

SCARS OF A PUTSCH

Synopsis

On September 12, 1980, Turkish army tanks invaded Anatolia and General Kenan Evren seized power. It was the third military coup in 20 years, but it was the hardest and most violent, and the one that left the deepest mark on Turkish society. For the left, this putsch was a fatal blow.

Abidin, the director's husband, was a revolutionary in the 1970s. He fled Turkey for Vienna after the military putsch. Some of his comrades managed to escape like him, and rebuilt their lives in exile, but most were arrested, tortured and spent years in prison.

Arriving in Austria in January 1981, Abidin decided to turn his back on politics. Nevertheless, he followed what was happening in Turkey on a daily basis. He was appalled by the blindness of the Western powers, who wanted to believe in Turkey's positive development as a bulwark against the USSR and went so far as to support the Islamic brotherhoods. On the contrary, they did not condemn the coup d'état, its human rights violations and the liberticidal constitution drawn up by the generals. Economic and geostrategic goals were more important. Today, these same powers are astonished that Turkey has turned away from democratic ideas and towards political Islam.

This film tells the story behind the 1980 military putsch and the transformation of Turkish society in the form of a personal quest that begins with the scars on Abidin's body: the scars of six bullets fired at point-blank range by a fascist Grey Wolves militia. The wounds on his body have healed, but they still haunt him today. To understand what's hidden behind them, the director (a Belgian woman) searches for traces of "her husband's" Turkey, the one he grew up in, the one he fought for, and the one that is crumbling before his eyes. She wants to know how the putsch "operated", how political Islam came to power in his country. Because these wounds are not just his own, they are those of an entire country.

This quest goes back and forth between Vienna and Ankara. On her journey, the director meets her husband's family and former friends in the struggle, women and men who fought for social justice and democracy. It also takes her to communities, places and landscapes, symbolically charged and marked by the country's transformation, as well as in the archives.

Little by little, this largely unknown page of Turkish history emerges in the form of a journey into the world of the man, the director has been living with for 15 years, yet whose past she knew little about.