking, and would later be given the privileged task of designing the entire set and decor for “The Miners” in 1937, which he undertook with great finesse. In Dino’s film “Towards the Sun”, which he made upon his return to Turkey, the influence of “The Miners” is readily apparent after he was involved in its production in Leningrad. “The Miners”, the story of which revolves around the conflict between the working class and the capitalist, is truly one of the best-made examples of Revolutionary Cinema and received positive reviews from most film critics. As for Dino, little did he know that he would be accused of being a “Bolshevik” on account of his involvement with the film, and he was kept under close scrutiny for a long time by the conservative circles in Turkey. Abidin Dino was by no means the only intellectual to be influenced by Soviet Revolutionary Cinema. Muhsin Erteğrul was an important artist within the genre from the 1920s onwards, and it would be fair to say that he was also influenced by the Soviet tradition. In 1925 Erteğrul went to Russia to work with Soviet filmmakers, where he made two movies, “Tamilla” and “Spartacus”. However, his most powerful revolutionary work was “Bir Millet Uyanıyor” in 1929, which he made following his return to Turkey. The film, with its critically acclaimed content and technique, is one of the best examples of the genre made in Turkey in the 1930s (Şener 1970). The film, which was screened in 1932, was proof of Erteğrul’s dominance of Turkish cinema, and he made countless more films until the 1940s. His film entitled “Aysel Bataklı Damız Kızı” from this period brought him international recognition, and removed any shred of doubt of the Soviet cultural influence in the way he masterfully took advantage of certain elements of revolutionary cinema (Dorsay 1998).

**Act Two: Construction**

Cinema is such an invention that the day will come when it will change the direction of world civilizations more than gunpowder, electricity and the (discovery of the) continents ever did. Cinema will ensure that people living in the farthest ends of the world will get to know and like each other. Cinema will erase any difference in opinion and appearance, thereby making the greatest contribution to the recognition of the human ideal. We must accord cinema the respect it deserves (Mustafa Kemal Atatürk; Şener 1970).
In 1933, preparations for the 10th anniversary celebrations of the founding of the Republic were particularly noteworthy endeavors, exhibiting a great desire to celebrate the Turkish Revolution around the whole country with mass ceremonies. Details of the celebrations were planned by the central government and extended down to the smallest institution with the intention being to duplicate the national rituals of the revolution (Sargin 2004). Later, the Newsprinting Public Directorate Duties and Organization Act (Matbuat Umum Müdürlüğü Vazife ve Teşkilâtına Dair Kanun), which came into effect on 26 May 1934, commissioned an agency, thus paving the way towards fulfilling expectations under an institutionalized umbrella (Şener 1970:32). It is under such circumstances that the film Ankara: Serdce Tureckii appeared as a Turkish–Soviet collaboration. With a decision that was based on the increasingly improving Turkish–Soviet ties, two masters of the period, Sergei Yutkevich and Lev Oskarovich Arnstam, were invited to Turkey (Figure 1). Both came to Ankara with a large crew, and with support from well known writers like Reşat Nuri Güntekin and Fikret Adil, Turkey’s first film critics, they created the movie as a Turco-Russian partnership. The film lasts 135 min and was shot in black and white in 8 mm format, as was the leading technology of the day. In April 1934 the editing of the film was completed and the film was presented to the Turkish government in the presence of Turkish President Mustafa Kemal and the Soviet Ambassador Z. Suric. So proud was İsmet Pasha of the resulting product that he could not praise the film or express his appreciation for Soviet cinema enough. Within a short time, the film was being screened in Soviet theaters, especially in Moscow and Leningrad, under the auspices of Turkish Ambassador to Russia, Ragıp Bey.

The mastery of the first director, Yutkevich, brought the movie closer to the style of Soviet propaganda films, and engraved it in the collective memory as probably
the first of its kind. Yutkevich was one of the Soviet Union’s most productive and respected directors—the root of his power lying in the style he acquired through his inevitable affinity first with Vertov and then with Eisenstein. As one of the most acclaimed filmmakers of his time, Dziga Vertov had an enormous impact on Yutkevich’s cinema, in particular in his cinematic technique, which was expressed the most in “The Man With the Movie Camera”, which presented a common blueprint with the Ankara: Serdce Tureckkii. The film became famous for the range of cinematic techniques developed by Vertov, such as double exposure, fast motion, slow motion, freeze frame, jump cuts, split screens, Dutch angles, extreme close-ups, footage played backwards, animations, etc. Along with a shared cinematic expression, both names believed in the same ideology that defied mainstream narrative cinema. For Vertov, revolutionary cinema, in contrast, needed to follow a selective attitude in its cinematic form, which required the use of a space-oriented narration, in a way reminiscent of Eisenstein’s “archetypes” with actual spatial practices. His cinematic form was regarded as essential to the narration of what is “real”, believing that filmmaking was an ideological tool that could defeat the eye’s impotency (Hicks 2007).

In a similar fashion, Eisenstein’s contributions to Soviet cinema at the time were without doubt based on the integration of his technique and methods with his political identity. The methods he referred to as “editing/montage” soon became the primary tools of Revolutionary Cinema, and it is well known that Yutkevich often utilized such methods (Wollen 1972). Masterfully employing the experiences he gained in theater in his later works, with movies such as “Strike” (1924), “Battleship Potemkin” (1925) and “October” (1927), Eisenstein brought a new perspective to the cinematic construct by replacing long shoots with one tense stimulant after another to achieve a complete narration. Later, he not only used contradicting stimulants to produce a particular emotion, but also enhanced the production through a dialectic process. In using various stimulating scenes made by overlapping separate images, his intention was to constantly trigger the consciousness of the masses. In short, the interruptions obtained through visual stimulants were a necessity for the construction of political messages, and he reiterated on many occasions that his goal was to produce political messages through the manipulation of images (Gillespie 2003). Eisenstein was also an expert at using audio and visual materials independent of one another when necessary. This method, which he adopted to increase the stimulating effect during editing, was known to have been used intensively in “Battleship Potemkin”. Despite all these achievements, the greatest contribution the director made to Soviet Cinema was his preference of using real people relaying their own experiences rather than professional players. The use of elements like soldiers, students or mothers, referred to by Eisenstein as archetypes in cinema, were essential for the accurate narration.

Yutkevich, as Eisenstein’s contemporary, was thus under the influence of a similar ideology, and closely followed all of these cinematic developments. The director’s works extended across many genres, from historical films to documentaries and biographical works, and he was seen to have experimented with the methods summarized above. What brought him fame was as much his original use of

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methods inspired by Eisenstein and Vertov as his successful tales of the working class carried into Soviet propaganda films. Yutkevich was, in truth, a filmmaker, an art theoretician, a writer and an educator, but more importantly, he was a true socialist with deep-rooted faith in the Soviet Revolution. He believed that cinema should be the most important tool in the narration of the Soviet culture (Schnitzer and Martin 2003). During an interview conducted on 29 May 1966 he spoke about the role he and Eisenstein had assumed while cinema was gaining a revolutionist perspective. In his opinion the primary issue of Revolutionary Cinema was the mass entertainment aesthetics obtained through the juxtaposition of entertaining art, which included cinema and was often belittled, with classic forms of art. What mattered was bending and reshaping the bourgeois aesthetics through mass representations to take on revolutionist images through various techniques. “The Storming of the Winter Palace”, with its depiction of the October Revolution turned into a mass public representation, was a perfect example of an actual event reproduced in a historical environment. This show, which, in his own words, turned into a “mysterious game” and employed the working class, battalions and actual war machines, brought to life the world of art nouveau—new art, which saw the creation of “collages” both in terms of content and technique. Revolutionary Cinema, however, which utilizes the opportunities of new art, originated from mass representation, forcing a union between the revolutionary content and aesthetics (Yutkevich 2003).

A convergence was apparent between Yutkevich’s filmmaking, particularly the mass representation he modeled, and the general montage of Ankara: Serdce Tureckii. The film opens with Prime Minister Ismet Pasha’s summarization of the past 10 years of the Republic’s adventure. In the narration, it is highlighted that the revolution extended beyond being solely political into an overall development, including urbanization and architecture. The tale of the success of the revolution was laid out in the details of the hour-long production. The film opens with a shot of the Anatolian landscape—the endless expanses and the hollow feeling of the prairie—portraying the spaces of the war and the tabula rasa of the Turkish Revolution. The elements described in the idyllic narration are the statue-like shepherds, caravans disappearing into the distance and the associated poverty. The camera turns then to an ordinary Anatolian settlement where the narration describes the arduous journey an old villager is to make to Ankara, “the heart of Anatolia, the heart of Turkey”. The reason for his journey is made explicit through a short, explanatory text and subsequent shots following the scene “Celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the Republic”. The traveler is not actually alone, as he is one of hundreds of young men and women making their way to Ankara, accompanying him on trains, the symbol of modernization, from afar. One cannot help but notice the connection drawn between machines and modernization in the scenes, focusing on the rails extending far into the distance, the locomotive and the train cars. The meeting of the Girl Scout alighting ceremoniously from the train with the traveling villager in Ankara could be seen as a historical stimulant employed by Yutkevich to highlight the contrast between old and new and the traditional and modern. Later in the film, details of the great transformation are presented through the eyes of this duo at the large ceremonial gathering and later in the streets of the Modern city, where they are joined in the excitement of the revolution. At this point, Yutkevich inserts a
flashback once again to show the Soviet delegation entering Istanbul with the same goal. This prolonged shot contains exceptional scenes of the public greeting of the Soviet Navy battleships with deep affection. What is implicitly depicted in these scenes is the warmth of the Turkish–Soviet relations at the level of their peoples. The journey of the Soviet delegation continues by train, ending at the train station in Ankara with an official ceremony. The Soviets, after receiving a warm welcome in Istanbul, are greeted in a similar way in Ankara by military and civil officials, Scouts and the general public. The scenes taken from the air, visualizing the old and new capitals and especially including the Presidential Palace, lend great meaning to the entry of the Soviet delegation to the station—their final destination being Modern Ankara.

The next scene is devoted to the ceremonies organized as part of the 10th Anniversary Celebrations. Military and civil officials, as well as the chiefs of foreign missions and the Soviet delegation, greet the troops as they march on parade. The troops are followed by the military band and the new war machines of the military. Viewed through the eyes of the villager and the Girl Scout that Yutkevich brought together in Ankara to symbolize the new and the old, the ceremony ends in an awe inspiring manner with shots of tanks and planes. “There were only a few of these during the war, but now there are many”, says the villager, pointing to the planes. The war machines, which have multiplied in a very short period of time, have turned into a source of pride for both. Yutkevich returns to the ceremony, depicting young people marching with discipline carrying flags and pennants as the most striking aspect of the new statehood. According to the director, the civilian participation in the mass assembly represents a people’s revolution that goes far beyond a mere military success. It is here that Yutkevich attempts to draw an image of Turkish–Soviet relations, bringing together side by side President Mustafa Kemal and Marshal Fevzi Çakmak with the Soviet Delegation using subsequent shots, thus combining the administrative powers of the two states into one. The ceremony, which ends with an official parade, continues into the night, and the new capital, with its modern buildings decorated with lights, is presented to the audience with lengthy cinematic interplays. The overlapping images in the narration of the director signal a bright, shining city with futuristic images.

The first part of the film ends with scenes of the Soviet delegation leaving Ankara by train, and being waved off with affection. Yutkevich’s narration continues with greater joy in the second part. The camera focuses on the pages of an encyclopedia showing notes on the geography and history of the new capital. The viewer is presented one by one with scenes of the Temple of Augustus’ remains, Roman monuments and settled Anatolian civilizations, as if to assist the new nation in seeking its roots in other places. Yutkevich does a great job of separating the Republic from its pre-republican identity, transitioning into the irreconcilable conflict between the old and new. At this point the director once again presents signs of destitution juxtaposed with images of the prairie, presenting a series of shots of rural settlements and the people in a way that deeply affects the viewer. Villagers trying to build barracks using traditional crafts, elderly people here and there, women wearing headscarves and hijabs pushed to the outer recesses of public space, and children, who obviously have no access to education, all act as a prelude to the
transition of the townspeople that settled in old Ankara to urban practices. Scenes of Ankara hinting at the pre-Republican times convey the destitution of Anatolia. Typically medieval-looking narrow streets, dirt roads without sidewalks, single-storey shops, backward trade and townsmen maintaining this appearance are transformed by Yutkevich into cinematic elements to depict the social profile of the country prior to the Revolution. Stimulating scenes are further reinforced by consecutive texts, “Ankara, before it became the capital of the Republic, had dark, narrow frightening streets and even the wide roads with heavy traffic were unpaved dirt roads” (Figure 2).

Yutkevich takes advantage of heightened emotions with great mastery in further stimulating scenes. For him, the Turkish Revolution signaled a social rupture, and the 15-year-long war bore the message of new Turkey. The primary spaces of the war were, without doubt, the Hakimiyet-i Milliye Square (Ulus Meydanı) in the old city, and the Ulus Victory Monument with which it is identified (Sargın 2004). The camera pans around the modern square, coming into focus on the monument, which depicts a Turkish soldier and the female figure carrying a shell to the battlefront, before ending with a shot of the Second Parliament Building. The spatial transformation around Parliament is worthy of attention. Its wide, paved sidewalks; Station Road, connecting the Ankara railway station to Ulus Square; automobiles, as symbols of Modernity, parked around the area; and the new infrastructure and urban practices are all representative of the transition (Figure 3).

Yutkevich at this point refocuses on the Parliament Building, it being an important breaking point for him. By establishing a link between the contemporary look of the city, the construction of the government buildings and the resolution to become a Republic, he embarks upon an architectural tour of the city (Figure 4). The purpose of the tour is to track the spatial trail of the achievements in the

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**Figure 2:** Scene from war ravaged Anatolia
Yutkevich’s tour of Ankara starts in the old city and extends to Yeşilçam (meaning literally “new city” in Turkish), which symbolizes the Modern. Eventually, by focusing on certain structures along the only modern boulevard in the capital and other structures interspersed in various parts of the city, he conveys the privileged tales of each architectural element, symbolizing the successes achieved as a result of the Revolution. The new Ankara and its new urban practices embody a cinematic tale that internalizes Modernism, which Yutkevich attributes to the young Republic.
The indispensable “archetypes” of the story are cubical two- or three-storey houses encircled by gardens, mansions with towers, cobblestone boulevards, wide sidewalks, moving automobiles, the police of the modern state bringing order to the increasing traffic, urbanites that are Western in appearance, parks with fountains, healthy children playing and modern mothers out and about with their babies in strollers resting in the park—all are formulated with great finesse in the narration of the director.

Yutkevich continues his cinematic narration with the portrayal of the Girls’ Institute as a symbol of both modern education and the freedom of women to participate in civil life. Images of women in sporting attire exercising in unison are added to the director’s tour of the city to show how the revolution, which brought about a powerful discourse in terms of health and physical fitness, was being internalized by those in power. Yutkevich also approaches the new Music School, where his focus is on the students being trained in classical music. The image of a group of students being educated in contemporary music in a modern building, also bringing to mind the Cultural Revolution, is a powerful scene that stirs strong emotions in the viewer. The montage of all of this visual wealth draws the audience into an engrossing narration (without a moment’s respite), also incorporating secondary narrations with great success. It is relayed to the viewer that the Soviet Embassy Building, through its presence within all of this activity, is one of the city’s oldest structures, turning into a message in which Yutkevich makes known the confidence the Soviets have in Ankara. The tour, which partially ends with the Soviet Embassy returning to its starting point, ie the Parliament Building, is a reverse montage. During the second tour of this long road no concessions are made in the depiction of the visual richness of the Modern residences that are mushrooming to create Yenisehir, nor of the compelling story of the alliance between the villager and the young Girl Scout. In Yutkevich’s world, the young Girl Scout, who says, “this is our new life now” with great joy in witnessing this newness surrounding her, is giving voice to the blessing of a utopia (Figure 5).  

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The Final Act: Revolutions as Constructed

On the morning of 29 October 1933, the Parliament Building once again played host to state officials. The President, leaving the building amidst a crowd of people from where he is to travel to the site of the ceremony by automobile, is to receive a joyous welcome after which he gives his famous “10th Anniversary Address”. Yutkevich conveys to the viewer that this historic moment is documented by filming the cameras recording the leader. Each word of Mustafa Kemal’s speech is accompanied by images of the Turkish Revolution, taking the viewer on a journey to cities that resemble construction sites and scenes from Anatolia, where construction workers are laying bricks and applying plaster, machines are forming factories, laborers are operating machines, cities are industrializing, engineers are building bridges and confining water with dams, and villagers are utilizing modern agricultural techniques. The subsequent images, presented by Yutkevich in a depiction of “modern times”, are in a way an attempt to decipher “the new” replacing “the old” as a tool of social reconciliation. The tabula rasa of a nation that desires modernity should be established through the mechanisms of revolution, and its “official history” should be documented with reference to that historic rupture. A key device of such a desire is, of course, the construction of the spectators’ sense of belonging through the use of shocking images. It is here that Yutkevich turns his cinema, with all of its beautifully montaged images, into an ideological tool for depicting a shared sense of belonging in an attempt to visualize the political basis of that reconciliation. He also knows that no matter how this visual fest is presented, the building of a collective identity must be the common denominator. In other words, the utopian politics of Modernity necessitates a rupture in the cognitive world of each spectator and formulates its own collective identity from the ground up. This needs to be distinguished from an internal, usually instinctive, identity that is dependent on a subjective sense of time. What Yutkevich strives for is rather a new collectiveness that requires an ideological construction. There is not only the individual, but also a group identity that exists outside of and lives beyond the individual; and consequently, the individual’s understanding is strongly linked to that group consciousness (Halbwachs 1992). Understanding its significance, Yutkevich systematically captures those images that beautifully depict the success of the Turkish Revolution in narrating how that construction was carried out, both materially and visually.

During this construction, however, some spatial and temporal frames are necessary. The Republic will compel the ideological construction being built into a time frame (with the proclamation of the new Republic) and a spatial decor (in Ankara). It is through his cinematic success that Yutkevich reconstructs that time–space frame in his montage through the elements of Modern architecture by using the symbols of the Revolution hidden in the details of an internalized world. The emancipated citizens’ contemporary urban practices strewn across the modern city and the spaces that host them are indispensable cinematic elements of that reconstruction. At this point, the structures, as the objects of Modern architecture, and the practices attributed to those structures are in reality the most effective method of an organized attempt in the way to make this ideological construction visible, legitimate and shared (Cannerton 1989). For this reason *Ankara: Serdce*
Tureckii should be considered as a work that ceaselessly produces the possibilities of an ideological construction. It is known that the logical confirmation in that construction revolves around the politics of the Turkish Revolution, which highlight Modernity as the prime basis of all. From another perspective, all of the constructions that overlap with Yutkevich’s own ideology, rather than rejuvenating what “refers to the past”, necessarily strive for the ideological basis being established for the future to be rendered sustainable. Through the use of symbols of the Revolution, it becomes possible to incorporate the ideological choices emulated into the collective body of the Soviets into the new Republic in Anatolia. Just like the transfer of the Soviet capital from St Petersburg to Moscow, the move from Istanbul to Ankara was symbolic, and merited a cinematic narration that Yutkevich deemed worthy of attention. The move from cosmopolitan port cities to the inner lands—the “heart of the country”—was not to be taken merely as a necessity brought on by war, as the changing of capitals rather referred to a political gesture, like in “Socialism in One Country” and “We Look Alike—Biz Bize Benzeriz” (Belge 2003:123).

The film is an attempt to show which symbols need to be rendered negative and which should be upheld during production, and to design a collective belief that re-establishes the logical confirmation with reference to the images collected. What is at play here is a new identity of revolution brought down to the level of a world of images. It is not important at this point whether the collective identity of the Turkish Revolution has been “invented” with the help of such images, as successfully montaged by the director (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983); what Yutkevich prioritizes here is rather the ideological message of the final product. The sense of revolution and thus collective integrity are of utmost importance, and one must underline the legitimization of the many elements that are internalized through the selected visuality. His cinematic representation opts for a reiteration of the tools of recollection during the process of creating a new revolutionary culture; while of equal importance is the director’s wholehearted desire for some things to be forgotten. A careful look at the film Ankara: Serdce Tureckii reveals a world of imagery that deliberately brings to the forefront the pre-Republican visuality. Yutkevich masterfully inserts those images into his montage through exclusion and destruction, as well as the creation of a ceaseless tension between the old and the new. In reality, that rupture refers to the faith in the earliest times of innocence, and thus the tabula rasa of the Turkish Revolution as constructed.

Yutkevich’s Revolutionary Cinema, unlike the increasingly stricter attitude the Proletkult exhibited after 1924, was not about the absolute rejection of the past. The desire to be new propelled it into an experimental realm, highlighting the montage and collage, and prioritizing mass representations. Political maturity in such experimentalism is inevitable. Yutkevich persisted in maintaining the “collective benefit” that Eisenstein strove for through the use of stimulating elements, and described as the content of the work being what brings forth the collective benefit (Eisenstein 1993a). Collective benefit is a result of the propaganda-related concerns of the Revolutionary Cinema. Within a process of forming “its own language, its own expressions, its own words and its own images”, which Eisenstein refers to as “the second literary experience of cinema”, the concepts, methods, tactics and applicable images used for the benefit of society should be directly transferred to cinema.
Cinema’s duty should be to provide a lengthened visualization of “an intense and thought-provoking process”, rather than an attempt at an emotional discharge brought about by fleeting moments of excitement (Eisenstein 1993b). This was the main element that differentiated Soviet Cinema from mainstream Hollywood. The cinema Eisenstein yearned for was a specialized industry that sprang up from a process that was dependent on Lenin’s vision, “Cinema is the most important art among all other forms”, and transformed socialist teaching into a productive, ideological and methodical spiral of centralization for the benefit of the public. He explained the primary goal of his films in an article published in the 1925 edition of Kino magazine: “Soviet cinema firstly aims to educate the masses. This cinema seeks ways to provide them with a general and political education. It carries out a broad propaganda effort for the Soviet state and the ideological patterns of the people of this state” (Eisenstein 1993c:25). Soviet cinema was seen as a tool for the political, cultural and moral objectives of the Soviet state. In other words, Soviet films should cater to the masses, for their good, and “be honest towards all life, whether they are films about the new moral principles of laborer families, or historical films requiring the cooperation of thousands of people” (Eisenstein 1993c:19). Honesty, in addition to political needs, called for a stance against an organized set, ie the space had to be real. The awareness that an imitation spatial montage created in the studio could not reflect an actual physical space compelled filmmakers to use a real one on film. This brings us to the basic qualities of a tradition started by Eisenstein and continued by his comrade Yutkevich—the search for social benefit, a holistic narration obtained through the montage of thought-provoking propaganda stimulants and an honest attitude regarding space were the essentials of Revolutionary Cinema.

Ankara: Serdce Tureckii also unconditionally embodies the basic characteristics of Revolutionary Cinema. The film exhibits an attitude that prioritizes social benefit and utilizes stimulating narration from start to finish and with great finesse. But, more importantly, it uses spatial elements pertaining to both Anatolia and the capital Ankara, in their natural forms, as though a studio environment brings the film closer to the Soviet cinema of that period. Elements related to the space are not the result of forged design, as Yutkevich also opted to use the natural as much as possible. The Turkish Revolution, like “The Storming of the Winter Palace” or “Battleship Potemkin”, warranted cinematization in its true spaces with the participation of real elements that had experienced the period and with a revolutionist joy that defined the period. For this reason the whole film revolves around the 10th anniversary celebrations of the founding of the Turkish Republic. In addition, the narration of the revolution is based on the “before and after” duality with regard to individuals, masses and spaces. Scouts, soldiers and modern-looking bureaucrats represent prosperity, and replace the masses depicting destitution; while the institutions, modern architecture and urban infrastructure replace the arid prairie. Ankara is now a construction. It is at this point that Yutkevich turns from Ankara to Moscow to draw a visual connection between the October Revolution of 1917 and the Turkish Revolution of 1923, powerfully exposing the ideology cast on Turkey by the Soviets. In reality, for the director, Ankara and Moscow are two important capitals with a common political stance and a shared goal.
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