

Imprisoned Graves



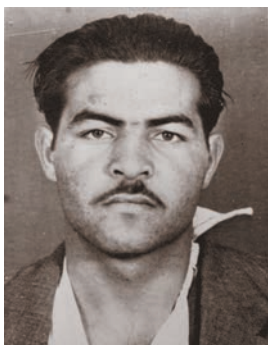


Michalakis Karaolis

He was born at Palechori in the Nicosia district on 13.2.1933.

He was hanged on 10.5.1956.

"You should not feel sorrow for me... since I myself see no reason why I should feel sorrow for myself. I don't want my family to shed tears for me either".



Andreas Demetriou

He was born at Agios Mamas in the Limassol district on 18.9.1934.

He was hanged on 10.5.1956.

"I am sorry I will not be able to see our Cyprus free. However, I am not frightened by death because life is worth nothing in slavery".



Iacovos Patatsos

He was born in Nicosia on 1.7.1934.

He was hanged on 9.8.1956.

"My beloved mother I send you my greetings. I am among the angels. I am now enjoying the fruits of my labour. My spirit is fluttering round the throne of our Lord. I want you to be glad as I am".

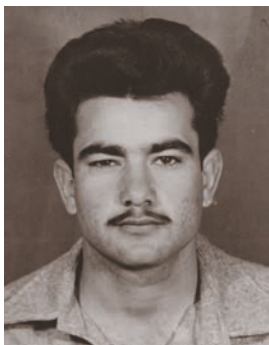


Andreas Zakos

He was born at Linou in the Nicosia district on 12.11.1931.

He was hanged on 9.8.1956.

"The hour of death is approaching but calm prevails in our soul. At this moment we are listening to Beethoven's eroica symphony".



Charilaos Michael

He was born at Gallini village in the Nicosia district on 9.2.1935.

He was hanged on 9.8.1956.

"Because I know why I shall be executed I feel strong and calm and I am ready to face anything with absolute tranquillity".



Stelios Mavrommatis

He was born at Larnaca tis Lapithou in the Kyrenia district on 15.11.1932.

He was hanged on 21.9.1956.

"I want you to know that your son and brother died with a smile on his lips because he kept until the end the sacred oath he gave to sacrifice himself for the sake of the freedom of Cyprus".





Michael Koutsoftas

He was born at Paliometocho in the Nicosia district on 12.11.1934.

He was hanged on 21.9.1956.

"The only words the tyrants can hear from my lips are these: Freedom or death. Even the prison walls have learned these words".

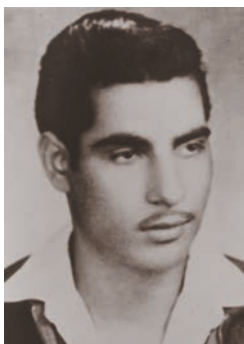


Andreas Panagides

He was born at Paliometocho in the Nicosia district on 30.1.1934.

He was hanged on 21.9.1956.

"My beloved children, At the age of 22 I am dying for the sake of a great idea. Your mother and your uncle will some time explain to you why I was executed. I pray that you may become good Christians and good Greek Cypriots. Always follow the path of virtue".



Evagoras Pallikarides

He was born in Tsada village in the Paphos district on 26.2.1938.

He was hanged on 14.3.1957.

"I shall climb up a hill, I shall follow paths in order to find the stairs that lead to freedom".



Markos Drakos

He was born in Nicosia on 24.9.1932.

He was killed in an ambush laid by the British at Sinaoros near Evrychou village on 18.1.1957.

"God and my country call me, father. I ask for your blessing".



Gregoris Afxentiou

He was born at Lyssi in the Famagusta district on 22.2.1928.

He was burnt on 3.3.1957 in his hide-out near Machairas Monastery by British soldiers after a long battle with them.

"If need be I shall fight and die as it befits a Greek but they will not take me alive".



Stylianos Lenas

He was born at Handria in the Limassol district in 1932.

He died in the Akrotiri military hospital on 28.3.1957 after being injured in battle at a place between Pelendri and Potamitissa on 17.2.1957.

"I shall not live. I shall die for the freedom of Cyprus".



Kyriakos Matsis

He was born at Palechori in the Nicosia district on 23.1.1926.

He fell fighting in his hide-out at Dikomo on 19.11.1958.

"It is not for money that we are fighting but for virtue".

During the 1955-59 struggle for the liberation of Cyprus from the British yoke the colonial rulers constructed in the Nicosia Central Prisons a small cemetery which has gone down in history as the “Imprisoned Graves”. It is a narrow place, next to the cells where those condemned to death were held and the gallows, surrounded by high walls with pieces of glass on top. When John Harding was governor of Cyprus it was decided to bury here those hanged and also leading figures of the National Organization of Cypriot Fighters (EOKA) killed in fighting so that their funerals might not provide an opportunity for mass rallies and militant demonstrations.

Buried in the Imprisoned Graves are thirteen heroes-martyrs, nine of whom were executed by hanging in the Nicosia Central Prisons, three fell in the battlefield and one died in a military hospital after being injured in fighting. Their only crime was their love for freedom.

The heroes who died on the gallows did not break despite the horrible and inhuman physical and mental tortures to which they were subjected from the time of their arrest until the time of their execution; they endured their terrible ordeal with a high morale and unshakeable faith. And when the critical moment came they walked to the gallows upright and proud, chanting religious songs and the national anthem while fellow-fighters detained in the same prison gave them courage with patriotic slogans and songs.

The funeral took place immediately after hanging. Present was only the prisons priest, who performed the funeral service outside the closed entrance to the cemetery. The British buried them without any Greek Cypriot, either mother or father, being present. Parents visited the graves of their children after the end of the struggle.

The nine hanged fighters, all young men, aged 19-24 are listed according to the order in which they were executed:

Michalakis Karaolis

Andreas Demetriou

} *They were hanged together on 10.5.1956*

Iakovos Patatsos

Andreas Zakos

Charilaos Michael

} *They were hanged together on 9.8.1956*

Michael Koutsoftas

Stelios Mavrommatis

Andreas Panagides

} *They were hanged together on 21.9.1956*

Evagoras Pallikarides

He was hanged on 14.3.1957

Another four EOKA fighters, whose heroic action surprised even the conquerors, are also buried in the Imprisoned Graves. The British refused to give the bodies of the heroes to their families fearing the people's demonstrations at their funeral. They buried them in the prison's cemetery as they buried those who died on the gallows.

The four heroes are the following:

Markos Drakos

Gregoris Afxentiou

Stylios Lenas

Kyriakos Matsis

In the four graves of the Central Prisons cemetery the British buried eight bodies in order to save space. The eight heroes are, two in each grave:

Andreas Demetriou and Stylios Lenas

Andreas Zakos and Kyriakos Matsis

Andreas Panagides and Michael Koutsoftas

Gregoris Afxentiou and Evagoras Pallikarides

After the end of the struggle the Imprisoned Graves became a place of pilgrimage, a monument to heroism and resistance to the forces of violence and terrorism, a sacred temple of freedom founded on the bones of the immortal EOKA fighters. Their immortality is declared by an inscription on the cemetery wall:

“A brave man's death is not death”.



The cells where those who were going to be put to death were held



The gallows



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



P.I.O. 152/2012 – 10.000
Published by the Press and Information Office
Printed by the Government Printing Office