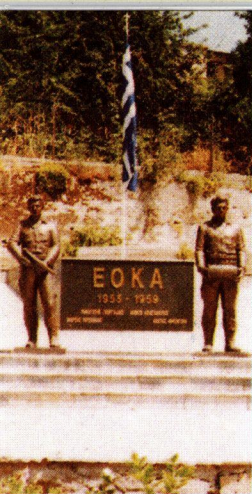


The holocaust at Kourdali



THE HEROES' MONUMENT AT SPILIES-KOURDALI



In the hard but proud years of the struggle for freedom of Cyprus, the small villages of Spilia and Kourdali were the scenes of two important events:

- The first EOKA battle against the British on 11th December 1955, at the site of the hideout of EOKA leader Dhigenis; and

- One of the most tragic accidents of the struggle on 20th June 1958. Four fighters gave up their flesh and blood to the chalice of history, to enable the generation of the

struggle and all those that followed and are still to come to join in Holy Communion.

On that hot day of 20th June 1958, a powerful explosion shattered the quiet of the villages, which were described by a British officer who was involved in the historic battle of 1955 as "**the heart of EOKA**".

The home of freedom fighter Andreas Patsalides was destroyed in the explosion. He and his fellow fighters Costas Anaxagora from Spilia, Panayiotis Georgiades from Livadia and Alecos Constantinou from Kakopetria and raised in Famagusta, were blown to pieces and fragments of their flesh were flung as far as the surrounding fields.

The four men had come to the fateful house on that day out of a sense of duty to the homeland, which all four held to be "nobler and more sacred" than anything else.

Panayiotis Georgiades and Alecos Constantinou (as is described on page 576 of "The Chronicle of the EOKA Struggle" by its leader Dhigenis) set out from Livadia for Kourdali on the orders of Spilia sector commander Christakis Tryfonides in order to build a hideout at Patsalides's house. They carried with them two 14-pound bombs to be used to blow up Platania forest station, two batteries, wires and a device to make a "pressure mine". All this was to be delivered to Costas Anaxagora.

The explosion occurred, in unknown circumstances, during training in the use of the locally manufactured materials.

Fortunately, Patsalides's wife, with their small daugh-



The home of Andreas Patsalides immediately after the explosion

ter Maria in her arms, had sat outside the room where the four men were sitting. She had moved away so that she would not overhear their conversation, as the rules of the struggle dictated. This saved her life and that of her child.

As soon as the debris from the explosion had settled, the brave wife had the calmness and readiness of spirit to urge her sister and the fellow fighters who quickly gathered at the scene to gather up any weapons that were left. "At least we saved the guns" she was to say later in an interview.

The tragedy at Kourdali bears witness both to the conditions under which the Struggle was fought and the lack of ammunition, which the fighters tried to supplement with roughly made improvised supplies made by the freedom fighters themselves. It also tells of the heroic spirit, the readiness to sacrifice and the absolute commitment of the young men and women to the idea of freedom and the homeland.

The British transferred the dismembered bodies of the fighters to Nicosia General Hospital, where scores of relatives and fellow fighters from their places of birth hastened the following day to collect them.

Indicative of the spirit of the Struggle and the tributes



The interior of the house

paid to the four fighters were the massive demonstrations that followed their sacrifice.

The bodies were received from the hospital and the funerals took place in an unprecedented atmosphere of patriotic and fighting feeling.

These are some typical descriptions in the press of the time:

"Scenes of extraordinary emotion took place at the time of delivery of the dead, on whose bodies the Greek sisters of the hospital laid wreaths on behalf of the medical and administrative staff.

One nurse made a valedictory speech to the dead men. "Your names," said the nurse, "will be recorded on the list of martyrs to the liberation struggle of the Greek-Cypriot people, who with a sense of pride reveal themselves before your sacrifice, heroic children of the motherland".

On the young Greek sisters' wreath was written:

With great courage the struggle you are leaving

To your memories tributes are due

And my muse in deep sorrow and grieving

Sheds a tear that is bitter and true

In an atmosphere of deep mourning friends and fellow villagers accompanied the funeral procession as it left Nicosia at about 1.15 p.m. in the midst of applause, and cries such as: "Glory and honour to our immortal brothers" rang out on all sides, creating an atmosphere of great emotion.

Out of the Kokkinotrimithia detention centre white handkerchiefs were waved in salute to the funeral procession while in the villages along the way the kneeling inhabitants strewed the streets with flowers and laurel leaves as they waited for the coffins of the dead to pass by.

...At about 6 p.m. the coffins of the four immortals arrived at Spilia where flags at half mast and laurel wreaths hung on posts bowed before their appearance at the entrance to the village. There, on their knees, the communities of Spilia, Kourdali and Kannavia and the inhabitants of the villages of Kyperounta, Livadia, Polystypos and many others greeted with cheers and enthusiastic speeches the coffins borne upon the shoulders of lusty youths, and covered them with Greek flags".

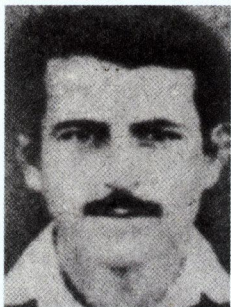
For some time the terrible accident that left four men dead was surrounded by a sense of mystery regarding the identities of two of the dead, since only Patsalides and Anaxagora were identified immediately.

The identity of Panayiotis Georgiades became known while mass was being performed for all four, while the body of Alecos Constantinou was identified by his tragic mother three days after the dreadful event.

The figures of the four heroes were recreated on a monument at the entrance to Spilia, as examples of virtue and self-sacrifice, while Patsalides's house became a place of national pilgrimage.

The tragic death of the four freedom fighters at Kourdali remains to this day a torch to our duty towards freedom for our country. Contemporaries of the four dead and people of younger generations laid wreaths on their graves and monuments. However, the grave of Alecos Constantinou has been without flowers or a lighted lamp since 1974 when the Turks occupied Famagusta. And his sacrifice awaits vindication still.

ANDREAS PATSALIDES



Born in the village Kannavia, Nicosia District, on 14 August 1930, one of four children to Alexander and Maria Patsalides.

After graduating from Kannavia primary school, he worked initially at Amiantos where he was active as one of the founding officers of the local New Trade Union, and subsequently found employment at Platania forest station.

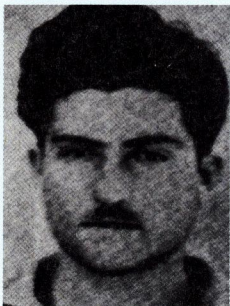
He lived at Kourdali where he married Irene Alexandrou. He joined the struggle at its earliest stages

and was involved in a great deal of action. Together with the hero Christos Tsiartas he took part in an ambush on the Kakopetria-Spilia road and worked with the local chiefs of the Organisation and the guerrilla groups in the area. Together with the hero Costas Anaxagora he had a part in the removal of radio transmitters from Platania forest station.

He and his wife, who had also been initiated into the struggle, concealed weapons and ammunition. Freedom fighters stayed at his house, which served as a distribution centre to the area sectors.

When Patsalides gave up his life for his country he left behind Maria, a child of only sixteen months, while his wife was carrying their son who was born five months later and was named after his heroic father.

COSTAS ANAXAGORA



Anaxagora was born in the village of Spilia, Nicosia district, on 20 June 1935 and was the first of twelve children of Anaxagoras and Minodora Louca.

After graduating from Spilia primary school, he worked as a driver at the Amiantos mines and was a founding officer of the New Trade Union SEK, and "Aris" sports club at Spilia. He was known for his pure patriotism, which characterised his

entire family and was one of the first to swell the troops of legendary EOKA after the historic battle of Spilia in December 1955. He acted as liaison among the groups in the area and maintained hiding places for the Organisation's explosives and weapons.

He also took part in ambushes and other missions, such as the taking of three radio transmitters from Platania forest station and the blowing up of a government excavator at Spilia. His fiancée, Maria Chr. Cleanthous was by his side throughout.

Death found him on the day of his 23rd birthday.

PANAYIOTIS GEORGIADES



Born in the village of Livadia on 15 December 1929, one of four children to Achilleas and Evgenia Georgiades.

After graduating from the village primary school he found work in Nicosia as an employee in a private business. He was a member of OXEN (YMCA) and from there he joined the Struggle in 1954. When the Struggle began he acted as liaison between Dhigenis and Makarios under the code-name "Icarus" and was second in command of the

safekeeping and distribution of weapons in the Nicosia area. He also transported wanted persons and offered them refuge in co-operation with his brothers who maintained a hideout at their house in Livadia.

In October 1956 he took to the mountains to escape British persecution and joined the guerrilla group of the hero Stylianos Lenas.

Following the arrest of Lenas and the death of the hero Demetrakis Christodoulou, on 17 February 1957, Panayiotis Georgiades escaped to Limassol with the hero Evagoras Papachristoforou. From there he returned to his village in mid-November 1957 and devoted himself to re-organising the area, which had suffered serious blows as a result of betrayal.

He continued his action as group leader until his heroic death.

ALECOS CONSTANTINOU



Born in Kakopetria, Nicosia District, on 6 October 1936, the only child of Costas and Elpiniki Constantinou. He lived with his mother in Famagusta as his parents divorced while he was still an infant. After primary school he continued his education at the local Greek Gymnasium and Lyceum. He also took English lessons and, because of his success in examinations, he managed to secure work in the British army.

With the onset of the Struggle he joined a group of the Famagusta executive and its meetings were held at his house. With his mother's help, he also concealed the group's weapons there.

On 14 April 1958, he and a fellow fighter shot interrogator Deare in the face. Following a series of failed attempts against him Deare claimed provocatively that no one could stand before him and shoot him. Deare's escort pursued the two freedom fighters but did not succeed in catching them. They later joined the guerrillas, where Constantinou worked mainly with Panayiotis Georgiades until his sacrifice.



HONORARY PLAQUE IN MEMORY OF THE FOUR HEROES



THE COUNCIL OF HISTORIC MEMORY
OF THE EOKA STRUGGLE 1955-1959



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