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**MEMORIAL SITES – IV  
(Secret Places)**

**ON THE VERGE OF WAR  
The İnönü-Churchill Rendezvous**

**Documentary  
Running Time: 28':48"**

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## **ON THE VERGE OF WAR**

### **The İnönü-Churchill Rendezvous**

#### **OPENING TITLES OF MEMORIAL SITES 20''**

**NARRATOR 2- 10:00:25-10:00:40**

A small town near Adana... A special park in the town and a historical railway car in the park... The destiny of this town changed with an event that occurred in 1943.

*Fade out-Fade in*

**NARRATOR 3- 10:00:43-10:00:55**

Most of the land that the Ottoman Empire had lost during the First World War, was gain back by the Independence War. Thus a new state was born in Anatolia: The Turkish Republic.

**NARRATOR 4- 10:00:55-10:01:07**

The foundations for the new state were laid by the extraordinary efforts of Atatürk and his friends, revolutionary societal changes followed one another to create a modern, secular and state.

**NARRATOR 5- 10:01:07-10:01:16**

Although exhausted from the war, the people was accomplishing economic and political progress in succession during the early years of Republic.

**NARRATOR 6- 10:01:16-10:01:29**

Atatürk was travelling around the country in the White Train, which was representative of the bright side of the young republic and the new breakthrough in development.

**NARRATOR 7-10:01:33-10:01:46**

Turkey was on the progress, but the economic crisis ever deepening with the Great Depression of 1929 was about to shake the world.

**NARRATOR 8 -10:01:50-10:02:00**

Knowing very well how destructive war is Atatürk's principle "Peace at Home, Peace in the World" was the basis of his foreign policy.

**NARRATOR 9- 10:02:05-10:02:22**

However, the mid-30s were a period when the entire world joined in warmongering. A movement that would first cause carnage in Europe, then around the whole world was about to occur in Germany.

NARRATOR 10- 10:02:25-10:02:38

After Atatürk's death in 1938, his brother-in-arms, the Commander of the Western Front in the War of Independence, and former Prime Minister İsmet İnönü became the president of the Republic.

NARRATOR 11- 10:02:42-10:02:58

Meanwhile, on the other end of Europe, a change in administration also occurred in England. Winston Churchill, an experienced officer of World War I, who was able to see the dangers of the coming war, came (would come) into power as the Prime Minister in 1940.

NARRATOR 12-10:03:02-10:03:17

The much-feared came true: World War II broke out on September 1<sup>st</sup> 1939 when Germany invaded Poland.

NARRATOR 13- 10:03:32-10:03:47

As the war spread over Europe, İnönü was saying: "Turkey neither has any demands of rights and territories from anyone, nor owes anyone any rights or territories."

Subtitle: Youth and Sports Day in Ankara - May 19, 1940  
10:03:32-10:03:47

NARRATOR 14- 10:03:49-10:04:00

Having occupied Poland first, then France, and finally Greece and Bulgaria, German armies had arrived at the Thracian border, the western end of Turkey, in June 1941.

NARRATOR 15- 10:04:04-10:04:17

Two countries at the opposite ends of Europe. Turkey was on the verge of war while England was about to fall into the clutches of war. Suffering from violent attacks of Germany, England wanted Turkey to enter the war as well.

NARRATOR 16- 10:04:20-10:04:36

Allied Powers on one side, Axis Powers on the other... Trying to preserve neutrality, İnönü had summarized Turkey's foreign policy during the wartime as follows: "Keeping out of the war and not entering the war under any conditions whatsoever is based on a decision made before."

NARRATOR 17- 10:04:40-10:04:50

Soldiers who had established the Republic after long years of fighting were now in power, but they were the ones who tried to avoid war the most.

INTERVIEW 18- 10:04:53-10:05:18

1<sup>ST</sup> INTERVIEW WITH ÖZDEN TOKER

(Subtitle: Özden Toker  
Doughter of İsmet İnönü)

*"He used to say, "It's easy to stick your hand into a beehive, an ignorant person may put his into it without knowing what will happen. But it's very difficult to take your hand out of it. So, it's easy to go into war, but difficult to come out of it. That's why I see no reason to enter the war, to give up peace as long as no one violates our rights."*

NARRATOR 19- 10:05:19-10:05:37

But Turkey was being forced to take sides. With the fear of a German attack, Turkey was keeping its relations with Germany warm and carried on trading with them, while trying to take sides with the Soviets and the Allied Powers.

NARRATOR 20-10:05:40-10:05:48

Once again, the war brought about famine and death all around the world (along with death). Years when bread was rationed had started.

Subtitle: Bread ration card (10:05:46-10:05:50)

NARRATOR 21- 10:05:52-10:06:03

The children of the Republic were only just trained and had assumed positions to implement the ideals of the revolution. Turkey didn't want to risk losing her children in this war.

NARRATOR 22- 10:06:05-10:06:14

İsmet İnönü and his general staff, were gathering frequently to evaluate the present situation.

NARRATOR 23- 10:06:19-10:06:32

Turkey's economic and military technology at the time was not even fit to defend itself. But there were advocates of war in Turkey in spite of this reality. İnönü had to struggle against them as well.

NARRATOR 24- 10:06:40-10:06:54

The youth witnessing the horrors of war by way of radio, magazines and news reels were in fear. One of them was Sudi Abaç, who was a student in a boarding school in Adana during the 1940s.

INTERVIEW 25- 10:06:55-10:07:18

*1<sup>ST</sup> INTERVIEW WITH SUDI ABAÇ IN THE RAILWAY CAR*

(Subtitle: Sudi Abaç  
Lawyer – Witness)

*"...At night, when we went to bed in the boarding school, we couldn't sleep for a few hours. We thought what would happen if a bomb fell there. There was passive defense everywhere. The windows were covered with thick curtains, rugs or paper. There was no leak of light. Schools and other important places were camouflaged like that against air raids. Houses were camouflaged as well."*

NARRATOR 26- 10:07:20-10:07:45

While Turkey was staying away from the war, England was putting up an extraordinary struggle to defend itself. The rapid defeat of the countries in continental Europe, pointed out that a similar ending was expected for England as well. With no intention to give up, Churchill was only promising his people "blood, sweat and tears".

NARRATOR 27-10:07:48-10:08:02

Trying to get along with Germany and the Allies, and signing mutual agreements, Turkey's wish and determination for peace was reflected in the illustrations of magazines, relieving the worried people a little.

INTERVIEW 28- 10:08:05-10:08:33

*2<sup>ND</sup> INTERVIEW WITH ÖZDEN TOKER*

*"He implemented a careful policy of neutrality. But he used to treat both sides with utmost care. For instance, the embassies of both countries... I was only a child but I remember. Von Papen... We had relations with Von Papen's children. The British Ambassador Hugessen... We had close relations with him as well. He used to preserve the same distance with all of them. He made them respect him, but preserved a certain distance."*

(Subtitle: Özden Toker  
Doughter of İsmet İnönü)

NARRATOR 29- 10:08:35-10:08:53

When it came to 1943, a significant breaking point in the war was experienced. After suffering from heavy defeats in North Africa and

Stalingrad, it was obvious that Germany was not going to win the war. But how much longer would the war continue?

NARRATOR 30- 10:08:56-10:09:13

The Allied Powers were planning to open a new front to fight Germany by arming Turkey and wanted to hold a secret meeting to make the final decision. They were to meet in Yenice near Adana, at a point called "Triangle" which was a railway junction.

INTERVIEW 31- 10:09:14-10:09:55

*INTERVIEW WITH MÜSLÜM KURU BEFORE THE RAILWAY CAR*

(Subtitle: Müslüm Kuru  
Witness)

*"They were to come a day later or something. So they told us to whitewash the houses near the railroad. The headman and others came, he said this house... He pointed out all the houses. He called the owners of the houses too. He said, "You're going to whitewash all the houses. İnönü and Churchill are going to come and pass through this line. Don't let them see it like this. He should see them clean." So we whitewashed the houses, and they came the next day."*

NARRATOR 32- 10:09:59-10:10:04

It was January 30, 1943, an important day in the Turkish political history...

NARRATOR 33- 10:10:05-10:10:21

Having landed in the Adana airport, Churchill was greeted by Şükrü Saraçoğlu, the Turkish Prime Minister of the period. He was taken to Yenice, which was a small railway station at the time.

NARRATOR 34- 10:10:24-10:10:32

Atatürk's White Train was now welcoming important guests. It was on the unused line near Yenice.

NARRATOR 35- 10:10:36-10:10:45

The young boys, who returned from their boarding school in Adana to Mersin every weekend, were in for a surprise. Their train was stopped in Yenice.

INTERVIEW 36- 10:10:48-10:11:22

*2<sup>ND</sup> INTERVIEW WITH SUDİ ABAÇ IN THE RAILWAY CAR*

(Subtitle: Sudi Abaç  
Lawyer – Witness)

*"We came to Yenice. I noticed them from afar. There were soldiers, police officers, gendarmes etc. The whistle was blowing, but we didn't understand why it was blowing, or was it blowing for us. We came to the railway station, and a police officer told us it was forbidden to leave the train. We could only see the Yenice Meeting from the window. We could only watch from afar. We tried to understand what was going on from the railway car."*

**Subtitle: Reconsruction (10:11:06-10:11:20)**

**NARRATOR 37-10:11:23-10:11:26**

There is someone else in Yenice who remembers this secret meeting.

**INTERVIEW 38-10:11:28-10:11:51**

**INTERVIEW WITH FERDANE DALOĞLU AT THE RAILWAY STATION**

**(Subtitle: Ferdane Daloğlu  
Witness)**

*"There was nobody left at homes, coffeehouses or in the marketplace. We all went there and saw him. I was picking flowers, wild flowers. I wanted to give them to İnönü. I was looking for someone to lift me up. I don't know how it happened but I stood in front of him. I gave him the flowers. He said, "May you be as delicate as flowers," and touched my head. Then they took me out?."*

**NARRATOR 39- 10:11:53-10:12:12**

The meeting was held in an ordinary railway car. Leaders, bureaucrats and officers were sitting around a small table.

**NARRATOR 40- 10:12:16-10:12:24**

İnönü and Churchill, two current statesmen were coming together for two different objectives while the war continued with all intensity...

**NARRATOR 41- 10:12:25-10:12:52**

İnönü had been a successful commander in Turkey's War of Independence in the early 1920s. Churchill had led the British naval force against the Ottoman Empire during World War I and had failed to cross the Dardanelles in 1915. Although Churchill's Navy was then put to rout, the Ottoman Empire ended being one of the losers of this war in which the Entente-Powers, Britain, France and Russia finally achieved victory. Those fighting at opposing sides in those days had to be together now. The meeting started in a candid atmosphere.

**INTERVIEW 42- 10:12:55-10:13:35**

### 3<sup>RD</sup> INTERVIEW WITH ÖZDEN TOKER

(Subtitle: Özden Toker  
Doughter of İsmet İnönü)

*"During a discussion, while they were talking about some important issue, Churchill suddenly calls out to his men as if he remembered something. He said, "I had an important letter, where is it? You were to give it to me." So his men brought the letter and gave it to him. Churchill stood up, buttoned his jacket in a very serious manner. So my father stood up as well. He told my father, "His Majesty the King has a message for you. With your permission, I'd like to hand it over to you now." My father approached Churchill with the same serious expression, slightly bowed his head, and said "It will be a great honor for me. Thank you."*

Subtitle: Reconsruction (10:13:09-10:13:31)

NARRATOR 43- 10:13:36-10:13:52

Subtitle: Reconsruction 10:13:35-10:14:08

Along with the American President Roosevelt, Churchill aimed at forcing Turkey to enter the war to open a new battlefront in southeast Europe, in order to relieve the Allies of the pressure. Turkey, on the other hand, was trying to preserve neutrality and keep out of the war.

NARRATOR 44- 10:13:55-10:14:01

Two stubborn men... Two master diplomats in a railway car on a deserted railway...

NARRATOR 45- 10:14:02-10:14:05

Both experienced in tense meetings.

NARRATOR 46- 10:14:09-10:14:19

İnönü was a discreet, self-possessed man and good strategist. Churchill was a bold struggler and determined person.

NARRATOR 47- 10:14:21-10:14:43

Subtitle: Reconsruction 10:14:20-10:15:05

Churchill handed İnönü an outline document reflecting the opinions of his country. Turkey, on the other hand, had subjected its entering the war to the condition that his military needs were served and had prepared a long list of necessities to complicate the matter. The list included numerous demands from the complete renewal of military equipments to food grants.

NARRATOR 48- 10:14:46- 10:15:07

At the time, England was not capable of fulfilling those demands; therefore they were trying to at least guarantee that Turkey wouldn't

support Germany any longer. Moreover, they wanted to have a military base in Turkey to bomb the fuel resources of Germany located in Eastern Europe.

NARRATOR 49- 10:15:09-10:15:24

In parallel with the general meeting, the military and political delegations held meetings as well. The official minutes and correspondence reveal that there had been quite a severe negotiation.

NARRATOR 50- 10:15:26-10:15:38

Subtitle: Reconsruction 10:15:25-10:15:36

This rendezvous was going to end with Churchill failing to get what he wanted for the second time on the Anatolian soil.

NARRATOR 51- 10:15:43-10:16:02

Churchill returned to Adana by train, and left Turkey on the airplane "Commando" piloted by his son. Stalin and Roosevelt would soon get the bad news from Churchill.

NARRATOR 52- 10:16:03- 10:16:12

The pressure on Turkey to enter the war was overcome for the time being. Having seen Churchill off, İnönü was obviously relieved as he wandered around the Yenice Railway Station. The whole country was relieved.

Newspaper Headlines Subtitles: 53- 10:16:12- 10:16:23

1. İnönü had accepted Churchill.
2. How was Churchill welcomed in Adana?
3. Winston Churchill presented İnönü the friendly letter written by King George.

NARRATOR 54- 10:16:23-10:16:44

Having continued for two more years all around the world with all intensity, the war finally ended in 1945. Few months before, as a matter of form, Turkey had declared war against Germany and Japan.

The result of the War was about 55 million deaths; millions of casualties; burnt down, devastated cities and countries. Obviously, all the parties of the war had lost, rightful or not.

*Fade out-Fade in*

NARRATOR 55- 10:16:47-10:17:08

64 years later, lawyer Sudi Abaç is at the place, where the İnönü-Churchill meeting was held. The famous car of the White Train is now in Yenice-

Mersin. Watching İnönü and Churchill in this wagon where the historical meeting took place in 1943 changed Sudi Abaç's life.

NARRATOR 56- 10:17:09-10:17:22

The meeting held in Yenice, a sub district of Mersin, went down in history as the "Adana Meeting" or the "Adana Conference."

NARRATOR 57- 10:17:28-10:17:40

According to Sudi Abaç the Yenice meeting has been much underrated.

NARRATOR 58- 10:17:45-10:17:56

As he watches the images in the railway car, he goes back to the moment when the secret meeting was held in 1943.

NARRATOR 59- 10:18:23-10:18:36

As the representative of a generation rescued from the devastation of the war, Sudi Abaç remembers the event he witnessed once again as he visits the photograph exhibition in the Peace Park.

INTERVIEW 60- 10:18:39-10:18:56

*3<sup>RD</sup> INTERVIEW WITH SUDI ABAÇ IN THE TROLLEY*

*(Subtitle: Sudi Abaç  
Lawyer – Witness)*

*"It was a knot for me. My objective was to find this wagon that would symbolize our liberation, approach the people at large and the entire world with the peace train and tell the whole world the truth."*

NARRATOR 61-10:18:58-10:19:12

Already in his university years Sudi Abaç had begun to look for the train of his youth memories all over Turkey.

INTERVIEW 62-10:19:16-10:19:54

*4<sup>TH</sup> INTERVIEW WITH SUDI ABAÇ IN THE RAILWAY CAR*

*(Subtitle: Sudi Abaç  
Lawyer – Witness)*

*"I started from İzmir. They didn't even know anything about it. It was impossible. Then I got a message from Adapazarı, so I upped and went but it wasn't there. Then we went on to Eskişehir, it wasn't there either. They were listening to me, but telling me there was no such thing. They would give it to me if it was there. Then I went to Sivas, they told me it wasn't there. No, it wasn't in Konya either."*

NARRATOR 63-10:19:58-10:20:06

Not being able to find the wagon Sudi Abaç started to reflect his passion for peace in the caricatures he drew.

NARRATOR 64- 10:20:15-10:20:29

Years passed, one day he received a message that the railway car might be in Konya. This time he was about to bring a secret part of Turkey's history into light again.

INTERVIEW 65- 10:20:33-10:21:53

5<sup>TH</sup> INTERVIEW WITH SUDI ABAÇ IN THE RAILWAY CAR

(Subtitle: Sudi Abaç  
Lawyer – Witness)

*"We passed through a few places, there were lots of wagons. One of them caught my eye. This, wait a minute, this one caught my eye. The toilet was here. There was a There was a plaque here saying "Toilet". They had written the letters on a brass plate with black paint. I saw it from afar, and I was a little embarrassed. They shouldn't have written toilet. Foreigners have certain words and signs to indicate the restroom, I thought they could have used one of them. We don't think about these things. I said "Let's go inside." We went inside. This hall, there was a coop on this side. There was a mattress on the floor on this side. It was filthy and horrible. I said we were going to restore the wagon and take it away with a big ceremony. Then we were going to take it to Yenice, where the meeting was held. They found a large piece of land there, which is this land you see here. Then we were going to build a park.*

NARRATOR 66- 10:21:56-10:22:10

The wagon was restored by the General Directorate of Railroads in a short time.

NARRATOR 67- 10:22:16-10:22:42

Subtitle: January 30, 1993 – Yenice 10:22:17-10:22:25

It was put on display on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the historical rendezvous, in the Peace Park built for the occasion with a ceremony in which Turkish and British officials participated. İnönü's son Erdal İnönü was present as well as the Deputy Prime Minister along with the British Ambassador John Goulden.

NARRATOR 68- 10:22:51-10:22:59

This old man knows the value of peace very well. The Municipality of Yenice has attended to his sensitivity.

NARRATOR 69- 10:23:09-10:23:16

Today the wagon is close to the railway line where the meeting was held.

NARRATOR 70- 10:23:16-10:23:34

The state-of-the-art wagon of its time in construction and design, now stands amidst the fruitful fields of Çukurova with its plain beauty.

NARRATOR 71- 10:23:59-10:24:02

Sudi Abaç's message seems to have reached the present generation. In the guestbook visitors can express their feelings.

NARRATOR 72- 10:24:02-10:24:16

"We are thankful to you for protecting our country against the hell of war with a great foresight and determination under very difficult conditions; and prevented us, the young generations from being left fatherless."

Guestbook Subtitle: 10:24:04-10:24:10

"We are thankful to you for protecting our country."

NARRATOR 73- 10:24:19-10:24:25

The guestbook is full of peace messages written in different languages...

NARRATOR 74- 10:24:26-10:24:32

Churchill's granddaughter Christine also expresses her gratitude to those who chose peace.

NARRATOR 75- 10:24:35-10:24:46

The wagon has a lot of little visitors as well. This visit raises hopes of children coming from the schools in the region for keeping peace alive for the coming generations.

NARRATOR 76- 10:24:49-10:25:04

Today, Yenice is a small town with a population of 10,000. Traces of the rendezvous that took place in 1943 can be seen all around Yenice. There are only three people left who have witnessed the historical rendezvous, but the new generations keep its memory alive.

INTERVIEW 77- 10:25:05-10:25:36

*INTERVIEW WITH VELİ SERİN IN THE PEACE PARK*

(Subtitle: Veli Serin)

### Mayor of Yenice)

*"We hope for a world in which peace prevails, rather than wars. We have chosen this park as the venue of all activities and celebrations held on the World Peace Day on September 1 every year, in order to take part in this effort, and to keep our hopes alive. Moreover, we have actually chosen the moment İnönü and Churchill shook hands as the emblem of our town to show how important world peace is for us."*

NARRATOR 78-10:25:37-10:25:50

The photograph of the historical hand shake is exhibited on both entrances of the city on the Adana-Mersin highway. The street that leads to the İnönü-Churchill Peace Park is called the İnönü-Churchill street.

NARRATOR 79- 10:25:53-10:25:55

The Yenice Station...

NARRATOR 80- 10:26:00-10:26:14

Now there is heavy railroad traffic on the line İnönü crossed by a trolley in 1943. The railway passes right through Yenice and carries passengers between Adana and Mersin.

NARRATOR 81- 10:26:22-10:26:58

Young locals have given Churchill's name to the Park. They call the park "Churchill" in short as if demonstrating their hospitality. They go to "Churchill" for wedding parties and other get-togethers. This place, which had rescued the Anatolian people from the verge of war, now witnesses the wedding ceremonies of the new generations.

NARRATOR 82- 10:27:02-10:27:13

Each year, a "Peace Festival" is held in Yenice on "September 1, the World Peace Day". The local administration was certainly inspired by the İnönü-Churchill rendezvous when launching it.

NARRATOR 83- 10:27:15-10:27:35

All kinds of activities remind of the importance and value of peace to Turkey and to the whole world. The "Peace Parade" held every year begins at the town center and ends at the Peace Park with the lighting of the peace torch. Panel discussions and exhibitions take place.

NARRATOR 84- 10:27:44-10:27:55

If it weren't for the determination of Sudi Abaç, this wagon would be erased from the collective memory of Turkey.

NARRATOR 85- 10:27:56-10:28:05

Today this "modest wagon" continues to send messages of peace to the entire world when we need peace more than ever.

Final Credits Space 10:28:09-10:28:48

**THE END**