

A Socioeconomic Analysis of the 1974 Turkish Invasion and
Occupation of Cyprus

by

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A THESIS

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This thesis delves into the far-reaching socioeconomic implications of the 1974 Turkish invasion of Cyprus, highlighting its enduring impact on the island's present state and regional instability. This historical event is largely left undiscussed despite its applications to similar issues within the same region today.

Historical context for this thesis is provided through first-hand accounts from family members and family friends. Quantitative data from global public databases such as World Bank, Cyprus Statistical Services, and the International Monetary Fund were cross referenced to analyze the quantitative, measurable effects of the Turkish invasion. After this process, the harms of both the invasion and occupation are evident. But its effects are not that simple, as economic policies created prior to the invasion resulted in a significant growth within the Cypriot economy following the invasion.

By studying this enduring conflict, we can understand the similarities this event has had with others similar to it in the past, as well as applying these lessons in the present.

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Εκφράζω επίσης την εγκάρδια αγάπη και την εκτίμησή μου στην οικογένεια και τους φίλους μου για την αμείωτη ενθάρρυνση να επιμείνουν. Τα λόγια τους για κίνητρο και πίστη σε

μένα ήταν πηγή δύναμης και κινήτρου, ειδικά στις πιο δύσκολες στιγμές. Στον πατέρα μου και στην υπόλοιπη οικογένειά μας που επηρεάστηκαν άμεσα από αυτή τη σύγκρουση—η ανθεκτικότητα και το πνεύμα σας ενέπνευσαν αυτό το έργο. Ελπίζω ότι αυτή η διατριβή τιμά τις ιστορίες σας.

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Project Description

In my analysis of the socioeconomic implications of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus, I analyzed the domestic effects of the invasion and occupation, but also the broader effects on Cypriots across the globe. Some specific questions I intend to study include what the capital loss because of the invasion was, as well as the productivity shock of the invasion. This topic is of great interest not only to myself, but to specialists in my field as the Turkish invasion of Cyprus was not a cut and dry event, as the outcome of the invasion was very complicated. This topic is also of interest to non-specialists as the history of Cyprus, as well as more specifically the Turkish invasion, is rarely discussed and it is quite difficult to find sufficient documentation and information online, especially within an economic scope. The history of both the occupation and invasion of Cyprus is relevant to present day happenings and can be used as a moment in history that we can draw comparisons to for additional international economic effects of wartime conflict.

My research will consist of both quantitative and qualitative analysis, to reflect my educational background in both economics and sociology. This will be reflected in completing a quantitative data analysis of economic and census data. A qualitative data analysis will be done through the process of interviewing individuals who lived through the war. These conversations will be transcribed, as well as followed by reflective pieces on each interview. I believe this will assist in creating a more holistic view on the Turkish invasion and occupation of Cyprus, as well as contributing to a very scarce archive of first-hand accounts of the invasion.

Introduction

Every family's history is marked by significant historical events that shape identity and connect generations. One of my family's significant historical events was the 1974 Turkish invasion of the island of Cyprus. My paternal side of the family is from Cyprus, specifically the north, thus having been directly affected by the invasion of the northern portion of the island. My father, who lived in the village of Akanthou, was 10 years old when the Turkish forces invaded the northern region of the island, forcefully displacing not only his parents and older brother, but his entire extended family. This invasion completely altered the trajectory of not only my father and our family's lives, but of the entire island.

Like our family, many others had to start completely from scratch when they were displaced to the southern portion of the island. This in turn resulted in a complete upheaval of the economy of Cyprus, and more specifically, a drastic loss of capital. A main motivator in pursuing this topic was to shine light on this historical event, as it is rarely ever discussed. If and when it is discussed, it is described as a mere blip in the Mediterranean, although after much research, it was arguably a pivotal point in the region's history.

Within my approach to this thesis, I found it critical to discuss the economic effects of the Turkish invasion and occupation within the backdrop of its social implications. This event was not merely a significant economic shock, but a generationally destructive event to hundreds of thousands of people. Incorporating first person accounts was critical to accomplishing this human-first approach. I interviewed several family members and family friends, whom I gleaned insight of the invasion and occupation from. Cross referencing this data with immigration data allowed me to paint a more vivid picture of what occurred following the invasion.

As for quantitative data, economic and statistical data were collected through publicly accessible international data. Some of the databases utilized in this project included the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, Statistical Services of Cyprus, and more. While some topics featured more robust data than others, the Cypriot economic data prior to the invasion were quite scarce, which resulted in some limitations. Economic data was analyzed and visualized, allowing for a more accessible and comprehensive method to understand this historical event.

Within the analysis of quantitative economic and immigration data, it is evident that the Turkish invasion and occupation resulted in an alarming loss of capital for Cyprus. A total of 37% of Cyprus' land was occupied during the invasion and has subsequently been settled on for over 50 years. It is worth noting that the occupied portion of the island, the north, was the most developed at the time of the invasion. As my father has described, it was a popular tourist destination for both Europe and the Middle East, featuring resorts frequented by many celebrities. With the immense loss of this land came a 67% loss of tourism capacity. Thus, a drastic and sudden increase in unemployment was seen from 3% to 15.2% (Trading Economics, n.d.).

Of course this did not merely affect tourists, but the natives of the land who lived in various villages. One third of the entire island's population had been displaced, resulting in a mass exodus of people from the north to the south. These individuals and in time their own children, including my own family and myself, were labeled by the government as refugees despite already being citizens of the island. Others fled to nearby countries, many of whom already had friends or family internationally.

Following the invasion, there was a surprising and relatively rapid improvement in the economy. Prior to the invasion, Cyprus had implemented economic policies such as the Tripartite System of Wages, which allowed for negotiations to occur between employers, employees, and the government. Such topics of negotiations included working conditions and wages. Thus, with policies such as these, Cyprus was able to pick itself back up considering its significant losses. An increase in female employment, as well as emphasis on the service sector, in an aim to replicate the north's previous economic glory in the south, also contributed to great economic improvement.

Background on the 1974 Turkish Invasion

My father's story, as well as the collective stories of my paternal side of the family during the invasion inspired this thesis. The literature review portion of this thesis details the existing research on the topic, as well as historical context to this event.

Figure 2.1: A Map of the Island of Cyprus



(*Britannica Cyprus* 2024)

This map of Cyprus depicts larger cities as well as villages in Northern Cyprus using their original Cypriot names. This map also includes a smaller image of Cyprus on a broader map of the eastern Mediterranean.

This map depicts the island of Cyprus and the line splitting the North and the South portions of the island after 1974. As the map denotes, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is only recognized by Turkey as it is internationally considered illegally occupied land.

Akanthou, the village my own family is from, is located near the top right coast of Cyprus.

As a result of the conflict, all the residents of the villages that were invaded and occupied cannot return to this day. The occupation has been deemed illegal under international law, and yet Northern Greek Cypriots, while having legal ownership over their land, cannot do anything about taking back physical access and use of their land. As a result of this, Northern Cypriots were considered refugees and were sent to live in refugee housing where many, such as my own grandfather, have lived since the invasion and beginning of the occupation, which has now surpassed its 50th anniversary.

Figure 2.2: Refugee Housing Provided to Displaced Greek-Cypriot Peoples in the South After the 1974 Turkish Invasion



(Growing up in Refugee Camps, 2023)

Housing in the south of Cyprus offered to refugees of Northern Cyprus. My own grandfather lives in a unit identical to those pictured above.

Economic Conditions During Cypriot Interwar Period

In recent decades, additional research has emerged increasingly focused on Cyprus' economic state within the context of being an independent nation as well as a colony for a certain period. This includes specifically looking at Cyprus' growth rate during this interwar (1921-1938) period. The interwar period is defined as the period between World War I and World War II. This is of relevance to the economic research of Cyprus as it creates a detailed contextual image of the state Cyprus was economically during both world wars.

A notable contribution to this topic is "Economic Growth or Stagnation during the Interwar Period: Reconstruction of Cypriot GDP 1921-1938" by Alexander Apostolides, whom I had the pleasure of meeting virtually and getting to speak to about Cyprus' economic state and history. His dissertation primarily discusses the economic conditions of Cyprus between the World Wars, thus giving context to what Cyprus' economy was like in the decades leading up to the Turkish invasion.

Apostolides' dissertation concluded that during the interwar period, there was a fluctuation in Cyprus' economy. While there were years that signaled economic growth, there were also periods of stagnation. These variations were largely influenced by global occurrences at the time, including world wars, as well as local economic trends, such as agriculture performance. Agriculture performance is the measure of how efficiently outputs are being

produced given the inputs that went into the production of said output. This facet of the economy is significant as agriculture is a sizable portion of Cyprus' economy.

Another significant contributing factor to the state of the Cypriot economy included Britain's colonial policies and their effects on the economic development of Cyprus. Thus, research such as this is important to place Cyprus and its economy in a historical context, particularly during such a pivotal period in history.

Pre-Invasion Cypriot Historical Context

Prior to beginning the story of the Turkish invasion and occupation, it is necessary to look back to Cyprus' history. From the beginning of historical records, Cyprus has primarily been culturally and linguistically linked to Greece, as well as the Greek language and culture, despite being in the Middle East, and having influences from the region. While this still rings true to this day, a Cypriot dialect emerged on the island. Cyprus' geographical location within the Eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea has allowed it to maintain a close cultural and economic relationship with Greece.

Despite these deep-rooted Greek cultural ties, Cyprus has been under the rule of many empires and countries. Cyprus had once been under the rule of the Persians, the Egyptian Empire, the Byzantine Empire, the Ottoman Empire, and eventually became a British crown colony, a decision that was proclaimed in 1925. Britain's colonization lasted until August of 1960, after tensions rose between Cypriot nationalists who wanted to be not only independent from Britain, but united with mainland Greece, and Cypriots who wanted to stay a British colony

to maintain a level of safety and security against other larger, and more powerful, nearby nations.

On July 15th, 1974, the Cypriot National Guard, which consisted of about 10,000, led by about 650 Greek soldiers carried out a coup on the nation's capital. The coup consisted of machine guns, explosives, and at one point, there were reportedly 10 tanks surrounding the Presidential palace. The President at the time, who was elected in 1959, was also the head of the Cypriot Orthodox Church, Archbishop Makarios. While he initially agreed with the idea of Cyprus uniting with Greece, also known as 'Enosis', he ultimately aligned himself with the movement for an independent Cyprus, something that better aligned with Turkish Cypriots. This independent path sought to bring about more peace and agreement between those who aligned with either Greece or Turkey.

A line of causation can directly be drawn between the coup and the invasion of Cyprus, ultimately resulting in the demise of Cyprus as a united island. This is due to the major political disturbance, the coup, having left Cyprus virtually unprotected, and vulnerable to the invasion of Turkey, especially as tensions rose between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. Many believe that a factor in the division of Cyprus was due to the Cypriot nationalists pushing to unite with Greece. The friction and vulnerability left Turkey ready to implement the plan and strategic map of invasion and occupation, a map that according to many interviewees had circulated for years prior.

The 1974 Turkish Invasion of Cyprus

On the morning of July 20th, 1974, the Cypriot people's hopes and dreams for the future of the newly independent Cyprus came to a full stop, just five days after the Greek-led coup took

place at the capital of Cyprus. Coincidentally, directly across the street where my own father would attend school after the invasion. On the morning of the invasion, the Turkish troops invaded Cyprus from the northern coastline pushing through the island towards the capital of Cyprus, Nicosia. Turkish jets bombed the island, targeting major satellite sites and the Nicosia airport, which was put out of working condition.

The Turkish invasion of Cyprus, as one might imagine, had a significant effect on the people of Cyprus. Thousands of Greek Cypriots were killed, the majority of which being women, children, and the elderly. Another act of horrific violence the Turkish and Turkish Cypriots committed against the Greek Cypriots was the rape of women and young girls. Often these survivors were disrespected by or even outcasted by society and were shamed. The use of sexual violence, such as rape, is disturbingly a common aspect of war and conflict across the globe, the invasion of Cyprus was no exception.

Turkish Colonization and Settlement of Northern Cyprus

When analyzing the socioeconomic effects of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus, it is crucial to note that at the very core of this topic is the displacement of the Greek Cypriot population of Northern Cyprus, as well as a significant impact on the cultural heritage of this group of people. The piece “Colonization by Turkish Settlers of the Occupied Part of Cyprus” by Jaakko Laakso calls this human impact to the forefront of the conversation. His research highlights the legal and human rights concerns, particularly regarding how the settlements of the Turkish were viewed through the eyes of international law, as well as the human rights implications of the permanent displacement of the Greek Cypriots that were native to the Northern part of the island.

This research largely explores the complex political and legal dynamics of settlement policies as well as geopolitical tensions in Cyprus. It highlights the need for international attention to be placed on the people of Northern Cyprus displaced by the de facto partition of Cyprus in 1974. The forced eviction of the Greek Cypriot population as well as the settlement of the Turkish in the occupied territory still has present day effects. Northern Cypriots were considered refugees in their own country, many of which still identify as such according to (Hadjiyanni, *Cyprus Review*). Greek Cypriots are being forcefully kept from their land as Turkish military forces are present in the northern part of the island.

The demographic shift of the northern portion of Cyprus is noteworthy, as the constant migration of Turkish settlers, who were paid to settle on Cypriot land, has drastically changed the population makeup of the region. This is concerning for the future of the potential acquisition of the Greek Cypriots' land as the increase in population of Turkish residents can, and has been, used as leverage in support of the continual settlement of the northern part of the island.

In the data tables as well as visual representations of the data below, it is apparent that the rapid growth of the Turkish population in Cyprus was due to the encouragement of Turks immigrating to the newly occupied region of Cyprus.

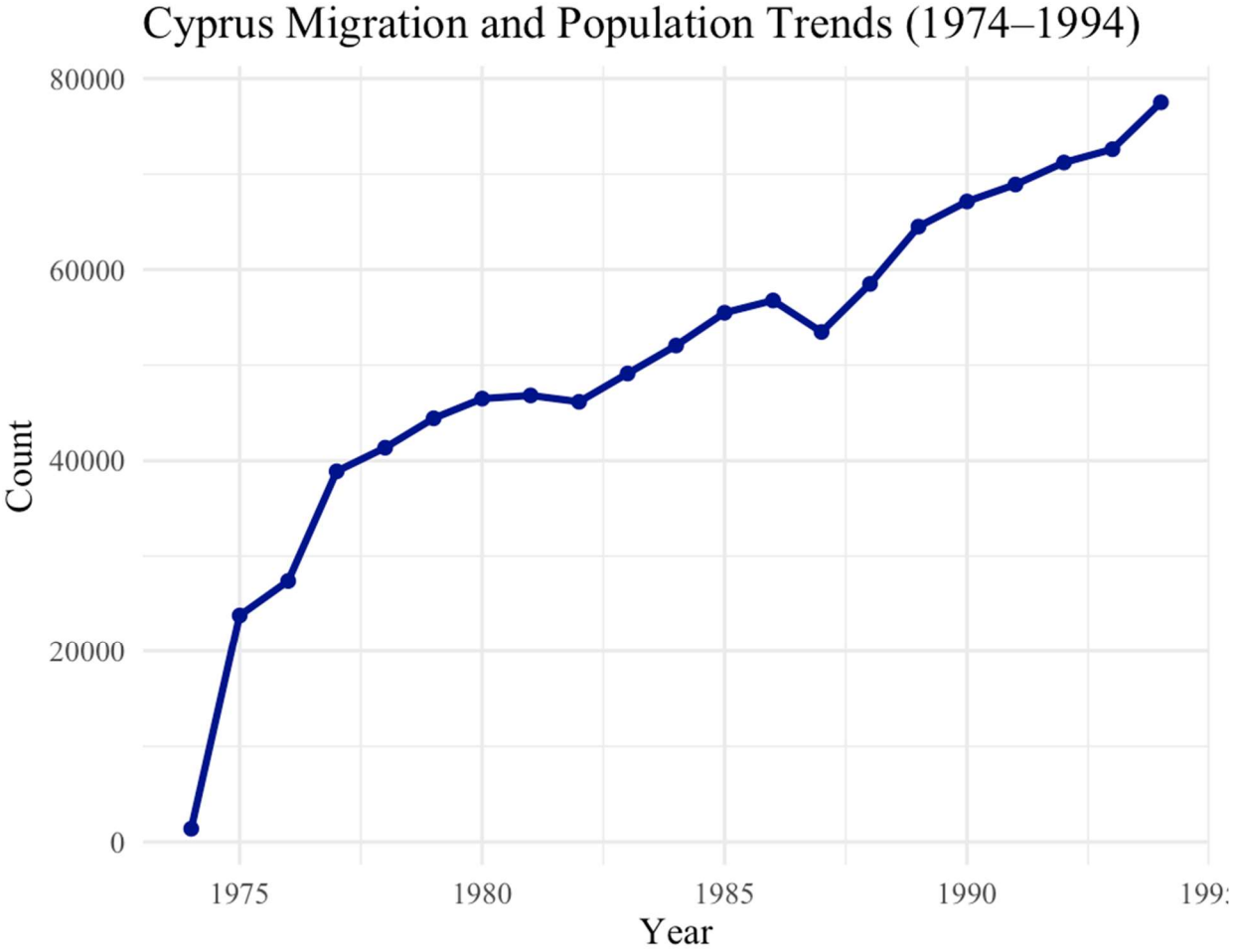
Figure 2.3: Ethnic Composition of Cyprus by Population Before 1974

Ethnic Group	1960 Population Count	Census %	1973 Population Count	Census %
Greek Cypriot Community	447,901	78.20%	498,511	78.90%
Turkish Cypriot Community	103,822	18.13%	116,000	18.40%
Others	20,984	3.66%	17,267	2.70%
Total	572,707	100%	631,778	100%

(Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, 2003)

Between 1960 and 1973, Cyprus's total population grew from 572,707 to 631,778. The Greek Cypriot community remained the majority, increasing slightly from 78.2% to 78.9% of the population. The Turkish Cypriot community also grew modestly, from 18.13% to 18.4%. Meanwhile, the population share of Other ethnic groups declined from 3.66% to 2.7%, both in percentage and absolute numbers.

Figure 2.4



(Council of Europe “Recent Demographic Developments in Europe”, 1996)

The population shift in Cyprus from 1974 to 1994 was primarily driven by migration, especially due to the massive influx of settlers post-invasion, while natural population growth played a minimal role. The blue line represents population settlers which steadily increased throughout the period, with a sharp rise from 1974 to around 1978. The green line, net migration, is very volatile, with its peak in 1974. This peak is likely due to conflict-related displacement. The red line, which represents natural increase (births minus deaths), remains relatively stable and low in comparison to the other two lines. The instability in net migration reflects ongoing demographic adjustments and external political pressures.

In more comprehensible terms, it is evident that the population of settlers in Cyprus had significantly increased following the invasion, far eclipsing the rate of growth of not only immigration, but also the natural increase in population. The large spike of the population of settlers coincides with the beginning Turkish settlers arriving to Cyprus. The spike of net migration at the same point likely indicates the mass displacement of Greek Cypriots immediately following the invasion. In contrast to the natural increase in population, which is births minus deaths, it is evident that the overwhelming majority of population change is due to migration. The notable dips in the net migration line can be explained by emigration out of the island due to economic hardship, our disillusionment amongst Turkish settlers.

Economic History of Cyprus

When studying the impacts of the Turkish invasion on Cyprus through an economic lens, it is important to step back and place this story within the broader context of its economic history and conditions. As a small island in the eastern Mediterranean Sea, Cyprus has been exchanged

amongst the hands of many world powers. Some of which include Assyrians, Egyptians, Persians, Romans, Arabs, Ottomans, and most recently the British.

During the modern era, Cyprus' economy has been heavily reliant on tourism, or more broadly, the service sector. As of 2023, this sector accounted for 86.8% of gross value added to that economy for the year. (Economic overview, 2024). Were this sector to be compromised, Cyprus' economy would be desolate. Such a catastrophic event would be contingent on the loss of the land itself. It's crystal blue warm coasts, historical ruins, and overall natural beauty make Cyprus such a prominent tourist attraction primarily for those in Europe and the Middle East. Losing this would mean losing the very foundation of its economy. But unfortunately, this is exactly what occurred in 1974.

When Cyprus was invaded and occupied by Turkey, it lost the northern 37% of the island (Solsten, 1991). At the time of the invasion, Northern Cyprus was the most developed and desirable land on the island. It was a popular tourist destination, as opposed to the southern portion of the island which at the time was more rural in comparison. Unsurprisingly, this resulted in a significant disruption to the economy of Cyprus. Not only was it the most developed at the time, but it was a tourist hotspot that brought in a significant amount of revenue for the economy.

On a humanitarian level, the occupation of 37% of the island resulted in a displacement of a third of the island's population, including my own family. Shortly following the invasion, economic policies were implemented to aid in the country's recovery. These policies were incredibly successful, resulting in a 6% economic expansion in real terms between 1974 and 1978. To this day, the northern portion of the island is still occupied, and thus thousands of lives

have been changed forever, the government was successful in getting the country overall back on its feet.

Methods

Within my research, I have made it a priority to include both research and data analytical strategies from economics and sociology, both areas of study I have focused on in university. To incorporate this, I will be exploring this topic both through qualitative and quantitative means. The quantitative approach to the economic data analysis will consist of researching various forms of data and analyzing it through coding visual.

By incorporating a reflection of the interviews, the economic side of the effects of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus will be understood in a more effective manner, as the data will add to a more holistic picture. Within the interviews I will not only ask questions directly related to the invasion but will also be asking broader questions about their lives that expand far beyond the invasion, both prior to and after it occurred. This will place the human experience at the forefront of the conversation and setting the economic outcomes of the invasion as a backdrop to the human impact of the conflict.

To complete a comprehensive analysis of the economic effects the 1974 Turkish invasion and occupation had on the island of Cyprus; it is important to compare Cyprus to similar countries economic development. This will be done through comparing the countries' GDP. A country's GDP, or Gross Domestic Product, is a useful economic indicator as it provides a more holistic picture of the growth or decline of an economy and can help in comparing the economies of several countries as it provides context for international operations and investment decisions. It is important to acknowledge that while using GDP as an economic indicator, it is not an end all be all as it still a limited scope. GDP does not account for environmental impacts, income distribution, or unpaid work.

Discussion

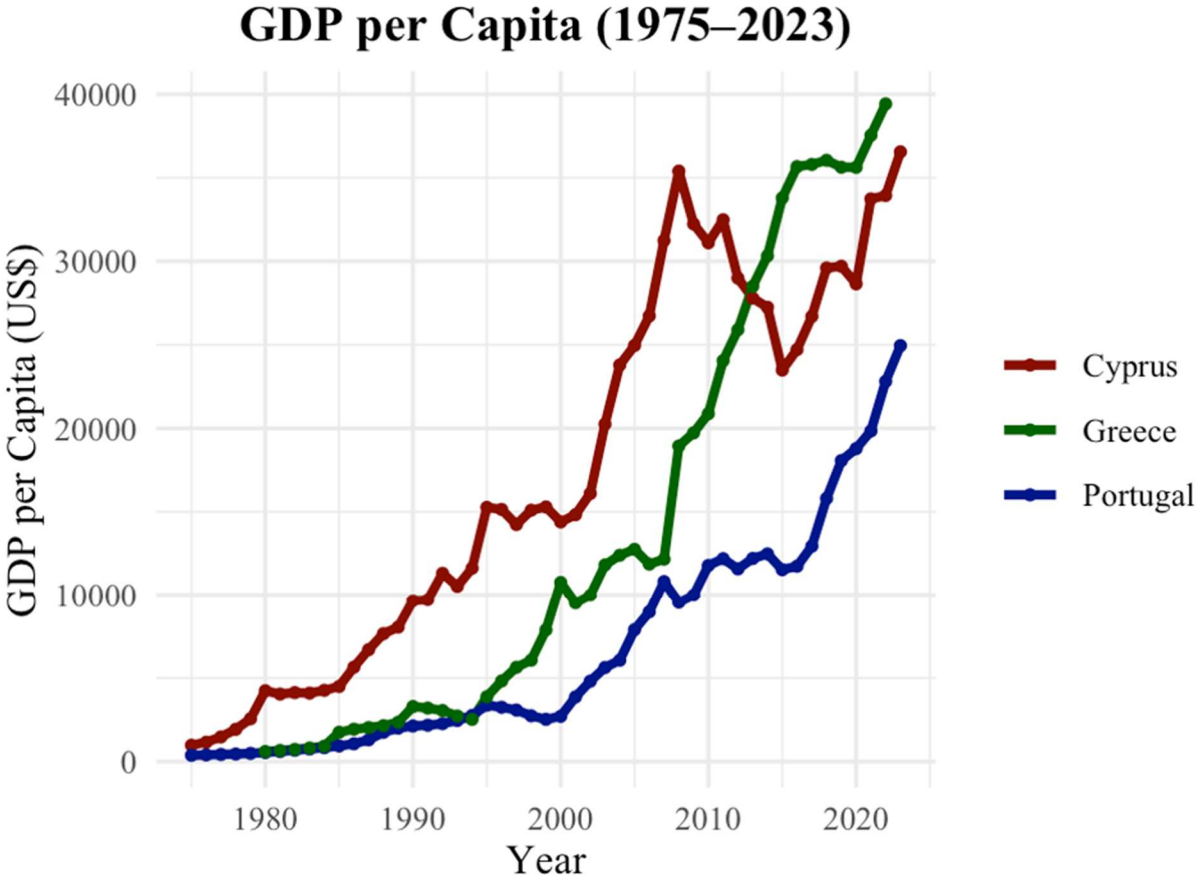
To better understand Cyprus' unique economic trajectory, it is advantageous to compare it with two countries with cultural and political similarities. The two countries I will be comparing to will be Greece and Portugal. According to Jones (2022), Greece is the most like Cyprus as most of both countries speak Greek. There are also commonalities between both their heritages, religions, and cultural influences. Portugal is second most similar as both countries have presidents voted in by popular vote. They are also both popular tourist destinations within the Mediterranean region with their populations made up predominantly of Orthodox Christians. With these conceivable similarities in mind, one can analyze the different trajectories each of these countries took in comparison to Cyprus as its economy was severely disrupted and permanently altered.

Like many other countries during the WWII period, Greece's economy was devastated. Though unlikely given the economic state of the world, Greece experienced what has been dubbed colloquially the "Greek economic miracle". At the time, this growth was second internationally only to Japan. The early aughts were a continuation of this economic success, with the crown jewel of the decade being the hosting of the 2004 Olympic games in Athens, right where the Olympics began thousands of years prior. Unfortunately, the Greek economy took a steep downturn during its financial crisis of 2008.

The early 1970s marked a pivotal turning point for Portugal, as a decade of economic growth gave way to political upheaval, social reform, and the end of its colonial empire. From the 1960s-1970s, Portugal was seeing an annual growth rate of about 5-7%. This was a positive sign for the country as it had previously been western Europe's poorest country. By the year 1973, Portugal experienced an inflation surge as well as an energy crisis. Like Cyprus, Portugal

also experienced a coup in 1974, known as the Revolution of the Carnations. This coup resulted in democracy in the country. The year after, all of Portugal’s African territories were independent. This was significant as Portugal’s era of colonialism began in 1415 and put them on the map as a key global economic force for next few centuries. Additionally in 1975, Portugal’s transportation, heavy industries, banking, and media were nationalized, coinciding with the social and political instability during the same year.

Figure 2.5:



An effective way to analyze the Turkish invasion’s economic impact would be to use a difference-in-difference research design. This method is used to estimate the causal effect of an event or treatment by comparing the change in outcomes over time between a treatment group

and a comparison group that did not receive the treatment. In this case, we would compare the change in GDP to the changes seen in both Greece and Portugal. Unfortunately, a limitation in this thesis process was the lack of pre-invasion economic data for Cyprus. Instead, I looked at economic growth after the invasion. By pursuing this strategy, I followed the assumption that Cyprus would have followed a similar economic trajectory as Greece.

A more quantitative analysis of GDP per capita growth highlights the remarkable economic recovery and long-term resilience of Cyprus compared to Greece and Portugal. In 1975, all three countries had relatively similar GDP per capita levels—around \$2,000–\$3,000. By 1980, Cyprus had nearly doubled its GDP per capita to approximately \$6,000, while Greece and Portugal trailed behind at around \$4,000 and \$3,500, respectively. Over the longer term, from 1975 to 2000, Cyprus’s GDP per capita rose to roughly \$15,000, a five- to six-fold increase, while Greece reached about \$13,000 and Portugal around \$10,000. This growth divergence became even more pronounced by 2023, with Cyprus’s GDP per capita approaching \$35,000, Greece slightly higher at around \$38,000, and Portugal lagging at approximately \$25,000. In percentage terms, Cyprus experienced an increase of over 1,000% from 1975 to 2023, compared to about 800% for Greece and 600% for Portugal. These quantitative differences emphasize Cyprus’s accelerated post-invasion growth and its ability to not only recover but outperform regional peers in terms of economic development per person.

Despite the invasion and occupation of Cyprus, the island was able to rebound economically showing a steeper and more sustained GDP per capita growth than either Portugal and Greece, whom are the most similar countries politically and structurally to Cyprus. The internationally recognized portion of the island, which is specifically the south, managed to rebuild its tourism, service sector, and unite with the European Union.

Within the analysis of the effects of the Turkish invasion on the economic structure of Cyprus, it is evident that a huge loss was taken by the Republic of Cyprus. With 37% of its land occupied by the Turkish army, Cyprus lost 67% of its tourism capacity according to (Pashiardis & Hajispyrou, 2003). A significant concern following the invasion was Cyprus' loss of capital as so much of its country was invaded and occupied.

Despite this significant loss in tourism capacity, Cyprus was able to recover quickly considering the circumstances. This was done so by maintaining an emphasis on exports and allowing the government to work in tandem with internal institutions. Due to Cyprus' economic policies created prior to the invasion, such as the Tripartite System of Wages, which facilitated negotiations between employers, employees, and the government in terms of wages and working conditions. Policies such as this one led to an impressive pattern of economic growth despite Cyprus' huge losses. In addition to these economical changes, there was also a rise in female employment as well as an increase in the service industries, a sector that would prove to be fundamental to Cyprus' economic recovery.

As the Cypriots from the north were pushed out to the south, the Turkish from the south of Cyprus, as well as immigrants directly from Turkey began to colonize the northern half of the country. After the invasion, 99.5% of Greek Cypriots lived in the south while 98.7% of Turkish Cypriots lived in the north (*Demographic Yearbook System*, 2004). According to the government of the republic of Cyprus, the significant demographic changes are deemed illegal by both the country itself, as well as the UN (European Parliament, 2024).

In addition to this, the Cypriot Embassy located in Vienna has written up a formal list of objectives it views the Turkish government of possessing as they colonize and occupy Cyprus. One of the most apparent reasons is to not only change the demographic nature of Cyprus, but to

alter the population balance on the island of Cyprus to justify Turkish requests and arguments in terms of the post-invasion Cyprus issue. This demographic shift also helps to influence elections, thus exercising control over politics in the controlled area.

The embassy has also made the argument that what Turkey is doing is classified as ethnic cleansing. This argument is justified by the fact that all signs of cultural and religious heritage, such as churches, were destroyed or looted. In addition, all Greek geographical names of the occupied portion of Cyprus have been illegally changed, only furthering the erasure of the communities which were once there prior to the occupation.

With an artificial increase in the Turkish Cypriot population, the majority of which was due to the influx of settlers, not native Turkish Cypriots. This rise in the Turkish settler population, as well as the overall occupation of the north has, though illegally, resulted in Turkish military presence to be on the island. This adds to the bolstering of Turkey's end goal to annex the northern portion of Cyprus.

Not only are these claims accusations on behalf of the Republic of Cyprus, but they are also claims of the Turkish government. In an interview on May 10, 2005, with the former Turkish Cypriot 'president' of Northern Cyprus (2005-2010), Mehmet Ali Talat, he admitted to the policy of colonization. "There were times when 'citizenship of the TRNC' [Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus] had been given in restaurants. There are people who never came to Cyprus, yet they were given 'citizenship'." (*Illegal demographic changes*, 2006). While this is incredibly problematic on a geopolitical scale, it is especially consequential for the displaced northern Greek Cypriot population who have resided on the same land for generations.

The colonization of the northern half of the island violates the indigenous Cypriots property rights as all their land was, and is currently, used to house Turkish settlers. The wave of

settlers from Turkey is so large that they have outnumbered and replaced indigenous Turkish Cypriots. This is also problematic for this group of individuals as not only is there anger and frustration being pointed towards them due to the invasion, but they are also receiving unfair treatment as the Turkish settlers get far more privileges, resulting in unfavorable economic conditions forcing them to emigrate. According to the same article, there are at least more than two Turks for every Turkish Cypriot in Cyprus. This results in an apparent contradiction of Turkey's claim of the invasion being for the sake of native Turkish Cypriots. Another shocking statistic according to the Turkish Cypriot Daily "AVRUPA" from March 26, 2001, stated that over '34,000 title deeds have been given to settlers from Turkey since 1974. This land is more than half of Northern Cyprus, the report says."

According to *Turkish Cypriot Daily "HALKIN SESI"*, (December 30, 2005), workers permit released to Turkish settlers rose exponentially. A table featured in this piece features the number of "work permits" that were issued between the years of 2000-2005. Between 1976 and 2006, the number of registered voters steadily increased from 75,781 to 151,635—more than doubling over 30 years. The largest jumps occurred between 1995 and 2000, and again between 2000 and 2005, with particularly rapid growth noted between February and May of 2005. This trend reflects a consistent expansion of voter registration over time.

An additional table within the piece is a visual manifestation of the colonial policies enforced by the Turkish government, and the so called "Turkish Republic of Cyprus", which is only recognized by Turkey. From 2000 to 2005, the total number of issued and renewed items rose sharply from 6,113 to 42,779. The majority of this growth came from first-time issues, which increased over sevenfold—from 4,661 in 2000 to 36,200 in 2005. Renewals also grew steadily, though at a more modest pace, rising from 1,502 in 2000 to 6,579 in 2005. The most

dramatic increases occurred in 2004 and 2005, indicating a surge in demand during those years. It depicts how the influx of settlers has resulted in a drastic increase in “registered voters” further contributing to the aim to control politics on the island, and in turn impact the politics of the Mediterranean region.

It is worth noting that Turkey’s invasion, colonization, and occupation policies are all in violation of international law. Deeming its government and actions as illegitimate. The methods by which Cyprus’ demographic shifts occurred are constituted as war crimes under international law.

Over time, the glimmer of hope for the potential reunification of the island has dimmed. The potential for Greek Cypriot refugees to return to their homes is nearly gone, as nearly all the adults from that time are either passed away or in their 80s/90s. The only remaining inhabitants are those who were children at the time of the invasion, like my father. Many of the elderly survivors continue to live in designated refugee housing, my grandfather and many other older relatives.

In addition to the negative lasting effects of the invasion and occupation on native Cypriots, the conflict of the island is also impacting the exploitation of the Mediterranean seabed’s hydrocarbon deposits. While the Republic of Cyprus agrees to share revenues from this resource, it declines to give the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus a say. This is only one example of what a global impact an occurrence such as the invasion can have.

The events and lessons from the invasion and occupation of Cyprus can be applied to other historical events such as Kosovo and Serbia, Palestine and Israel, and West and East Germany. Similarly to Cyprus, the conflict between Kosovo and Serbia is intrinsically tied with statehood and international recognition. Similarly to the invasion, ethnic tensions between the

Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo escalated into violent conflict and a de facto partition. This comparison highlights how occupations result in long-term instability, even if the violence has ceased.

Similarly to Cyprus, the violence currently in Palestine is a direct result of historical entitlement, as well as settling on the land. Just like the settlers in Northern Cyprus, the Israeli settlements in the West Bank are considered illegal under international law. Both Cyprus and Palestine feature people displaced from their ancestral homes, with generations of families lives completely altered. The separation of both lands is made evident through physical borders. The Green Line in Cyprus, and the separation barrier in the West Bank serve as both physical and psychological reminders of the divide that has now lasted decades in both lands.

East and West Germany, like Cyprus, were divided by foreign powers, more specifically in this case, the Soviet Union and Western Allies in Germany, and Turkey and Greece's influence in Cyprus. Germany's capital Berlin, like Cyprus' capital Nicosia were both split, representing a physical reminder of the division within both countries. Unlike Cyprus, Berlin's wall fell, and Germany was reunited.

Cyprus serves as both a lesson and reminder that there is a much broader global pattern of occupation and settlement, and that these patterns turn land into a tool used for political control. International laws are applied inconsistently, often in alignment with the larger global power's interests.

In addition to the quantitative portion of the data collection within the thesis process, the qualitative data obtained from the interviews was equally as critical. These interviews were completed during winter of 2025. The format consisted of asking a series of questions pertaining to personal experiences as well as obtaining perspectives on the handling of the invasion and

occupation via phone or Skype. These interviews were not only key to this study, but impactful to hear as a descendant of those who were affected by the conflict.

Throughout each interview, there was very much an air of sadness despite the invasion having been over 50 years ago. It is evident that the human effects of the invasion go far beyond capital loss, even for individuals. Entire lives were uprooted, or even worse, lost. Each interviewee described their experience and where they were during the invasion so vividly, you'd think it happened last week.

One of the interviewees was a young mother at the time of the invasion living right on the 'Green line' created to divide the North from the South. The second, was a young boy living in the Southern portion of Cyprus, near the president's palace which the coup had taken over just five days prior to the invasion. This coup had effectively removed the archbishop and replaced him with a pro-Enosis leader. The third interviewee was also a young boy at the time of the invasion, but he lived in a small village with his family in the North. That young boy was my father.

While each perspective and story were unique, there was common thread- the disappointment in the actions of the Greek Cypriot Nationalists. There is much debate to this point through today, and the three interviewees were all of the opinion that had the coup not occurred, the invasion likely would not have been sparked, or at least more time could have been bought. One key fact I learned during the interviews was that the Cypriots were aware that if a coup were to occur, it was likely an invasion on the behalf of Turkey would soon follow it. This was eye opening as all my life I had assumed that there was no knowledge of the potential of an invasion.

The interviews all stressed the importance in identifying and pushing back against nationalism, and how ultimately that led to the downfall of Cyprus. There was also an emphasis placed on the fact that the blame of the invasion, in addition to Greek Cypriot nationalists, should be placed on the Turkish government and military, not the Turkish Cypriot citizens. After all, it was by the implementation of the Turkish government that the invasion occurred. I also specifically call out the military as they committed war atrocities, specifically violating the rights of women and children.

For all three interviews, the description of the time following the invasion was quite bleak. The interviewees, all Greek Cypriot, described it as a time of uncertainty and loss. Families in search for missing family members, and individuals seeking a new place to work and live. While my father's aunt who lived on the 'Green line' was able to reside in her home, Koulis and his family had to flee their home in the South. Thankfully, they were able to return. Others, like my father's family in the North, weren't so lucky. Their village, as well as the entire northern portion of the island was occupied by Turkey. This meant like many others, my father's family home is to this day lived in by a Turkish family. Their land has also been fully taken over. Though this is illegal, it is still nearly impossible to get their home or land back. Additionally, all the homes in the villages of the North were not only occupied but looted. Not only does this mean that families had virtually nothing with them as they were being displaced, but they also had nothing to pass down to future generations. Things like jewelry, handmade furniture, and sentimental items were obtained by the Turkish military.

The invasion and occupation completely changed the trajectory of the lives of those of the North. My father recalled being told as a young boy that his family's plan was for he and his older brother to go to England and study hotel management, and eventually build hotels on their land that was right on the coast. Many opportunities and legacies were cut far too short.

Conclusion

By completing a comprehensive review of the socioeconomic implications of the 1974 Turkish invasion and occupation of Cyprus reveals the complexities of this pivotal historical event. Within this analysis, it is evident that this economically and socially destructive event in history had been known of for years prior to its inception. With a weak response on behalf of the guarantors, Northern Cypriots lives were left at the mercy of the Turkish government and military.

In addition to the significant social outcomes, Cyprus' economy was drastically changed. Their most profitable and developed portion of the country had been occupied, leaving many scattered around the country looking for new work. This lent to an economic shift towards the service economy, and an effort to replicate the North's upward trajectory within the tourism sector. Further analysis also indicates that the economic policies implemented in the years prior to the invasion resulted in a very successful economic recovery for the southern portion of the island.

While this study featured a multifaceted approach to the topic at hand, it is necessary to take note of limitations within the study. Examples of such included limited opportunities for facilitating first person accounts. This historic event took place just over 50 years ago, meaning that many of the surviving individuals who were adults at the time have either passed away, or are experiencing memory issues or loss due to aging. If this thesis were to be facilitated over a longer period, a primary goal would be to incorporate more interviews, increasing the diversity in ages included in the study. Another limitation of this study was the significant lack of public economic data for Cyprus prior to 1975. This ended up being the lengthiest point of the research, as finding sufficient quantitative data to draw on was very difficult.

Despite these difficulties, the Turkish invasion and occupation of Cyprus is incredibly important to shed light on. Not only did it permanently effect the Cypriot people and alter the geopolitical landscape of the Mediterranean, but it also serves as an example of political warning signs to look out for. The fascist Greek coup, as well as the ensuing invasion of occupation on behalf of Turkey left Cyprus politically, socially, and economically fractured. Similar fascists movements can be identified in our present-day world and will only follow history's many examples of violence and societal decomposition. By recognizing and applying the lessons we as a society have learned in the past, we can help to quickly recognize fascism, and thus eliminate the potential for conflict. Not only does this result in a more economically stable global landscape, but a more humane and hospitable world.

One common thread throughout each of the interviews was the emphasis of peace and community. These individuals' experiences are living proof that the harboring of hate will only lead to a destructed world. On our path to becoming an ever-evolving society, we must prioritize the understanding and respect of others. Our land is shared, and raging wars for capital or power will never be beneficial to anyone, but the ruling class. This conflict is key to keeping populations stratified and unable to create real change. As a society we must prioritize education, to recognize the larger forces at play that perpetuate cycles of oppression and hate.

Appendix

Interview Questions

1. Do I have permission to audio record this interview?
2. What is your name and birthday? (Only if interviewee consents).
3. Where were you born and raised?
4. Can you tell me about your family background?
5. What are the names of your parents and siblings?
6. Can you describe your immediate family?
7. To your knowledge, where did your ancestors come from?
8. How would you describe your childhood?
9. What was the extent of your education, and how would you describe it?
10. What were typical jobs in your community?
11. What did people do for enjoyment/entertainment in Northern Cyprus?
12. How did religion play a role in your life?
13. How old were you when Turkey invaded Cyprus?
14. Can you tell me a bit about your life prior to the invasion? What was your daily life like?
15. What were your hopes for your life prior to the invasion?
16. Can you describe when you first found out the invasion was happening?
17. What are your most vivid memories from that time?
18. Can you describe life leading up to and during the invasion?
19. What was life like immediately after the invasion, for example the following year?
20. How did the invasion and occupation directly impact yourself and your family?
21. Did you ever consider leaving the country after the invasion?

22. What is your perspective on the politics of Cyprus leading up to the invasion as well as how it has/hasn't been handled since?
23. What has been your reaction to the occupation of Northern Cyprus?
24. (If applicable) Can you tell me about your time serving in the army?
25. How has the culture/vibe of Northern Cyprus as well as the island changed since the occupation?
26. What are your thoughts on the lasting effects of the invasion/occupation?
27. In what ways did the invasion change your perspective on life?
28. What is something about yourself that you were most proud about that you did during this difficult period?
29. Is there anyone who significantly impacted your life during this time?
30. Would you say the world has changed since you were younger? If so, how?
31. What can we learn from the past, specifically the invasion and occupation?
32. Above all, what would you like to be remembered for?
33. Is there anything else we haven't covered that you would like to discuss?

Full Interviews

Interview Transcription: Yolanda Hadjisoteriou

December 29, 2024

Yolanda: Okay. Okay. Do you want to give my name?

Evyenia: Yeah.

Yolanda: You want my name?

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Yolanda: Okay. My name is Yolanda Hadjisoteriou. And, well, that's just- remind me the question because I cannot see them. I don't have them.

Evyenia: Oh, yeah. The third question was where were you born and raised?

Yolanda: Born and raised. I was born in Nicosia, Cyprus and raised in the same place.

Mhmm.

Evyenia: And then can you tell me about your family background?

Yolanda: Family background. Okay. My both parents were from Nicosia. And, but my father was a textile merchant, and my mother was a housewife. Middle class. We are in middle class. We had our own house and all this. We lived our very what I... I miss my words.

Kyriacos: Comfortable.

Yolanda: Comfortable. Yes. That's it. What else do you want to know from that?

Evyenia: Yeah. If you want, you could also say the names of your parents and siblings, but you don't have to.

Yolanda: Oh, okay. I see the next question. My father's name was Dinos. My mother is Lenya. What is the siblings? I didn't know they were. Oh, brothers and sisters. Brothers. I had 3 brothers. I am the only girl in the family. Okay. Okay. The second one in line. I have a brother older than me. It's me and 2 brothers younger.

Evyenia: Okay. And then can you just- do you want- or I guess you already did describe your family and then, do- you to your knowledge, where did your ancestors come from? Like, did you ever hear like, oh, they came from Greece or was your family always in Cyprus from what you were told?

Yolanda: They're from Cyprus. As far as I know, it's from Cyprus.

Evyenia: And then how would you describe your your childhood?

Yolanda: I think you missed one. Number 6.

Evyenia: Oh, yeah. I since you describe I mean, do you wanna add more to that? Mhmm. Do you wanna add more to that? To number 6, can you describe your immediate family?

Yolanda: My family. Mhmm. Yes. Now I'm a widow. I have 2 sons. I have I have two sons, four grandchildren. And then and then as far as I know, they are from Cyprus. They were from Cyprus. Their childhood. Okay? Strict. Strict- strict parents. Okay. Okay. Strict. Okay. My parents were strict. Mhmm. But we live a comfortable life. We had a house. We had, my father always had a car. We had whatever we need. We- what we did, we went to school every day. And then I play with my brothers and, in the street with the children in the neighborhood.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Yolanda: It was children's life. Yeah. We didn't have anything else to do. Yeah.

Kyriacos: No video games.

Yolanda: Yeah. No video games. No TV.

Evyenia: And then as far as my my next question was, what is the extent of your education? How would you describe that if it was in Cyprus or someplace else, for example? Your education, did you...where did you go? I went to the elementary elementary education and high school.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Yolanda: It was a good education where learning the Greek language, history, maths, and some English.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Yolanda: And it was a difficult years, and they were difficult years.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Yolanda: Because the British sometimes, they close the schools

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Yolanda: When we put the Greek flag on the school. So sometimes the the schools were closed. We- but when the- we we learn good things.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Yolanda: It was a good education.

Evyenia: And when you say you learned Greek history, do you mean, like, from Greece or from, like, Cypriot history? Like, Greek Cypriot history?

Yolanda: Yeah. It was Greek and some a little Cyprus history.

Kyriacos: Yes. Okay. Did did you also go abroad in England and study anything, Yolanda? Or did you- the highest level of education you achieved was the high school?

Yolanda: High school, I went to London for 6 months only for short term. I did some short term.

Kyriacos: Okay. Now when you said the Greek flag on the when you raised the Greek flag the British were having problems with, that was before 1955?

Yolanda: Yes. It was before. It was when we had the revolution on '55 when it was '55. Yeah. 1955 when the republican revolution was. And we young people, we have to do something. And what we did is, put a Greek flag on the schools, and they closed them. They closed the school. Would they just close them for the day or for, like, a couple

weeks at a time or for how long? It's some sometimes more more days. Yeah. Weeks.

Yeah. I remember there was a time that I didn't, but my brothers, they went, it's like, they went to the church, and the teacher was doing some lessons there.

Evyenia: Yeah. Mhmm. And then my next question is what were typical jobs in your community or the area that you're living in?

Yolanda: Okay. And there are the merchants. That is my father. There are the agricultural families. Making shoes by hand, tailors, dressmakers, and, in towns and villages by the sea, there are fishermen. And okay. Some teachers and, and we had some doctors as well. Yes.

Evyenia: And then also because this or question 11 was more about specifically Northern Cyprus, but I'll ask, I guess, for Southern Cyprus. But what did I know you said you played outside, but what other things did people do for, like, enjoyment or, like, entertainment? Like, for fun, I guess.

Yolanda: I think it goes for the whole island. I said that, for the whole island it was the same, not just the north.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Yolanda: It was family meetings for dinner and and, there are cinemas and theaters.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Yolanda: Coffee shops mostly for men. We didn't, women didn't go to coffee shops then.
That's that was it.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: And I, I also know that, you know, even it happens today, weddings, you know, was a big event where whole towns get together and relatives.

Yolanda: Yeah. Yes. Yes. Yes. That's the- it was always- yeah. And, weddings, more people, not just yeah, family.

Kyriacos: Yeah. I I remember in Akanthou, we had weddings in the plaza of the village, and everybody from the village. Everybody.

Yolanda: Yes. Yeah. In the village, they are all together. Yes. And mostly they are relatives. Yes?

Evyenia: And then my next question is, how did religion play a role in your life if it did?

Yolanda: Okay. We used to go to the church every Sunday and Sunday school. We had Sunday school then. But we did not have differences about people who were Muslims or Catholics or, Maronite. We spoke the same language, and everybody had his own customs and holy places in every village and every town.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Yolanda: So we respect each other. Mhmm. And, sometimes there were Muslims, they could give you when you go to Apostolos Andreas, they could give you money to light a candle. Yeah.

Kyriacos: That that was long time ago. Right?

Yolanda: Long long time ago. Yes. That's what I, you know, you want to know now?

Kyriacos: So, what you are saying is that even the Muslims, when you go to the monastery, like, Apostolos Andreas, they will give you money to buy a candle, meaning to to pray for them too. To pray.

Yolanda: Yes. Yes. To wish them well. We we that's a means we didn't have any difference in religion.

Evyenia: Yeah. And then how old were you when Turkey invaded Cyprus?

Yolanda: I was 29. I was married with a son of three and I was pregnant.

Kyriacos: I remember. Yes.

Yolanda: You remember that. Yes. You remember.

Evvyenia: Okay. And then can you tell me a bit about your life? I know you already did this a little bit, but could you tell me a little bit about your life prior to the invasion? Like, what, I guess, like, daily, like, daily life was like for you leading up to it?

Yolanda: Okay. When I was married, I have stopped working. Mhmm. And I stayed home as a housewife to raise my children. I have friends and we usually visited each other at home for a coffee and a chat. On Sundays we used to go to- with my husband- to the north to his village to see my in-laws. We have built a house there with a big yard, and we planted trees and had chickens and turkeys and a donkey, shall I say?

Kyriacos: Of course. Okay. What do we usually do? Yeah. Do you do what was the name of your donkey? Because usually, Cypriots would give names. We we I remember my dad gave names to our donkeys.

Yolanda: I don't know. It was your grandfather's donkey. It was and it was a a short one. Uh-huh. So, so, his legs were touching the ground almost.

Evyenia: That's a tiny donkey.

Kyriacos: A little guy.

Yolanda: Yeah. Yeah. And then- and then I you know, you are you you don't know, but, the grandfather was a tall man. Yeah. He he was good for his, compared to other men. Yeah. He was tall. Very nice and thin and tall for his age. He was a nice, 'leventis'.

Kyriacos: Yeah. Handsome guy. Leventis [brave man in Greek]. Uh-huh. So he he was- his name was Kyriakos.

Yolanda: Uh-huh.

Kyriacos: And the father I mean, the father of my mother.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: And also my aunt's husband

Evyenia: Mhmm. Andreas' father.

Evyenia: Mhmm. Okay. Okay. And then my next question is what were your hopes for your life or like plans for life prior to the invasion?

Yolanda: Okay. My dream was to have my children in a country which we could have peace and be happy. And because we have lived in, many difficult times before as a British colony and then when the Turkish Muslim Cypriots started to want more than any other minority could have. After the encourage of the British troops, We had a bigger property by the sea at Akanthou, and and, we we plan to build bungalows for the- for tourist visitors.

Evyenia: Oh. Then yeah. So kinda similar to what you're saying with the hotels. [My father had discussed plans to build hotels on their land in Akanthou.]

Yolanda: Yeah. Yeah. It is near the hotel, not the place. Yes.

Evyenia: And then can you describe when you first found out the invasion was happening? Like, maybe what were you doing at the time? Like, what are your memories from that?

Yolanda: Firstly, it was the coup coup it is, The coup. Uh-huh. The coup against the president, Makarios. Yes. And and we were very afraid of this civil war. Because it was a civil war, actually. And did not know what the others were planning for us. That goes with the 17, I I put a note here, question. It was a surprise when we get on the radio that

Turkish troops were invading on the island. It was July 20th. People were on summer holidays.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Yolanda: Especially at the seaside. Pentemili, the invasion point, and Kyrenia. I had relatives there from fortunately, we are at the Trodos mountain at that time, of holidays. And you say something, what I remember mostly. Uh-huh. I remember a young mother who stopped at where we are staying for a glass of water with a newborn baby. And she had run from home, Morphou. She was living in Morphou. Without taking anything. No food. No clothes for the baby or herself. Her husband was in the army. She left and I don't know for where you could see the horror in her face.

Evyenia: Wow.

Yolanda: We we were worried about our relatives that were at the village. There was only one telephone at the coffee shop of the village. And there was no one's no no mobile then.

Kyriacos: So, yeah, you say you were at Troodos. Troodos was a summer vacation for a lot of people. Vacations. And you said Yeah. There was the phone- the public phone that was there, the the public phone at the at Akanthou, the village. So you were calling. You have so you were called at Akanthou or...

Yolanda: Akanthou, and we didn't have any answer. To know. And, we learned where you were because when Andreas [Yolanda's husband] went to work, he had to go from Limassol. We used to go I I read it later from Limassol to go to Nicosia because you couldn't go from the other road. And he met your father

Kyriacos: Yeah.

Yolanda: In the, in the street. And that's how we learned that you left the village and the US some per se.

Kyriacos: So my uncle, Andreas, was at Troodos, and he was driving to Nicosia for work, but he had to drive through Lima, so he couldn't go directly through, close to the Astromeritis. Astromeritis. Yeah. Because Turkish were moving in that direction.

Yolanda: Moving. Yes. Yes. Yes.

Kyriacos: So, and he met my father on the road, and he found out...

Yolanda: Yes.

Kyriacos: Do you know because, say, his car was to help.

Evvyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: To help the army, I think, something like that.

Yolanda: Yeah. Yeah. That's why he moved.

Kyriacos: Yeah. My father, because he had a big van, they were using his van to transport supplies and food for the army. And he saw my father's car. He recognized it, and my father told him that my family already got on the bus from the village, and they are going to- we went to Agoro. That's another on the south side of the village. We went there. We were staying with other people. Yeah. And they opened up their homes, and we were just sleeping on the floor. So a lot of people in one house.

Evvyenia: Yeah. Mhmm. And then my next question is, can you describe life leading up to and during the invasion?

Yolanda: I went back to work in 1973. So to go to work from the mountain because we are still afraid to go on Nicosia. And, we but we had to go to work. And, we used to go from the mountain. We had to go around from Limassol. That is, at the far south end of the island. We had to stay at the mountain because our house in Nicosia is near the green line. They put that line and the bullets were falling on our veranda were afraid to stay there. Refugee peoples were trying to find a safe place to live and the necessities to support their families. A lot of people did not know where their relative or sons or parents

were. Your relatives, they came and stayed with us when it was safe to return home. Fortunately, they managed and left before the Turkish soldiers went into the village. Only my father-in-law, he stayed back. He did not want to leave his home. But they forced him and with others that stay behind and took them to a concentration camp. He stayed there for 2 months. After the cooperation of U.N. people, he came home to us. The old man suffered and was sick.

Kyriacos: So my grandfather, Kyriakos, when he he was released, he was sick, you said? He was not feeling well?

Yolanda: Yeah. He was sick because, at the concentration camp, Kyriacos.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Yolanda: He said because he was alone, not with his wife, the other people may have their wives, and they gave him something to cook, to eat, and they didn't give him food. His village is, yeah. And do I do some of the fight? And then he was with diarrhea. Sometimes he was very sick. And he, what he did, he he was wearing the the oldest, he was wearing that traditional what we call like, sort of like a I'll show you pictures so you'll see what it is. It's not pants, but it's...

Evyenia: Oh, it's like the kind of skirt.

Kyriacos: Yeah.

Yolanda: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And, it was very old and dirty, and my grandpa didn't want people to see him wearing pants and think he has money. Yeah.

Kyriacos: But at the same time, Yolanda said that people that were staying in the camp with my grandfather from even from the same village. Right?

Yolanda: Mhmm. They would not when they some people have their wives, they wouldn't even offer him food. That's why he he he didn't have good nutrition and all that.

Kyriacos: That's why he- about how old he was at this time? My grandpa in '74. How old was he?

Yolanda: I think he was nearly at 80. Nearly 80.

Kyriacos: 80? 80 years old? 80.

Yolanda: Yeah. Yeah.

Kyriacos: I don't know if it was 79 or uh-huh. Late 70. Yeah. When he died, I think he was 82. So, what year did he die then? Because it was a few years after the war. I remember he was staying in Famagusta.

Yolanda: What year? I don't remember. We were staying at that. I think 8 I think '80.

'80. 1980. 13th November 1980. Now I remember. Okay. In '80.

Kyriacos: So, and the war was so it was six years after the war? Yeah. Yes. Yeah. Six years. So, I'm assuming was in the late late mid- to late eighties when he died? '80. Yes. Yeah.

Evyenia: So, I'm assuming he was born in 1890 something. I don't know.

Kyriacos: Do you remember his date of birth?

Yolanda: No. No. I don't know the date of birth, but I know the date of death.

Kyriacos: Yeah. You're right. I mean, if he was Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Close to that. 1890s, I'm assuming.

Evyenia: Yeah. And then yeah. My next question is, what was like or what was life like immediately after the invasion?

Yolanda: For example, like, the following year. I think, what I I think I answered it with all this. I said, is, people who are looking for their relatives to find a place to stay

Evvyenia: Mhmm.

Yolanda: To work, just to live, to support their families. So, and, that's where I say some, Kyriacos' family did not stay in our house, but the other people and my immigrants may stay with us.

Kyriacos: Mhmm. We stayed at your house for for the one day. 2 days. Just a few days at least. Yeah. Yes. Yeah.

Yolanda: 1 or 2 days. Yes. Mhmm. Yeah. Mhmm.

Kyriacos: Do you have any questions pertaining to how the economy was right after the war? How do you have a question about that?

Evvyenia: Not in this section, but yeah. If you wanna talk about a little bit about what you remember the economy was like during the time or, like, were people still were, like, kids still going to school? Were things still, like, kinda running semi normally? And, people were trying to find things to do work any work. Like, so there is- right.

Yolanda: He was working at the building.

Evvyenia: Construction?

Yolanda: Mhmm. Constructions. I mean, whatever they could do because he didn't have couldn't go into an office or anything. The offices, government offices, CITA, anything that- Cyprus Airways, I was working. They were working. Mhmm. We, Cyprus Airways, we didn't have the airplanes because the airport was closed. We didn't have planes, but we went to the office and did some office work, anything, and we are half paid. We are half paid and then there was a time that we we are working one month, and we are paid. And then the next month, we didn't we didn't go to work, and we are paid 30%. That was a month I was I received only £10. Yeah. My salary. But this, people were trying to find things to do. And then the government make these they gave orchards or anything. What you had, Kyriacos.

Kyriacos: Oh, yeah. Yeah. To work. The- and that was Turkish land. This was land that was owned by Turkish Cypriots and moved to the north. And then they said, okay. If you, if you were a farmer on the north, you are entitled to using this land. It's not there is not given to you, but you can use it, cultivate it. Yeah. And and that's what my father was was doing for years. And they and I and I remember, eventually, they were asking them to pay so much per year in rent. It was minimal, but you were renting meaning, yeah land, and the land actually to use it. To show that it- it belongs to you. Yeah.

Evyenia: Yeah. Mhmm. And then what is it like, after, let's say, you're done renting the land, what happens then?

Kyriacos: Well, that's it. What happened to my father. After a while, it was given to someone else because my father got very old, and we, the the children...

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: Were not in the- were not in the same business. We're not in farming, so they found someone else, some other family that now lives in the village in that, Mathiatis is called the name of that specific village my father was rented from. There's another family who is using the land now.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: But they're still renting. Yeah. They don't own it. Yeah. They're still same deal.

Evyenia: Mhmm. And then oh, my next question is Yes. This is- so sorry. If there was a question if we were thinking of leaving the country. Uh-huh.

Yolanda: Okay. Yes, sometimes it was a thought, but it was difficult to do because at the time and for a long time, there was no ways of leaving the island. Airports were closed and the ports were closed because it was no flights that can- flights to go. Yeah. They are not safe. They are not safe to go. The yeah. Everything was blocked.

Evyenia: Mhmm. Okay.

Yolanda: Could not leaving- leave- the okay. And 22? Mhmm.

Evyenia: Oh, yeah. 20 to 22 is, oh, yeah. I think that was question number 22. 21, you answered it a little bit already, but 21 was how did the invasion and occupation directly impact, like, yourself and your family, your immediate family? I would prefer. I mean, you you can think about, I mean, jobs, you mentioned that, I mean, your family, your- the immediate family, how did that impact you?

Yolanda: I mean Okay. We are fortunate that we had a job. We have a salary. We could leave normal and have whatever we would have. That's it. Mhmm. But there was another question. What do 22 question, what goes up? That was, did you ever consider leaving the country after the invasion? That was at 22. I thought it was 21 but okay. Because I have 22 or I wrote something politics.

Evyenia: Oh, yeah. That's yeah. That's 23. What is so yeah, it was what is your perspective on the politics of Cyprus leading up to the invasion as well as how it has/has not been handled since?

Yolanda: Okay. Although that the invasion, I'll pick what I think about it. Mhmm. The invasion was very well planned many years before. England, Greece, and Turkey were the guarantors. They should protect us in case of danger. But imagine the guarantor to

invade the island and stay with the army for 50 year now. So, so and we are a small country, and we are under the big world powers. The interests of the big powers. The big powers. Yes. I'm forgetting my English.

Evyenia: You're doing good. Yeah. This is Okay.

Yolanda: Later you said something else, and I hate that I have what I don't like about, you know, how I feel about it. Yeah. So what is I hate that I have to show a passport to visit my village in my own country and have the foreign army keeping me away from the north side of Cyprus. Yeah. That's, how how I feel. And then Okay. Let's see. I went to 25, 24 East. I go to army. I didn't go to army. I didn't go to army. Oh, yeah.

Evyenia: Yeah. And the next question is how was the culture or, like, the the feeling, I guess, of Northern Cyprus, how did that change since the occupation? Like, maybe they were more the North and South were more similar at first, like, how have they kinda, like, split?

Yolanda: Okay. I I was writing that just now. So I say that a lot of Turkish Cypriots that we are forced to move from their village and houses to go and live in the north side of the island to places they did not know and live in houses that belong to others with their furniture and personal things in them. They are refugees too. Mhmm. When in their own country, we I do not think they are either happy. And on top, a lot of people, they were brought from Turkey and occupy Greek Cyprus houses and properties. The worst is that

they think they they can do anything they want without the owner's permission. They made roads and built many houses everywhere in the land that does not belong to them. I do not blame ordinary people. But I is the- their can I say government? Yeah. It's not the government but it's the heads of the...

Evyenia: Yeah. Right.

Kyriacos: The ruling people.

Yolanda: Okay. The rulers.

Evyenia: And then would you say that the- or so the people, the Turkish Cypriots from the south were forced to go to north who? Yeah. Who forced them to go?

Yolanda: It was the plan when they I told you is an old plan is they divide the island. Mhmm. So, they move, they move people, citizens from north to south and from south to they were forced by an agreement somehow. Yeah. I don't know.

Evyenia: So, by an agreement. So that would have been, like, Turkey, for example.

Yolanda: Yeah. It's Turkey. Yeah. And and then is the- it wasn't something the same. The Greeks, they didn't want to stay in the north because they were afraid of the Turks, the army, and all those...

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Yolanda: And so on. And the Turkish that live in south, again, they were afraid that they were being revenge...

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Yolanda: Somehow and kill them. So, they move. But some of of them, I know they were forced to move.

Evyenia: Yeah. Mhmm.

Yolanda: They didn't want to.

Kyriacos: Also, Thia [aunt], there was this, another aspect of this, which was, and you mentioned the coup against the president that was organized by the Greek Junta at that time. It was a dictatorship in Greece.

Yolanda: So, they Yes. They funded this coup against the president, and the and the aim of that was to unite Cyprus with Greece. And a lot of those nationalists, they were against Turkish in Cyprus, and the Turkish Cypriots in their villages on the south were afraid that they will become the target of these Greek Cyprus nationalists.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: And that was one...

Evyenia: Excuse?

Kyriacos: ...Turkey used that for Yes. An excuse. An excuse to invade. To invade. And second...

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: To go and say, hey. I'm liberating my Turkish Cypriots, saving them from the Greeks, and come to the north.

Evyenia: So, would you say that was something that was happening though, where, like, let's say the Turkish where there's violence against them or they were discriminated?

Like, did that happen a lot?

Kyriacos: It happened in the past, Thia. And probably, you know, better than way better than me because it was...

Yolanda: There are most time that there were, yes, fightings between them, Greeks and Turks.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Yolanda: But, again again, it was, we are living very peacefully before.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Yolanda: But after the that, this became, because when we are fighting the British, then the British stop the policemen and make the Turkish people policemen. But Turkish people then were not educated people. They were not educated before they were very low class and giving them this Authority. Authority and office. And then Turkey became that, okay, Cyprus belong to me because they before the British were Ottoman Empire Yeah. Inside. Yeah. So they remember that they own the place.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Yolanda: So they started from there. And I remember then the first fights between Greek and Turks. The Turkish were talking about they said. To unite with. Enosis [unite Cyprus with Greece]. Uh-huh. So basically, what my understanding is that the Turkish at that time, they were saying division of the island or death. So they wanted to divide the island. And That's why I said it's an old plan, very old plan. Yeah.

Evyenia: Yeah. And then, yeah, I know you said the Turkish Cypriots were more lower class. What was- were they, like, prevented from doing the same things or prevented from, like going to school or things like that?

Yolanda: No. They have school. They went to school, but their professions were usually low, very low.

Kyriacos: Was it because the Greek Cypriots were not giving them opportunities for employment? Or No.

Yolanda: I don't think so, Kyriacos, because they in villages, they have their own property and all this. But I don't know. Is their culture, I think. Is their culture? You see Muslims and all this, they are very they don't they have opportunity to educate and now they do. But then it was, and the people that we are staying in Cyprus, they were the poor Turks. When the British came, they left. Turkish people left.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Yolanda: The the rich ones and all this, they have something they they left. So only the poor stay.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Yolanda: That's why they were regret. Oh, okay. Uh-huh. We had a very good relation. So basically, the Turkish Cyprus basically. When British handed it, left, the Turkish Cyprus that had the good jobs, education, and all, they moved. They went out of Cyprus. They went to Turkey...

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Yolanda: Or somewhere else. Yeah. Who stayed behind were the people that lacked education, the means to have a to leave. To go to leave. And and and my understanding, these are the people that will make Koupes, Shamishi, or labor, type of work rather than professional.

Evyenia: Yes. Yeah. And then but yeah. Also, my question is they weren't, like, segregated is what I'm saying. Like, they could everyone could fully do.

Kyriacos: No. There was a time where segregation with Turkey, and I don't know what year happened, Thia, where initially Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots, they were working together and living together. Right? But but then there was a time where they withdrew to their towns and they wouldn't allow Greek Cyprus to enter their towns. Right?

Yolanda: Yeah. It was, after '57, '63 that time. Yeah. Also when Yeah. Your I had to say to to give you an example, my grandfather from my mother's side, he was playing violin, and he used to play to Turkish weddings. He was very famous for that, and he was doing that. I mean, very- and my father had many customers, Turkish customers. Many. I I know because I went to the shop sometimes and I work there. And they they, they have good relation. So, yeah, what what what forced the Turkish Cypriots to segregate and move to their own villages was that because there were, at times, Greek Cypriots that would go and bother the Turkish, and Turkish will say I think yeah. I think, Turkish started this. Uh-huh. They started this and then okay. Our part, they they did the same. Yeah. They started these things. So there is so there is somebody push somebody push them. Yeah. Somebody push them to do it.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Yolanda: Yeah. Yeah. Somebody push them and told them this is the good thing to do.

Evyenia: Yeah. Mhmm. And then, my next question was, what are your thoughts on the lasting effects of the invasion occupation since, obviously, it's still going on today? What are what are your thoughts on that?

Kyriacos: Say it again.

Evyenia: What what are your thoughts on the lasting effects of invasion and occupation?
Since we're still going today.

Yolanda: So, basically, everyone's the the long effects, the long lasting the macro macro.
Problem. And and what I said about I hate to show my passport. No? Mhmm. Yeah.
Yeah.

Kyriacos: How about overall, Thia, overall, the meaning the lasting effects because the
occupation has been going on for so many years. How do you see the society the the
impact on other Greek Cypriot society? Because it's been for us so long, so many years, I
think it's very difficult now.

Yolanda: Mhmm. I can see. It's very difficult because people that live in the north now,
they were born there. They are 50 years old. Yeah. So, they feel that this is my home.
This is my country. I- it's my village. Yeah. So, it would be very difficult to to solve the
problem. Yeah. Solve the problem.

Kyriacos: So how about on the Greek Cypriot society, where you live, the people that,
you know, you you move around and you see people, and you've been there for so many
years. How do you see the Greek Cypriot? So the impact of that invasion now, how do
you see that impacting our Greek Cypriot society?

Yolanda: And the I think the youngsters, they live their life as it is now. And they are they are happy. They are doing they they don't know about. They don't know about the north. It's like Alexis [Yolanda's youngest son]. Yeah. He doesn't want to go, even to see the property. I told him, you should go and see the property. Your own land there.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Yolanda: He doesn't want to. He doesn't feel the need. And I don't feel nice. When I went there, I was sick, for my weekend, 10 days...

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Yolanda: ...Afterwards. But Alexis doesn't want to even to go there to see the place. He does- they don't know it. They don't know it. They don't feel anything about it. They don't have an emotional connection. Nothing.

Kyriacos: Ne [Yes in Greek]. Ne. Ne. Yeah. Ne.

Yolanda: Yeah. Ne. You have because you live there. Yeah. And I and I the place.

Kyriacos: And I know Evy is is going to interview me too, so I don't wanna tell her everything now. But I feel the I feel the same as you. When I was in Cyprus, my brother

asked me to go to Akanthou, and I said, no. I don't want to go just because it's painful.
Yeah.

Yolanda: You went there? No. Once at least. No? No.

Kyriacos: Yeah. I went a couple of times, at least 2 or 3 times. But this time when I was there, my brother said, let if you wanna go, let's go. And I said, no. I don't want to go.

Evyenia: No. I I went twice, I think... Mhmm.

Yolanda: [Talking about a friend she discussed the north of the island to]. Yeah. She said he said, you always talk about this, the village and you have this and that and all. So he wanted we went together. Mhmm. And he wanted to and to show him the place. And because I was explaining, this is our place. This we are planning to to build the bungalows. Then we went there. This is my home. And this had the- it was more emotional because I talk about it. Yeah. I have to explain and is somehow I lived it. Yeah. Again. I lived there. It was difficult. Yeah. So, I don't want to go again. Mhmm. Yeah. What other question? So, if that's a answer your question, but the youngsters sometimes because they don't know the place Mhmm. Maybe they don't feel anything about it. Yeah.

Evvyenia: And then on a more, like, broader scale in what ways did the invasion change your perspective on on just, like, life? Like how did it change you personally? It changed me.

Yolanda: It changed I I don't think that change. It's just I feel like this sad all the time when we have to talk about it and, but it- that's it.

Kyriacos: So, I mean, Thia, sometimes these events change the way you see life and the way you behave in life...

Yolanda: Okay. I I said something. Sometimes the after invasion, the early times, years, I was thinking why to build the house or why to do this? You might lose it. Mhmm. I- you are afraid to to move. You are afraid to move, to make progress, to do things. That's how I I felt. And when I saw people that were building and starting to build the house, I said, oh, how can they do it?

Kyriacos: Right.

Yolanda: But, yes, I was afraid to do to move forward to to do things, or even invest and build. Repair my house or buy things for my house. I didn't want to do it. Mhmm. Yeah.

Kyriacos: You did. So, basically, you lost trust that what you're building might not be there tomorrow. Yes. Yes. Yeah. The future for the future.

Evyenia: And then my next question was what is something about yourself that you were most proud of that you did during that, like, difficult period?

Yolanda: Proud. Not proud, but I was pleased that I could help my relatives at the first days of that when they were refugees and I could give them a place to stay at least and food and, but the necessary things to live.

Kyriacos: Yeah. And we appreciate that and I to this day I remember it. Thank you. Yes. You, see?

Yolanda: Yes. I know. I know. And the girls, I know the I take the love. Yeah. I I can feel it. Yes. I didn't I didn't do it for I I didn't want anything to give me back. Yeah. I I felt that way. And I am I am doing now for I have it. I want to give to help people.

Evyenia: And then is there anyone oh, sorry. Yes. Oh, is there anyone who significantly impacted you, your life during this time? Like, is there one person that stands out that was like, oh, this person really helped me or really, I don't know, played a big role in my life during this time?

Yolanda: During the wartime?

Evyenia: Yeah. Yeah. During the invasion. During the wartime, during that time, was there any person that really made a big impact on you or have changed your perspective, your life? Was there someone that played a big role during that time in your life?

Yolanda: I, I, I cannot say anything. I don't know.

Evyenia: That's okay. I mean, it's fine.

Yolanda: Oh, I don't know.

Evyenia: Yeah. Mhmm. That's that's- that's fine. Yeah. And then Yeah. My next question is, what can we learn from the past, specifically the invasion and occupation? Like, what lessons has it would you say taught, like, Greek Cypriots?

Yolanda: What lessons what lessons did the invasion taught the Greek Cypriots? Don't mess with the British. Don't trust the British. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. You don't trust the British. Yes. Or Americans. Or Russians. Not to be too fanatics. Yeah, extremes. Yeah, to the extremes. And but we are, we're all human beings, so love each other and just to live Mhmm. To live peacefully and just not to do I I'm going to do this, not to do to others what you don't want to to to you. To do to you.

Evyenia: Yes. Yeah. Yeah. And then Yes. So is that you you would say find ways to live together peacefully We can live... rather than...

Yolanda: Yes. Division and and 'better than you'. Yeah. Yeah.

Evyenia: Right?

Yolanda: Wars all these wars and all these, I get the worst. Yes. Yeah. They all they do harm people Yeah. They harm people. Yeah. Mhmm. Destroy the lives and then the whatever new deeds. Mhmm. Destroy everything. Right. Now I see the worst we have Yeah. Everywhere. Mhmm. Mhmm. Yeah. They destroy livelihoods, societies. Yeah. And You built and they ruined it. Okay.

Evyenia: Yeah. Yeah. Okay. And then oh, yeah. And then my next question is more specifically about, like, you as an individual. Above all, what would you like to be remembered for? Like, what do you want about yourself to be remembered by everyone?

Yolanda: I would like to to be remembered. Okay? Like I'm a good person and but I could help people and did good things.

Kyriacos: Yeah. Yeah. That's good. And I will add to that her kindness and generosity.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: And generosity

Yolanda: Thank you. With whether it is helping people financially or with her time devoting her time to because your- Yolanda also is a member or other organizations that help women.

Evyenia: Oh, really?

Kyriacos: And so yeah. Yeah. Yes. What what was what is that organization? Thia, maybe she can mention that you are presiding or you are the president of that?

Yolanda: I- I was so president of that. It's Zonta International. It's American organization. This is international organization actually. Zonta. It's- if you go and see Zonta.org, you can see about it.

Evyenia: Mhmm. We have another one, Kyriacos. It's- we call it Zoi vs. War Violence.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: Zoi is life.

Yolanda: Zoi is life. Zoi is life. Yeah. Zoi is life. Yes. And we are planning to start next month in January. There was an, what can I say? An Ergastirio [workshop] is, Zoi xana is life again.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Yolanda: And we are trying to help women, that, from both sides is by communal this program, that had this, psychological problems during the invasion. Right. I mean, if they they are violence or not violence, even just refugees just left the house, is they feel something sad inside and cannot live normal. Mhmm. Yeah. They they have this in life. So, we try to help them...

Evyenia: Mhmm. Good.

Yolanda: ... In in new organization. Okay. And then my last question, is there anything else that we haven't covered that you want to discuss or speak more about or anything like that?

Yolanda: Hey, we said a lot of things. Yeah. What about you? Do you want to go and visit Akanthou too?

Evyenia: We have. We- the most recent time was not last time we went to Cyprus, but the time before.

Yolanda: Mhmm. So, you do remember then?

Evyenia: Yeah. I do remember going to see it, but I think it'd be it'd be nice to see it again. But, obviously, if that's like a painful thing, then I wouldn't wanna go.

Kyriacos: No. No. I mean, no. For you, I would definitely go because I think it's good for you guys to because now, you're looking at it through different eyes. You're more mature now. You can see things and yeah. Remember, I think it is value there. Yeah. And just when you listen to the history, you see it differently.

Evyenia: Exactly. Yeah. Yeah. Mhmm. Personally, there's no like painful personal memories to it. That's like we are learning about this too so it's not like forgotten but there's no connection to yeah, that area.

Yolanda: Mhmm. Yeah.

Evyenia & Kyriacos: Yes. Well, okay. Thia, we first of I mean, thank you for doing all of this, taking the time.

Yolanda: Oh, no. It was, it was nice. It was to remember all these things. I wrote down, I wrote it just to remember. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Interview Transcription: Kyriacos Kitsis

December 29, 2024

Evyenia: Hello, dear father. Do you, first of all, do you mind if I record you? Depends how you're gonna use this precious interview. Okay. What is your name and birthday?

Kyriacos: My name is Kyriacos Kitsis. Birthday is September 4, 1963.

Evyenia: And then where were you born and raised?

Kyriacos: I was born in Lefkosia, otherwise known as Nicosia in Cyprus. I was raised in I was raised in initially up until the age of 11 in Akanthou, village of Akanthou in the northern part of Cyprus.

And then up until the age of 24, I lived in Nicosia.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: And then after that, I came to the US, and I've been here since then.

Evyenia: Wow. Is there a reason why you were born in Nicosia and not, I mean...

Kyriacos: That's a question for my mother. But I guess there was no hospital to deliver. They had what they call, kinda like a nurse. Oh, what's that called?

Evyenia: Midwife?

Kyriacos: Probably. I'm not sure. But it was obviously the right choice to be I think I don't know. I think it was in a clinic...

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: I was born. I don't remember. I don't know the name of the clinic or the doctor, but, yeah, for that reason.

Evyenia: Mhmm. And then can you tell me about your family background? So that's, like, your grandparents, what you know about, like, let's say, just, like, your family history.

Kyriacos: The, briefly, my mother's father...

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: ...Was a big landowner in, and his father was even a much bigger landowner because as you go from generation to generation, you divide land. Land gets smaller.

Right?

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: ...Per person. But my grandpa divided his own property by 4 because he had 4 kids, and still my mother had a lot of land inherited by her father.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: Considerable land. My- you know, he was basically doing farming.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: And on my and his wife was housewife and also helping him.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: You know? At that time, it was, again, agriculture and farming. My father's side, my- they own land too, and my dad inherited land as well. But my grandpa was a shepherd. Mhmm. He had goats and sheep, and and he lived in, outside of the village. We've been there where they started building houses, the Turkish...

Evvyenia: Mhmm. Oh, yeah. Close to the sea.

Kyriacos: Yeah.

Evvyenia: Oh, so when- when you say, like I know you said on your dad's side that he was a shepherd, but on your mom's side, like, farming, what specifically?

Kyriacos: I don't, I mean, they have a lot of, I mean, agriculture, you name it, from tomatoes to potatoes to but I I don't think my I don't know if my I need to check with my brother and my dad to see if he had any, goats or anything like that. Maybe. Uh-huh. But I don't know. He has a lot of, obviously, olive trees and all that.

Evvyenia: But I guess my question is it's not like let's say, like, animals. It's primarily, like, vegetables and stuff like that. Like, plant-based things.

Kyriacos: I think so. I mean, I'm not absolutely a 100% sure.

Evvyenia: Uh-huh. Yeah. And then as far as because I feel I think I've asked you this a few times before. But both sides, especially on your mom's side, if- do you know why it was that their family had so much land? Especially since all you know is that they were inherited.

Kyriacos: So, I don't know how originally got into the hands of...

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: I would imagine it's probably something similar to here when people came to the US and the government says, okay...

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: ...This is- this land is for you. You take it, then you make a living. I would imagine that at some point, because, you know, like, Cyprus changed hands. Yeah. You went to the Ottoman Empire from the Venetians.

Evyenia: Around the time of your grandparents?

Kyriacos: I don't- I don't know much of dates in history. You know? I don't know when Cyprus exchanged hands. It happened several times.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: So, you have to look at the history. But I don't know how, but, obviously, when they divided the land...

Evyenia: Yes.

Kyriacos: You have a big shot.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: You know I wanted to do something in, like, in the military at some point or, like, did something because I feel like you have to do something serious to acquire that much thing. I don't know. I don't think so.

Evyenia: Oh, well, my next question is, what are the names of your parents and siblings?

Kyriacos: Oh, my father Petros, my mother Evyenia, which your name after her, my brother Andreas. Oh. I have only one brother.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: And older. Two years older.

Evyenia: Yeah. And then can you, can you describe your immediate family? So that could be, like, your family dynamic or that kind of thing.

Kyriacos: Well, my family my father was a farmer. They would grow cucumbers, tomatoes, potatoes, eggplants, acres and acres of that. And then my and we had people helping us, you know, to harvest all of these, put it on a big truck, and take them to the wholesale market. So, my father would drive the, the big van and bring it to and get paid and come back and continue. We also had wheat. But what do you, you know, for making bread, white bread, what do you call it?

Evyenia: The grain.

Kyriacos: Yeah. Acres and acres of that, and then they combine, you know, the machine, the big tractor will come and cut it. And, we also have olive trees. And, also, harupia, we call it. It's like black and long, gosh. In English, how do we... like peppers or No. It's not peppers. They're big trees and, let me do the Greek to English translation. One second. One second. Greek to English. Translation. There we go. Enter the text...

Evyenia: Yeah. Locust tree.

Kyriacos: That's what we call it. Let me look it up. Yeah.

Evyenia: Oh, it's looks like this. There are little white flowers on it.

Kyriacos: No. No flowers.

Evyenia: Really?

Kyriacos: I don't know, like, why they're called a locust tree. Oh, black locust. Yeah. I know this is not it. Alright. Well, let's find- I will find out later.

Evyenia: Oh, this?

Kyriacos: Bravo. That's it. What is that?

Evyenia: It says the black gold of Cyprus.

Kyriacos: Mhmm. What is it?

Evyenia: Medium sized hardwood deciduous tree belonging to oh, legumes. So that's like, you know, like snap peas and stuff like that?

Kyriacos: Yeah.

Evyenia: A deciduous tree that is native to North America. And a member of the pea family. Wow.

Kyriacos: Yeah. Okay. Anyways Yeah. Well, you- you can give more info. Like, we can do that together. What else? Because this was about, like, describing your immediate

family. So that's something like- yeah. My immediate family was, I mean, obviously, the 4 of my mother, my father, my brother, and me, small family, but then we had a lot of relatives living nearby Yeah. Before they were in Akanthou. So, we, growing up, we were very connected with our cousins.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: On both side. I mean, my father's sister, one of them, the oldest son, we live right next door to us. Mhmm. And we just jumped the wall, and we're going to play with my cousins.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: And then the- my cousins from my mother's brother, like, Savoula, they were all just you know, the plaza where the house in Akanthou, the road that goes down and, as you're leaving the village to the right to the right, probably 500 yards from our house, it was their house. So, we'll go and play with them all the time.

Evyenia: Have both sides, like your mom's and dad's side of the family, always lived that close to each other? Or is that a coincidence then? A coincidence I mean, maybe after the war?

Kyriacos: No. Before because I mean, that's kinda crazy that they're all in one little No. Because it was the the had only 2,000 residents. So, it was a small town. So, houses were- I mean, no. I mean, it just happened right next door.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: But because, I guess, it was inheritance from the parents, and so there were 2 houses next to each other.

Evyenia: Oh, I see.

Kyriacos: From my father's side.

Evyenia: Uh-huh.

Kyriacos: But my aunt, Savou, did not live far from us. I mean, you know, probably a five-minute walk from our house.

Evyenia: Oh, wow.

Kyriacos: Yeah.

Evyenia: And do you know how they met, Pappou and Yia Yia Evyenia?

Kyriacos: Well, they were from the same village, obviously. Mhmm. And my, I guess, my mother my father was like my mother, and he kept sending, agents, brokers. You know? People from the town, ladies that knew my grandfather.

Evyenia: Uh-huh.

Kyriacos: To say, hey. Petros, you know, is interested in your daughter and this.

Evyenia: Oh, he didn't tell her. He told her dad?

Kyriacos: Yeah.

Evyenia: Did she know?

Kyriacos: ...And this is the story my aunt told me that he- people- a couple of other ladies from Akanthou will come and represent him and say, 'Hey, we think it's a good idea. He's interested in your daughter'. And yeah.

Evyenia: Wow.

Kyriacos: Yeah. But they- like, there's no specific story of how they met. It's just they're from the same place. Knew that.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: Yeah. I don't think my mother cared much for him, I guess, initially. But I don't know. I mean, I don't know much of the details. Uh-huh.

Evyenia: I think we kinda talked about this a little bit before, but to your knowledge, where did your ancestors come from?

Kyriacos: As far as I know, Cyprus, and that's it.

Evyenia: Yeah. And how would you describe your childhood? Because I know you're mentioning it was, like, your family being close by and being in the fields and that.

Kyriacos: My upbringing in Akanthou too, was very like, been out in nature, in the fields, and playing in the yard, front yard of our house, which was in front of the plaza. It was nice to see people come and go.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: Across the plaza was, Kaguaris, his coffee shop, who was also he was married to my father's aunt. Mhmm. His wife or the sister of my father's mother.

Evyenia: Uh-huh.

Kyriacos: So, you know, and then their daughter, who was my elementary- I mean, my kindergarten teacher, Eleni, when she was there, I mean, it was kinda close.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: You knew people. You go to the coffee shop and sit there as a kid and listen to people. I remember, like, because we didn't have TV at the house at that time, we'll go for New Year's and watch TV at the coffee shop of Eleni's father, and it was nice. And it was nice to be in the fields even though it was we're going to work, and it was a little tiring, but it was right next to the sea. The Mediterranean was beautiful. It wasn't you know, we didn't have it was just we, as kids, I guess, we had what we needed.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: I think my mother was working very hard. My dad was very, you know, driven to he was kinda making people work

Evyenia: Uh-huh.

Kyriacos: A lot. But they work very hard in the in the fields... You know? But I feel like also I mean, it's interesting here as a little kid. Like, yes, you grew up in a very beautiful place, but there's still, like, you know Yeah. It's not perfect.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: I remember after the war, you know, my mother was working in a factory because you lost everything. There were no cash in the bank because recently I mean, right prior to the invasion, my dad went and bought, and my mother also was in agreement. Just buy this piece of land next to us because it was for sale. And then all the money was- most of the cash was gone. It was so my dad will have to work in construction. My mother had to work in the factory, and the factory owners were taking advantage of the people because they knew they were refugees. They were working like they were slaves.

Evyenia: Do you know what type of factory? Like, what they're...

Kyriacos: Clothing.

Evyenia: Oh, that's, like, one of the worst.

Kyriacos: Yeah. So, it was pretty bad shitty situation for her because... I feel also that, you know, my mother didn't really have a happy life because she got married. She worked so hard.

Evyenia: Mhmm. Do you know if either- this is something that just crossed my mind. But have had either of them ever, like, when you were younger or when they were younger, I'm not talking about, like, when Pappou came to the U.S. in the '80s or whenever that was. But, like, do you know if traveling to any other countries, like in Europe or...

Kyriacos: Nowhere.

Evyenia: They have never been outside Cyprus?

Kyriacos: My dad has never gone out of Cyprus. Only once when he came to see me in United States after I've been here for years. Wow.

Evyenia: What is what or yeah. What is the extent of your education and how would you describe it? And, like, you could focus more on, I mean, you could see the extent of your education, but when you describe it, maybe more of, like, the portion in Cyprus.

Kyriacos: Well, yeah, the highest degree of education is master's in business administration.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: I also done the one-year executive education management at UCLA.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: Pepperdine School of Business. I studied my bachelor's in computer science.

In Cyprus, I got my associate degree in computer science.

Evyenia: Mhmm. Yeah.

Kyriacos: I went to Cyprus College for two years, three years. I don't remember. Two.

And I got my, I have a 101 credit units...

Evyenia: Uh-huh.

Kyriacos: When I came here. And then I went to the University of Central Oklahoma. At that time, the name was Central State University.

Evyenia: Mhmm. Yeah.

Kyriacos: I didn't transfer my credits. I did, like, a year, year and a half because whenever you transfer, you lose. You get a free service at class.

Evyenia: So, and then how would you describe education in Cyprus both, like, when you're younger, also, like, the associate's degree later on? Like, how...

Kyriacos: Well, I think it was good it was good education. I think I mean, as far as education, I think, Cyprus is, is pretty strong.

Evyenia: Oh. I thought. What about, like, let's say, elementary school before and after the invasion? Because I'm assuming...

Kyriacos: It's well, I didn't... Oh, well, I mean, because I was very little I mean, young, 11 years old.

Evyenia: I mean how much do you remember?

Kyriacos: I mean, I remember. This was we're the same before and after. Same because the same curriculum.

Evyenia: Oh, that's yeah. That's another thing. It's like, did they change the way they talked about the people or anything?

Kyriacos: No. It's the same Uh-huh. The Department of Ministry of Education. The books have come from Greece, basically. Oh. So, they they was pre it was said already. So, it was like, okay. This year, these are the books you're gonna have. These are the subject. I mean, the educational system was not altered in any way, because...

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: ...Of the war.

Evyenia: But I guess the difference between you and Thia Yolanda is she said that hers was, like, instead of Greece being the one to kinda, like, roll out the curriculum and stuff, it was the U.K. or Britain, I guess, specifically.

Kyriacos: The curriculum?

Evyenia: Yeah. That's what she was saying. That they, like that if they had the Greek flagged up, they couldn't

Kyriacos: Oh, no. That's not the curriculum. No. No. No. During the...no. The- what she meant is that the I think there were there were times I don't know. They were rebelling against they were not okay. At that time, there was Cyprus was a British colony.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: So, there was this movement within Cyprus for independence.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: To get rid of the British.

Evyenia: What I'm asking is, like, who controlled the curriculum? Because I assume it would have been Britain if they were a colony.

Kyriacos: No. No. It was still Greece. Yeah. It wasn't Britain. And I well, I don't know to what extent Yeah. Britain will have a hand on it in it, but I still it was from, books were from Greece.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: But what she's describing is when sometimes students will put a a Greek flag because, you know, pro-independence.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: You know, British would not like that and shut them down for it. But I did not experience that because I was born after the Cyprus independence from Britain.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: Which to me, that independence, that that was the beginning of the of the demise of Cyprus.

Evyenia: And then we're gonna get back to them...

Kyriacos: Yeah.

Evyenia: Later, obviously. But I know you answered this a little bit earlier too, but what were the typical jobs in your community, in your village?

Kyriacos: Farming, agriculture.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: That was the main thing. You had the trade people like, Eleni's dad that own the coffee shop. He was also the carpenter. You needed a table. You needed an armoire; he will make it for you.

Evyenia: And there I'm assuming there's, like, one or two per village?

Kyriacos: I mean, he I don't know if there was another one, but he was the main one. He had the full shop, I remember.

Evyenia: And the coffee shop?

Kyriacos: Yeah.

Evyenia: Both?

Kyriacos: Yeah. But he had all the machinery, and then he walked down. He was up on the second floor of this, not far from this, like a block, let's say.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: From his coffee shop, and you hear, see the machines. You know, kind of and I went into his shop at least a couple of times, and I saw him working there.

Evyenia: Yeah. This is kind of a more random question. Was the furniture, like, very '60s, '70s looking, or was it, like, traditional Cypriot?

Kyriacos: No. I mean, it's everything was solid wood. Everything was nothing or anything like this. It was just solid wood, and the carpenter will just shape the wood, cut it.

Evyenia: But it's like a traditional chair? Because you know how, like, during '60s, '70s in the US, they You know in Cyprus when you go and look at chairs...

Kyriacos: Yeah.

Evyenia: ...You have the traditional chair with the, like, similar to what one has. Spirals or something?

Kyriacos: Yeah. You you know, when when you sit, it's like woven? Yeah. But then it's wood frame.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: So yeah. Like I mean, I I I don't know. I mean, like, all my mother's furniture, you know, the nice furniture and the salad, we call it, where, you know, where people come and visit you.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: It was all handmade.

Evyenia: Wow.

Kyriacos: And it's it was really, I mean, and the material and the the seat covers and the cloth, it was, like, stitched in the...

Evyenia: Wow. Like details?

Kyriacos: Oh, yeah.

Evyenia: Now I mean, I I can't imagine how much that much that would cost.

Kyriacos: It may be 20, \$30,000 a sofa.

Evyenia: What? That's...

Kyriacos: Yeah. I mean, it was very beautiful detailed.

Evyenia: Was that in the family for a long time, or is it

Kyriacos: No. And I don't know who made it for her.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: But my grandfather was the one who paid for it because, traditionally, there, when your daughter gets married, you give her dowry. It's a dowry.

Evyenia: Yeah. What color was the material?

Kyriacos: I- from what I remember, it had some, like, not green, but, like, some turquoise to it, and then the the clear white stitching and something.

Evyenia: Oh, uh-huh.

Kyriacos: It was a very had a lot of detail.

Evyenia: And was the wood like a like a dark stain? Was it painted white?

Kyriacos: No. No. Dark dark wood.

Evyenia: Oh.

Kyriacos: Yeah.

Evyenia: Wow. What did you do for enjoyment/entertainment in Northern Cyprus?

Kyriacos: Not much. Just basically playing with my brother, playing with little cars, playing with, you know, with my cousins. That was it. Go to school and then play. And then in the summer, we're out in the fields working

Evyenia: Did you swim much?

Kyriacos: Yeah. We'll go not a lot, but I will go with my father because the sea was right there. Yeah. Or I'll go with my grandpa

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: Andreas, my father's father, and and, go swimming. There was this cove area. It was so beautiful, and we'll go swim there, or I go fishing. I went with my I don't think I went with my grandpa, Kyriakos. I went with my grandpa Andreas, and with my brother and with my dad a few times.

Evyenia: Yeah. Mhmm. Did you ever go with your mom?

Kyriacos: I don't know. I don't I don't remember that.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: I don't remember. Maybe, but I don't remember a specific case-

Evyenia: Uh-huh.

Kyriacos: -Instance.

Evyenia: And then how did religion play a role in your life?

Kyriacos: Well, let's say, kid, you know, my mother would take us to church, big holidays.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: I mean, a lot before the war. Right? Yeah. Like, Christmas, Easter, all of that stuff. And when we after the war, we were living in Pallouriotissa. There was a big church.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: That's where Katerina is getting married tomorrow.

Evyenia: Oh, wow.

Kyriacos: Yeah. And, we'll go on Sundays, but not every Sunday.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: And we'd wouldn't want to go to church because I, it was, like, three, four hours. It's like, oh my god.

Evyenia: Was it that long in...

Kyriacos: Yeah?

Evyenia: ...Northern Cyprus still?

Kyriacos: Same. I mean, it's the same religious church.

Evyenia: Yeah. But, like, was there, like did you guys do a lot of, I guess, religious, like, traditions or something in the house?

Kyriacos: Not very...

Evyenia: ...you know, those people that do a lot of religious stuff. Or, like, any religious, like, icons or something in the house?

Kyriacos: No. Oh, yeah. Probably there was. I don't remember. But Maybe there was. I don't remember.

Evyenia: But, like, neither parent was very religious?

Kyriacos: No. I mean, the, my mother, I'm sure, more probably than my dad.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: You know? But, I mean, not very religious, but we will celebrate the major holidays.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: But one thing I remember, we never had a Christmas tree, which I think to me now, I mean, looking back is like, man, how much would a tree would have cost of you? You know?

Evyenia: And when that was normal for other people? And I do it. Not so much, actually, in the in the village.

Kyriacos: Maybe some people did.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: But I don't recall. And I don't know, I need to ask my brother to see if he remembers.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: I remember having a tree. Because what would have been, like, if not a tree, what was, like, traditional for traditional but there was no, like...

Evyenia: Oh, you put the garland up. You put...

Kyriacos: Nothing. Nothing. I don't remember.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: I remember once as a gift...

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: You know, when Santa Claus for us, it was like January 6th, Saint Nicholas.

Evyenia: Oh.

Kyriacos: They're calling here, but we call Agios Vasilis. We came back home, and there was, like, two chocolates over there. Like, the...

Evyenia: Oh...

Kyriacos: Chocolate. The door.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: That was it. I mean, the big the gifts...

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: ...That we get would be before school, my mother would take us and left with my brother and do our school shopping, the yearly school shopping. We'll get us nice clothes and yeah. And that's what I remember.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: And you asked me a little about how the one I mean, our life as a family.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: My, as, I said, my dad, not very affectionate.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: Not at all. My mother was, you know, dealing with my dad, obviously. But I remember this is one thing I will never forget.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: I- I was always a good student, and my mother went to see my- this was right after the war. Right? And I went to see my teachers, and they told her how great of a student I was. And then I came home, and she gave me a hug and a kiss, and I remember that. And I- it wasn't so common for us to say I love you and give a hug. And I remember that gesture, that what my mother did, and I- I felt so great. I felt so happy. My mother did it was the most beautiful thing. Wow. Yeah. It was the first first time I felt that.

Evyenia: Wow. Yeah. Yeah.

Kyriacos: So, yeah, that's and then our life after the war soon after because, she had to work in the factory and all of that and a lot of stress and all that. And then a doctor misdiagnosed my mother. It was too late. She got cancer, and everything started going

downhill. And her life was very difficult. And and then we were given a house, the one that lives now.

Evyenia: Uh-huh.

Kyriacos: And, and that was a house given to all refugees, like, all. And then, I guess, we lived there a couple of years and then she passed away

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: In, '79. And she was 46?

Evyenia: Wow. Did she so she was affectionate but didn't, like, maybe vocalize it as much as

Kyriacos: Yeah. She was more affectionate, obviously. Yeah. Yeah.

Evyenia: Yeah. My question is, how old were you when Turkey invaded Cyprus?

Kyriacos: Eleven.

Evyenia: Were you not 10? All this time, I thought you're 10.

Kyriacos: No. '63. I mean, I was born September. And was this July? July of '74. I- was almost 11.

Evyenia: Oh, okay. Good that I wrote the right thing.

Kyriacos: Yeah.

Evyenia: Can you tell me a bit about your life parts of the invasion? What was your daily life? Because I know you described a lot about what the village was like, what your parents were were doing, but, like, your regular day, what did that kind of look like?

Kyriacos: Well, I mean, I was as a young young little kid, I remember. I mean, I was very little. Yeah. But then, you know, I would go to school, kindergarten, then elementary school. I go to school. I was a very good student. I will come back, do my homework, whatever, play with my brother, play with my cousin. And it was a you know, just that was my life. You know? Just being a kid, go to school, come back, play, do your homework. Summers, go in the fields.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: You know?

Evyenia: And then, what were your what were your hopes prior or what were your hopes or, like, plans for life prior to invasion? So that can be you specifically or, like, your family. Like, I know you mentioned some...

Kyriacos: Yeah. We're we're talking about my mother, you know, maybe because we had land by the on the coast...

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: Tourist area, we were thinking of going to England, studying hotel management, and build you know, develop hotels, you know, and that that was kinda one of the well, I one thing that I remember was talked about.

Evyenia: Uh-huh. Do you remember anything else that, maybe you guys had planned?

Kyriacos: No. Because we're young.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: I mean, I was 11 years old. I mean, how many plans are they?

Evyenia: Even, I was gonna say, yeah ...Even the hotel thing is very specific.

Kyriacos: Yeah.

Evyenia: Can you describe when you first found out the invasion was happening?

Kyriacos: Well, let's back up a little bit because we were working in the under the tree, and we're putting I don't know. I think it was watermelons, cucumbers, whatever because we have people helping us harvest them, pack them up. And and, and this what I'm describing, it happened it's take it's taking place right after the coup of I think it was 15th June. I don't know. We need to look at this. And...

Evyenia: Or in July?

Kyriacos: In July. Yes. And then we'll hear noise...

Evyenia: Mhmm. Like deep sound coming from the sea. And I remember I saw a boat coming so close to the shore and with the Turkish flag.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: And, also, later, we found out it was, like, submarines. You know? They yeah. And then they were basically scouting the area where they are going to potentially, you know, invade.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: You know, where are they going to get off from the ship

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: You know, when they conduct invasion. So- and I think a couple of days later, the invasion took place. I was a kid I didn't know what was happening. My mother was not home. My dad came to left to Nicosia to bring the produce.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: And my mother was working in the fields, and I heard I saw planes flying and...

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: Since, like, you know, my story as a little kid, I was fascinated by planes. And I went and stood at the edge of a cliff, and I was watching the fighter jets just flying so low and just passing over the town. I was so fascinated by airplanes. And then people said, oh, it's it's a war happening. Turkey is you know?

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: And I remember before the war also, they were talking in the news, and my grandpa remember was by my grandfather's house, my- Andreas'- grandfather's house. And they were saying that potentially Turkey would invade Cyprus because of the coup against the president there, and Turkey, is a guarantor of the peace in Cyprus, was going to invade to protect the Turkish Cypriots.

Evyenia: Uh-huh.

Kyriacos: So it was anyway, and me as a kid, I didn't know what was gonna happen. So, anyway, I see the planes. The planes are coming, and and then we soon after when you we learned that they invaded the town of Kyrenia. We went there.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: There's a castle there. Remember, like a fortress, and we sat there with my friends and with mommy, and and we had drinks. It's on the Turkish side.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: I remember that. I remember the castle, whatever. Exactly. But I remember eating and everything. So and then, there were a couple of waves of the invasion, the first

wave, and people left from Kyrenia in those towns. And then the second wave was our town.

Evyenia: Yeah. How far was the first town from you guys?

Kyriacos: The- Kyrenia? It's about half an hour from the...

Evyenia: Uh-huh.

Kyriacos: Half hour drive. Yeah. I mean, we will hear the bombs. We hear the explosions.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: I went- the planes were flying over my town and dropped bombs, and they would drop bombs where my father was stationed in Kantara.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: It was a military anti aircraft unit up there. And my father was enlisted not as a soldier, but because he had a van for- to carry supplies and food for the soldiers.

Evyenia: Was the van, like, a bus sized or how would you describe it? It's like Like the weapons? Like the like those vans for, like, 15 passengers, let's say. Yeah. Like the Amazon. You know?

Evyenia: Yeah. Also, really quick to jump in because one thing I know you've told us a million times, I feel like it should be mentioned this, is when you said the plane planes are flying over, you could see the helmets, the soldiers.

Kyriacos: So yeah. At one of the days, I don't know...

Evyenia: Mhmm. Which day that was.

Kyriacos: We I mean, we were like I said, the planes will fly so low and which we were worried that they might drop bombs over the houses. So me and my brother, we went to my aunt cousin's house, and they have in their yard, they have lemon trees.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: So we went, and we're hiding under the lemon trees. And I remember I look up, and the jet was flying over the house, and I saw clearly the pilot, the the helmet of the pilot.

Evyenia: I mean that's insane.

Kyriacos: Yeah. That's got I mean, this plane was probably 250 feet, not even 500 feet above ground. It was low.

Evyenia: Well, the fact that you can see is- yeah. Face. Yeah.

Kyriacos: The the helmet. The those wearing helmet. You couldn't see a face because they're wearing a a full-face helmet, but you could see it so close, so clear. So and they will fly, and then after a while, we hit the bomb strongly or drop it in. I wouldn't even know if my father was gonna...live with it. And in the evening, we had, they forced us to have no lights, you know, because they didn't want the enemy to know where the town even though they knew exactly where the town was.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: But the from the fires up on the mountain, the town was lit like daylight. I mean...

Evyenia: Wow.

Kyriacos: So many...

Evyenia: Was it like orange sky sort of?

Kyriacos: I don't... orange, but it was like it was, a lot of light. Yeah. So you could see the town.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: So a few days later, we have to leave because we heard, 'Hey, the tanks are coming. The tanks are coming'. So So we got into the, my mother, my brother, and I, we got on the village, one of the buses of the town, and yeah. We sat on the very back of the bus, and we were leaving, and we left.

Evyenia: And what do you what did you guys bring with you?

Kyriacos: I I got the the family books, the pictures.

Evyenia: Did they each bring anything?

Kyriacos: Or well, my mother had the suitcase, and I know the day before we went up to the shops Uh-huh. In the town, and we got a suitcase.

Evyenia: Specifically, for this?

Kyriacos: Yeah. Because we suspected that we might have to leave.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: So, my mother put some clothes for us.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: And we got on the bus, and we left.

Evyenia: Uh-huh.

Kyriacos: And as we're leaving, we went down the gas station, right out about couple of miles out of the village.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: We passed by there, actually. With my grandpa, Kyriakos, was there, and my mother was begging him to come with us, and he didn't move it. And as you heard me, your aunt I mean, my aunt Yolanda said he was hostage in a camp, concentration camp, for a couple of months.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: And we left, and we were driving. We went through the coast and then up the mountains. We're passing from the area where my father was stationed with the...

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: Military unit up there. All the mountains were charcoal. Nothing was left.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: There were antennas up there...

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: And the antennas there were used for communication, telecommunication, and for TV. And Turkey- was Turkey were bombing all of that to disable communications. And and I was thinking, how could anybody survive this? I mean, it's all burned.

Evyenia: And those were, like, civilian areas too?

Kyriacos: No. It was yeah. It used to be civil, but there was a military.

Evyenia: Yeah. But were there, like, homes and that kind of thing?

Kyriacos: No. No. No.

Evyenia: Oh.

Kyriacos: No. It was just, anti-aircraft unit there.

Evyenia: Mhmm. K. And then were there just in general, when they were dropping bombs throughout, like, all three phases, was it mostly 2 big phases. Or two? Was it was it ever a lot on, like, villages and homes and things like that, or was it mostly just, like...

Kyriacos: I think they were hitting military, not homes, but, yeah, army. They were Yeah. Just going after the the any military resistance that was there. But the the the bad part about all of this is when they invaded, it was Sunday morning, and they broke into people's homes in Kyrenia. Nobody knew. I mean, people went to sleep. They woke up.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: And soldiers will break into people's homes. They will kill the father, the son, and they will rape their daughters, their wives. It was a horrible thing.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: A lot of Greek women got raped.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: In fact, I had a teacher in high school who was teach she was teaching, I don't know if it's French or Greek. I don't I don't remember now. It's been so long.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: And she was a victim of rape from the Turkish troops. Someone was in a and I hear I heard this story. This guy was captured as hostage.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: And there were men and women on the bus, and the Turkish troops, soldiers were on the bus. And there was, this guy, the Greek, also knew he knew Turkish. He couldn't speak, but he didn't reveal that he could understand Turkish, and he will hear the Turkish soldiers what they will say amongst themselves. And one of them was messing with a Greek lady who was on the bus, and he was putting his hand in her private. He's messing with her, and he was saying what he was gonna do to her and all. And and this guy was listening.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: You understand how you know? There was no respect for human life or anything like that. It was it was horrible.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: So many people lost their sons, and women got raped. And so, yeah, that's why... you're a civilian. You're at home. You hear the tanks are coming. Well, you're gonna leave. I mean, you don't have... you're not the soldier. You don't have a weapon.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: So that's why my mother and, you know, took us and left.

Evyenia: Yeah. Where was that, like, violence mostly in the first phase? When...

Kyriacos: Before the and second. I mean, when they my grandpa stayed behind me when when the Turkish troops came, there was a hill overlooking, the plaza and overlooking our house. The Turkish troops came in and started playing music, dancing, all of that. And then we started hitting all the houses, and they would just loot the houses. And my mother left her jewelry and all of that. They they will go into closets, open them up, and throw everything out, and still, they were looking for money, gold, jewelry, and that kind of stuff.

Evyenia: But what about, like, like, violence against people? Like, I mean, like, were they killing people or raping people too during the second?

Kyriacos: Yeah. first and second. I mean, it's that's what they did.

Evyenia: Wow. Both phases of the war.

Kyriacos: Yeah. So next to when you go to my mother's grave, next to her, there's they were identified in probably ten years, fifteen years ago in the mass graves. So...

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: You know, kids have got killed. Some of them were killed during the coup against the president by their own people, by the Greek Cypriots killing. So, yeah, it's a the history of Cyprus. Yeah.

Evyenia: When before, like, when you first heard about the first phase...

Kyriacos: Mhmm.

Evyenia: Was there ever any consideration at all that you guys were gonna stay, or was it immediately, like, you had to go?

Kyriacos: Well, we didn't know what was gonna happen, but we were we knew that was that that possibility was high. They had to leave.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: And me as a little kid said, oh, we're gonna leave and go and see other places. I didn't, you know, I was a kid.

Evyenia: Yeah. I was gonna ask you, what did you think was going on this whole time?

Kyriacos: Oh, it was summertime. Me, I was kid running around, having a good time. But, like, seeing the planes, hearing that people were saying things like that. You you, I wasn't terrified. I wasn't scared or anything like that. No. To me, it was like action. You don't think so. But I remember one night me and my mother and my brother because my father wasn't there. Right?

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: We slept instead of upstairs; we went downstairs just in case they drop a bomb or something. Remember our house was stairs that goes down?

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: Yeah. We were sleeping down there, the first floor.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: And me to make fun, you know, I was sleeping. I was in the middle of my mother, me and my brother. I went like this with my feet. [Hits heels on the floor]. My feet on the cement floor. On the cement floor. And they got scared.

Evyenia: Oh my gosh.

Kyriacos: I said, oh, it's me. Don't worry. It's good.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: Yeah. What was the question? What was the question?

Evyenia: Oh, what were your I mean, you already, like, described some of these, but what were your most vivid memories from that time? Like, I know the helmet thing we've heard so many times.

Kyriacos: That was a very clear thing. The fact that I mean, everything is so vivid to me because from the moment we got on the bus and driving to go find a place for me and my

father halfway, and I would say, 'Oh, okay. He's alive. He was waiting'. You know, I've told you this story many times to make sure we were there.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: We were on the bus. If not, he would come back and find us.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: And, and then we went, and we stay in people's homes and we're a lot of people, and it was summertime. People would sleep outside, inside just so they were sleeping on the floor. And then, a few days later, we met with my father, and we were- we basically went out in the fields and we're sleeping under, how to guess, the trees. Oh, or whatever you put on a tree.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: And, and also my father's sister, Nitsa, was there with the four kids because her husband was- actually he was, captured, hostage, and they put him on a boat, and they took him to Turkey. He was in a Turkey prison. He got- he stayed there for months.

Evyenia: Wow.

Kyriacos: And he was one of the last people to get off the last bus during the time they were doing, hostage exchange. A release of hostages. Yeah. She- my aunt was so pissed. 'Why did you wait so long?' So yeah. I mean, a lot of vivid memories.

Evyenia: Yeah. Well, it's crazy at 10 years old.

Kyriacos: Yeah. Because that's pretty young. And being out there, living under the trees. And then my grandpa Andreas came and visited us there, and he said, you guys should come to my house, and that's when we stayed there. She [Yolanda] said, like, couple of days.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: And then we rented the house in Pallouriotissa.

Evyenia: Yeah. Wow. Can you describe life? What you already described life leading up to and but is there anything more you wanna say about, like, life during the invasion, like, in those few days or weeks?

Kyriacos: Like it was unstable time. Imagine living under the trees, no clothes for the shower. For? I mean, we lived I don't know. Maybe weeks.

Evyenia: Wow.

Kyriacos: And, you know, we were- the trees were not far from a British base. And British, they would fly those gliders, and the gliders, they fly, you know, no engine. They pulled them with the tractor to take off, and they would just fly around. And me, I was so fascinated. So I would run and go to the runway...

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: ...Where they were landing and take-off and go and see it.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: So, again, me being a kid.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: And, but then, you know, a network of people come and visit us under the trees. Yeah. You know, relatives.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: Eleni's brother, the- you know, Eleni, her dad had the car. He was in the army. He was serving the army at that time, and he came, and he was telling us stories from the war.

Evyenia: Do you remember any? Like, any of those...

Kyriacos: I don't know. I don't remember. But, you know, he would tell us.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: Once it happened. And then they gave us a tent before going to my uncle. After the the trees, we went in a tent, and we slept in a tent. It was horrible. The sand will come through. It was sandy. You feel sand in your dust in your mouth.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: I remember before they gave us our own tent, we slept one night in a much bigger tent. There were a lot of people in that tent. I mean, it's just a crappy situation, you know, living in a tent. And, I mean, I I mean, I can sit and talk for hours about experiences during the war.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: And and I know right after the war I don't know if you're missing out. One thing that I mean, that's why sometimes I just don't like what happened in Cyprus also from the Greek side. You know, people will take advantage of refugees.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: You know? Like my mother.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: I remember also went to see a doctor once she was a doctor, and the doctor-female doctor said, 'Oh, well, next time you come, have a little stuff to give to the kids. And then we went the next time, there was nothing. So, it's like, and me as a kid, I'm thinking, okay. Where is the things you promised? You know? It was just like to get business back or continuing. Or...

Evyenia: Right.

Kyriacos: And also, you know, you feel like we have all this this, and now it's like...

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: Yeah. I mean, I went to school. I continued my schooling and all of that, but, you know, my father will work initially, there was the government I mean, it was a service where they were providing food for the refugees who worked there, and then after that, it went to construction. My mother was working at this scrubby factory. It was tough time, and and then she got sick, like I said.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: I felt like, like, being a refugee, I felt like, second class citizen because now you have the kids from. Your parents have a good job. They have a good thing. Yeah. And we have way more than them, but now it's like nothing.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: You have nothing. You know? You don't have the expensive shoes, the clothes, that kind of stuff. I felt like at times maybe an outsider. You know? Because these were not the kids I knew from my school. This is a new group of people. You know? So, I think Cyprus I mean, the I felt like the society is Greeks amongst ourselves.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: I don't think it was fair nor nice. It didn't feel right. You know? Yeah. It's like you go to high school and then where do you okay. Refugee housing. You know?

Evyenia: Yeah. Uh-huh.

Kyriacos: That's, you know, the housing for the refugees.

Evyenia: Yeah. Would- were there a lot of other refugees at your high school too?

Kyriacos: Some. Yeah. There were.

Evyenia: Did you know any of them?

Kyriacos: Yeah. But these are from everywhere.

Evyenia: Well, that's what I'm saying. Like, anyone specifically from your village or anything?

Kyriacos: No. Not from my village.

Evyenia: What?

Kyriacos: Like, in the- because from the village and now people, 2,000 people, they spread throughout the rest of the island. Right?

Evyenia: Did you guys keep in contact with most of them, or is it- other than family members?

Kyriacos: People. They have weddings and all that. They will go and find and invite them and get together to a wedding. Yeah. I mean, they're some ...

Evyenia: So, you're pretty- still do.

Kyriacos: Yeah.

Evyenia: Yeah. In the months and, like, say, like, years following the invasion, what was it that you guys were being told about what was going on with the land or if you would return? Or, like, what was it...?

Kyriacos: Ongoing, never-ending talks between the Greeks and the Turks. Turks will hold their position, like, no. No. No. No. They're finding all kinds of excuses to prolong the situation and to make, to perpetuate the occupation, basically. And to this day, Turkey says division. That's it. We gotta divide the island to separate communities. There would Cyprus right now. We need to go back to having one common government with, and then you have your rights. We have our rights and, but I think, in my opinion, probably, it's impossible for that to happen. Sometimes I think that, yeah, division is the only solution. But yeah. Turkey is not country Turkey, first of all, is a country that is not it's not a liberal democracy. So, it's kinda like Russia. They they've taken the land, and we gave

them the reasons. We, the Greek Cyprus, for wanting to for through from Greece- and God knows what bigger plans were in place...

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: ...To encourage people to unite Cyprus with Greece. The moment where before that, there was an agreement that they're gonna be three guarantors, Britain, Turkey, and Greece, and that Greeks and Turkish will live harmoniously. Right? But then they started bothering the Turkish. You know? Greeks started doing that.

Evyenia: How would you- what do you mean by bothering?

Kyriacos: Like, can you say they were going, you know, set fire here, bother people's business, Turkish people. No. I mean, again, I was not born then, but from what I hear, what I read, I mean, I haven't really studied the history very well to know exactly what happened, but I know they were and also Turkey will also make people same thing that Greece was doing, you know, trying to...

Evyenia: The nationalists.

Kyriacos: Yeah. You know, thinking that coming from both ends.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: Yeah.

Evyenia: So, mhmm.

Kyriacos: And that caused the division. And when there was a dictatorship in Greece, they found the opportunity to send a general in Cyprus and get all of that going and have a coup against the president. And the president of Cyprus said, look. The moment there is a coup happens in Cyprus; Turkey will be here the next morning.

Evyenia: Really?

Kyriacos: We can't do this. We can't trust Turkey, and that's that's exactly what happened. So, he knew that that was a plan already. So, and, anyways, not to get into too much on politics, but, yeah, it was a difficult time.

Evyenia: Mhmm. What was the I guess, from, like, your parents' perspective, what was the how did they see it, I guess? Do you remember how they were...

Kyriacos: My dad agrees that the going against Britain was the beginning of the demise, was the biggest mistake. Because as long as you were under the umbrella of Britain, yeah, you might say, why would I be a colony?

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: But you also enjoy the protection.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: I would say we, it would would have been way better if...

Evyenia: Really?

Kyriacos: ...We remain under England. And and, you know, eventually, you know, England gives independence, you know, to countries. So many countries... probably would have eventually.

Evyenia: Uh-huh. Probably would have eventually. Yeah. Yeah. '60s.

Kyriacos: Yeah. And and and still in Cyprus, they- England has two huge military bases anyway.

Evyenia: Yeah. Why do you say that because like I was saying, I mean, the the late 1900s is when the majority of the British colonies were liberated.

Kyriacos: Yeah.

Evyenia: But I think those, I guess, situations were a little bit different because it's, like, super harsh and, like, there's more I don't think I don't think Britain was harsh on the Cyprus because...

Kyriacos: No. No. It wasn't. They offer jobs. They brought in the geological department in Cyprus. You know, all the the cartography, you know, mapping all the properties inside from the system they brought. I mean, Cyprus has one of the best, topographical

Evyenia: Oh.

Kyriacos: In in systems in place because of Britain.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: So Britain brought roads. Britain brought technology, brought a lot of things to Cyprus because that's what they do with their colonies. But and and they also absorb a lot of the money that comes from there. It's not because they love you, but it's still a benefit.

Evyenia: I saw I- somewhere online yesterday that Cyprus was one of the only colonies that they actually made a profit off of. That, like, they ended up obviously, they made more than they had to spend.

Kyriacos: Yes.

Evyenia: But I think also the story of Cyprus being a colony is different than, say, like, all, like, the African colonies where it's, like, there's a lot of segregation and, like, mistreatment. But...

Kyriacos: Mhmm.

Evyenia: Would you say there was any, like, restriction of...

Kyriacos: Of what?

Evyenia: Any restriction of, let's say, like, the access you guys had, things or, like, very inequitable, like, extraction of wealth or resources. Like, where's it all the skill using us? You know?

Kyriacos: I'm sure there was.

Evyenia: Oh.

Kyriacos: But I can personally speak to that because I wasn't even born then, and I'm not an ex- I didn't study that subject to really say definitively, and I can speak to that.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: But in general, yeah. They they colonize because they wanna extract the richness and benefit from it.

Evyenia: Yeah. Yeah. That makes sense. Yeah. Well, that makes sense, but that's definitely very common.

Kyriacos: Yeah.

Evyenia: How would you- this is actually going right off of that. How would you describe, describe the economy at the time? But I guess it's a little fast forward too.

Kyriacos: The economy during the war, you mean? Or...

Evyenia: Yeah. You can do slight- like, straddling the war, I guess. A little before, during, before the war,

Kyriacos: I mean, my- I will speak to our family.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: But we were doing very well because my dad would go and sell all the produce to the wholesale market, come back loaded.

Evyenia: Uh-huh.

Kyriacos: Ton of money with him. He was doing well.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: Especially the few years right before the war, everyone was doing very well and expanding the farm.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: Having more people and buy more land next door to us and, you know, grow. Yeah. And then the war came, and it's like everything to screeching to a halt, and you lost everything. Zero.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: And then you are a, a laborer working in construction, working minimum wage.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: So, for our family, it was devastating here. The- I would say we never recovered to that same level because how can you- It's impossible.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: It's impossible. So how can you acquire this land if you go to the southern part there? You need millions and millions of dollars to...

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: ...To rebuild all of that. So, it's, so I mean, yeah, financially, it was very, very difficult. And you would say that's the same or different for other relatives and friends for the same... There are people that benefited from the war.

Evyenia: Really?

Kyriacos: Yeah. People that, you know, sometimes lack yeah. I mean, no. Even some of the refugees that didn't have much, and they came to this, and opportunities were created for them.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: Right? So, there are people that got- became worse off. Some people got some improvement in their financial situation. We had a guy in our village, he had a big chicken farms. He was doing well before the war.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: But because he had relations with the banks, he had, you know, credit with the banks.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: He started doing it again, and he became huge again.

Evyenia: Wow.

Kyriacos: Much bigger than before.

Evyenia: Wow. So yeah. And then what about right after, like because I know you were so younger at the time, but do you remember it being I don't know, like, what do you remember from that? Like, economically, I guess.

Kyriacos: Well, what I remember is what I described. For us, as a family, it was a big hit financially.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: Even though we never had an issue with food on the table.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: We never experienced that, not having enough to eat. That was not- I don't remember we ever seen that.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: But, you know, you feel the discrimination. You feel the- you're like a second-lower class, kid in school, in the community. You're a refugee. Your dad is not gonna drive the fancy car and all that. You know? But yeah. I mean and, you know, slowly slowly on the south, you know, business started to pick up again, and economy, and money came from abroad, I'm sure. Money, for an investment.

Evyenia: Yeah. Would you say the North was more, not advanced, but I don't know, more...

Kyriacos: Oh, the north prior to the war, the north was the prime part of the island because tourism was...

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: Huge I mean, Varosha, Famagusta, that city that now is like a ghost town.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: Abandoned. It was like the what did they- the Monaco of Eastern Mediterranean. It was like that. You know? But, like, what's the word? Architecture wise too? Or High-end hotels, high end restaurants, nice I mean, the facilities I mean, the movie stars will go over there. Big names from United States will go because it was a destination. It was a imagine beautiful Mediterranean island with the first-class facilities, resorts, and services. So, it was it was a thriving. From Akanthou, the northern part of the island was the, the desirable area.

Evyenia: And why not the south, would you say?

Kyriacos: Because of its natural beauty and, it just I don't know. I mean, it just happened that from Famagusta was a big city that really was thriving.

Kyriacos: Yeah. And attracted a lot of tourism.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: And good tourism, not just junkie.

Evyenia: Uh-huh. And so yeah. The next question, I mean, we've been talking about the whole time, but I don't know if there's anything else you wanna add to what you've been saying. But it's- how did the invasion and occupation directly impact yourself and your family? So, if there's anything you haven't touched on that you want.

Kyriacos: We talk financially, of course.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: My trajectory in life, God knows what I would have been if I was there. I mean, I know that financially I would have been way, way better, you know, if I was if we never lost our...

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: Land. But to me, I would say, in life, you never know what will have been.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: Maybe my personal life will have been sad. I don't know. But it's, yeah, definitely changed. I mean, for me coming to the U.S. instead of England.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: Just to study.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: Obviously, I will have stayed near Cyprus and for sure Cyprus. I will have, you know, leverage the land to do business and that would have made it so much easier because you have the land.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: Any bank will open up the doors.

Evyenia: Yeah. What prompted your decision to go to the US instead of England?

Kyriacos: Because even after the invasion, we were gonna go to- expensive at that time in England.

Evyenia: Oh.

Kyriacos: To study.

Evyenia: And then did you ever aside from, like, the educational aspect of it, did you ever consider leaving the country after the invasion? Like, your family...

Kyriacos: Of course. Yeah. My dad we looked at, he was contemplating going to Greece.

Evyenia: Oh, really?

Kyriacos: To work in Greece, but the work basically what there it was just working factories over there. And, I mean, I again, I was young at that time, but he wasn't too keen on going outside of Cyprus.

Evyenia: Because I've seen a lot online that if it wasn't the U.S. or the U.K., the most popular place that people immigrate to afterwards was Australia.

Kyriacos: Yeah. But if you didn't have anyone over here, it would have been usually...

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: At that time, people were like my dad, let's say, 'yeah, would go to England' because they had other friends or relatives already in England. And so 'why don't you guys come over? We help you'. And, you know, yeah.

Evyenia: Mhmm. What is your oh, well, again, we also talked about this already, but in case you wanna add more, what is your perspective on the politics of Cyprus leading up to invasion as well as- well as how it has or has not been handled since?

Kyriacos: I think there were huge mistakes that were, that from one leadership to another...

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: ...Prior to the war. And not securing the island, not making sure that it could never happen. If I were the president at that time, I will make sure that no matter whatever power I have as a president to ensure that I have control of the military.

Evyenia: Yeah. Would you say he didn't really?

Kyriacos: I don't think he did that.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: So, and, also, at the same time, the nationalism and allowing that to embed and be embedded in the society. People got brainwashed, basically.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: We are Greeks. We're gonna unite with Greece. We're gonna be protected. Fine. It sounds good. But who are you're putting up with? England, Great Britain.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: Worked with the British. So, basically, they said British are okay. You're fighting us. You're kicking us out. Fine.

Evyenia: Do you think Britain could have, you know, forced Cyprus to remain?

Kyriacos: But Britain- Britain didn't wanna do that.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: I don't know the details behind it. But they say, 'Okay. You're gonna pay for it', and we pay. 'Yeah. You don't like us? It's what it's gonna be Turkey now'. So that is the, I think the biggest mistake that was done inside was the mishandling of not being

strategic enough. And maybe some people, maybe some leaders were strategic and so, but they didn't ensure, they didn't put in place to ensure that that would never happen.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: Not to have full control of the military. And, you know, 'some brave' it's kinda like the January 6th riots here. You go and, yeah, you big macho guy. I mean, they were celebrating in the streets when they had the coup, and they kicked the president out of the country.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: He had to flee. And they were jumping and dancing and all of that. And they stood, and they were- had a list of names of people to go and kill. My cousin- my uncle Sofoklis, was on the first on the list from our town to be executed.

Evyenia: Oh my gosh. Why was that?

Kyriacos: Well, because he was supporting the president, Archbishop Makarios. He was not, he was on the left. He was a leftist. He wasn't a nationalist. More, his progressives. Not a nationalist who wanted your reunification with Greece. My uncle was supporting the president at that time, Archbishop Makarios.

Evyenia: Well, I'm- I guess my question is why specifically was he, his opinion so influential that they felt they had to...

Kyriacos: They just hated him because he was supporting this president, Makarios.

Evyenia: Uh-huh.

Kyriacos: Rather than the nationalists.

Evyenia: I was like, I don't know if this makes sense, but, like, how do they know that?

Kyriacos: Clean up. Clean up. Get rid of them so we...

Evyenia: But what like, how do they know he was supporting?

Kyriacos: If he's just, he knew these ideologies. Putin. They're nationalists. Oh, just like because they're from the same town. They go to the coffee shop. They talk. They know. So, these were his friends like that. People from the same town. So even, like, your friends, let's say if they knew this was your opinion, they would still put you on the list. Well, the extremists, the nationalist.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: Yeah. There's few. Yeah. And my uncle is alive today, and some Greeks are alive today because Turkey came into the island. Because when Turkey came in, they were shitting in their pants. They were not going after killing the Greeks. They were running around to save their asses from the Turkish bombs.

Evyenia: Were there a lot of Greek nationalists on the northern portion, would you say?

Kyriacos: They were everywhere.

Evyenia: I, I don't know. Like, primarily in one spot?

Kyriacos: No. It wasn't. But let's pause for a second. I need to go back and be right back. Okay?

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: To join a movement, a nationalistic movement for the reunification for the unification of Cyprus with Greece. And I think that was a big mistake.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: Because the moment you consider the Turkish guy in the next town is a lower class is a lower...

Evyenia: Uh-huh.

Kyriacos: Not having the same rights as you, then automatically, you created a hostile, a toxic environment.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: Where that will never lead to a better place, but it will lead to friction.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: So, Greeks were, no matter what people say, they made a lot of mistakes, and I have no doubt in my mind that knowing the Greeks, I know that they also bothered the Turkish. So, they and that slowly, this nationalism from the Greek side and the Turkish at the same time, they say, strategically, as a long term, if we manage...

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: To create this opportunity for us as a guarantor country, we can just come in and take the island or take at least half of that.

Evyenia: Was there do you think their goal was to take all of it?

Kyriacos: I don't think. Because the plan that we have now, this was a map that was- that circulated decades ago.

Evyenia: Really?

Kyriacos: Yes.

Evyenia: Wow.

Kyriacos: Yeah. So, there was, you know, orchestrated plans. So so, I mean, Turkey working their way and through backdoors, and God knows. I mean, I can't just sit here and tell you exactly why.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: And then maybe we will never find out, or maybe I need to study this, you know, more and learn about this, really, what went down, how things happened. And there are books about the story. But every time people write, you gotta read a lot of books, accounts.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: And then see what really how to put things together. Because when you read only one author's perspective. It's his or hers. And whatever reasons he or she had to write this book and what views they have; it doesn't mean those are the true facts. So, you have to combine and judge for yourself too.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: But long story short, these nationalistic ideas that 'We're better than you, these are, that was the beginning of the, again, the demise of Cyprus. And that leads to a fragile foundation too of the country itself.

Evyenia: Right.

Kyriacos: And then you have Greeks against Greeks. No. No. No. No. Greeks against Turkish. Greeks I mean, my, like I said, my uncle was Sofoklis. Savou's husband was on the list. He was the police in charge of the police in Akanthou.

Evyenia: He was?

Kyriacos: Yeah.

Evyenia: Oh, see. That's what I'm saying. That makes sense then. Okay. Then he'd be on the list. Because I was like, 'Why this random guy'? He- but it makes sense. As part of the government.

Kyriacos: Yeah. The institution. Yeah. And he supported the president. He supported, you know, Makarios. So now these people are saying 'No. We're gonna get rid of you. You are the enemy'. So, imagine this neighbor, two blocks from your house, same small town of 2,000 residents, they're willing to go and execute...

Evyenia: Yeah. That's insane.

Kyriacos: ...Their neighbor.

Evyenia: Yeah. That's awful.

Kyriacos: So awful. Yes. So, these- these are the stuff that happened in Cyprus. And I think in a way, the Turkish invasion, even though it killed a lot of young kids...

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: Some people say that saved their lives. Prime example, my uncle.

Evyenia: Yeah. And what about, like, what about, let's say, the people who were the nationalists when Turkey invaded? What was their, do you remember what that kind of was like, their reaction? With all that going on?

Kyriacos: They would just run-in to save their bags, you know, and just rescue themselves and move, get away from the Turkish, and that was it.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: That was the end of that.

Evyenia: Mhmm. Wow. It. And then also I know kinda shifting back to the military side of things, because I know you did serve in the army, like, the mandatory...

Kyriacos: Yeah.

Evyenia: ...Period. Can you tell me about that or, like, how that kinda connects with the separation or the divide of Cyprus? I don't know, just explain it.

Kyriacos: Okay. I mean, that has nothing to do. But I mean, because army military service was there for as long as I know.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: But that didn't play a role. The role that the military played was the bringing a general, from the the dictator of Greece, sending a general in Cyprus that he already convinced some...

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: ...Heads of military units in Cyprus to mobilize against the president, get the tanks and...

Evyenia: Oh, I see. The president.

Kyriacos: So that was the role of the military. So, there was a malignant part of the army that contributed to that. And that's why I say he- he, the president of that time, had done a better job managing the military so that the military is, true trusted body of government.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: For the country. For the country, for the president, not for the nationalists...

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: ...and the dictator from Greece. So, me, my service in the army, I mean, I felt like I wasted, you know, two and a half years of my life for nothing. Because the reality is if you get to speak with my cousin, Kyriakos, who served in the army, his title was one step below the general of the army.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: He had, like, four stars. I mean, it was, three or four. But the not the was we're talking was which I I don't know in English. I need to look it up. But he would tell you that our army, even now in Cyprus, it's a joke. I mean, if Turkey wants to take Cyprus, it's a matter of minutes.

Evyenia: Would you say it's weaker now than it was back then?

Kyriacos: I don't know how weaker it is now, but with the technology that Turkey is possessing now, I mean, Cyprus is not the- it's a, it's a walk in the park. It's like going to the cafe. There will be zero, I mean, nothing resistance.

Evyenia: Mhmm. Yeah. Would you- have you been told a lot of stories from, let's say, Pappou [grandfather in Greek] about, or I guess your dad, what his time during the military was because he was directly in it when the invasion was happening.

Kyriacos: He yeah. He was not as a soldier.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: But he was as a civilian and tested to help. He saw actual bombs falling. He saw people dying. So he saw, because the jets were just aim and just dive, and while they were diving, the machine guns were going...

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: To clean up the area of anybody that was there to, you know, to avoid having if you are getting shot, you're going to hide. Right? So that's what they wanted for soldiers to hide, get away, clear the area, and then the plane would just turn up. And when they are at the moment, when the plane would turn up, they drop the bombs.

Evyenia: Wow.

Kyriacos: Yeah. So, if my dad were to tell me the story, he remembers that very clearly. There was this general not general, but, captain, he was not in the dugouts. He would you know, the, you know, how they have the dugouts where the soldiers are hit.

Evyenia: Kinda like in World War I.

Kyriacos: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Protecting themselves from the bullets. And he was standing, running around, and orchestrating and telling the soldiers what to do. And he would see the plane coming. He would know where to run, and no problem. Nothing.

Evyenia: Wow.

Kyriacos: So, my dad was, 'this guy is- he's crazy'.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: So, he will see the plane, and he will run and, you know, know where to, how to protect himself.

Evyenia: Uh-huh.

Kyriacos: So, there he saw this kid coming out of the dugout to go and get more bullets from the next door dugout. He told me, [the captain told the kid] get back in. Get back in. He told me, he told the story, get back. The kid didn't hear [listen]. He kept going. The plane comes and cut him in half.

Evyenia: Oh my gosh.

Kyriacos: Yeah. My dad had to drive him to his parents.

Evyenia: Oh.

Kyriacos: Yes. And they went to the town. They enter the village because the next day, they're taking their son.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: In pieces, terrible. In a box. So, they met his father. They asked, you know, we wanna find him.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: I'm the father. And then they told them, sorry, but we don't have good news. And he said, at least did my son die as a hero? And my dad says, yes. Of course, he wasn't gonna tell him he made a stupid mistake.

Evyenia: Yeah. Wow.

Kyriacos: Didn't listen to the captain.

Evyenia: But he couldn't hear?

Kyriacos: He could hear.

Evyenia: Oh, I thought you said he couldn't hear.

Kyriacos: I mean, he wouldn't listen to the captain.

Evyenia: Oh, I thought you said he couldn't. I'm like, oh, that's really sad. Yeah. Wow.

Kyriacos: So, he didn't listen to the captain, and that's what happened.

Evyenia: So how old was he, do you think? Like, 16? Right?

Kyriacos: Right. You know, you're 18. You go to the army maybe between 18-20, young kids.

Evyenia: Wow.

Kyriacos: So, he, and then they, drove further to his mother's house. We know his parents' house, and the mother was there. And when she saw them and they told her, she just fell to the ground. She didn't die, but she was like...

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: So, this is, this is the sad part of the world.

Kyriacos: Yeah. The human, the whole human...

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: ...cost.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: How can a parent ever recover from that?

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: So, a lot of young kids and a lot of parents. And I remember June 19th I mean, in '74, I've seen a lot of people wearing black, mourning.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: Brothers, fathers, sons. A lot of young kids died.

Evyenia: Mhmm. What about, like, let's say do you know much about, like, the women and daughters like that side of it? Because they weren't directly in the military, but there was a lot of, obviously...

Kyriacos: Yeah. The, the mothers were mourning the loss of their sons, sisters, loss of their brothers. A lot of women got raped and all of that. A lot of human rights violations and all of that. But you know how these things work. Right? You mean, you- it's a war.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: I mean, who is held accountable? I don't know if anyone. But, you know, it's a for me, Cyprus, it's a place where I mean, I go and love to go and see, but at the same time, there's a bitter past. Yeah. And sadness. And, I mean, honestly, it's like it's a very weird feeling for me, Cyprus.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: Even but I lived way much longer in United States.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: But the reality is still I feel like I'm connected with Cyprus so much more. Mhmm. I and Cyprus, I love. Cyprus, I hate so much.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: It's a mixed emotion about Cyprus because it took advantage of my mother, of my family. You know, when my mother was sick, when my mother needed money, she was taking advantage.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: You know? And, and I saw sadness. I saw people treating us as second-class citizens. And, but still, you know, I I feel the connection with the island because my roots are from there. I have people that love me to death, you know, and they love my family. They love you guys to death.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: So, there is that good connection. I mean, my cousins, when I was there, I was, like, more than their brother.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: I mean, they're laughing the way they hug me, and they squeeze, and you feel that you're loved.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: In that, I've never found it anywhere...

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: ...anywhere else. Only there. At the same time, when I think of what my family went through all these years, I feel I have I can't hate towards what the Cypriots years ago have done. The mistakes and the mishandling from the leadership all the way from leadership to people that got brainwashed. And and that's why when I hear the United States, this nationalistic and populist selling all these great things when it's in fact is not for the betterment of the society, but it's for their own benefit. And that's what happened there. And that's why to me, it's it's such a... I can see there is...

Evyenia: Yeah. Yeah.

Kyriacos: ...here in U.S. and that's scary. And every time you try to divide people and societies and alienate one with another, then it will- you will never have a good result. Someone will benefit at the end. But let me tell you, none of these two is gonna benefit. There's someone else behind you. Person...

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: ...is benefiting.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: Because like Yolanda said this morning, the Turkish people from the south that were forced to go to the north, they're not happy there.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: Because they were I mean, they're also displaced from their homes.

Evyenia: Yes.

Kyriacos: That's also sad.

Evyenia: And I can imagine that'd be really difficult too because not only were you displaced from where you're from, but on top of that, you're, I would imagine because, you know, people will take out their anger, I mean, not on the government itself because they can't, but on individuals.

Kyriacos: Yeah.

Evyenia: So, it's like not only are you being displaced, but you're being hated for it too when you're also a victim of it. That's crazy. Unless you have anything else, should I go to my next question?

Kyriacos: Yeah.

Evyenia: How would you say the, like, culture, like, the general vibe of the northern portion is different than the southern?

Kyriacos: I mean, I know we've been there, and I know you can tell. I'm like, people had this time. The thing is that you mean before the war. You would do before and after.

Evyenia: But I kinda meant after, where it's...

Kyriacos: After the war, I mean, right now, I mean, it's, like, totally two universes. Two separate I mean. The north is not as developed. It's not...

Evyenia: Would you see it's paused or it, like, regressed?

Kyriacos: I mean, they started developing sort of, like, infrastructure, but overall, as a society, as a place, you cannot trust to go into business in the north. You cannot feel as safe as on the southern part of the island because on the south, no matter there is a law. There is sort of "European Union country".

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: Right? On the north is like, it's Erdogan. It's Turkish president who is a, you know, autocrat.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: Him and his cronies and, you know, the corruption, and they control who does what and who you know, and they control law enforcement and everything.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: So, I will not want to live in a country that is controlled by another criminal.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: And I will not feel safe.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: And I don't feel very safe when I'm in the north. For one, because I'm Greek.

Evyenia: Mhmm. And second, knowing that a country like that, you know, can violate human rights there's no consequence.

Evyenia: Yeah. It definitely, I remember when we went...

Kyriacos: Yeah.

Evyenia: That it felt very, very different than... [the south].

Kyriacos: Yeah. Yeah.

Evyenia: You didn't... It feels like you're going to a country before, like because there was, I mean, from what I remember other than when we saw your village and a few other, like, buildings scattered, it feels, like, completely untouched almost. It's almost eerie because it's like you know there's people out there, but you don't see them.

Kyriacos: Yeah. A lot of the- with the especially the first time we went to, I saw roads that were, like, it's '74, same condition. So not much has changed. But, I mean, to me, the biggest thing is, is the fact that you cannot feel that as a human being, your rights will be honored.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: And and who wants to be in a place like that?

Evyenia: What would you be, like because you're talking specifically about your rights being violated, what specifically would you be worried about happening? Say we were to go there, and you said what...

Kyriacos: But there you get into an accident, you were never, I don't think you even though you were not at fault, I don't think that you is you because it's corrupt. They're gonna find a way to blame you that you were responsible.

Evyenia: Because you're Greek Cypriot or just because you're not...

Kyriacos: Because you're not from there. You're not Turkish. Because it's a corrupt place. It's like in Mexico, they stop in or in, what do you call it? Venezuela or the same shit. You're driving and you're going. You're a foreigner. They stop you, and you either have to pay money to- for no reason, and it's corrupt.

Evyenia: Yeah. So, it's more so you're more so talking about corruption than, like, violence.

Kyriacos: How would I feel safe then? Well yeah. Yeah. I mean, I I, you know, maybe not as much of physical safety, but I think it's a corrupted place that I will not trust that

I'm gonna be treated fairly if I got into an accident if something happened while I'm there.
You know?

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: But if they decide not, we're gonna put you in prison until your case is resolved.

Evyenia: Yeah. Wow.

Kyriacos: God knows.

Evyenia: Yeah. What I mean, again, this is kinda connected to that. What are your thoughts on the lasting effects of the invasion occupation?

Kyriacos: The lasting effects are obvious.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: I mean, is that deep sorrow for for the loss...

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: ...that you, your family has experienced.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: The financial loss, obviously, and, you know, it's the, the human loss.

Evyenia: Yeah. But your family didn't experience the human loss. And the pain going through that.

Kyriacos: Yeah. That's still true. The refugee and all that. And, you know, it's overall in life, I think I always, you know, think about it, what would have been if I wasn't if I was not a refugee.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: At work, how my life would've been different. It just, it made me, also taught me a lesson and I came here.

Evyenia: Yeah. Actually, this is literally the next question.

Kyriacos: Material things that you could, you know, accumulate in your life could just disappear in just like that. And what is left is just from material, there's nothing. The only thing I think that has value in life and that which continues to be the case is the

relationship you have with your family. Everything else I mean, material wealth is is is it helps you, but that, nobody can guarantee that.

Evyenia: Yeah. That's the thing that's, like, as terrible of an experience and situation that was. I think you couldn't, your- I think your family as a whole couldn't have had a luckier outcome since nobody was, like...

Kyriacos: Yeah.

Evyenia: ... killed or anything.

Kyriacos: The only thing I I wish my mother would have been diagnosed, treated, you know, properly, and not losing her life at 46, which I think it was the super young.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: The saddest thing that happened. You know? And yeah. So as a human being, you just have to move on in your life and overcome those difficulties and just not always looking back, but look forward to do things, meaningful things in your life and be a good person and really work hard in your life to accomplish and do good things and be be manage to be independent, you know, financially and all that. Do it on your own.

Evvyenia: Mhmm. I mean, yeah. So, would you say there's anyone who significantly impacted your life during this time? Like, one person that stands out that was like, they really...

Kyriacos: What do you mean?

Evvyenia: Like, I for example, and not to put words in your mouth, but, like, for example, like, let's say your mother because she was by herself with you guys. Like, she really took care of you guys and went through all that on her own with you guys...

Kyriacos: Mhmm.

Evvyenia: ... to protect you during the invasion?

Kyriacos: Yeah.

Evvyenia: Yeah?

Kyriacos: I mean, it was someone that I... what was the question?

Evvyenia: Someone that you were, or someone, anyone that significantly impacted your life during that time.

Kyriacos: I mean, during that time is the care of my mother, obviously. Yeah. Nobody else.

Evyenia: Really?

Kyriacos: Mhmm.

Evyenia: What is something about, like, because I think you said something I mean, you've told us some- an answer related to this before, but I'm curious what you'll say now. What is something about yourself that you're most proud of that you did during this difficult period?

Kyriacos: Yeah. I mean, it it sounds silly, but I think being able- I mean, just grabbing the album.

Evyenia: That's what I thought.

Kyriacos: The pictures of the family. I think, I don't know how I thought of that, and I think it was, I mean, I had pictures of my elementary school, and nobody had it. And years, years, decades passed that nobody knew, and then I send them to my cousin. Wow. And then the- her neighbor is my classmate. Wow. I said, oh my god. It's a big deal then she started circulating them to everyone. They had their reunion and all that.

Evyenia: Oh, I remember you mentioned this. Yeah. Wow. Yeah. So, I feel like that's a huge deal. Like, obviously, having those, like, like you were saying...

Kyriacos: Yeah.

Evyenia: ... jewelry from parents, things, like, little sentimental things are really important, but I think nothing tops pictures because there's, you can never I mean...

Kyriacos: Yeah.

Evyenia: You can't make a picture similar to them. How many, how big, how big would you say the photo album was? Like, were there, like, tens of pictures? Like, a 100? Like...

Kyriacos: No. It wasn't a 100. I don't know. 20, 30 pictures, something like that.

Evyenia: Mhmm. Do we have it here?

Kyriacos: Yeah. I have all the pictures. So, we copied them.

Evyenia: The... digitizing.

Kyriacos: Yeah.

Evyenia: And then my next question is what would you- or would you say the world has changed since you were younger? If so, how? Like, for example, it's more in a violent time now, would you say you're noticing the patterns of, like, you're seeing with, like, nationalism and kind of division that's happening more? You're seeing it more? Or is it the same? Has it been less? But I know also you were younger when when this first happened.

Kyriacos: So I think probably things are worse now than before.

Evyenia: Just like globally too.

Kyriacos: Globally. At the global level it is worse because all of these, now you have a a group of them now. A group of countries are organized, and they learn how to subvert...

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: ... the democracy. They subvert people for the for the money.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: They're willing to do, they're willing to go out in front of millions of people and say, we're going to do this for you. They elicit all these emotions...

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: ... people in the heart, and they play with people's pain and hopes.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: And then they turn around and and they they, they take everything for themselves.

Evyenia: What about, obviously, you weren't alive during this time, but, like, from what you know about, say, like, World War II in that era because I remember even in school just learning a lot about that where it's like, 'oh, they're telling you what you wanna hear' and literally the same story.

Kyriacos: Yeah.

Evyenia: Because I feel like that was a pretty huge...

Kyriacos: The same.

Evyenia: ... dark period. But would you say that's from what you know about them, would you say it's worse now?

Kyriacos: I I think right now you're relying on the decades following that. Right now, I think the world is so much much more higher risk because, the the accessibility to lethal global destruction.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: Weapons...

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: ... that you can destroy planet Earth in, in seconds.

Evyenia: Insane.

Kyriacos: Humanity can eclipse in seconds.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: So, and now and all of that is under the control of a bunch of lunatics, psychopaths whose ultimate goal is their power and money. Nothing else. So that to me... take a group of countries, China, Russia, Turkey, Cuba, Venezuela, all of them. These are countries that are willing to corrupt and willing to work with each other. It's a

network to support each other. Look. Now you have North Korean troops fighting in Ukraine on behalf of Russia. See? 'So, we are thieves. Now you help me. I help you'.

Evvyenia: Exactly. Yeah.

Kyriacos: They put sanctions on Russian money. Well, Russian money is flowing everywhere. And bankers in the West, in the U.S., and in England, they're willing to do business with them. They're hiding. And and and these banks are saying, 'well, it's not-we don't know this. It's a, it belongs to this company'. But are you truly investigating to see this company, where is it connected to?

Evvyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: And people go, and they set up share companies, Cyprus, the Cayman Islands, and all of that. And they say, okay. This is the company. To me, a company that comes from Cyprus give you the \$3,300,000,000 was like, you better question that because I gotta tell you, it's not clean money from Cyprus. It's from Russia. And another thing, when I was in Cyprus right now, I've seen this extremely high buildings, this high they're all empty.

Evvyenia: Really?

Kyriacos: You know what it is?

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: It's Russian money and Ukrainian money parked there in Cyprus. They're just taking their money out of Ukraine and Russia. And what? They're gonna buy \$20,000,000 of penthouses. And nobody lives in there. They just put it there because in hopes that they're not gonna lose their money. Because if it's a Russian, they might lose it. So, they say, okay. Let's put our money there in hopes that this real estate will keep its value and go up.

Evyenia: Wow. But why would- why aren't they having people live there? At least, like, making money off rent, for example.

Kyriacos: Who can afford to rent a \$20,000,000 penthouse? How much do you owe? With a bunch of...

Evyenia: I thought it was a, like, a building with a bunch of units.

Kyriacos: No. Each penthouse is \$20,000,000.

Evyenia: What?

Kyriacos: Yes.

Evyenia: Wait. I thought you meant the whole building.

Kyriacos: I really... no. It used to be the Buildings in Limassol. And we went to Nero Cafe in Limassol, and we sat there. There are yachts there. Millions [of dollars].

Evyenia: That's insane.

Kyriacos: Okay. I mean, a million and a half, two million, three-million-dollar yachts. There are yachts with helicopter pads.

Evyenia: That's crazy.

Kyriacos: It's all just Russian money. Parking.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: Oligarchs.

Evyenia: Yeah. Wow. Yeah. Why do you think they chose Cyprus?

Kyriacos: Because I think, I guess that is something we didn't talk about much earlier on, that it looks like recently there's a lot of Russian money in Cyprus now.

Evyenia: Why would you say that is? Why is Cyprus?

Kyriacos: Because Cyprus has set up a system where it's easy to set up companies in Cyprus. And you fund, Cyprus will not ask questions. Bring the money there. Create this company.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: And then that company now shows 'I'm a Cypriot company. I have this money. This is my business'. And then, 'oh, I wanna invest in United States. I wanna buy real estate'.

Evyenia: Oh. It's the Russian guy.

Kyriacos: It's the, yes.

Evyenia: Wow.

Kyriacos: You know how many companies like that bought apartments from Trump?

Evyenia: Really?

Kyriacos: A lot of them.

Evyenia: Wow.

Kyriacos: Yes. So that shows you why he has close ties with Putin because imagine what deals they're making.

Evyenia: Yeah. That's insane.

Kyriacos: Yes.

Evyenia: Wow. What can we learn from the... I mean, I feel like we talked about all this already, but what can we learn from the past, specifically the invasion and occupation? I mean,

Kyriacos: I feel like, like we said, I feel like Nationalism is not good. Is not good. Nobody's better than you, you are not better than anybody else.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: And you need to- people need to learn to- it's like going back to what they say in church. Love your neighbor.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: You gotta love your neighbor. We're human beings. We all on this planet.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: Hatred, it's a poison. The end, at the end, it's going to poison all of us. We're gonna drown- all of us. We all going to get drowned in the same poison. So, and, unfortunately, things got so bad that some, crooks out there, they got themselves to the level of power in government, and they know how to manipulate these people with their network.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: That common people believe them.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: And they buy their B.S.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: And now these few are thriving.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: So, who I mean, I don't know if Trump will do this, but what I was saying today, who is to stop Trump to do what Putin is doing in Russia? He's taking legitimate business. He's taking them over and putting his own people putting and extract all the money from the business. They throw it to different show companies accounts for themselves.

Evyenia: Yeah. Well, also, having billionaires that have a lot of shady business themselves...

Kyriacos: Yeah.

Evyenia: ... moving on to the government- that is what's crazy to me.

Kyriacos: Yeah.

Evyenia: They have zero qualifications. They're just billionaires.

Kyriacos: There was in the steel industry, was it the Chicago or where the Rust Belt, what they call it?

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: It was some Ukrainian guy, years and years ago. Basically, washes money out of Ukraine, corrupt money, brought them to the US. He didn't care for workers. He didn't care. I mean, people working there. Anyway, long story short, eventually shut down. And all of these Americans, now they found themselves without jobs. Look at the impact that you have. Entire towns evaporated. You know?

Evyenia: That's so sad.

Kyriacos: And people in the US, and you're telling me the government didn't know where this money was coming from, but there are a lot of people who get paid along the way. Right? A lot of people in the government here. So, in this...

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: ... they get paid, they pocket the money. They get their goods. Yeah. 'Screw them'- their workers in U.S. And this, I need to look it up and tell you where a specific...

Evyenia: ... if it's a steel plant, you said...

Kyriacos: Yeah.

Evyenia: Then it probably was in the Midwest.

Kyriacos: Yeah. It is. And it's shut down right now. Entire cities I mean, towns.

Evyenia: Wow.

Kyriacos: Wiped out of the map just because there's no no nothing for them to do, so they left. So, and then there's all the democrats, all the this and that. There's corruption everywhere. So, in the you know, now when I was younger, I would think, okay. Why this decision has been made the way it is? And I never knew that, hey, wait a minute. There is also the corruption.

Evyenia: Exactly. Because you would never, as like, a regular person, you would never think people could be that cruel. Because that's really what you're talking about.

Kyriacos: Yeah. It's global.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: Now you would say, okay. If- why the president of this country will make this decision? But then you're assuming that this president is putting the national interest...

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: ... first.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: But no. Look at Assad, the Syrian dictator who, now where did he go? With ...

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: What's his...what is he now? Do you know where he's in? Is that now? In Moscow. He's in Russia. So why? Because They all work together.

Evyenia: Yes. Mhmm.

Kyriacos: And so, okay. 'Come home. Come to Russia'. Yeah. You're gonna have your lavish because you already did...

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: ... because millions of dollars, you know, outside of the country, okay, come to you.

Evyenia: And that's not really, I mean, I know again, you were pretty young, but from the earlier period of your life that you were more conscious about this stuff, this wasn't really a thing you would say or at least not to this degree?

Kyriacos: I mean I mean, in Cyprus, I know that there was corruption. And I think what happened, people said that I don't know how that money was flowing to Cyprus for these- to the nationalists to pay them, to give them incentives to work more and more harder to make this happen.

Evyenia: Wow.

Kyriacos: Yeah. Now I don't know for sure.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: But that's what I, I heard when, you know, people were saying 'yeah. That money was flowing through'.

Evyenia: Yeah. This is completely...

Kyriacos: Mhmm.

Evyenia: ... more specifically about you. Not really about it historically. But what above all, what would you like to be remembered for given all the things that have happened in your life?

Kyriacos: You know, because when you ask this question, I'm assuming I'm dead.

Evyenia: They... imagine this is... yeah. Like, decades from now, like, somebody's reading this.

Kyriacos: I'm dead. Right? I don't care what people... honestly, I don't give a shit what people would think about me.

Evyenia: Uh-huh.

Kyriacos: Seriously.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: What I care about is the people that live with me, my three daughters, what would they think of me. And, and that is one thing that I struggle sometimes, and I, I wanna make sure, in the you know, as a father, I try to do the right thing.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: There are moments where I lose it. You know? And maybe I might say a word that I didn't mean to say it.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: But I- my goal is for my three daughters. I don't care about anybody else to say, you know, 'you truly care. He was a good man. He loved us'. That's it. That's what I want. Nothing else. It's not the money. I don't care. I, I wanna be good with your mother. I wanna be good with you, with your sisters. Sometimes things get heated and difficult. You know, teenage issues, boyfriend issues, this and that. You know, no matter what I do every time I go to bed, I think of you guys. So sometimes I might seem like I give up, and I'm sick and tired of this. You know?

Evyenia: Mhmm. But, ultimately, deep down, I want the best for you. And every time I say something, it's not because I'm an asshole because I wanna give you a hard time or anything because I know what is right for you guys.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: I mean I mean, of course, I don't know. I can't throw a map and tell you do this and you're gonna be successful. But I know the right path and what you guys need to be

doing. And when I sense that this is not happening, that's what gets me turn... well, I mean, makes me get old faster.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: Because I feel like a failure when my kids are not doing the things that I think they shouldn't be doing.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: You know? Gaining independence and putting themselves in a good path where you have no need to depend on anybody.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: That to me, it is- it's a huge accomplishment. You know, me as a father to be able to say, you know what? I educated my daughters. My daughters have a good head on their shoulders, and they're making the right decisions for themselves. They're keeping themselves safe, healthy, and they're thriving in their careers, whatever you wanna do.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: And be happy. That's what I want as a father.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: That's what I want. I don't care what everybody- I don't care what my neighbors think. Fuck them. I don't care. I care about my three daughters, what they would say, my wife.

Evyenia: Yeah. Yeah.

Kyriacos: Of course, you extend the circle and say, I want, you know, my family, my extended family, my cousins, my you know, to say, you know what? What a good... and I feel it with my cousins. I mean, my cousins then I, I mean, I, I have to tell you. I have such a good relationship with them. It's like with my cousin, Kyriakos, I was like, more than brothers. With his sisters, it's like I mean, they were I want to take my dad home and Angelici. On the way back, I got stopped by, husband George, and we're talking outside, and they were worried to death. What happened to the rest of them? Maybe they have an accident.

Evyenia: To you?

Kyriacos: Yeah. They were worried so much, my cousins, about me. And then they came outside to say, okay. Maybe we have to go and see...

Evyenia: Wait. How come? What did they what did they think happened?

Kyriacos: Maybe- they didn't know. They got startled... Why didn't I come back sooner?

Evyenia: Oh, I see.

Kyriacos: And I'm talking with George. So, I said, well, I got detained by George.
[Laughs].

Evyenia: Uh-huh. [Laughs].

Kyriacos: But you see, this I think to me, the relationship and the love with my family, it's way more important than anything else. And especially knowing that, you know, you live in I live in a new country and, I mean, I can't give you here. 'You take this land. You take this land. You're fine'. They own the land and what I can give you is education.

Evyenia: Yeah. That's what I remember, especially when we were younger when you tell us about all this, I was like, 'why does he keep talking about land? Like, why would he give us land? It makes zero sense.' Because that's not something that we grew up expecting. But it's- now after, like, hearing all this over the last few years and knowing that as far as you knew, that's just how it goes. So, you give your kid land and then to see it from your perspective, you don't have that here. I

Kyriacos: In the US. I mean, people that would give you land...

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: ... they're giving land to their kids. I mean, and you see a guy, you know, didn't even go to school or anything, but he buys a \$2,000,000 house for how? Because he has assets. Land. You know?

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: So, I mean, you sell a piece of land, you get millions of dollars. You're set for life.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: Your life's different.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: So, these are the things that, you know, money is not everything, but money is a means to...

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: ... having a better life. Imagine you go to a store, and I don't know. I think it was Katerina who was telling me this. You know? Do you ever remember going to the store and having to make a decision? Wait a minute. We can't buy this because we need to buy food. Thank God I was fortunate not not to have to make these decisions when, you know, having a family.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: But imagine that.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: How difficult it would be. And and I and I and I I say this to you guys, and it's true when I you guys are growing up in this bubble that we created and under the umbrella of your father. Right? Because, okay, you need something, you get it. But if if you're on your own and you have to if if you outline all the things, the expenses, the cost of maintaining a house and 3 cars and kids, colleges, insurance, and so on. Do you have all this? I mean, it's a- it was mind blowing. Mind blowing.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: So, the cost of living here in in U.S., and Oregon is not the most expensive state, is astronomical. Yeah. So, you think I'm gonna make \$100,000 a \$100,000 nowadays? It's not a big deal. It's not a lot of money. Okay. You can start from there. But what I mean is I'm not saying, okay. 100,000 is is good to start. It's the beginning. But it doesn't mean that, you know, I mean, you, your life is extremely expensive, and I don't want you guys to take this for granted that, you know, it's easy to make all of this. Yeah. Because it took me so many years to be able to get a job. And keep in mind, as a foreigner, it's different.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: So, these are the challenges of life. So, anyways, but yeah, I I wanna be remembered by my kids as a good father and a good caring person rather than anybody else. You know, I don't care about, I don't want anything any other- I don't care about other people, what they say about me.

Evyenia: Uh-huh.

Kyriacos: They don't know me.

Evyenia: Mhmm. Yeah.

Kyriacos: Yeah. I don't wanna 'he was the great businessman'. You know? I just wanna live my life with love and care, be a good person. That's what makes me... knowing that I'm good with my family.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: And take pictures. Yeah. Yeah. Along the way also. [Laughing].

Kyriacos: Mhmm. I also believe that, and I continue to do that every day to do my best to the absolute best of my abilities to care about my job as as my own company because I believe that that's imperative

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: To do your job to the best of your abilities, always.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: And be honest. I don't go there and lie. I don't. I just do my job.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: That's it. That's right. Do I have to get up every day at 6 o'clock and 7 be on the road? No. But it's me. I do my thing. Yeah. That's where I am. See? Rain, shine, snow. I'll go to work.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: So yeah.

Evyenia: My last question is, is there anything else we haven't covered that you want to discuss? Or, like, let's say there's something oh, there was this thing from my childhood that I wanted to expand on more and forgot to mention. That's like when someone looks back on this, let's say, 30 years, what is something you'd want them to know? Either by your story or about, like, the history, any of that.

Kyriacos: But still, I'm sure I will find things that always- there's always we love things, but, I mean, you would think that wars will end at some point, but never ending. They're getting worse. That's the thing. You know? I'm, I'm here in United States as a result of a war.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: And also, it's not like maybe the physical war itself has ended, but the consequences last generations.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: Many, many generations and the trauma on little kids. That's true. See. Thank God I didn't see dead bodies next to me.

Evyenia: And I'm shocked that you somehow didn't see any of that.

Kyriacos: Yeah.

Evyenia: And that your family was all...

Kyriacos: Yeah.

Evyenia: ...surviving. That's crazy. Yeah. I mean, honestly, when we sometimes, I look back...

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: ... the few years, I mean, couple decades, almost I lived in Cyprus, you know, the things that I experienced, it was like, you can write a freaking book.

Evyenia: Yeah. No. Yeah.

Kyriacos: And then you come to the US, and everything is, like, frozen.

Evyenia: What do you mean?

Kyriacos: I feel like life is not, I mean, maybe it's a good thing. You know? I don't want bad things. But I I feel like our life here in U.S., it just goes by very quickly. And, but, again, I don't wanna work. I don't wanna...

Evyenia: It's very just, like, calm, you mean.

Kyriacos: Or that's very... I feel like, because I think because what is missing is that is that extended

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: ... network of people, friends, relatives.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: All that because it's not there. Like, if we were in Cyprus today, we will be Monday right now, what, it's 7 in the morning. A few hours after that, we'll be going to church. Katerina is getting married.

Evyenia: Exactly.

Kyriacos: Everybody and their mother is gonna be there.

Evyenia: So crazy.

Kyriacos: ... nice to see you.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: And then these are happy moments. You know?

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: Yeah. But I, I don't know. I, I think we covered almost most of it. Always there are little pieces here and there that I know we didn't cover.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: But we can talk about that later. Yeah. Yeah. I mean, I think my message to all of this is nationalism, hatred, it's never a good thing. Never. Yeah.

Evyenia: Yeah. So that's it. Thank you for being with me...

Kyriacos: Sure.

Evyenia: ... I don't know how many hours.

Interview Transcription: Kyriakos Themistokleous (Koulis)

(Translated by Kyriacos Kitsis & Evyenia Kitsis)

Koulis: He was born May 1, 1960.

Evyenia: Mhmm. Wow.

Koulis: Okay. Next question, Evy.

Evyenia: Mhmm. Where were you born and raised?

Koulis: I was born in Lefkosia, up until five years old I grew up in Lapithos. Yeah. Up until 5 years old in Lapithos. Next question Evy.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Koulis: A village in the north part of Cyprus. And then after that, in Nicosia. Right? Yeah. Yeah. A suburb of Nicosia. Okay. Next... And then he moved to another town after he built his house.

Evyenia: Okay. And then the next question is, can you tell me about your family background?

Koulis: My mother was a teacher for elementary school. She was a music teacher, she played violin, accordion, mandolin, guitar. My father was a mechanic for mechanical and heavy-duty vehicles. Like the caterpillars. The bulldozers. Mhmm. Caterpillars. Right. Okay. My grandfather from his mother's side was a shepherd. A suburb of Nicosia. That was my mother's father. My grandpa from my father's side was a builder and farmer in Northern Cyprus. Both grandmothers were housekeepers.

Evyenia: And then what are the names of your parents and siblings if he wants to say? He doesn't have to.

Koulis: My mother's name was Eleni and my father's name was Andreas. When my mother passed away my father remarried another woman whose name was also Eleni. So, when my mother passed away, I was 4 or 5 years old at that time. I have one sister, named Irini.

Kyriacos: Irini in English means peace.

Evyenia: Oh.

Kyriacos: Yeah. She's peaceful. Alright.

Evyenia: Oh, the next one is, can you describe your immediate family, like, family dynamic?

Koulis: From one to five my grandmother took care of me. It was very nice with grandma. After five my father remarried and it was difficult because my father's wife thought that the daughters were the ones that will take care of her when she gets older, so she didn't care much about the boy. Only cared for the daughters because she believed the daughters would be the ones to take care of her when she was older.

Kyriacos: So, his...uh-huh. So okay. The- the second mother. Right? I mean, Eleni. How- wait a minute. So, you don't have any siblings from the second Eleni?

Koulis: No because my second mother was a little older.

Koulis: His father got married in order to have someone to take care of the family.

Evyenia: Mhmm. Okay.

Kyriacos: And your sister Irini was from the same mother as you, correct?

Koulis: Yes. She was taking care of me but not with the compassion and warmth of a real mother. So that made me stronger to depend on myself, not to depend on anybody.

Evyenia: Uh-huh. And the next question is, to your knowledge, where did your answers ancestors come from? Like, does he know of anything beyond Cyprus?

Koulis: They are all from Cyprus. I did 7 generations of the family tree, going back to 1830. And one of those ancestors came from Greece.

Evyenia: Oh wow. Yeah. How did he go about doing the ancestry?

Koulis: I had a grandfather who was 90, he remembered his father and grandfather, and like that I figured it out like a puzzle. I went 3 generations back from there, and then I found out the other names. From there, I asked them and completed the full Excel spreadsheet.

Evyenia: What the next one is, what is the extent of your generation?

Koulis: Yeah. It's the same as here. I finished high school and then and then from there, I went to Adi. Then The Higher Technical Institute.

Kyriacos: And that one is a very difficult school, he passed examinations...what did you study?

Koulis: Electrical engineering.

Kyriacos: He was a very good student, Mr. Koulis. There it's 3 years. The Higher Technical Institute. Right? And that one is a very difficult school. I mean, you- he's taken examinations.

Evyenia: I guess the other question I have for this is how would he describe, like, let's say, like, high school, middle school, how would, how was that like in Cyprus? Like, did they talk about what, like, what was going on geopolitically?

Koulis: Only in the- during the history class.

Evyenia: Uh-huh.

Koulis: But it was not about the recent events. It was the, you know, the old history way back.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Koulis: And that's what we all did in high school.

Evyenia: In, like, historical I mean, from, like, decades before or, like, hundreds of years before?

Koulis: Both. Both. I mean, and I got the same education in high school. You were in Cyprus. You get every high school; you just get the same courses.

Evyenia: And the next question is, what were the typical jobs in your community?

Koulis: Okay.

Kyriacos: So before and after the invasion.

Koulis: Education, accountants, doctors. But then we have the farmers. Lawyers.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Koulis: Economists.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Koulis: You have the private sector and the government sector for all these jobs. Now about 5% of the population in Cyprus is shepherds and farmers.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: Yeah. So, so you say now only 5% of the population in Cyprus is shepherds and farmers? How do you have this- where did you get this statistic from?

Koulis: Okay. It was from a government agency.

Kyriacos: So, you got it from a government agency. From the- but so before the war, we had more farmers. Before the war, between 20-30% of the population were more than the farming and agriculture. But now it has been reduced to about 5%, yeah, after the war.

Kyriacos: Yeah. I mean, economy changes. I mean, modernization and new jobs. Yeah. Automation. And when he was describing, like Yeah. He's right. A lot of those properties were gone as well because of the Turkish invasion.

Evyenia: Yeah. So, this statistic applies to Greek Cypriots only. Right?

Kyriacos: Yes. Only to the Greek Cypriots.

Evyenia: And when he was describing the typical jobs in his, like, community, was that before the invasion as well? So, it's more of the city?

Kyriacos: Yeah. He- it's overall for Cyprus, for the whole island he's describing. But in his community, in the suburb of, it's more of an office job. Yes. I mean, like he described,

because you are in the suburb of the city. They- you're not farming in the city. Right? So, with the exception of the- his grandpa. He had, he had land.

Koulis: Yeah. Yeah. You have to get- it wasn't the center of the city. It was a suburb, I guess, before fully developed and there was some land there.

Evyenia: Uh-huh. Okay. And then the next question is what did people do for enjoyment or in your town in in Northern Cyprus or Southern Cyprus?

Kyriacos: You do both. I mean, you can before and after the invasion, a lot on the north. You were a little kid at that time.

Koulis: You were, I don't know if you remember. He remembers the fairs we had. Uh-huh. You know? The religious fairs where we have, you know, the the church of the village is the name day of the church of the saint. Right? And then you have vendors come in. The whole village goes there.

Evyenia: Kinda like a street fair?

Kyriacos: Yeah. Kinda like that. Yeah. Yeah.

Koulis: Movies and movies, which is true for before and after the war.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Koulis: Both. Yeah. Uh-huh. Sometimes in my village in the north, there were classical, classical music, bands and orchestras that will go and play, and he attended those. They had that...

Evyenia: Like concerts?

Koulis: Yeah. Classic. Okay.

Kyriacos: What's next?

Evyenia: The next one is how did religion play a role in your life? I know you talked about the street fair a little bit.

Koulis: Uh-huh. As I explained to you what I went through, with medical challenges.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Koulis: And the only thing I had to rely on, basically, it was the hope with, you know, the, with God's help.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Koulis: And I always felt that there was that strength, that support.

Evyenia: Uh-huh. From some higher authority, from God. And I relied on that.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Koulis: And I think and that's what I believe that that carried me through and really helped me through the difficult times.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Koulis: Also, he through the, yeah, teachings and through the religion. I try to be respectful and nice to everybody. And follow those principles of our religion.

Evyenia: What about, like, earlier on in his life? Was that the same case?

Koulis: Because my mother died when I was very young, I had those difficult times with the new mother. I had a difficult time all the way. Yeah. So that relationship with God existed since then. I don't have an issue with if you're a Muslim, fine. I respect you as a human being, creation of God. Doesn't matter what religion you are. I believe in God, and I respect everybody.

Evyenia: Yeah. My next question is how old was he when Turkey invaded?

Koulis: 14.

Evyenia: Yeah. And then can you, can you speak a little bit more about your life prior to invasion? What, like, daily life kinda looked like for you and your family? I think we've touched upon this already. How was daily life? How was it before the war?

Koulis: Okay. So, I would go to the village in Lapithos, and my grandma was really taking care of me. And because my mother at that time, she was a teacher working in Nicosia. And being with grandma was the best thing because I had freedom to do whatever I wanted. So, I was very happy with grandma.

Evyenia: And then my next question is, what were his, like, hopes or, like, plans since he was a little bit older than you were, before the invasion?

Koulis: I wanted to become a teacher because my mother was a teacher and because she passed away, I had that wish or hope to become a teacher.

Evyenia: Mhmm. Yeah. The next question is, can you describe when you first found out the invasion was happening? Like, you first, like, memories of that.

Kyriacos: Okay. Yeah. Let me translate.

Koulis: So, before the war, as we said, there was a coup against the president.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Koulis: And the presidential palace was not too far from my home at that time. And we could hear the shootings and all of that.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Koulis: And we knew that, and it was well known. If there's a coup, then an invasion most likely is going to follow.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: Remember, we were talking about that. So, yeah, there was a fear in him that the invasion is coming.

Evyenia: Uh-huh.

Kyriacos: So, okay. Go ahead. Yeah.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: So next to Kaimakli near Kaimakli, his home, there were Turkish villages not too far. So, he was worried about being so close.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kulis: So, what we call the 5th mile or 5 mile, that's exactly where the invasion took place, which is 5 miles from Kyrenia. We went to Kyrenia. Now another 5 miles from there is Lapithos.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Koulis: So, in Lapithos, that's where my village was. My grandfather, my grandmother were there. And I had relatives there, so I would hear what was going on...

Evyenia: Yeah.

Koulis: ...from them. So, we had it filled with olive trees, and we wanted to go and take care of the trees. But good thing we didn't because if we had gone there, we would be dead. The grandparents wanted to; the family was planning on going.

Kyriacos: But good thing they didn't. You remember I talked to you about when the coup happened?

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: They were looking for certain people to kill.

Evyenia: Oh, yeah.

Kyriacos: Greeks against Greeks.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Koulis: So, when it happened, we were locked in one room. The whole family, we were scared because there were Greek Cypriots shooting outside.

Evyenia: Your house?

Koulis: No.

Evyenia: Or just in general?

Koulis: They were just shooting in the streets out there. If there was any resistance, they were just out in the streets and shooting.

Evyenia: Oh, I see.

Koulis: But I don't think they were looking specifically for anyone. Because my father at some point, they were looking for my dad, not to kill him, but to go and help them...

Evyenia: Oh, I see. The tanks.

Koulis: ...the national because they needed, he had expertise in heavy equipment, so they needed someone to help them with...

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Koulis: ...maintenance.

Evyenia: Oh. Okay. And then the next question is kinda going off of that, but it's just, again, like, what are your most vivid memories from that time?

Koulis: So mhmm. So, when the war broke because of the Turkish villages that were nearby, Kaimakli, we went to another village close to Kyrenia, and that area still now is under Turkish occupation. And we left for safety.

Evyenia: So, during the 2nd round of the invasion?

Koulis: Mhmm.

Evyenia: The 2nd round was on the 20th or first was on 15th. Right?

Kyriacos: Yeah. August 15th and 20th. The second route. We can look up the dates.

Evyenia: Well, I had seen the first one was July 20th, and the coup was 15th July.

Kyriacos: Okay. And then the second route of invasion, it could have been in August, but we can verify the date. So, they moved to Kytheria.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: The Turkish coming over to Kyrenia where was with his family. So, let's continue. Go ahead, and next?

Koulis: We were concerned about the house in- leaving Kaimakli getting- catch a fire because of what was going on.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Koulis: I brought the musical instruments of my mother with us when we went... So, the second during the second round of invasion, the Turkish planes were throwing bombs.

We call them naval and naval bombs, they caused fire. So, they did with the explosion. They were, they were basically dropping bombs near the house.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Koulis: We left. And we were getting out of that village to save ourselves, basically.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Koulis: And we met with the Turkish tanks, and they threw one of those from the tank.

Kyriacos: It's a warning shot from the tank.

Evyenia: Oh, I see.

Kyriacos: Yeah. Uh-huh. And, and what happened...

Koulis: Yeah. I went to Lima. And for 5 months, I went to school there. But before we go to the school, when you guy when they were living and met with the tanks.

Evyenia: Uh-huh. Okay.

Kyriacos: So, let's say from a distance about 500 meters or so. And it was that warning shot, if you will. It's sort of a shot that the tank throws that shot to ensure that he can reach the target.

Evyenia: Oh, I see.

Kyriacos: Like a practice. And, and yeah. And then from there, to confirm that the target is within reach, and then can throw the actual, the actual bomb, if you call it. You know?

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Koulis: But we, fortunately, nothing happened, and we continued our way to Limassol. That's where I went to for 5 months. 14 years old. Elementary school. Yeah. The last class before you go to High school.

Evyenia: High school. So, like, 8th grade, I would say. 14 years old.

Kyriacos: Yeah. Yeah.

Koulis: Alright, that's the yeah. Just saving ourselves. Yeah. I remember the tanks being so close and shooting. That was very scary.

Evyenia: And just to double check, the people who were using the tanks, were those the Turkish?

Koulis: Turkish.

Evyenia: And then since we already talked about this a little bit, what was- can you describe, like, during the invasion or, like, as it's going on or, like, immediately after, like, that span of time? Life?

Kyriacos: Yeah. I think he talked about it. I mean, possibly, that is so I think he already talked about, like yeah. We could see if he has anything else to add to that. Do you have anything to add directly about your life?

Koulis: I had a very good life right before the war. Yeah. Summers, I would go to the village. I would go to the beach. I'd go swimming. Weekends, and summers, we have a great time. Go to, yeah. The fairs. So, it was a really good life.

Evyenia: I mean and also, like, during- specifically during the invasion or, like, let's say, going back to school right after that or, like...

Kyriacos: Oh, okay.

Koulis: My family did things like that. So okay. So, basically, because a lot of refugees went to Limassol

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Koulis: The school couldn't absorb all the kids. They had morning classes and after afternoon classes. And I had to go in the afternoon, and my house was about 5 kilometers, about 3 and a half miles from the school. So, I had to walk, and it was dark in the- coming back from school. It was a long distance and in the dark in a new place...

Evyenia: Yeah.

Koulis: ...and winter.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Koulis: Yeah. And then I came back to Nicosia, my old school, because it was still there, and I continued there another three and a half years.

Evyenia: And then going off of that, this is kinda similar. When you went back to your original school, did your family move back into their old home or did they have to relocate to a different home?

Koulis: Because it was empty, they got everything out.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Koulis: We have to replenish everything. Refurnish the house. But, yeah, the same house. Office. Yeah. Yeah. And then Mhmm.

Evyenia: Mhmm. Yeah.

Koulis: Yeah. I came halfway through the school year, so I had to get new kids, new teachers, readjust. You know? It's not easy.

Evyenia: Yeah. And then the next question is, I- even though I know you were younger at the time, but can you describe the economy at the time? I mean, after the invasion.

Koulis: Yeah.

Evyenia: How was that like? Economy and this... 70% sorry. Go ahead.

Koulis: 70% of the hotels...

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Koulis: Tourist areas and agriculture. The factories, agriculture was on the north.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Koulis: My father will- he was working for the government, so they reduced his pay by about 20 or 30%.

Evyenia: Wow. Yeah.

Koulis: So, basically, what I'm saying, the economy was impacted in a major way because the- most of the hotels, factories, were on the north side of the island. Now you don't have them anymore. Yeah. Majority of those are now refugees.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: In- in the government, they had to build houses. You know, there are future houses like. Yeah. They had to build those houses. There was a difficult time.

Evyenia: But I think, don't you think that generated jobs?

Kyriacos: I mean, they don't cause more... So, a lot of jobs were created at that time because of the construction that needed to be taking place for- to house all the refugees,

hotels to be built. So, development started now moving to the south. Yeah. So, there were a lot of jobs created at that time.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: Not immediately after the war, but it took some time for that to happen. Because initially, refugees were living in tents and under the trees. Go ahead, Koulis.

Evyenia: Yeah. The next one is how the invasion occupation directly impacted himself and his family. So, for example, his family in the north, like, what happened to his grandparents' home and yeah. Could they still go back? That kinda stuff.

Koulis: So, my grandmother didn't want to leave. She said, I'm gonna stay here. I wanna die here. She was hiding for quite some time. The Turkish found her, and then they put her in a camp like they did with {Kyriacos' grandfather}.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Koulis: And they were just they were guards watching.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: I wouldn't call it concentration. Oh, just like a camp. It's not the same when we say with the Jewish concentration camp. I mean, yeah, they put them in an area where...

Evyenia: It was basically kinda like the ones in here, they did in the U.S. for the Japanese? Where the...

Kyriacos: Yeah. Yeah.

Koulis: Yeah. She was old in age. Now if she was young and if she was a soldier, then definitely she would be executed. But because she was old, you know, and, like, {Kyriacos' grandfather} didn't do anything to them. She just kept them there. So, the first few days they were killing the old people too

Evyenia: Wow.

Koulis: But she was hiding. But then...

Evyenia: Uh-huh.

Koulis: Yeah. She was hiding in the in the mountain. Just like in a cave or like I don't know. Like, stone caves.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Koulis: On her land in her farm.

Evyenia: Uh-huh.

Koulis: So natural caves. So, she was hiding in there. Small caves. We left. My grandpa and my aunts

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Koulis: We went to Morphou, another village in the north. I mean, not village. It's a big city, actually. And then from there, because Morphou was also occupied by Turkey, by Turkish, they moved to Galata up on the free side of the mountains on the south side of Troodos- is on the mountain. Right? Close to.

Kyriacos: Yeah. You know, we went there for- we have the tip top ice cream.

Evyenia: Oh, yeah.

Kyriacos: They were close to each other. And, and, you know, Yolanda's house is right across.

Evyenia: Uh-huh.

Kyriacos: And that was a house that was in Sina Oros. Across where Yolanda's home is

Evyenia: Oh, wow.

Koulis: So, we moved up there, my grandpa and my aunts. And then the grandmother decided she didn't wanna go because she wanna stay there, but she knew that the rest of her family went to the mountains. But she couldn't stay there because she was so sick, Turkish sent them all- sent her over to the south.

Evyenia: Oh, they just let her go? Or...

Koulis: Yeah. They sent her over. They said, you go you're too sick.

Evyenia: Uh-huh. What would they have her do there?

Koulis: She was living her life. Yeah. Is it because a lot of Greeks stayed behind, and they were just...

Evyenia: But not in her home?

Koulis: No. She was staying in the camp, yeah. For a year and a half. But sometimes, she will just sneak out and go and go to her house and go around, but she was risking her life, risking getting shot.

Kyriacos: There was an agreement initially with the president at that time, which clearly made an agreement with the Turkish to leave about, what, about 10,000? About 10,000 Greek-Cypriots to remain in their towns. But then, eventually, after, what, after a year and a half, how many years? Yeah. They threw them out.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: They send them back to the south side.

Koulis: My wife, she was with her mother in a village in the north. She was under Turkish control. She was...

Evyenia: Oh, she lived there during that?

Koulis: Yeah. She was in one of those two villages that allowed people to stay. But her father, my father-in-law, was 40 years old, and they just captured hostage and took him, like {Kyriacos' uncle}, in a Turkish prison for 3, 4 months.

Evyenia: Wow.

Kyriacos: Yeah. Yeah. Okay. What's next?

Evyenia: The next question is, did you or, like, your family ever consider leaving the country after the invasion?

Kyriacos: So, when Koulis was a little kid, it all depended on his father. His father had a government job.

Evyenia: Uh-huh.

Kyriacos: Public sector. Then he relied on that for his life, living.

Evyenia: So, they didn't consider?

Koulis: No. And all the relatives were in Cyprus. We didn't have any relatives abroad or so, you know, he had his job, the- all the family in Cyprus. So, there it wasn't something that they considered.

Evyenia: Uh-huh. And then my next question is, what is your perspective on the politics of Cyprus leading up to the invasion as well as how it has/has not been handled?

Koulis: So, every Cypriot is gonna tell you something different.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Koulis: Small country, we should have made move- movement towards becoming friends with the United States. The U.S. was considering Turkey as a stronger ally than Cyprus and more important partner.

Evyenia: Uh-huh. And maybe because Turkey is in the middle next to all the Middle East and Russia. Right?

Koulis: Oh, the dictatorship in Greece was considering if half of Cyprus is given to Turkey, then they will leave the Greek Islands in the Mediterranean, the rest of the Greek islands alone. They wouldn't bother.

Evyenia: That's- wait. What do you mean? Like, if they mess with Cyprus and that was it?

Koulis: The dictatorship in Greece, according to police, considers that by giving up half of Cyprus and Turkey, they will leave them alone, not bother with the rest of the Greek islands. The dictatorship. Yeah. Yeah.

Evyenia: So, Turkey- their objective was to have control of Cyprus. The whole island?

Kyriacos: I don't know the whole island but have control. Yeah. For Cyprus the same way they're getting involved now with Syria and Iraq and all this.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: Turkey has their hands everywhere.

Evyenia: Yeah. And then the next question is how about after the invasion, how do you consider the handling of the problem.

Koulis: So, a lot of people are saying that our politicians lost a lot of good opportunities, but we all heard that Turkey wanted everything. They would not negotiate.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Koulis: Basically, standing firm on their demands.

Evyenia: Uh-huh.

Koulis: For keeping Northern Cyprus as part of their own. Making North Cyprus part of Turkey, basically.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Koulis: Like Berlin. I don't know.

Kyriacos: If you want to add anything, that's fine. If not, we continue.

Evyenia: Yeah. What has been his reaction to the occupation of Northern Cyprus?

Kyriacos: What?

Evyenia: Just his general reaction to the occupation, not just like the invasion, but the fact that people are actually going there and settling.

Koulis: So, basically, Turkish Cypriots are not the issue. The problem is with the settlers that Turkey sent over to Cyprus.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Koulis: And the fact that there is an army there ready to attack, you feel unsafe. Yeah. That's a concern. Yeah. The fact that now Cyprus is partnering up and helping United States allowing the US troops there to because of the war in Israel, you feel a little bit more safe there because you are- it's clear that US wants to maintain control of the region and keeping Cyprus a a country that is partnering up with the United States.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: U.S. doesn't wanna lose that support.

Evyenia: I thought they were sending aid to Palestine.

Kyriacos: Who?

Evyenia: Cyprus.

Kyriacos: No.

Evyenia: They were sending- Cyprus was used as a port...

Kyriacos: Yeah.

Evyenia: ...to send food, to send supplies to the people in Palestine.

Kyriacos: Also, they help the evacuation process, taking people out of Israel and Palestine to bring them to safety in Cyprus. There are Canadian citizens, American citizens, Europeans. Cyprus was a place where people would bring them from Israel to Cyprus, keep them there, and then send them to their countries. But what Koulis is

talking about is the military assistance allowing U.S. aircraft carriers and military personnel to be stationed and use Cyprus... So, I mean, it's, aircraft I mean, warships.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: U.S. warships are allowed to enter our ports for, you know, supplies, fuel, and all that. There's a naval base, the Cypriot naval base in Cyprus, but now has expanded to allow helicopters and aircrafts to U.S. aircraft and helicopters to use and land on the base. So, there is military cooperation now between Cyprus and U.S.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: Now what Koulis is saying is to our advantage, because now you have U.S. that needs Cyprus.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: There's a good relationship. So, they will not want Turkey to take the entire island. And, you know, Turkey is another Putin, you know, right, another autocracy there and Turkey sometimes doesn't care what the United States wants. And they've done it many, many times. And so, the Greek Cypriot government is more friendly with U.S.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: So Koulis considers that as a positive.

Evyenia: Yeah.

Kyriacos: And kinda guarantees a little bit more stability knowing that Turkey- if Turkey was to try and do anything to the Greek side, US will not allow that to happen. God knows if that will actually happen.

Koulis: But yeah. So, a nephew of my wife came to the United States for training on American weapons. Military. And then U.S. is supposed to be sending American weapons to Cyprus.

Evyenia: Mhmm. Alright. The next one is well, I don't know if this is as relevant because it's- can you tell me about your time serving in the army? But I don't know if that's just the mandatory 2 years if that has anything to do with it, unless he wants to speak on that.

Koulis: I served 26 months in the army.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Koulis: And also 30 years as a reservist.

Evyenia: Oh, okay. Yeah. Yeah. Did that tie you at all to the invasion, occupation, were things like that brought up in the military or not as much?

Kyriacos: The- what?

Evyenia: Were topics like the invasion, the occupation...

Koullis: Yeah, a little bit, but it's not anything. While I was serving in the army.

Evyenia: Mhmm. Okay. My next question is how is the culture, like, vibe, I guess, of the north changed from the south or changed from what it used to be? Yeah. And and by the way, before.

Kyriacos: What question is this?

Evyenia: 26.

Koullis: They destroyed churches. 600 churches.

Evyenia: Wow. Yeah.

Koullis: Looted churches. You know, all the villages now. They have the Mosques. They're trying to destroy whatever reminds people of the Greek culture.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: Yeah. Was just sad. Yeah. Next, keep going, Evy.

Evyenia: What are your thoughts on the lasting effects of the invasion/occupation?

Koulis: I believe that we need to be patient.

Evyenia: Uh-huh.

Koulis: And since things continuously evolve Yeah. That to find that opportunity and have some sort of a resolution. Mhmm. Because if we rush today, the way things are today, the conditions, it will not be to our favor, and we potentially, we could lose the rest of Cyprus.

Evyenia: Yeah. And what is your idea of, like, a resolution? What would that look like to you?

Koulis: You know, ideally, you might say something like United States.

Kyriacos: What do you think?

Koulis: Two states with one over sort of like a federal government and two state governments.

Evyenia: Oh, I see. Yeah. Okay. Okay. And then how did the invasion change your perspective on your own life or just life in general?

Koulis: So, basically, no matter what you know, invasion, no invasion. It could be a typhoon. It could be anything. Your life can change in a- very quickly, and we need to be appreciative of what we have and be happy and live life now. Basically. In the present. In the present.

Evyenia: Right. And then what is something that you're most proud of yourself for doing or the way you acted during this time? Like, did you do something for...

Koulis: Given the fact that I started from zero...

Evyenia: Uh-huh.

Koulis: I managed to have a good family...

Evyenia: Uh-huh.

Koulis: Build my own house, have a good career...

Evyenia: Uh-huh.

Koulis: ...and doing very well.

Evyenia: Mhmm. I see.

Koulis: And now I'm retired.

Evyenia: Mhmm. Is there anyone you would say that impacted your life? Like, let's say a parent or, I don't know, a family friend that was very impactful during this time.

Koulis: No. No. My wife.

Evyenia: Were you with your wife during this time?

Koulis: No. I mean, after the war.

Evyenia: Oh, I mean, like, during that time.

Koulis: Oh, you mean during the war? My grandfather and grandmother that took care of me during that time. You know?

Evyenia: What do you think we can learn from the past, like, in terms of the invasion and the occupation?

Koulis: Yeah. Yeah. To respect others and don't fight with each other.

Evyenia: Yeah. So, you said... yeah. And then above all, like, this is a more personal question. What would you like to be remembered for? If someone's looking back on this in the next couple decades. I mean, like, let's say in 20 years from now, somebody's reading your story, what do you want them to take?

Koulis: Okay. Someone who always tried for the best and never gave up.

Evyenia: Mhmm. And has a story, not because of the world. Also, I've had challenges, you know, the medical issues I've had for years and overcoming all of that.

Kyriacos: Uh-huh. I think it's very admirable.

Evyenia: Mhmm.

Kyriacos: And the last one?

Evyenia: The last one is is there anything else you want to say that maybe wasn't covered or something you were hoping to bring up that you didn't get to.

Koulis: Oh, be patient always. And to know that there is a fair God out there that if we are doing the right thing, he's going to help us.

Evyenia: Mhmm. Yeah.

Kyriacos: One of the best friends I ever had.

Evyenia: Wow. That's nice.

Kyriacos: And or probably the person that you can always count on to be there when you need him. Be a good person, humble person, and he cares for people. So, he's very nice. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Koulis: Thanks.

Kyriacos: Yeah. You understand it and you lived some of it.

Koulis: And, you know, being part of the family and obviously, yeah, that helps to... yeah. Ask the right questions. Yeah.

Kyriacos & Evyenia: Alright, Koulis. Thank you!

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