

## The "Cyprus Troubles" 1955-1960

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**H**aving been a very minor participant in these dismal and tragic events of so many years ago, I should perhaps begin with a brief explanation of how I came to be involved. Like all young men at that time (except for the physically unfit), I had to endure two years' compulsory service in Her Majesty's Armed Forces. Now the so-called Cyprus Emergency caught the British Army unprepared in many respects, one of which was its total lack of any Greek-speakers. I had a classical background, and had dabbled a little in Modern Greek, though at that time I had never been to Greece. I therefore found myself called upon to go out to Cyprus in the early summer of 1957 and to take a crash course in Modern Greek at the British Institute in Nicosia, culminating in a rather cursory examination. I then spent the greater part of the years 1957 and 1958 as a Greek interpreter, attached firstly to the Special Branch of the Cyprus Police and later to the 1st Battalion, Royal Ulster Rifles. During this period I travelled all over the island until my release from the Army at the end of September 1958.

When I first thought of trying to write about these events, I had ideas of producing a fully documented account of the political and diplomatic history of the period. But I soon came to realise that this would be impossible within the confines of one single and relatively short paper. And so I have limited myself to what I know best, that is the actual events that took place in the island of Cyprus in those years, and which were known at the time as the "Cyprus Emergency", or the "Cyprus troubles" (*φασαρίες* in Greek). This paper will *not* be an account of my own experiences, though inevitably, my views after more than thirty-four years are still very heavily coloured and influenced by my experiences at the time. However, there is one fundamental point I should emphasize, which I suppose will surprise no one: this is the fact that everyone concerned in this miserable conflict comes out of it badly, and every side told lies,

many of which are faithfully reproduced in the various subsequent books on the subject.

I should like to begin with a quotation, which I owe to Nancy Crawshaw's very detailed book entitled *The Cyprus Revolt*:

I know little of the history of Cyprus. I think there was a short while ago some reference to its having belonged to Greece. It was my impression that it had at least some cultural connections with Greece, but that it had never, in fact, been under Greek rule, though it may once have been held to have some allegiance to Turkey.

This was actually a Belgian delegate to the Council of Europe in 1954, though it could so easily have come from the mouth of one of those set in authority over the people of Cyprus in the nineteen-fifties. The island of Cyprus first came under British rule in the year 1878, as a result of the Cyprus Convention between Great Britain and Turkey which was secretly concluded at the Congress of Berlin in that year. Originally the island was to be administered by the British while formally remaining a part of the Ottoman Empire. But in 1881 supervision was transferred from the Foreign Office to the Colonial Office, and in 1914 Cyprus was annexed by Britain on the outbreak of war with Turkey. The first fifty years of British rule were largely uneventful: roads were built, hospitals were established, malaria was eliminated, scientific forestry in the mountain ranges was encouraged, agriculture and industry began to recover from the centuries of stagnation under Ottoman rule. But the political destiny of Cyprus was very largely left in the hands of the colonial rulers.

A Legislative Council had been established in 1882, consisting of a mixture of elected members and colonial civil servants, but, as was frequently pointed out by the Cypriots, they had less control over their affairs than in many a colony where the standard of educational, economic and political development was very much lower than in Cyprus. Throughout all these years there was really only one significant issue in Cyprus politics, and this was the demand for ENOSIS or union with Greece. The passionate desire of the majority population for union with the mother country was always there, and had been recognised at various times by such notable figures as both Gladstone and

Churchill. But the feeling lay largely dormant until 1931, when by far the most serious demonstrations in favour of ENOSIS took place in Cyprus. A march on Government House resulted in a riot, and the Governor's Residence was burned down: troops were sent in from Egypt, the Bishops of Kition and Kyrenia were deported, political parties were banned, the Constitution was suspended, and the flying of the Greek flag was forbidden.

Throughout the 'thirties and the years of the Second World War Cyprus remained something of a backwater, but when the Labour Government came to power in 1945 it was anxious to bring about representative government in Cyprus after fourteen years of direct rule. Plans were laid for an elected legislature and for economic, social and political progress leading to self-government; but these were abandoned in August 1948 in the face of very strong opposition. Archbishop Leontios had in 1947 proclaimed that the solution to the Cyprus problems was "ENOSIS and only ENOSIS". His views were echoed by his successor Makarios II, who in 1949 laid the plans for the church plebiscite on the question of union with Greece. This was carried out under the auspices of the Bishop of Kition, Michael Mouskos, who succeeded to the Archbishopric in 1950 as Makarios III. 96% of the population voted in favour of ENOSIS, after which the campaign for union with Greece was very strongly and significantly stepped up.

At various times in the early nineteen-fifties, Lieutenant Colonel Georgios Grivas returned to his native island of Cyprus. Grivas was notorious as the one-time leader of the extreme nationalist and anti-communist organisation "Chi", at the end of the Second World War: he had been retired from the Greek Army with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, and had tried unsuccessfully to enter Greek politics. He met Archbishop Makarios for the first time in Cyprus in July 1951, and returned in 1952, when he recruited as his leading supporter Andreas Azinas, the Secretary General of PEK, the Farmers' Trade Union. Grivas then made a thorough reconnaissance of the island. Arms and ammunition were smuggled into Cyprus from Greece over the next couple of years, and in October 1954 Grivas finally left his home in Athens, entering Cyprus illicitly and moving to a secret address in the outskirts of Nicosia. In January 1955 Grivas met Makarios in the Bishop's House at Larnaca: Makarios was able to tell him that Marshal Papagos, the Greek Prime Minister,

was now fully in sympathy with their as yet undeclared aim of achieving ENOSIS by means of violence against the colonial rulers. It was at this point that it was decided to call their now fully-fledged organisation by the name of EOKA (Ἐθνικὴ Ὀργάνωσις Κυπρίων Ἀγωνιστῶν – National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters). On 28 March Makarios gave his blessing to the struggle, and it was on the night of 31 March/1 April 1955 that the first island-wide acts of EOKA violence took place. The radio transmitter in Nicosia was blown up, the Secretariat was damaged, two police stations in Limassol were attacked, and in Larnaca the law courts, Police Headquarters and the District Commissioner's Office were all bombed. Responsibility for all these attacks was claimed by EOKA in leaflets bearing, for the first time, the name of the leader DIGHENIS, the cunningly chosen pseudonym of Georgios Grivas.

The British authorities, as so often in their various colonial trouble spots, were very largely taken by surprise. The Governor, Sir Robert Armitage, was a career colonial civil servant and ill-equipped to deal with a military emergency, and the British Army in Cyprus was then scarcely more than the conventional small-sized peace-time garrison. Further EOKA bombings followed in the months of May and June, and a large-scale campaign was begun in order to scare and intimidate Greek Cypriot members of the Police and other "collaborators", as EOKA regarded them. Two policemen named Koskopoulos and Poullis were murdered by EOKA, and for the latter crime a young man called Michael Karaolis was arrested. EOKA now began to attack Turkish Cypriot policemen, and the "Cyprus is Turkish" organisation, formed in 1954, began to demand that if Cyprus were to be given up by the British, it should become a part of Turkey. On 30 June the Prime Minister, Sir Anthony Eden, went back on his previous determination to keep Greece and Turkey out of the Cyprus dispute, and invited Greek and Turkish representatives to London to discuss the problem. A tripartite conference opened in London on 29 August, which ended in failure and the rejection of the British proposals by both the Greek and Turkish sides. During the conference violence intensified in Cyprus, and on 17 September the British Institute in Nicosia was set on fire and destroyed.

On 25 September Armitage was replaced as Governor by Field-Marshal Sir John Harding, the retiring Chief of the

Imperial General Staff. Harding's instructions were first and foremost to restore order, but also to leave the door open for negotiations with local leaders. The Archbishop had announced a plan to launch a passive resistance campaign, but on 30 September he surprised everyone by expressing his willingness to meet the new Governor. Harding and Makarios met the day after the Governor's arrival, but their initial talks broke down and Grivas launched a new EOKA offensive. The new Governor was given far wider powers than his predecessor: he took over direction of security operations, and the military forces at his disposal were enormously expanded and reinforced. Three hundred policemen of all ranks came out from Great Britain to strengthen the police, restore their morale, and weed out EOKA sympathisers. Troops were now to be trained in riot-control and crowd-breaking, and police stations were henceforth to be securely protected by the Army. By the end of the year (1955) there were nine infantry battalions on the island, and the security forces now totalled up to about fifteen thousand men.

In October Karaolis was tried for the murder of P.C. Poullis, was found guilty and sentenced to death: his appeal was turned down by the Cyprus Supreme Court on 14 November. This gave rise to riots by school-children in Nicosia, and their dispersal by troops using batons and tear-gas. (The use of children came to be a very significant element in Grivas's strategy.) EOKA violence was stepped up even further: five servicemen were killed in one week, two of whom died in an ambush directed by Grivas himself. Special courts were now set up and new judges brought into Cyprus from the U.K., and on 26 November a state of emergency was proclaimed. Troops were put on active service, the death penalty was extended to cover crimes such as bomb throwing and the discharge of firearms; deportation, censorship and the imposition of collective punishments were all now introduced. The Archbishop condemned the emergency measures, and compared British rule to Fascism. EOKA violence continued to escalate: a bomb intended for Harding went off in the Ledra Palace Hotel, a gunman called Andreas Demetriou was arrested for trying to kill an Englishman in Famagusta, bombing and ambushes increased, and on 4 December the first collective punishment was imposed on the village of Lefkoniko. Everywhere security operations were intensified, and on 8

December twenty-four monasteries were surrounded by troops and searched with mine detectors.

Churches and monasteries were now turned upside down by the security forces looking for weapons and ammunition, though very little was found. It had long been suspected that EOKA operations were being directed from a base in the Troodos mountains, where terrorist hideouts were increasingly to be located on the hillsides, and early in December strong military reinforcements from the Gordon Highlanders and the Royal Marine Commandos were moved into the area. Harding did not increase his popularity by deciding in December to arrest over a hundred left-wingers and to ban AKEL, the neo-communist party, which had consistently opposed EOKA violence and terrorism. On 11 December the first murder of a Turkish Cypriot took place when a Turkish policeman was shot dead in Paphos by four EOKA gunmen. Turkish riots ensued, but Dr. Kutchuk, the Turkish community leader, appealed for calm and Turkish feelings were contained.

During the winter curfews and cordons and searches of villages were steadily intensified, and in the towns school disruptions increased markedly as more schools were closed down and secondary education virtually came to an end. Confrontations frequently revolved around the illegal display of the Greek flag, which Harding regarded as an intolerable affront, showing as so often little understanding of Greek susceptibilities. Nevertheless Makarios and Harding had met again on 21 November, and talks between them dragged on until 3 March 1956. Harding had presented a £38 million development plan, which involved the acceptance of limited self-government, leading to a possibility of self-determination in the future.

Makarios rejected the proposals, and again EOKA violence increased. On 15 February 1956 the Colonial Secretary Alan Lennox-Boyd flew in for further discussions with Harding and Makarios, but these made no headway; and on 9 March the British authorities tried their most drastic expedient yet. Makarios was suddenly arrested on the plane which was about to fly him to Athens, and was deported to the islands of Seychelles, along with the extremist Bishop Kyprianos of Kyrenia. A one-week general strike followed in Cyprus, and a bomb was placed under Harding's bed by an EOKA agent who had been employed as a servant at Government House. The bomb

failed to ignite, since the mechanism had been set at too high a temperature to allow for the Governor's very English habit of sleeping with the windows wide open.

Grivas was now in sole command of EOKA activities and nearly five hundred acts of violence took place during the months of March and April. Large-scale operations against EOKA were undertaken in the Troodos and Kyrenia mountains, and on 10 May Michael Karaolis and Andreas Demetriou were both hanged in Nicosia Central Prison. The very next day Dighenis announced a savage retribution for the hangings: two British soldiers, Private Ronald Shilton and Corporal Gordon Hill, had been "executed" by EOKA in reprisal. A wave of violence followed, and Turkish Cypriots became increasingly involved in strife with the Greeks. For the first time a barbed wire barricade was erected in Nicosia to separate the two communities in times of inter-communal trouble.

During the summer security operations in the Troodos mountains were again intensified. Grivas was tipped off by his agents in the police and escaped to the Paphos Forest, but two of his group leaders and seventeen other EOKA gunmen were captured. Grivas kept constantly on the move, and for the rest of the Emergency made use of two hideouts in the Limassol area. Grivas also declared the first of his tactical truces on 16 August, giving EOKA a breathing space and a much needed opportunity for regroupment and rebuilding its forces. At the time he refused Harding's offer of either a conditional amnesty or the opportunity of free passes to Greece for all members of EOKA. On 29 August EOKA resumed hostilities with a bomb explosion in Larnaca, and on the 31st one of its outstanding figures, Polykarpos Georgatzis, escaped from Nicosia General Hospital after a gun battle in which four people were killed. By this time fifteen hundred paratroops had been flown out to Cyprus: these were to be used both for operations in Cyprus and in preparation for the calamitous invasion of Egypt, the "Suez adventure" that took place in October. It was during this period that the British Government first released extracts from what were said to be the diaries of Grivas, found by the troops in screw-top jars buried near the village of Lysi. The diaries were said to give full details of the setting up of EOKA and to provide overwhelming evidence of Makarios's complicity in its activities from the very beginning.

After the Suez debacle, which had drastically slowed down operations against EOKA, Harding once again had many more troops at his disposal for a full-scale onslaught. Thirty-four people had died in November, and EOKA's victims included the Assistant Commissioner of Troodos, Douglas Williamson; a young journalist called Angus Macdonald who had only just arrived in Cyprus; and Dr Charles Bevan, a doctor who had devoted most of his medical career to the people of Cyprus. Even sterner penalties were introduced for acts of terrorism, and (whether or not as a result of this) violence declined sharply during the winter. Grivas however became obsessed with the thought of treachery amongst EOKA's ranks and eleven Greek Cypriots were shot dead during the month of December, mostly in village coffee-shops. The Minister of Defence, Duncan Sandys, had now visited Cyprus and concluded that the whole of the island was no longer needed as a military base, in firm contradiction of Eden's previously held beliefs. In December the distinguished judge, Lord Radcliffe, announced his proposals for the future government of Cyprus. He had made two visits to the island during the year, and his plan envisaged a constitution that accepted the principle of self-determination, but provided for local internal self-government, leaving defence, foreign affairs and internal security in the hands of the British administration (at least for the time being).

The Radcliffe proposals were immediately rejected by Greece, and soon afterwards by Turkey; Makarios too was eventually to dismiss the Radcliffe Plan from his exile in Seychelles. In the first few months of 1957 the security forces had a number of successes: an energetic new G.O.C. had been appointed, Major-General "Joe" Kendrew, and EOKA cells in the towns and villages were now being cleaned up as a result of much improved intelligence. One leading EOKA terrorist, Markos Drakos, was shot dead, whilst Polykarpos Georgatzis was recaptured: the journalist Nikos Sampson was caught in hiding near the village of Dhali and arrested for the murder of a British policeman. On 3 March Grivas's second-in-command Gregoris Afxentiou was encircled with his followers in a hideout near the monastery of Makhairas. He ordered his men to surrender, and although wounded Gregoris Afxentiou stayed on to fight alone with one follower, Avgoustis Efstathiou, who had been sent back by the British forces to tell Afxentiou to surrender.



They continued to shoot it out for eight hours, and at last explosives were used and petrol was poured down the hideout. Efsthathiou was forced out, and the hideout became a blazing inferno which could not be reached by the troops until the next morning. Afxentiou's charred body was found by the soldiers with a bullet wound through the head. His death was an example of outstanding and conspicuous bravery, and was possibly the only piece of genuine heroism during the whole of the Cyprus Emergency. (Incidentally, I got to know Afxentiou's father quite well over a year later, during cordons and searches of Afxentiou's native village of Lysi.)

The success of the security forces and EOKA's heavy losses led Harding to recommend the release of Makarios from the Seychelles. This was done on 28 March: at the same time much pressure had been put on Grivas by the Greek Government, and he had reluctantly agreed to a cease-fire on 14 March. Makarios arrived in Athens to a tremendous welcome on 17 April, and as the cease-fire got under way restrictions in the island were gradually eased. EOKA violence now died down altogether, though once again a period of truce was used for consolidation, while the security forces during the spring and summer launched a major operation in search of Grivas, culminating in a fifty-four day curfew of the village of Milikouri just to the south of Kykko Monastery.

The euphoria resulting from the release of Makarios did not last for long. During the spring and summer of 1957 EOKA refrained from militant action, while pouring forth a constant stream of threatening and intimidating leaflets. Several prisoners had died after interrogation, and EOKA propaganda made the most of these incidents and examples of atrocities by the army during cordon and search operations. In May Nikos Sampson was acquitted of the murder of a British policeman, but re-arrested on a charge of carrying firearms and sentenced to death. His sentence was later commuted to life imprisonment, as was that of Michael Rossides for the murder of Private Shilton in 1956. Sampson was of course to become notorious as the "President" of Cyprus for several days in July 1974 after the military coup which overthrew Makarios and led to the Turkish invasion of the island.

During the summer and early autumn of 1957 EOKA continued to re-group and for the first time formed anti-Turkish sections,

making plans for the defence of Greek villages against possible Turkish attacks. The Turks were concerned enough about this to form a new underground movement known as TMT, the Turkish Defence Organisation. EOKA also used violence against AKEL and the few remaining mukhtars, or village headmen: its new youth organisation, ANE, was active in recruiting and making propaganda, and it was decided to have a huge show of strength on "Ochi" day, 28 October. Violent clashes broke out for the first time since the cease-fire, coinciding with the departure of Sir John Harding as Governor after his two-year appointment came to an end. Harding was replaced by Sir Hugh Foot, previously Governor of Jamaica, who had also been Colonial Secretary in Cyprus in very different circumstances from 1943 to 1945. Foot had a very strong reputation as a liberal, which caused apprehension amongst the Turkish population and near apoplexy amongst some elements in the British administration. He was also deeply suspect to Colonel Grivas, who despised politicians and administrators with liberal pretensions, and feared that Foot was intending to seek out "moderates" in both communities in order to impose the Radcliffe Constitution.

The new Governor set out at once to create a good image: he announced his willingness to see any Cypriots who wished to talk to him, he visited villages on horseback and talked to the people in coffee-shops, he called on the strongly nationalist Mayor of Nicosia, Dr Dervis, he lit a candle to peace in an Orthodox Church. He appealed to Grivas to give him a credit of time, and made a special Christmas gesture of releasing a hundred detainees. The ever distrustful Grivas responded with a call for a boycott of all British goods, accompanied by widespread sabotage. At the same time EOKA stepped up its attacks on communists and left-wing activists: AKEL had now come out in favour of independence for Cyprus, and EOKA's war against leftists steadily increased in brutality, with ever more killings; culminating in the murder in Lefkoniko, on 23 May 1958, of Savvas Menakas, a left-wing trade-unionist. Menakas was tied to a tree and slowly beaten to death, in full view of his wife and the assembled villagers. Perhaps this incident more than any other during the Emergency illustrates the full horror and inhumanity of EOKA's behaviour towards its own fellow countrymen.

The campaign of sabotage continued during the spring of 1958, though there was not yet a return to the full-scale violence of the earlier years. But it was clear that the long cease-fire was now at an end. The British intensified their pursuit of Grivas, and in May Operation Kingfisher was launched in the Southern Troodos Mountains, in the most determined attempt yet to capture the EOKA leader. However, the most significant event during these months was the decisive intervention by Turkey in the Cyprus conflict. While Foot and Selwyn Lloyd, the Foreign Secretary, were attending a Conference in Ankara in January, riots by thousands of militant pro-partition Turkish youths broke out in Nicosia, resulting in the deaths of seven Turks at the hands of the security forces. This was a higher number of deaths than ever occurred in any Greek-instigated riot during the Emergency. The Turkish-Cypriot leadership was now totally committed to partition of the island, and did little to discourage its young extremists. Turkish activists were incited to further action by rumours of a forthcoming massacre at the hands of the Greeks, and inter-communal violence now began on a hitherto undreamt-of scale. In two months, fifty-six Greeks and fifty-three Turks had died. Greeks were driven from the largely Turkish suburb of Omorphita, most of the Greek dwellings in Lefka were burned down, and most horrific of all was the so-called massacre of Geunyeli in June. Thirty-five Greek Cypriot suspects were arrested by the army and dropped from motor vehicles near the Turkish village of Geunyeli, where they were summarily commanded to walk home. Turks from the village were waiting in ambush, and of the Greeks who had been left to the mercy of the villagers four were killed on the spot and four more died later from their injuries.

As inter-communal violence escalated throughout the summer of 1958, the British Government once again launched a plan for the future of Cyprus. This was known as the Macmillan Plan, based on proposals the Prime Minister had worked out with the Governor, and was proclaimed throughout the island on 19 June. It involved the deferment of a final solution to the Cyprus problem for seven years, with the introduction of separate municipalities for the Greek and Turkish communities. There was to be a ruling Council consisting of the Governor, four Greek and two Turkish Cypriots, and representatives from the Greek and Turkish governments. All Cypriots were to be entitled

to either Greek or Turkish nationality, as well as British. The plan was very quickly rejected by the Greek Government and by Makarios, and was received with no enthusiasm by a Turkish Government which was still pressing hard for partition. In July EOKA's campaign against the Turks reached its highest point: inter-communal violence was raging all over the island, and every day brought news of pointless and indiscriminate murders in one community followed immediately by savage revenge killings on the other side.

In the late summer inter-communal strife died down to a large extent, to be succeeded by ever increasing EOKA attacks on the security forces and on Greek civilians. In August EOKA gunned down and killed Colonel Frederick Collier at his home in Limassol, and Sergeant Reginald Hammond as he walked through the village of Ayios Dhometios with his two-year-old son. Nine civilians and four policemen also died during this month, while over two thousand Cypriots were detained on the order of the Governor; and the most massive series yet of cordon and search operations was launched in the villages. During the month of July there had been two particularly notorious incidents involving the security forces. In the village of Akhyritou two Greek Cypriots were killed after an attack on troops patrolling the village, and in the neighbouring village of Avgorou two of the inhabitants were shot dead by the Royal Horse Guards during a riot in which twenty-three soldiers and about fifty villagers were injured. EOKA's reprisal was to shoot and kill two British soldiers from that very same regiment in a shop in Famagusta three days later.

At this point I should like to depart briefly from my usual rule of self-effacement and quote from a letter I wrote to my parents at about the time of the above incidents:

After the events of the last four days I can hardly wait to get away from here. After the Avgorou shootings things have got worse and worse and resulted in the climax of today's shooting in Famagusta. I seem to be in a minority of one: at least the R.U.R.'s [that was the regiment I was attached to as interpreter] have got the "action" they have wanted for so long. I don't really know where to start, so I will begin with the freshest news. Shortly after the shooting in Hermes St. this morning I was rushed down to the scene of the crime by the Intelligence Officer, after an immediate curfew and road blocks had been

put into operation. The shooting took place in a grocer's shop and the general theory at the moment is that it was done from a passing car and not from the building opposite which is a so-called musical and literary club: anyway two grenades were allegedly found there, so when I arrived two platoons from "B" Company and the R.U.R. riot squad were smashing up every single thing in the place: books, cups and plates, chairs, tables, furniture, mirrors, etc. (damage estimated at £2,000), everyone except me thoroughly enjoying themselves, especially the R.U.R. officers of course, one of whom said to me he hadn't enjoyed himself so much in years, and didn't today's events make me change my mind? It's useless trying to argue with such people or get them to say what good such goings on do, or even to convince them that I don't like people getting shot any more than they do. I feel I can just about restrain myself for my remaining time out here and certainly no longer. To keep up the farcical pretence of no ill-treatment, etc., everyone in authority has perjured themselves again and again: and any attempt by me or anyone else to tell the truth could never succeed, short of taking it to the United Nations. This is chiefly apropos of what happened last night at one of the worst villages in the Famagusta area: "B" Company went in strength to search coffee-shops, together with myself and a U.K. police sergeant: they were determined to be tough in advance and show the village what the R.U.R. were capable of, since a small patrol had recently been chased out by the locals. So they started proceedings (at least the officers did and the other ranks soon followed suit) by throwing chairs at people in order to get them into the coffee-shops: when people refused to take down slogans they got bashed around with batons until they did, and even then the majority still refused. You can of course get away with anything in this country as long as you don't leave any bruises, but just "poke people around a bit". Later in the proceedings, it was *our* side that threw stones through windows. Much worse things than this happen in Cyprus, but I have just about seen enough of it. During all this the local priest telephoned the Famagusta police to complain about the rough stuff, so before long the District Superintendent came along to investigate: not that he is really concerned about it. The Company Commander swears that no ill-treatment took place, or if so he never saw any: he asks his officers if there was, and they in turn ask their N.C.O.s, all of whom blandly say that they never saw anything, which is the usual form out here. It is just the same with looting: at the very same time as he stuffs something in his own pocket an officer reminds his men with a

wink that looting is one of the severest offences known to the Army, and they shouldn't forget the 11th commandment. All this brings me back to the point I made about Sir Hugh Foot in my last letter: either he is unbelievably stupid, if all his underlings have managed to keep such things secret from him, or he is the biggest hypocrite ever, if he knows about it and at the same time harps on his liberalism and his wish for a just settlement.

September 1958 opened with another truly horrendous incident in the village of Liopetri, to the south of Famagusta, where a battle took place that was compared by many to the epic resistance of Gregoris Afxentiou eighteen months earlier. Four EOKA gunmen were cornered by the Army in a barn and fought a gun-battle against enormous odds for three hours. Finally the barn was set on fire with petrol and the EOKA men were killed as they came out. Other grim events followed in September, and these led up to what was perhaps the most notorious episode during the whole of the Emergency. This was the killing on 3 October in a street in Famagusta of Mrs Catherine Cutcliffe, the wife of a British Army Sergeant. After the murder the troops went on the rampage: at least a thousand Cypriots were rounded up and the majority were severely beaten. Several of them died, including a thirteen-year-old girl, and a forty-eight-hour curfew was imposed on the whole island. Grivas had issued a leaflet threatening to hit indiscriminately at every single English person, but for once EOKA disclaimed responsibility and the killers were never found.

Here I should like to quote very briefly from another letter, not one of my own this time, but a letter to me from a good friend in the army who stayed on in Cyprus for another year after I had left. My friend wrote as follows about the Cutcliffe incident:

After you left, things got particularly bloody and disgusting: what happened the day Mrs Cutcliffe got knocked defies description, there was wholesale rape and looting and murder. Two men were beaten to death by the Grenadiers in the "Snakepit" in Karaolos, four more died in Varosha, and a thirteen year old girl was raped and killed in a cage in 51 Brigade, also a ten year old boy was strangled by a Company Sergeant Major in the Military Police. It appears that the R.U.R. did not kill anyone: it was not for want of trying, though. That night I came closer to insanity than I ever was before: I

went and sat in the garden of the Commissioner's house and tried to escape from the mess in town, but even from there, I could hear the screaming in the Police Station and in Varosha...

Shortly after the Cutcliffe shooting, General Kendrew (who had recently survived an assassination attempt) was replaced as G.O.C. by Major-General Kenneth Darling. Darling had a "fire and brimstone" image, and a nose for publicity: amongst his innovations was an offer for the first time to British civilians of firearms for their own defence. Under Darling's command the Army had some signal successes, such as the blowing-up of the EOKA gunman Kyriakos Matsis in a hideout near Dhikomo in November, but Darling's claim to have broken the back of EOKA was still a long way from the truth. Nevertheless there was now increasing pressure on Grivas from Makarios, from the Greek Government, and from the United Nations; and after Foot had reprieved two EOKA gunmen on the eve of execution, Grivas declared a cease-fire on Christmas Eve of 1958.

The Greek and Turkish Foreign Ministers met several times in January 1959, and in February they met again in Zurich with their respective Prime Ministers. By now the British Government was content to take a back seat and leave the major parties to the dispute to work out some kind of compromise solution, provided that Britain could keep its sovereign bases in an independent Cyprus. And so, after almost four years of bitter struggle, the cause of ENOSIS was lost and the conflict was about to come to an end. The so-called Zurich agreement was signed on 11 February, to be followed by the Lancaster House Conference where Makarios and Kutchuk led the Greek and Turkish Cypriot delegations, and EOKA as such was not represented. A settlement was reached on 19 February, with provision for independence for Cyprus within the Commonwealth, with a Greek President and a Turkish Vice-President, each with their own Council of Ministers and with separate communal chambers for the two communities. Makarios returned to Cyprus on 1 March 1959, and the out-witted and out-maneuvred Grivas left the island on 17 March (though he was of course to return just over four years later). Implementation of all the arrangements necessary for independence from British rule took another seventeen months; and finally, on 16 August 1960, the new

Republic of Cyprus came into being, with a Constitution that satisfied no one, and, as everybody knows, that was to be the beginning of yet another (and as yet unfinished) chapter in the tragic and turbulent history of Cyprus.

The Cyprus situation was unlike any other in Britain's troubled post-war colonial history, in that the object of the struggle was not independence but union with another country which the majority population regarded as the motherland. EOKA was from the outset a ruthless and fanatically dedicated organisation, whose direction (at least after the deportation of Makarios) was entirely in the hands of its leader, Georgios Grivas. Grivas gives little away in his writings about EOKA's intelligence and security networks, but there can be little doubt that these were consistently superior to their British equivalents. In spite of their massive military strength and considerable use of agents and informers, the British could not infiltrate the local population, let alone win their hearts and minds (to borrow a phrase from a later conflict); and they never fully succeeded in breaking the network of EOKA cells in the towns and villages. In the latter part of the Emergency, the use of Turkish extremists was actively encouraged by the British authorities: Turkish Cypriots were now recruited into the Auxiliary Police and above all into a police body known as the Mobile Reserve, which contained the most blood-thirsty band of thugs the present writer has ever had the misfortune to encounter.

It is not going too far to say that amongst the British there was a dislike of the local population that sometimes amounted to hatred. The belief that "Wogs begin at Calais" was certainly endemic amongst the British authorities in Cyprus in the nineteen-fifties. There were of course exceptions to this, as in any imperial or colonial situation, but there was little or no understanding of the historical circumstances which had given rise to the passionate desire for ENOSIS on the part of the majority population. If only this feeling had been understood, and the nettle of ENOSIS had been grasped at a much earlier stage of colonial rule; but the Cyprus tragedy is over-full of "if onlys", and "might have beens".

It may be that the British were no worse, if certainly no better, than any other colonial power in human history; and no ruling power can be expected to love an opponent when constantly



faced with the prospect of being blown up by a bomb or being shot in the back. And I cannot stress too highly the sheer savagery, brutality and viciousness of Grivas and the assassins of EOKA. Like their Irish counterparts today, they had no conscience or compunction whatever about who they might kill in pursuit of their political and nationalist aims. But there was nonetheless a strong element of arrogance, insensitivity and sheer xenophobia in the British attitude to their colonial subjects in Cyprus which is very hard to forgive or to justify. The military authorities showed no appreciation whatever of the complex history and many-sided culture of Cyprus: "this horrible bloody little island", my battalion commander used to say at every opportunity. One of my most excruciating experiences during the summer of 1958 was that of accompanying the regimental band as it marched through the villages of the Famagusta area. The sound of the pipes and drums was supposed to impress the inhabitants with the power of the British military machine; this was known as "showing the flag", or "letting the wogs know who is boss".

In case I may be accused of exaggeration on this point, I should like to call as a witness someone of infinitely more eminence than myself: that person is no less an authority than Sylvia Foot, the wife of the Governor, Sir Hugh Foot. In her book *Emergency Exit* (published in 1960), Lady Foot speaks of some of the people in authority in the Cyprus of the late nineteen-fifties as follows:

Many of them were embittered to the point of personal hate against the Cypriots. Many of them were contemptuous and vengeful against the very people whom they were here to serve.

Obviously not all the fault lay on the British or on any one side: the degree of obstinacy and stupidity on all sides in the Cyprus conflict of the nineteen-fifties is extremely hard to credit now that more than thirty years have elapsed since independence. Towards the end of my time in Cyprus I was thoroughly sick of the sight of the Greeks, the Turks, and the British: whenever possible I would seek out the very agreeable company of the Armenian community in Cyprus. The Armenians had suffered more savagely than any other people during this century, at

least until the Holocaust: and they took care to keep very well clear of the Cyprus conflict. "A place of arms" was how Disraeli described the island of Cyprus in 1878, and so it remains today. The Cyprus situation is without any doubt one of the great tragedies of the 20th century, and one which (more than thirty years after the end of British rule) continues very sadly to be as far as ever from a permanent solution.

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