'ATATÜRK' IS ON PRIMEVIDEO

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For more than a year, the controversy over the Atatürk film, which was initially declared to be released by Disney but later abandoned, was concluded on September 9th, 2024 with its release by PrimeVideo, owned by Amazon. The platform announced that the second part of the movie will be released on October 29th and that it will be released as a six-part series on November 10th. Those who want to watch the Atatürk movie abroad are frustrated because PrimeVideo, responding to inquiries, stated that it can only be watched in Türkiye. This may change for some productions as viewership rates and demand for overseas viewing increases. We hope that PrimeVideo will take this point into consideration.

Before PrimeVideo releases Atatürk, it is useful to briefly and accurately recall the films journey. Especially after so much time has passed, after the dust has settled, the picture has become clearer. In 2023, DisneyPlus announced that it would release Atatürk, only to backtrack on this decision, which lead to a huge backlash in Türkiye, with the vast majority of Turkish users even canceling their subscriptions. When DisneyPlus announced that it was canceling the Atatürk movie, The Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA), which is well known by those who follow AVİMs daily bulletins for its hostility towards Türkiye and Atatürk, started a campaign as if the Atatürk movie was canceled as a result of their attempts. However, the situation is slightly different when evaluating the situation with DisneyPlus. It was frequently reported in the press that the only projects that DisneyPlus had decided not to release were those related to Türkiye. Although this news is true, it is incomplete. It is useful to look at the management strategies of the Disney company. In June, Disneys board of directors unanimously decided to extend Bob Chapeks contract as CEO for another three years. The Board is now convinced that Chapek, who took over as CEO at the beginning of the pandemic, did his best during COVID, one of the companys most turbulent periods, but that Disneys future will be in better hands with Bob Iger[1]. After Iger took office again, he emphasized the need to change the DisneyPlus content financially and announced that many projects would be abandoned. This policy continued in 2024. The company, which seemed unrivaled between 2015-2019, sought ways to protect its former reign when the pandemic occurred. CEO Bob Igers recent comment about quietly canceling movies was found disturbing. Unlike Warner Bros. which made big announcements about the completed films they canceled; Disney has made no progress on projects in development. Many of

these projects were announced at a time when Disney was focusing on streaming, particularly DisneyPlus and Hulu Originals. In 2020, digital platforms became the only option for watching movies when cinemas were closed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Considering that audience attendance was still low until 2021, this could be seen as the right decision. Still, Spider-Man: No Way Home, Top Gun: Maverick, Avatar: The Way of Water, Super Mario Bros, Barbie and Oppenheimer have shown that audiences are willing to go to the movies. 2023 was clearly a difficult year for Disney. This was because the companys strategy backfired regarding intellectual property[2]. In short, given that Disney has given up even on projects that were eagerly awaited by audiences in the US, it is only natural that it would give up on projects signed with Türkiye or any other country.

Had it not been for the Atatürk film that DisneyPlus had decided not to release, it is likely that the news about DisneyPlus canceling other projects would have been followed by an audience as large as the followers of the projects that were canceled. However, the fact that ANCA, which is allergic to Atatürk and Türkiye, jumped on the issue and tried to portray it as their own initiative is exactly what an antagonistic and opportunistic organization like ANCA would choose to undertake. Today, the movie Atatürk was released on PrimeVideo, a digital platform at least as notable as DisneyPlus. Earlier, in Los Angeles, where the Armenian diaspora is most active, it premiered at the Hollywood Turkish Film and Drama Days event in November 2023. Again in 2023, it was screened all over Europe and attracted much interest. The movie, which Turkish audiences watched more than once, apparently drew great interest on PrimeVideo as well. We suggest that PrimeVideo should not be indifferent to this interest and that the movie Atatürk should be included in the world library, not only in Türkiye.

*Image: *https://www.beyazperde.com/filmler/film-320087/*

[1] Bob Iger, yeniden Disney CEOsu oldu, 21 November 2022, *Marketing Türkiye*, https://www.marketingturkiye.com.tr/haberler/bob-iger-ceo/.

[2] Disney Might Have Cancelled All of Tehre Announced Films, *MovieWeb*, 20 March 2024, https://movieweb.com/disney-might-have-canceled-all-of-these-announced-films/.

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