Modern Cyprus in 24 Documentaries (Online Article)

Historical Note

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Content

Modern Cyprus in 24 Documentaries

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This list attempted to collect the most noteworthy documentaries on Cyprus from the 1970s until today. The list is not exhaustive and the selected documentaries are included for having contributed, in one way or another, to a better understanding of the Cypriot experience, in the historical context they were produced.

Not all documentaries in this list are freely available. Those who are not, are arranged in this list for their documentation, as knowledge of their very existence is limited. It should be noted that a number of documentaries are not readily available in any format, and have not been included in the writing up of this list, as they couldn't be assessed. The list is organized chronologically.

Life Chances: Four Families in a Greek Cypriot Village (1973)

Language: English. Subtitles: None. Duration: 40m.

The first ethnographic film on Cyprus by Peter Loizou, Life Chances explores the lives of four Greek Cypriot families in the village of Argaκi and the changes in their modes of living with the development of agricultural production. The availability of the film is sadly limited to individuals who have institutional access to the Alexander Street online archive.

Limited Availability:
https://search.alexanderstreet.com/preview/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cvideo_work%7C1879781

Attila '74 – The Rape of Cyprus (1974)

Language: Greek, English. Subtitles: Greek, English. Duration: 141m.

Filmed in 1974 and (unsurprisingly) accused of having a clear Greek Cypriot bias, Mihalis Kakogiannis' documentary remains significant in its documentation of the events of 1974 from eye witnesses, including National Guard soldiers, members of EOKA B and notable figures such as briefly installed dictator Nikos Sampson and archbishop Makarios. Attila '74 remains to this day one of the rare occasions where the actors who actively or ideologically supported the 1974 coup appear on camera in a documentary form.

Availability: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zqjcAzKhVXA

Eventful Lives: Sophia and Her People (1985)

Language: Greek. Subtitles: English. Duration: 34m.

The second ethnographic film on Cyprus by Peter Loizou, Eventful Lives documents the experiences of a Greek Cypriot family from Argaki as refugees. Unlike his first film, narration is seldom used, leaving it to the camera to document the incidents, dialogues and experiences of the people filmed. The availability of the film is sadly limited to individuals who have institutional access to the Alexander Street online archive.

Limited Availability: https://search.alexanderstreet.com/preview/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cvideo_work%7C1879627?ssotoken=anonymous

Christopher Hitchens – Cyprus: Stranded in Time (1989)

Language: English. Subtitles: None. Duration: 49m.

Surprisingly, Christopher Hitchens produced a whole documentary on Cyprus and its conflict. The film is worth watching for its collection of testimonies, enriched by Hitchens' access to both sides of the green line, as well as the footage of 1980s Cyprus. Beyond the noteworthy character of Hitchens strolling through Cyprus, the film is notable for being one of the first non-Turkish/non-Turkish Cypriot documentaries to include information on the massacres of Turkish Cypriots in 1974.

Availability: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SGSUkHW6UT0

Women Walk Home (1989)

Language: English. Subtitles: None. Duration: 33m.

This is a relatively short documentary concerning the Women Walk Home movement, a women's movement which emerged in the late 1970s and the early 1980s in the Republic of Cyprus, peacefully protesting the division of the island by crossing the buffer zone. The movement is one of the rare cases of mass women mobilization in the Republic of Cyprus. The documentary was produced using footage by the CyBC (RIK) and was scripted by Niki Katsaouni. It was produced in the 1980s and thus documents the movement's actions of that period.

Availability: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AbMLVo6cw0M

Our Wall – Το Τείχος Μας – Duvarımız (1993)

Language: Greek, Turkish. Subtitles: Greek, Turkish, English. Duration: 105m.

This is the first bi-communal Cypriot documentary, produced through the collaboration of Panicos Chrysanthou and Niyazi Kizilyurek. A long film, it remains one of the best works on the Cyprus conflict, documenting testimonies by Greek and Turkish Cypriots of multiple generations, addressing issues of violence, displacement, pre-partitioned co-existence and nationalism. While the film received the Abdi İpekçi Peace Award, extensive criticism by nationalists from both communities rendered its availability limited internally to Cyprus upon its release. It is worth noting that Hassan and Hambou, the husband and wife whose story inspired the acclaimed film Akamas, talk on camera in Our Wall.

Very bad quality with bi-lingual subtitles: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2n9CJJDuocU

Available also on DVD: http://www.home4cooperation.info/store/product/our-wall

Η Λευκωσία Εντός Των Τειχών – Nicosia Within the Walls (2001)

Language: Greek. Subtitles: None. Duration: 57m.

This carefully narrated documentary, directed by Elias Demetriou and produced by the Greek public television channel ERT, documents the life, experiences and changes in the south walled city of Nicosia. Filmed before 2003, it remains a rare case of a documentary documenting the everyday life in the walled city of Nicosia prior to the opening of the checkpoints, as well as exploring the walled city of Nicosia as a space in-itself.

Availability: http://archive.ert.gr/6624/

ΠΥΛΑ Αυτοί που έμειναν μαζί – PYLA: Those Who Stayed Together (2003)

Language: Greek, English. Subtitles: Greek, English. Duration: 52m.

This documentary by Elias Demetriou explores the inter-communal relationships in Pyla, the mixed village largely located since 1974 in the buffer zone, under the supervision of the United Nations. The documentary was probably filmed before the opening of the checkpoints in 2003.

Availability: http://archive.ert.gr/53052/ and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KOrnXRngQj8 (Greek Subtitles), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VXB-wLEg1a8 (English Subtitles)

Dead Presumed Missing? (2003)

Language: Greek, English. Subtitles: English. Duration: 39m.

This is an emotionally charged documentary, produced by Colette Piault & Paul Sant Cassia concerning the missing Greek and Turkish Cypriots from the violence of the inter-communal violence of the 1960s and the 1974 war. Recorded while the first remains of Greek Cypriot missing people were discovered, the documentary challenged the dominant position of the Republic of Cyprus concerning the fate of the missing; and addressed the mishandling by the state of one of the most traumatic aspects of Cypriot conflict. The availability of the documentary is sadly limited.

Limited Availability: http://www.der.org/films/dead-presumed-missing.html

Η Άλλη Πλευρά – The Other Side (2003)

Language: Turkish, Greek. Subtitles: Greek, English. Duration: 54m.

The Other Side, produced in collaboration with anthropologist Yiannis Papadakis, attempted to bring the historical experiences of Turkish Cypriots to a Greek Cypriot audience. The documentary follows mainly the personal story of the poet Neşe Yaşın, accompanied by analytical comments by Papadakis.

Availability: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PcvpQZ4VJ8Y (English Subtitles), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5f2agyWHWCw (Greek Subtitles)

Parallel Trips (2004)

Language: Greek, Turkish. Subtitles: English. Duration: 70m.

“Parallel Trips (Turkish: Paralel Yolculuklar) is a 2004 Turkish-Greek-Cypriot documentary film, written, produced and directed by Derviş Zaim and Panicos Chrysanthou, in which the two directors, from opposite sides of the divided island of Cyprus, record the human dramas that unfolded during the war of 1974 and the legacy that remains today.”

Availability: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oxuInC7p6pk

Beyond the line – Greek & Turkish Cypriot Deaf (2004)

Language: French, Sign Language. Subtitles: French, Greek. Duration: 26m.

This short film addresses the experiences of deaf Greek and Turkish Cypriots in the Cyprus conflict.

Availability: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MnXJgLMO2Go

Voice of Blood (2004)

Language: Turkish, Greek. Subtitles: Greek, Turkish. Duration: 34m.

Made by Antonis Angastiniotis, this chilling documentary documents the massacres of the inhabitants of the Turkish Cypriot villages of Maratha, Santalaris and Aloda in August of 1974, through recorded testimonies of the survivors of the massacres, as well as their families. This remains possibly the hardest documentary to watch on this list, as well as one of the most exceptional. Produced by a Greek Cypriot and documenting crimes committed by his own community, Voice of Blood was attacked as treason and has remained largely unknown in the Republic of Cyprus. The documentary was also released on DVD, alongside a bi-lingual book documenting its making and the personal thoughts of Angastiniotis. Although the intro in the available version is in Turkish, the rest of the documentary has bi-lingual subtitles.

Availability:

Part 1: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gwEF9H4PChk

Part 2: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lVHfXd8ZEFg

Part 3: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ImqlsKTsM4g

Part 4: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0UGGnvUQrnw

Voice of Blood 2: Searching for Selden (2005)

Language: Turkish, Greek. Subtitles: English. Duration: 48m.

A continuation of the first documentary by Antonis Angastiniotis, Voice of Blood 2 investigates further the massacres of the Turkish Cypriots of Maratha, Santalaris and Aloda in August of 1974.

Availability:

Part 1: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dlZOHnT97VE

Part 2: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JQGp2rbtnys

Part 3: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S9txkb6kh58

Part 4: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c11nXeEbadg

Part 5: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vsz4WszqpYo

Η Περιρρέουσα Ατμόσφαιρα – The Case of the Ambient Atmosphere (2005)

Language: Greek, Turkish, English. **Subtitles:** English. **Duration:** 40m.

“In October 2004, President of the Republic Tassos Papadopoulos publicly charged that people and organizations in Cyprus were paid by the United States through UNOPS to promote the ‘yes’ vote in the referendum of 24 April 2004. For an entire month, this was the leading item on the news. At the end of this whole debate, all that was retained by public opinion was that, indeed, some people in Cyprus took money from the US in order to support the Annan plan.

The bribing of people and organizations in the period before the referendum is often cited as an argument by both journalists and politicians, as if this was an unquestionable reality. The present investigation, based on all available primary sources and an evaluation of the information broadcast by the TV channels and published in newspapers, proves that this ‘reality’ was constructed by the government’s propaganda machine, the television channels and government-friendly press.”

Availability: https://archive.org/details/perireousa-atmosfera

Cyprus: Echoes Across the Divide (2006)

Language: English. Subtitles: None. Duration: 52m.

Echoes Across the Divide explores and documents the actions of musicians and artists against the ongoing division of Cyprus, in the partitioned city of Nicosia.

Availability: https://vimeo.com/167871601

Το Δηλητήριο – The Poison (2008)

Language: Greek, Turkish, English. Subtitles: Greek. Duration: 59m.

The second documentary by Makarios Drousiotis, The Poison attempts to document the negotiations leading up the Annan Plan, as well as the diplomatic initiatives, failures and environment that surrounded it, from the election of Tasos Papadopoulos to the presidency of the Republic of Cyprus, to the failure of the Annan Plan in the referendums of 2003. The documentary makes the argument that president Papasopoulos actively worked to undermine and pass a negative vote on the proposed plan.

Availability: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-wOi4S33xKQ

Women of Cyprus (2009)

Language: English, Greek. **Subtitles:** Arabic, Hebrew, English. **Duration:** 70m.

Vasiliki Katrivanou documents Cypriot women’s meetings across the divide, as well as the first crossings of women across the buffer zone with the opening of the checkpoints in 2003. Filmed during the period of the Anan plan referendums, it also depicts pro-solution protests in north Cyprus as well as the expectations, beliefs and anticipations of women prior and after the referendums. It is possibly

the only documentary focusing on women within the Cyprus conflict.

Availability: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tejqVk9NsKk

Όνειρα σε άλλη γλώσσα – Dreams In Another Language (2010)

Language: Greek. **Subtitles:** None. **Duration:** 70m.

This documentary by Loucia Ricani explores the experiences and everyday life of the students and teachers of the Phaneromeni primary school in the south walled city of Nicosia, the most culturally and ethnically diverse primary school in the Republic of Cyprus.

Availability: https://vimeo.com/29714481

The Third Motherland (2011)

Language: English, Greek, Sanna. **Subtitles:** English. **Duration:** 54m.

The Third Motherland addresses the experiences and perceptions of the Cypriot Maronite community within the history of Cyprus and within the contemporary internal status quo of the island. It remains a rare work in addressing the broader conflict by focusing on a Cypriot community which was not involved in the active dispute and the internal fighting from the 1950s onwards.

Availability: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fd4JI7G_sj8

Birds of a Feather (2012)

Language: English, Greek, Turkish. **Subtitles:** English, Turkish, Greek. **Duration:** 41m.

“This documentary looks at the contrasting personal memories formed in a post-conflict space after decades of physical separation. As stories unravel across the island’s coffeeshops, homes, open landscapes and the UN-controlled buffer zone, the film raises questions that resonate with every frozen conflict on the notions of truth, history and victimhood while examining the need for dialogue in a seemingly perpetual conflict.”

Availability: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lmf8GBQVSnQ

Evaporating Borders (2013)

Language: Greek. **Subtitles:** English. **Duration:** 73m.

“An essay in five parts, Evaporating Borders offers a series of vignettes, poetically guided by the filmmaker’s curious eye and personal reflections. Through the people she encounters along the way, the film dissects the experience of asylum seekers in Cyprus : A PLO activist and exile from Iraq is denied asylum within 15 minutes; neo-nazi fundamentalists roam the streets in an attack on Muslim migrants; activists and academics organize an antifascist rally and clash with the neo-nazis; 195 migrants drown in the Mediterranean.” Evaporating Borders was directed by Iva Radivojevic and produced by Leandros Savvides Landon Van Soest and it appears to be currently available through Amazon.

Availability: https://www.amazon.com/Evaporating-Borders-Iva-Radivojevic/dp/B073SHPW8K/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1518046069&sr=8-1&keywords=Evaporating+Borders

Εν Ονόματι της Πατρίδος – In the Name of the Country (2014)

Language: Greek. **Subtitles:** None. **Duration:** 72m.

This documentary by Soula Hajikiriakou addresses the inter-communal violence of 1963-64, as seen and experienced by the men who took part in the fighting. The documentary consists primarily of firsthand accounts, with limited narration. The documentary aired on CyBC (RIK) and was accompanied by a live discussion.

Availability: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XUU4FPnJQYs

Discussion: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YoKf7XyLNJk

Cyprus's Songbird Massacre – The Politics of Food (2015)

Language: English. **Subtitles:** English, French. **Duration:** 26m.

As part of Munchies' 'The Politics of Food' videos, this short film explores the contestation over the illegal trapping and selling of song birds in south Cyprus. While not technically a documentary, 'Cyprus's Songbird Massacre' remains one of the few freely available films which address this topic. A much more detailed documentary on songbird trapping is Emptying the Skies (2013), which explores the illegal practice in the broader Mediterranean area; and is available on Amazon.

Availability: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=etlvWRMRPRQ

Other Notable Documentaries

To list all available documentaries would result in an endless list. We can here briefly note some worthwhile documentaries that are not included in the above list. Cyprus: Digging the Past in Search of the Future (2011), follows a bi-communal teenage group as they learn about the mission of locating and identifying the missing people of Cyprus. Sharing an Island (2011) also follows a bi-communal group as they negotiate their views and their understanding of Cypriot history and of the conflict. Both documentaries are available with English subtitles on Youtube.

Memories of Miners (Μεταλλωρύχων Μνήμες) is a documentary on the Cypriot miners of the 1930s and 1940s, with testimonies of their working conditions, their experiences and the general strike of 1948. This is perhaps the only proper documentary on the Cypriot working class. It is sadly in Greek with no subtitles and currently not available online.

Long Drive Home is in all respects an amateur documentary from 2003, but has its own little significance. The footage was filmed by a friend of an Asha refugee, as he went to the Ledra Palace checkpoint in 2003 following the announcement that crossing was now allowed. The film documents his experience of going back to the village up until the results of the referendum for the Annan plan. It remains a rare documentary in being the only one that documents exclusively the experiences and thoughts of a refugee returning back to his village on video, as the events were unfolding.

Needs Greek Translation, Needs Turkish Translation, Kontrasusta (Website), Online Articles, Decade 2010-2019, 2018, Undefined Location

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