

THE MONUMENT OF THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE OF EOKA 1955-1959

Situated at Kato Amiandos - Pelendri



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE
COUNCIL OF THE HISTORICAL MEMORY OF THE EOKA STRUGGLE 1955-1959

THE CENTRAL IDEA AND COMPOSITION OF THE MONUMENT

The Monument to the liberation Struggle of EOKA 1955-1959 is situated in a wooded area at the summit of *Englisi* mountain between the villages of Kato Amiandos and Pelendri in the Pitsilia region where many bloody engagements took place during the period of the EOKA Struggle. It is a multifaceted monumental work dedicated to all those who contributed to the EOKA Struggle: the protagonists, the martyred heroes, the fighters, the victims and the entire Cypriot people, which lent its support for the success of the Struggle.

In particular, the Monument is a homage and an expression of gratitude to all those who sacrificed their life in order to pave the way to freedom. By erecting this monument the Greek people of Cyprus has discharged a duty to them, as outlined by the EOKA leader George Grivas Dighenis in a farewell pamphlet before departing from Cyprus following the Zurich – London agreements. He had then written the following:



"It grieves me that I have not been allowed to visit the graves of our heroes, and I bow respectfully before the greatness of their sacrifice. Cyprus has a duty, as a show of respect to them and also in order to set an example to future generations, to erect a monument in their honour reaching so high as does their glory and so very tall as to enable them to take in at a glance the whole of Cyprus, and Cyprus in its turn to embrace them; also it must be erected on soil drenched with blood, because this is what a fitting resting place for heroes should be like."

The Council of the Historical Memory of the EOKA Struggle 1955-1959 undertook the implementation of the project immediately after it was established in 1993, assigning the design and supervision of the work to architect Haris Fereos.

The central idea of the Monument stemmed from the verses of the last hero of the gallows Evagoras Pallekarides:

I shall climb uphill

Through winding paths

Searching for the stairs

That lead to freedom

The Monument is composed of various sections, both man-made and natural, which bond together in celebration of the Freedom of Cyprus and of the EOKA Struggle.

On a plateau at the top of the mountain are located the Freedom Monument and the chapel of Panagia Eleftherotria - Our Freedom Lady.

On a second plateau about one kilometer below the summit one finds the Propylaea, the gateway to the Monument, and the Hall of the Fighters.

The Stairs to Freedom are the connecting link between these two basic constitutive parts of the Monument. There are 108 steps in the ladder, as many as the heroes of EOKA who gave their life for the freedom of Cyprus; they have been arranged in groups along an uphill, 650-metre long footpath, which winds itself through a wooded area and connects the plateau of the Propylaea with that of the Monument.

THE PROPYLAEA

Before the visitors reach the footpath they come to the Propylaea, which offer a psychological preparation for the spiritual climb on the Stairs to Freedom. The Propylaea take on a symbolic character linking the EOKA Struggle with Greek history.

The Propylaea are composed of a shelter covered with flat tiles. At the one end it rests directly against the mountain slope. The walls built of local stone seem to offer support to the earthen mass rather than to the shelter. At the other end, the shelter rests on some of the pillars of a colonnade. The latter is so arranged as to look like it has always been there, just one of the many colonnades scattered all over the Greek soil of Cyprus, having been used by the modern descendants of those who built the columns in the first place as support to the shelter. In this way a connection is made indirectly between the Monument and the Struggle on the one hand and history on the other.

Built into the wall in front of the Propylaea are the copper relief portraits of the two supreme contributors of the Struggle, Archbishop Makarios III and general George Grivas Dighenis.

Having passed through the Propylaea, the visitor encounters the names of all the victims of the Struggle inscribed on large inlaid marble slabs. Commemorated here are all those who were killed during the Struggle, whether by the English or the Turks, as well as from other causes.



THE HALL OF THE FIGHTERS

On their way to the footpath leading to the Stairs of Freedom, the visitors come to the Hall of the Fighters.

A copy of the Record bearing the names of about 25 thousand fighters who shouldered the burden of the Struggle is kept here.

A bronze statue of *Freedom breaking her Chains* by the Greek sculptor Evangelos Moustakas is also housed in this hall.

Before leaving the hall, the visitors may learn about the history of the EOKA Struggle from a large screen monitor. It helps older people to recall the unequalled heroism and self-sacrifice the fighters and the people have shown for the freedom of Cyprus, and the younger generation to become acquainted with these.



IN PRAISE OF FREEDOM

Exhibited in the hall's basement is the monumental painting *In Praise of Freedom* created by the Cypriot artist Andreas Makariou, in which the EOKA Struggle is portrayed as the culmination of all the struggles which Cyprus has waged for its freedom through the ages. Art historian Chrysanthos Chrysanthou wrote the following about this work, which comprises 15 large frames:

"This important monumental work of Andreas Makariou entitled 'In Praise of Freedom' stands out for its wide range of combinations and the richness of its messages. Representative themes and abstract elements, forms of western art and images of Byzantine tradition, traits of mannerism and baroque, schematization and problematic space are used in expressing all the dimensions of Cypriot history ... The historical monumental work by Makarios is a rare work not only for the Greek people but worldwide..."



The conquest of Famagusta and the ordeal of Marcantonio Bragadino



Maria Synglitiki blows up the galley of Lala Mustafa with the Cypriot slave girls on it.



The massacre of 9th July 1821.



English rule: Nicodemos Mylonas and the revolt of October 1931



The Enosis plebiscite (1950) and the Oath of the Twelve in Athens (1953).



The arrival of Dighenis (1954) and the arrest of the "Agios Georgios" boat (1955).



The 1st of April 1955 and the liberation Struggle of EOKA.



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The hanging of the Nine heroes, torture of fighters, detention camps, arrests.



Turkish atrocities: the massacre of Greeks by the Turks at Gonyeli.



The self-sacrifice of Grigoris Afxentiou (1957).



The self-sacrifice of Kyriakos Matsis (1958).



The holocaust at Liopetri (1958)



Freedom emerging from the sacred bones of the Greeks.

THE STAIRS TO FREEDOM

After the Hall of Fighters, visitors may proceed to the footpath that leads to the plateau on the summit.

It is a holy place. Lying ahead is the first flight of the 108 stairs, as many as the fighters who fell in the battlefield or in carrying out orders. Each step is dedicated to a particular hero with his name and date of sacrifice inscribed on an in-built marble plate. As the visitor climbs up the flights of stairs he follows an uplifting course that takes him higher and higher, both literally and metaphorically.

The last stair takes him to the highest point in his ascent, which is the plateau at the top where the Monument to Freedom and the Chapel of Panagia Eleftherotria are located.



THE MONUMENT TO FREEDOM

Having climbed the last of the 108 steps the visitor finds himself in a big square paved with stones from Pilio at the far end of which he can see the Monument to Freedom.

The Monument is composed of two contrasting elements. The first of these is a massive horizontal wall. It symbolizes the power of death, which strives to hold the spirit captive. At the end of the wall on the right and at a very short distance from it there rises the second element, a light vertical stele which symbolizes the triumph of spirit over matter. The spirit is then the final victor, breaking free towards the limitless sky.

Adorning the horizontal wall are low relief marble scenes from the Struggle, the work of Greek sculptor Evangelos Moustakas. Below these and running across the entire length of the wall is engraved the oath given by the EOKA fighters.

Located at the eastern edge of the square is the Chapel of Panagia Eleftherotria with its wooden roof. It is built according to the traditional Cypriot church-building tradition of the Troodos region, in order to underline the strong connection between the Struggle and the Orthodox Church of Cyprus.



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Tel.: 99487733, 25753313



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