



CYPRUS

THE WALL BEETWEEN US

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Nicosia North. The Mausoleum dedicated to the mystic Sufi Kara Baba.

- ▶ Cyprus was declared a British Crown Colony in 1925. In 1950 Archbishop Makarios III was elected president and began the Greek Cypriot campaign for *enosis*, union with Greece
- ▶ In 1956 Great Britain deported Makarios to the Seychelles in an attempt to put down the revolt. Four years later, a treaty signed between Great Britain, Greece and Turkey approved the independence of Cyprus. Its government was composed of a mix of Greek and Turkish Cypriots
- ▶ Between 1963 and 1973 the island endured a bloody civil war between Cypriots of the two Greek and Turkish ethnicities. UN peacekeepers intervened
- ▶ 1974-1976: a coup d'état was orchestrated by Athens with the support of the CIA. The pro-Greek fighter Nicos Sampson was appointed the new president. The Turkish army invaded the north with 40 thousand troops, taking possession of 37% of the territory. A wall was built that divided the island in two
- ▶ 1983: the foundation of the Democratic Republic of Cyprus and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. The latter is recognized only by Ankara and is subject to an international embargo by the United Nations



South Cyprus. View from the Lidra Street Observatory. Threatening clouds announce a storm on Nicosia.



A Greek Cypriot military post near the buffer zone, a few hundred meters from the Turkish flags.



Nicosia South. Football teams train under the ramparts of the Venetian walls.



A private club near the buffer zone.

Cyprus is a Neverland, or rather a half Neverland. While one half is Europe, the other is a geographical void. The contours of this void are demarcated on three sides by the blue of the Eastern Mediterranean, and on the fourth by a green line that a UN General plotted on a map 45 years ago with the first pen that was to hand: that pen just happened to be green.

Everything to the south of this green line is marked on the map as the Democratic Republic of Cyprus. While to the north is nothing: 3,300 square kilometers of houses and hills but no homeland, inhabitants without a passport. To compensate, it has two identities: for those who live there, it's the Turkish Republic of North Cyprus, proclaimed in 1983 and recognized only by Turkey. For the rest of the world it's considered a territory under military occupation.

That green line plotted in 1974 mutated into a wall that still stands today: a jumble of oil drums, towers, tyres, sandbags, rolls of barbed wire, low and tall walls, hedges, metal sheets and chevaux de frise barriers even on the roofs of the ancient venetian buildings. The old streets of Nicosia (Lefkoshia on the Turkish side) are effectively sliced in half by this barrier that marks the very edge of Europe.



A wall delimits the Turkish military base at Nicosia North.



North Cyprus. War Souvenirs. Abandoned tanks have become postcards.



Dervish in the deconsecrated church of Santa Caterina. In Cyprus the Sufi tradition is present, the one of Tasawwuf, which indicates a mystical dimension, less attentive to more orthodox formalisms of Islam.



An alley closed by a barricade behind the buffer zone controlled by the UN forces.



Abandoned villa in the buffer zone.



The fortifications along the buffer zone create a war scenography.



Nicosia North. Access to a gate on the Turkish military base.



A coffee shop in the area along the buffer zone. It seems that the new generations are accepting the division of the island and begin to reuse and convert the areas once abandoned.



Interior of a building along the buffer zone in Nicosia South.



North Cyprus. Mausoleum with the image of Ataturk in Famagusta.



One of the many barricades of the Greek Cypriot army in South Nicosia that delimit the buffer zone.



Dervish is the promoter of a sort of social centre in Nicosia North. He creates graffiti and organizes alternative cultural events.



A small monument in the buffer zone in memory of a Greek Cypriot militiaman who died in the fighting.



Hasan Huseyn is a fashion and advertising photographer in Istanbul. Turkish Cypriot Refugee in London during the 1974 war, he got his education in the UK capital and after he moved to Istanbul. He spends a couple of months a year in Cyprus where is building up a boutique hotel.



Monument at Ledra Street Checkpoint.



The Murales of a dancing Dervish on the wall of a palace in Nicosia North, pierced by machine gunshots.

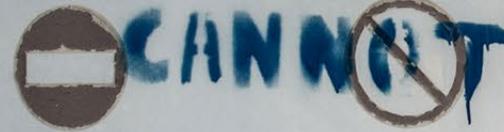


A Greek military post in the buffer zone, in Nicosia South, today looks like a scene for a war movie.



A pub near the Ledra street checkpoint. It takes its name from the most famous checkpoint in Berlin.

YOUR WALL



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