

The 'final farewell' to EOKA fighter, Thasos Sofocleous



The funeral of senior member of EOKA, Mr. Thasos Sofocleous was held on Saturday with a large crowd attending the service in Strovolos, including senior government officials.

Sofocleous, aged 91, was described by the government earlier in the week as one of the leaders of the “Eoka national-liberation struggle to shake off the colonialist yoke, but also a leader in preserving the historical memory of the struggle, a man always distinguished by courage, patriotism and selfless service to the country”.

Among the senior personalities in attendance were President Mr. Nikos Christodoulides, House president Ms. Annita Demetriou, Metropolitan Nikiforos of Kykkos and Tylliria and Greece’s ambassador Mr. Ioannis Papameletiou.

After the service, Sophocleous’ son Konstantinos delivered a eulogy praising his father’s unwavering dedication to the country and his belief in humanity – as well as his “fighting spirit, wisdom and keen insight”.

Sophocleous’ grandson also spoke and emphasised that Sofocleous was a symbol

of strength, perseverance, and inspiration.

EOKA (National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters) was a Greek Cypriot nationalist guerilla organisation that fought a campaign for the end of British rule in Cyprus, and for eventual union with Greece. It was headed by Georgios Grivas, a Greek army officer.

In a statement earlier in the week, the Eoka Historical Memorial Council praised Mr. Sofocleous, noting that as “sector leader for Pendadaktylos he caused huge problems to the occupation troops with ambushes and attacks on camps.”

On one occasion, Mr. Sofocleous “disguised as a worker, entered and spied on the English army camp at Agios Amvrosios, which he attacked a few days later.”

The deceased and his team were “arrested after being betrayed, sentenced to life imprisonment and transferred to prison in England until the end of the liberation struggle.”

On the deceased’s politics, the group recalled that Mr. Sofocleous had disagreed with Archbishop Makarios, “remaining faithful to Chief Digenis and his vision until his death.”

In 1955 Sofocleous, then attending university in Athens, gave up his studies to join the Eoka cause. At age 23, he took over from insurgent leader Grigoris Afxentiou as Eoka sector leader for Pendadaktylos and later Kyrenia.

He was arrested by British authorities in October 1956 and tortured during his detention. In December 1956 a judge sentenced him to life imprisonment. Sofocleous served 29 months, and in February-March 1959 he was released along with all other sentenced Eoka fighters.

His return to Cyprus was delayed until the declaration of independence, in August 1960, as he and the others were deemed “dangerous” for the transitional period.



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