

THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE OF EOKA

1955-1959

AND THE CHLORAKA COAST



Today the Chloraka coast in Paphos is a busy tourist area. At the time of the 1955-1959 struggle for liberation, however, it was a remote deserted shoreline, and this is why it was chosen as the site for the secret arrival from Greece of EOKA leader George Grivas Dhigenis and for receipt of the first shipments of arms.

Because of the very important events that took place here during preparations for the EOKA struggle in 1954 and the early part of 1955, the Chloraka coast and particularly the areas "Alyki", "Rodafinia" and "Vrexi" are among the most important monumental sites of the 1955-1959 struggle for freedom. It was here that the flame of freedom was lit for the first time. It was from here that the message was spread to the whole of Cyprus that the yoke of English Colonial Rule was about to be thrown off.

THE CHAPEL OF SAINT GEORGE

About two hundred metres from the sea, at the place known as "Alyki", where the leader Dhigenis disembarked on 10 November 1954, Zena Gunther built the chapel of Saint George, at her own expense, in honour of the military leader.



The chapel, which was later decorated with icons by George and Alexander Constantinides under the supervision of Paphos Diocese and with donations from Christians, is now an integral part of the monumental site on the Chloraka coast. Together with the other monumental works, it serves to perpetuate historic memory and to underline the Christian faith that inspired the freedom fighters of the struggle and was indissolubly linked to their love for freedom for the fatherland.



THE SAINT GEORGE CAIQUE

Following the secret arrival of EOKA leader Dhigenis in Cyprus, The Secret Committee for the Struggle in Athens hired the small petrol-driven caique "Saint George". Its captain was Evangelos Louca Koutalianos, who had visited Cyprus earlier in secret as captain of the "Siren" to deliver a cargo of arms and ammunition. Also aboard the "Saint George" were the shipowner Anargyros Mellos and the crew members Michalis Christodoulakis and Michalis Alifrangis.



The boat sailed from Perama near Piraeus for Rhodes on 13 January. From Rhodes it sailed for Cyprus on 23 January after taking Argyris Karademas on board. The British were aware of the boat's movements from the beginning and the patrol boat "Charity" searched the sea while police kept watch from the shore.



Archbishop Makarios and Leader Dhigenis were informed of the betrayal early on but despite their efforts they were unable to intercept the boat. The "Saint George" arrived on the evening of 25 January at a place known as "Rodafinia", 1500 metres south west of "Alyki". A team of seven freedom fighters from Chloraka waited to collect the boat's cargo.

The seven men were team leader Costas Leonida, Christakis Evzonas, Kyriakos Mavronicolas, Michalis Papantoniou, Nicholas Pentaras and Christodoulos Pentaras. Also present was the member of the Athens Secret Committee Socrates Loizides who was to board the craft and return to Greece.

THE FIRST ARRESTS AND CONVICTIONS

The boat had been spotted by the British and police rushed to the "Rodafinia" area.



A dinghy sent from the caique made three trips to shore in order to transport the arms and ammunition, which team members placed in a small shed housing a water pump machine, about a hundred metres from the shore.



At some distance from the shore police arrested Michalakis Papantoniou and Kyriakos Mavronikolas, whom the team leader had sent to bring fresh supplies for the caique. Moving along the coastline, the police arrested another four team members who had carried to the small shed the first cases of dynamite. They then arrested the remaining fighters as they were unloading.

The head of the police team sent flares to a nearby warship. The ship approached and fired warning shots against the "Saint George". The boat tried to make its escape but was forced to surrender. Before doing so, however, the crew managed to throw all remaining arms and ammunition overboard.

The five members of the crew and six of the eight Cypriots arrested on the coast were sentenced on 6 May 1955 by the British Assizes in Paphos to various terms of imprisonment ranging from one to twelve years and were transferred to Nicosia Central Prison. A little later, Socrates Loizides was transferred to an English prison.

THE MUSEUM OF THE BOAT "SAINT GEORGE"

After its arrest the "Saint George" was taken to the small harbour at Kato Paphos. Later the British sold it by public auction.

On the instructions of Archbishop Makarios, Iakovos Iakovides, who was mayor of Paphos at the time, purchased the boat so that it could be used as an exhibit in a museum dedicated to the struggle for liberation. On the initiative of Leonidas Papacostas and with the financial support of Zena Gunther the caique was transferred to the "Alyki" coast of Chloraka in October 1961. In 1968 it was placed in a building constructed by the Ministry of Education for the express purpose of housing the boat. In 1994 the Paphos Holy Diocese and the Council of Historic Memory of the EOKA Struggle 1955-1959 refurbished the museum. A new wing was added in 2000.



THE CHLORAKA COAST ON THE EVE OF THE CYPRUS LIBERATION STRUGGLE

The Chloraka coast takes us back much further than the launch of the Cyprus struggle for liberation on 1st April 1955. It takes us to the days when the minds of certain visionary Cypriots and Greeks began to form the idea of transforming **"the waiting policy"** followed until that time by the Cypriot people into a **"policy of a dynamic struggle"**. This was made necessary by the stubborn refusal of British colonial policy to grant the right of self-determination to the people of Cyprus.

British colonial policy left the Cypriot people with no choice other than an armed struggle. To this end, the Archbishop of Cyprus, Makarios III and Cypriot colonel George Grivas, together with other people from Greece and Cyprus established a Secret Committee for the Struggle in Athens whose aim was the liberation of Cyprus and Union with Greece. The members of the committee took their oath in Athens on 7 March 1953 but before doing so, they appointed Archbishop Makarios political leader of the struggle and George Grivas military leader.

Once the members had been sworn in they immediately began work to prepare the struggle. In Athens they began to amass arms and ammunition and in Chloraka in the spring of 1953 the first small team of freedom fighters was organised.

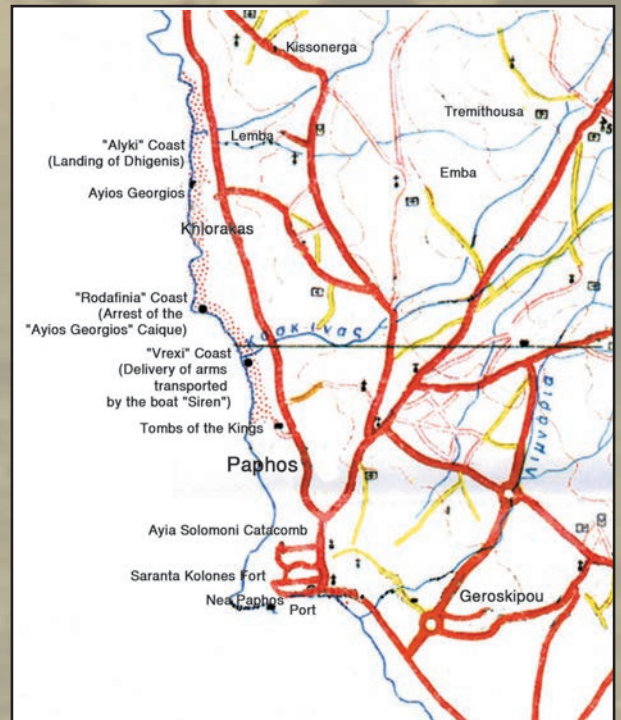
On 5 March 1954 at "Vrexii" on the Chloraka coast members of this team (Costas Leonida, Andreas Azinas, Nicholas Azinas and Charalambos Azinas) received the first shipment of arms. This arrived on the boat "Siren" captained by Evangelos Louca Koutalianos.

At "Alyki", the freedom fighters Costas Leonida, Nicholas Mavronikola and Michalakis Papantoniou received the leader of the struggle George Grivas Dhigenis. Dhigenis arrived in secret on the same boat on 10 November 1954, after a perilous voyage that began on 26 October at Piraeus. The three men took him to the home of Nicholas Azinas at Chloraka accompanied by Socrates Loizides and Notis Petropouleas. Theophilos Xanthopoulos from Greece was captain of the boat.

Dhigenis was now on Cypriot soil. The torch of freedom that was first lit in Athens had arrived on the Chloraka coast. Preparations for the struggle now continued at a more rapid pace. At Dhigenis's orders new teams of freedom fighters were set up in Nicosia and elsewhere and the arms that had been stored in Chloraka were distributed throughout Cyprus.

The "Saint George" brought a new shipment of arms to "Rodafinia" on the Chloraka coast on 25 January 1955. However, it was not only the Chloraka EOKA men who were waiting for the boat. The British warship "Comet" lay in wait at sea in the darkness of night and police were stationed on shore. The British arrested both the fighters who had spent so many nights waiting to receive the shipment and the boat with its crew.

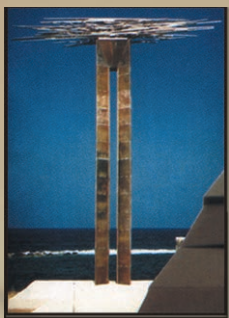
These are the events that we are reminded of by the Chloraka coast. Events that formed the beginning and laid the foundations for the EOKA struggle.



MONUMENT OF MEMORY AND HONOUR

The Council of Historic Memory of the EOKA Struggle 1955-1959 and the Association of EOKA fighters 1955-1959 implemented a decision made earlier to construct a "Monument of Memory and Honour" on the site of Dhigenis's landing. The winners of the competition to design The Monument were artist Nikos Kouroushis and architect Margarita Danou.

According to the designers the topography of the natural landscape led them to design the Site-Monument as an autonomous sculptural structure. The space around the sculpture becomes a small square in which the public gathers in wreath-laying ceremonies.



At the centre of the square a monumental bronze structure marks the spot where Dhigenis landed on the Chloraka coast, in order to direct and organise the EOKA struggle for freedom.

The structure is a vast window, a gateway drawn against the horizon.

It leads the memory to older traditional forms that marked events, such as the bell towers of churches. It invites, informs and announces. At the top of the structure there is a bronze sculpture in the shape of a boat. The depiction of motion in flight suggests movement in water or on air.

On part of the wall, close to the steps leading to the monument, are images of white marble in relief. The images depict the arrival of Dhigenis at the coast of Chloraka, the transportation of the arms and the arrest of the boat. The images were designed and produced by Greek sculptor Vangelis Moustakas.



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