

To what extent were EOKA's intelligence and counterintelligence activities successful against the British between 1955–1959?

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Biography

Simon Couper is an intelligence analyst focussing on insurgency and counterinsurgency. He has been employed across various demanding conflict zones, including Iraq and Afghanistan since 2005. He is a graduate of the University of St Andrews, earning an MLitt in Terrorism and Political Violence. Mr Couper was nominated for the prestigious Imbert Prize for his study on EOKA intelligence and counterintelligence, and was ultimately the runner-up.

Abstract

This paper evaluates the extent to which intelligence gathering and counterintelligence activities used by EOKA were successful against the British in Cyprus between 1955–1959. Material from The National Archives at Kew (UK) and the Cyprus State Archive at Nicosia (Cyprus) was examined and then compared to interview material collected from former EOKA commanders, who provided first-hand accounts of their intelligence and counterintelligence activities against the British Administration. The study concludes that, overall, EOKA's intelligence gathering and counterintelligence activities were largely successful, but were underpinned by widespread intimidation against the British Administration and Greek-Cypriot community, which protected EOKA from infiltration.

Keywords: [EOKA](#); [Intelligence](#); [Counterintelligence](#); [Counterinsurgency](#); [Insurgency](#); [Grivas](#)

Introduction

Between 1955 and 1959, EOKA (Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston / National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters) conducted a violent campaign to end British rule in Cyprus and achieve *enosis*, political union with Greece. EOKA forced Britain to consider either a 'change of sovereignty' in Cyprus or independence for the island (Robbins, 2012, p. 721). As a result of the insurgency, the British government agreed to a political settlement that included independence. Many commentators, therefore, see EOKA's uprising as successful (Corum, 2006; French, 2015b; Gentry, 2010; Beckett, 2001).

This paper examines the key role of EOKA's intelligence and counterintelligence activities

in enabling an insurgent force of 200–300 fighters to conduct an effective campaign against technically superior British forces, whose numbers peaked at 40,000 soldiers (Newsinger, 2015, p. 110). It addresses the question *to what extent were EOKA's intelligence and counterintelligence activities successful against the British between 1955–1959?*

The paper first examines EOKA's preliminary reconnaissance and intelligence gathering. It then analyses how EOKA developed their communication system and informant networks, which penetrated the British Administration. It also explores how EOKA conducted its defensive and offensive counterintelligence activities to protect itself against infiltration by British forces. Finally, it examines how EOKA used intelligence and counterintelligence to ensure that Greek-Cypriots supported EOKA through intimidation and violence. The paper concludes that although EOKA's intelligence and counterintelligence activities were largely successful against the British Administration, overall, their actions constituted only a partial success. EOKA forced the British government towards a political solution to the conflict, which resulted in independence but not *enosis*.

A relatively clear narrative of the 1955–1959 conflict is contained in the available literature, with accounts from both British (Crawshaw, 1978; Newsinger, 2015) and Greek-Cypriot perspectives (Varnavas, 2004). The academic literature related to EOKA, however, predominantly reflects a British perspective. EOKA's intelligence gathering and counterintelligence activities are largely neglected (French, 2015b; Robbins, 2012; Jeffery, 1987; Corum, 2006).

Crawshaw (1978) utilises various primary sources to provide a detailed analysis of EOKA's struggle against the British that incorporates small elements of intelligence collection and counterintelligence activities within a broader historical account. Newsinger (2015) offers a narrative of the conflict told largely from the British perspective, based on secondary sources, which includes limited details on how EOKA gathered intelligence against the British and almost no details on their counterintelligence activities. Conversely, Varnavas' (2004) historical perspective on the conflict is based almost entirely on Greek-Cypriot sources. Nevertheless, he does not focus on EOKA's intelligence or counterintelligence activities. Dimitrakis (2008) studies British intelligence in depth but makes minimal reference to how EOKA operated.

The only study dedicated to how EOKA developed their intelligence gathering and counterintelligence activities is that of Keith Slack (2019). Slack usefully details how EOKA gathered and used intelligence while simultaneously conducting large-scale counterintelligence to prevent British government forces from developing a full understanding of their capability. Slack asserts that EOKA's intelligence and counterintelligence operations were successful overall, and that this success was underpinned by a widespread network of both willing and coerced Greek-Cypriot informers who provided the intelligence EOKA needed. While generally persuasive, Slack is arguably unduly influenced by hindsight. He acknowledges

that ‘starting an insurgency is indeed a risky endeavor’ (Slack, 2019, p. 113), but his account does not fully internalise this insight. Instead, he presents the EOKA leadership as barely putting a foot wrong.

This paper, therefore, provides an important contribution to the existing literature by presenting a fresh analysis of the role of intelligence and counterintelligence conducted *specifically* by EOKA. Its approach is predominantly emic and focuses on the internal views of EOKA members. This allows an evaluation of EOKA’s performance as measured against their own standards.

Records contained in The National Archives (TNA) in Kew (UK) and the Cyprus State Archive (CSA) in Nicosia (Cyprus) were examined. Interview material was collected from two former EOKA commanders. Given the passage of time, such veterans are not easy to locate. Both interviewees were particularly well placed to comment on intelligence matters since they both held positions of considerable responsibility. Renos Lyssiotis was formerly a commander of political activists and a member of the political wing of EOKA. Prior to his incarceration by the British authorities, Lyssiotis was responsible for the Nicosia youth groups and had overall responsibility for approximately 250 individuals, students and non-students. The second interviewee, Thassos Sophocleous, was a guerrilla commander of the Kyrenia district prior to his imprisonment. Sophocleous was responsible for approximately 30 fighters in the Kyrenia region.

The researcher acknowledges that such interview material is subjective and may be biased. Although the men are now approximately 80–90 years old, their cognitive capacity remains good. Their accounts were cross-checked against the archival material of TNA and the CSA, as well as secondary sources.

EOKA has been described as both a terrorist group (Beckett, 2001) and an insurgency (French, 2015b). This paper takes the position that a terrorist group can also be described as an insurgent group based on the tactics employed (Moghadam et al., 2014); hence, both terms will be used to describe EOKA.

There is no universal definition of “terrorism”. Here, the term is used in line with the following: ‘the systematic use of coercive intimidation, usually to service political ends. It is used to create and exploit a climate of fear amongst a wider target group than the immediate victims of the violence, and to publicise a cause as well as to coerce a target to acceding to the terrorists’ aims’ (Wilkinson, 2011, p. 17). “Insurgency” is defined in this article as the struggle ‘between a non-ruling group and a ruling government or authority, where the former uses a combination of political and military means to challenge governmental power and legitimacy, while striving to obtain or maintain control over a particular area’ (Moghadam et al., 2014, p. 4).

The term “intelligence” is defined as: ‘the effort by an [organisation], devoted to the collection, analysis, production, dissemination, and use of information which relates [...] to the group’s security’ (Godson, 1986, p. 4). Counterintelligence is diverse and contains various sub-activities. This paper focuses specifically on defensive and offensive counterintelligence. “Defensive counterintelligence” is used in this paper to describe an action intended to ‘thwart hostile intelligence from penetrating one’s own intelligence service through robust security protocols’, while “offensive counterintelligence” is used to describe activity that is designed ‘to manipulate or disrupt penetrations of one’s own intelligence by turning an opponent’s agent into a double agent or by feeding false information or [...] through the use of assassination’ (Slack, 2019, p. 101).

In order to examine the extent to which EOKA’s intelligence and counterintelligence activities were successful against the British between 1955–1959, it is also necessary to define “success”. As a heuristic device, this paper uses Max Abrahms’ model, which describes ‘total success [...] as the full attainment of a terrorist group’s objective’. Lesser achievements are considered “partial success”. ‘No success describes a scenario in which a terrorist group does not make any perceptible progress on realizing its stated objective’ (Abrahms, 2006, p. 48).

It is important to note that Abrahms’ model focused on the overall strategic success of terrorist campaigns. This paper is more narrowly focused on EOKA’s intelligence and counterintelligence activities. Given their foundational importance to the prospect of overall success, it does not seem unreasonable to borrow from Abrahms’ model to evaluate these in their own right.

Origins of conflict

In June 1878, the Ottoman Empire granted Britain the right to administer Cyprus. This was partly to limit Russian expansionism and to allow Britain a presence in the Mediterranean (French, 2015b, p. 12). When Turkey aligned themselves with Germany in 1914, Britain annexed Cyprus (Crawshaw, 1978, p. 23).

Throughout Cyprus’ history, the Greek-Cypriots have claimed a cultural affinity to Greece, dating back to the ninth century (Crawshaw, 1978, p. 19). Under the various ruling empires, Greek-Cypriot identity was largely ignored (French, 2015b). Under British control throughout the nineteenth century, however, the Cypriot school education was delivered by Greek-educated teachers who espoused nationalistic values, taught a Greek curriculum, and encouraged both a Greek identity among their pupils and union with Greece (French, 2015b, p. 16). The Greek-Cypriot Church also championed Greek nationalism and *enosis* (Crawshaw, 1978, pp. 23–24).

Throughout the twentieth century, the Greek-Cypriot community – c. 80% of the Cypriot population (Colonial Reports Cyprus, 1955, p. 10) – continued to demand *enosis*. On 15

January 1950, the Greek Orthodox Church conducted a plebiscite on the issue (Panteli, 2005). This vote was a highly public event, taking the form of signing open books in churches across Cyprus. Cyprus had no democratic government at this time. A Colonial Office report stated that 75–90% of the names included on voter lists voted for *enosis* (Wright to Colonial Office, No. 36, 1950). Panteli (2005) and Varnavas (2004) assert that of those eligible to vote, 95.7% did so for *enosis*.

Such results cannot be taken at face value. It is likely that *enosis* did not have this level of support. Cyprus was more prosperous than Greece in 1950 (Granada UK Television, 1984, 4:00). Many Cypriots benefited from the economic development which Britain brought to Cyprus and the high rates of employment. Indeed, the figures represented here demonstrate that between 4.3% and 25% of those eligible to vote either abstained or voted against *enosis*. Furthermore, Governor Wright claimed that ‘pressure has been brought to bear upon those who have abstained [from voting] with threats from [the] church of blacklisting’ (Wright to Colonial Office, No. 36, 1950). In a highly religious society, being ostracised by the Church was a serious threat. Furthermore, Turkish-Cypriots were excluded from the plebiscite (Panteli, 2005). It can, thus, be concluded that the official results of the plebiscite overstate the level of support for *enosis*.

Nonetheless, the vote demonstrated that there was significant support among the majority Greek-Cypriot population for an end to British rule. Yet, support for *enosis* did not necessarily translate into support for the use of violent means to achieve it.

The British government refused to enter into discussions or negotiations concerning *enosis*. It was instead focused on ‘transforming Cyprus into their main military base in the Middle East’ (French, 2015a, p. 88). By June 1954, Britain had transferred its Middle Eastern Command from Palestine to Cyprus to retain its ‘last remaining base in the Mediterranean’ (Beckett, 2001, p. 152). According to a 1959 report by Air Vice Marshall Philpot, Cyprus was viewed as ‘an indispensable and irreplaceable centre for “Y” [Strategic-Signals] intelligence’ (Philpot to VCAS, 1959), enabling Britain’s signals intelligence to monitor both Russia and Egypt (Mainwaring and Aldrich, 2021).

In July 1954, Henry Hopkinson, British Minister of State for the Colonies, stated in Parliament: ‘there can be no question of any change of sovereignty in Cyprus’, adding that ‘there are certain territories in the Commonwealth which, owing to their particular circumstances, can never expect to be fully independent’ (Robbins, 2012, p. 721). In order to reinforce Britain’s position, the Governor of Cyprus imposed restrictions on the population that included a five-year imprisonment sentence for sedition, defined as any expression that planned for a ‘change in sovereignty over Cyprus’ (Varnavas, 2004, p. 28).

Such lack of recognition for Greek-Cypriot demands and the denial of any legitimate political pathway to achieve *enosis* provided the impetus for action.

EOKA origins and leadership

As Britain had refused to recognise the demands of the plebiscite, a secret liberation committee was established in Athens under the command of Archbishop Makarios III, the head of the Greek-Cypriot Church. Alongside Makarios was Colonel George Grivas and several senior Greek military officers who intended to provide material support (Grivas, 1964, p. 17). It was this committee that decided to conduct an offensive against the British to liberate Cyprus from British rule and named their movement EOKA. Grivas claimed that the committee had agreed that Makarios would have overall command of EOKA and would lead all political negotiations surrounding *enosis*. Grivas was to be responsible for all offensive operations (Grivas, 1964, pp. 13–17).

Makarios wanted a political solution to the question of *enosis* and intended to generate increased support amongst the Greek-Cypriot community in order to counter Britain's refusal to negotiate. As Cyprus was a highly religious society, the Greek-Cypriot community viewed the archbishop as their *de facto* leader. This was also the view of the British Administration, who considered Makarios to be the religious and political representative of the Greek-Cypriot community. As negotiations proceeded, however, Governor Harding adopted the view that Makarios was not acting in good faith. He believed that Makarios could order a cessation of hostilities. When this did not materialise, Makarios was deported to the Seychelles on 9 March 1956 (Crawshaw, 1978, p. 168). Upon his release in March 1957, Makarios approached the British to revive negotiations. His offer was refused, due to concerns that further negotiations with Makarios would undermine the ongoing negotiations with Turkey (French, 2015b, p. 239). Instead, this paper focusses on Grivas, who remained a dominant influence throughout.

Colonel Grivas, a former Greek army officer in World War Two, was the most influential EOKA leader and – as eventually recognised by the British Administration – its driving force. Grivas believed that ‘if diplomatic action [was] to be effective it must be backed by force’ (Crawshaw, 1978, p. 265). He also recognised that it was impossible to destroy the British security forces, opting instead for a campaign of attrition and relentless harassment (Grivas, 1962, p. 5). Nonetheless, the British ‘badly underestimated the size of internal support for the *enosis* movement’ (Robbins, 2012, p. 721). It was on this support that Grivas and EOKA drew to sustain themselves.

EOKA's initial plan was to avoid inflicting casualties on the British forces and, instead, conduct a sabotage campaign primarily targeting government installations (French, 2015b, p. 69). Makarios believed that ‘a brief campaign confined to sabotage operations would suffice to persuade the British to grant *enosis*’ (French, 2015b, p. 49). During Grivas' preliminary visit, he had decided upon targets and allocated specific sabotage teams to carry out the

attacks (Crawshaw, 1978, p. 102), which began in the early hours of 1 April 1955. EOKA's attacks resulted in significant damage to key British locations across Cyprus (Armitage to Colonial Office, No. 182, 1955a), and, according to EOKA veterans, came as a complete surprise to the British Administration, as their security and intelligence gathering ability was flawed (Varnavas, 2004, p. 57). Governor Armitage informed the Colonial Office that 'no special steps had been taken to post armed guards at the buildings [that were] attacked as there was no indication that sabotage would be attempted' (Armitage to Colonial Office, No. 187, 1955b).

Following his appointment as Governor of Cyprus, however, John Harding identified that long-term under-investment in the Cyprus Police Force directly contributed to the lack of awareness surrounding the EOKA threat. Harding reported that 'in the years before 1954 a vicious cycle developed, and that the government neglected the police force because there was no evidence of unrest in the island and the force failed to get any inkling of unrest because the government neglected it' (Harding, Report of the Cyprus Police Commission, 1956g). Thus began a struggle in which the strengths and weaknesses of intelligence activities would play a significant role.

Preparation

Intelligence gathering

Grivas conducted intelligence-gathering trips to Cyprus to assist in developing his 'general plan' ahead of the insurgency (Grivas, 1962, pp. 5, 71, 91–95). In a visit from Greece in 1951, Grivas identified several issues. First, there were no military weapons or other military material available for EOKA in Cyprus; these would need to be imported before the conflict could begin (Grivas, 1962, p. 6). Second, there was no military experience among the general populace, so he would need to recruit and personally train fighters (Grivas, 1962, p. 57). Third, Cyprus could easily be 'blockaded by the [British] by sea and air and consequently [...] cut off from all external supplies' (Grivas, 1962, p. 5). Finally, Grivas also realised that the British had 'unlimited resources' and 'complete control of the island', affording them the ability to transport large numbers of troops anywhere in the country within two hours to 'conduct frequent and detailed searches' (Grivas, 1962, pp. 5–6). Grivas believed that support from the population was critical in enabling EOKA's success (Grivas, 1962, p. 11). He, thus, intended to use the local Greek-Cypriot population for the supply of food, water, shelter and, more importantly, intelligence to EOKA that would support the latter and level the asymmetric battle against the British (Grivas, 1962, p. 11).

Grivas also identified the Cypriot Police Force (CPF) as a potential weak point. The CPF was underfunded with a reputation for 'incompetence, poor leadership, and corruption' (Corum, 2006, p. 27). Despite the British authorities having a strong military, which was numerically and technically superior to EOKA, they lacked a competent police force capable of providing intelligence on EOKA's developing threat (Varnavas, 2004, p. 36).

Grivas visited Cyprus for a second time between October 1952 and February 1953 and identified the need for special intelligence centres to collect and disseminate high-quality intelligence on military targets and movements for the benefit of EOKA (Grivas, 1962, p. 95). Grivas also intended to use the intelligence EOKA gained to neutralise any counteractivity by the British Administration (Grivas, 1962, p. 95).

Grivas recognised that EOKA needed to ensure that the British were unable to collect intelligence against them and that his plan had to include offensive counterintelligence activities to disrupt the police (Grivas, 1962, p. 39). He planned to target the CPF because, if neutralised, the British would be left 'blind and without intelligence', allowing EOKA to 'operate with comparative impunity' (Newsinger, 2015, p. 96). Grivas intended to use intimidation and violence, if necessary, to achieve his aims, as he planned to execute any British informers and silence those opposed to either *enosis* or EOKA (Newsinger, 2015, p. 96). This point is significant because Grivas' plans required detailed intelligence related to British and CPF operations. Such intelligence was often gained through intimidation of the CPF, whilst intimidation used against Greek-Cypriot society limited the British Administration's ability to collect intelligence on EOKA.

Despite developing a detailed understanding of what was needed to fight the British during his preliminary intelligence-gathering visits, Grivas initially struggled to implement his plans. A report written by the Chief Superintendent of Police, dated 26 March 1955, admitted that the British Authorities were aware that two arms shipments had already arrived (Meikle to Fletcher-Cooke, 1955). In spite of early successes, EOKA found it hard to import arms. One such failure was the interception of the vessel *St George* in June 1955. Its consignment of arms and explosives was discovered, and its crew was arrested and sentenced to 47 years' imprisonment (*Cyprus Mail*, 1955). A telegram from the Colonial Office to the Governor of Cyprus had warned of the impending arrival of the consignment, although the information came from an MI6 informant working for the British in Athens, and not from the CPF (Colonial Office to Governor Armitage, 1954). A key reason for this lack of awareness was the CPF's under-investment and lack of organisation (Andrew, 2009, p. 462).

By June 1954, *enosis* agitation within Cyprus was building. The Cypriot Police Commissioner suspected that Grivas was responsible, as he was known to be a 'fanatical supporter of *enosis*'. The police, therefore, cancelled all new visa applications (Commissioner to Colonial Office, No. 4125, 1954).

Since Grivas had been refused entry into Cyprus, coupled with the arms shipment that was intercepted, it is surprising that EOKA were able to develop an insurgency at all. Furthermore, EOKA was incredibly fortunate that the British authorities did not connect these two instances. Otherwise, EOKA 'would have been nipped in the bud' (Grivas, 1962, p. 8).

Despite these setbacks, in November 1954, Grivas returned to Cyprus covertly, and began organising and training the first combat units in sabotage operations (French, 2015a, pp. 87–89). He also initiated the process of selecting his first targets and oversaw the supporting intelligence operations (Grivas, 1962, pp. 7–8).

Communications

EOKA's intelligence-gathering capability was underpinned by their ability to communicate the intelligence they gained. An effective communications network was crucial in enabling Grivas to direct EOKA's activities. Establishment of such a communications system was, thus, a key objective (Grivas, 1962, p. 16).

Grivas did not trust any technical means of passing information, such as a wireless radio system, as it could 'give [EOKA's] position away' (Grivas, 1964, p. 28). On rare occasions, according to Britain's Director of Operations, General Darling, EOKA members used the telephone network belonging to the General Post Office, the Forestry Department or various monasteries to warn mountain fighters of British patrols (Darling, 1960, p. 84). This, however, only occurred when the telephone network was under their control (Wright, 1987, p. 156). Generally, EOKA viewed communications over the telephone with the 'greatest suspicion' (Darling, 1960, p. 89).

Therefore, Grivas relied almost entirely on written communications (Grivas, 1962, p. 16). A courier network utilised anyone with a 'legitimate reason to travel' to transport his messages, including taxi drivers, bus drivers, and police and government officials loyal to EOKA's cause (Darling, 1960, p. 89). Lyssiotis claimed that the courier networks were 'very important, because without [them] there was no other means of communication'. Sophocleous believed that the courier network 'was one of the most organised parts of EOKA and was mainly run by women [...] because they were less likely to be suspected'. The British eventually realised that Grivas favoured female couriers, who were 'unlikely to be subjected to rigorous body searches by patrols and they were psychologically tougher and more resistant to interrogation' (Darling, 1960, p. 89).

Grivas also claimed that his couriers could pass through 'roadblocks, curfews and searches' undetected (Grivas, 1964, p. 28). Eventually, however, the British authorities discovered that messages were concealed in the 'hollow frames of bicycles or concealed in the linings of handbags' (Operational Intelligence Wing, No. 2, 1956). This demonstrates that the methods applied by the couriers did not always allow them to navigate the searches as successfully as Grivas claimed. Intercepted messages undoubtedly provided detailed intelligence to the British and created a significant risk to EOKA's security. Sophocleous remembered that, if a courier were captured, 'the danger of the letters being exposed to the [British] was obvious, even if the context was not that clear to [them]'

In order to mitigate further the chances of EOKA's correspondence being discovered, couriers delivered their messages to secret "post-boxes" in all major towns (Dimitrakis, 2008, p. 383). Couriers also used dead letterboxes in rural areas. These were left in place unobserved, which allowed the couriers to deliver and collect messages incognito, preserving the anonymity of those involved in the chain (French, 2015b, p. 53). Anonymity was an important security aspect of the couriers' capability. Sophocleous noted that they were 'not allowed to ask the names of the other couriers', and 'only knew the code name of the EOKA member who was receiving the message, not their real name'.

EOKA couriers also adhered to a complicated process to limit British intrusion. For instance, if a message needed to be delivered to a location within 30 miles, the couriers followed a route that extended as far as 100 miles, which could take up to 24 hours (Dimitrakis, 2008, pp. 383–384). In extremis, however, an urgent message could be transported by a high-grade courier anywhere in Cyprus within three hours (Darling, 1960, p. 86). Sophocleous explained that, although he and Grivas were on opposite sides of Cyprus, his messages would reach Grivas 'in two hours' and that, if the information was important, he 'had a special courier with their own bicycle to move the messages at once'. Sophocleous claimed that if he asked Grivas an important question, 'he would reply [...] sometimes that night or the next day'. Sophocleous explained that 'everything [we] were doing [we] were getting permission from Grivas. We were informing him of our plans because he was always giving us expert advice'. Although the transmission of EOKA's communications was not immediate, the system was nonetheless significant; it allowed Grivas to remain connected with his dispersed groups and provide them with the direction needed to support their offensive operations, while avoiding technical means of communication that could have been identified by the British.

Grivas also ensured that messages destined for him would reach him via a relay of couriers, limiting the couriers' knowledge of who the recipient was. Grivas' location was known by just one highly trusted courier (Grivas, 1962, p. 17). Lyssiotis claimed that 'even if I was arrested, I could not say where [Grivas] was, because he had so many in-betweens in the courier network. Between me and Grivas the British had to arrest about seven people to be able to reach him, which was impossible'. This system, therefore, protected important commanders, especially Grivas, from being exposed.

The courier system was not without flaws. Grivas himself knew that, in the earlier stages of the conflict, his couriers had 'broke[n] every rule of security' when moving EOKA correspondence (Grivas, 1964, p. 28). Couriers often made little attempt to conceal messages, simply carrying them in jacket pockets and relying on the fact that British patrol officers would not be able to read Greek (Darling, 1960, p. 87). This laissez-faire attitude, and the fact that many of EOKA's letters were not encoded, led to many senior EOKA men being arrested (Darling, 1960, p. 87). In a conflict directed by correspondence, Grivas' ability to train EOKA's couriers in concealing their messages properly was limited.

Eventually, the British developed good inside knowledge of how EOKA's communications operated through intercepted messages and arrested couriers (Darling, 1960, pp. 84–89). They also located important post-boxes, such as the Central Post Box in Nicosia (Darling, 1960, p. 90; Foley, 1964, p. 73), which they believed processed all of Grivas' communications (Dimitrakis, 2008, p. 384). The British, however, also conceded that arresting EOKA members on the back of evidence gained was often pointless, as EOKA automatically made use of an 'alternative reserve system of couriers and routes' to ensure continuity (Darling, 1960, p. 90). Indeed, Lyssiotis claimed that 'the moment a courier was arrested, immediately his replacement was taking over. Whether he was in a higher position, or just a go-between, everybody had a replacement'. The inability of the British to understand Greek and EOKA's increasing use of female couriers, which made body searches difficult, 'were at times impossible handicaps to overcome' (Darling, 1960, p. 90). General Darling conceded that 'many couriers must have slipped through our patrols in spite of the fact that at one time they were temporarily in our hands' (Darling, 1960, p. 90).

The large body of archived messages contained in TNA demonstrates that EOKA's methods of communication were not always successful, and numerous couriers and their correspondence were intercepted. Moreover, Grivas' claim that the identity of his reserve couriers was protected is also questionable, as some of these were identified and arrested (Darling, 1960, pp. 90–91).

The interception of EOKA messages, however, appears to have had surprisingly little lasting impact on EOKA's ability to operate and communicate. Lyssiotis claimed that EOKA's communication system was critical: 'without the movement of messages, there was no [EOKA] [...] without communication nothing was happening, nothing could happen'. Without the ability to provide guidance and direction to the dispersed EOKA fighters, Grivas would not have been able to exert control over an organisation that entirely lacked military experience and looked to him for support. The resilience of the network Grivas developed allowed it to challenge the British Administration; on average, many more messages reached their final destination than were intercepted. Grivas directed the insurgency through correspondence. Despite many failures, EOKA's survival is evidence that the communications system was more successful than not.

In terms of Abrahms' model, EOKA's communications system can, therefore, be considered entirely successful. Despite difficulties, the objective of establishing a communications system capable of operating across the network was achieved.

EOKA's intelligence-gathering capability

Establishing an informant network capable of gathering intelligence on behalf of EOKA remained a key objective for Grivas (1962; 1964). The intelligence collected by EOKA's informants allowed the organisation to operate offensively against the British and the CPF

units, as well as against those opposed to EOKA, whilst also supporting its ability to act defensively when confronted by large-scale security force operations. In order to assess how successful EOKA's intelligence-gathering capability was, four areas will be examined: the youth groups that provided eyes and ears intelligence; the informants EOKA utilised across all of society, who provided intelligence collated during their daily routines; EOKA informants within the CPF; and intelligence EOKA gained through ongoing surveillance. The following analysis, therefore, covers the gathering of background information leading up to higher-value intelligence.

Youth groups

Grivas recognised the value of the Greek-Cypriot youth early on (Grivas, 1962, p. 14). Lyssiotis remembers receiving directions from Grivas to use his youth networks to collect low-level intelligence on suspected traitors in Nicosia: 'I was given instructions by Grivas, to organise a youth group to watch out near the Ledra Palace Hotel in Nicosia, because there was information that there was a specific house where local people, who had betrayed EOKA, were meeting there with the police'. Sophocleous also stated that 'the youth groups would also conduct surveillance of suspected locations and would record suspicious activity or people at those locations for EOKA'. Overall, they 'were very helpful to EOKA'. This invisible intelligence-gathering surveillance screen was an important objective in Grivas' plan to create an enormous low-level covert intelligence-gathering capability that was able to observe the security forces' activity and feed it back to EOKA.

The impact of youth groups is illustrated in the example of a CPF officer who openly expressed anti-EOKA views in front of two youths, who subsequently informed EOKA. A written declaration calling for the officer's murder was issued (Captured Documents, 1956a, p. 30). Youth networks may have seemed innocuous but were a key part of EOKA's intelligence-gathering capability. The intelligence they observed or overheard was forwarded to EOKA, supporting ongoing offensive counterintelligence activities against opponents.

In order to populate the ranks of the youth networks, Grivas encouraged demonstrations in schools whilst simultaneously encouraging absenteeism and for pupils to 'disobey their teachers' (Crawshaw, 1978, pp. 146, 154). This ultimately led to mass absenteeism across the education system as the pupils in one school encouraged others (Crawshaw, 1978, p. 146). Although schoolteachers were either Greek-Cypriot or Greek, and largely supported *enosis*, it was the British Administration that managed the educational system in Cyprus. Throughout January 1956, the British began to close down the unruliest of schools. By late January, 10,100 out of 14,700 secondary school pupils were either on strike or had their schools closed down (Harding to Colonial Office, 1956b). The impact of school closures on EOKA was immediate. According to Lyssiotis, 'when Harding closed the schools, the youth networks had more people to make demonstrations, throw leaflets and gather intelligence for EOKA'.

Not all teachers supported EOKA. Indeed, Dr Spyridakis, the headmaster of the largest school in Cyprus, the Pancyprrian Gymnasium, stressed to parents the ‘dangers of excessive nationalism to the cause [...] and [urged] for patriotism but not riots’ (Crawshaw, 1978, p. 145). Dr Spyridakis was pro-*enosis*, but he did not support EOKA’s methods. His stance challenged Grivas’ authority, and EOKA members issued direct threats to Spyridakis (Crawshaw, 1978, p. 145). Such intimidation sent a message to any parent or teacher who opposed EOKA’s methods that resistance carried a price.

Actions by the British Administration had the effect of fuelling the development of the youth network. By not protecting schoolteachers from EOKA intimidation and through large-scale school closures, impressionable Greek-Cypriot children were free to operate as part of Grivas’ intelligence-gathering network. Had the schools remained open, thousands of students would have been unable to operate against the administration.

Grivas was, thus, able to undermine the state whilst simultaneously creating a pool of ready-made recruits capable of providing eyes and ears intelligence collection for EOKA. By 1957, the threat posed by the youth groups was reflected in a report by the Chief Superintendent of the CPF who stated that ‘unless the youth [...] can be deterred from developing into terrorists, the eradication of EOKA will become progressively more difficult’ (Whymark to Director of Operations, 1957).

The British Director of Operations, Brigadier Baker, stated that ‘in retrospect, no single factor in the Cyprus situation did more to prepare the ground for violence than the failure of the Colonial Government to take control of the secondary education in the Island’ (Baker, 1958). Here, the actions of the British Administration inadvertently enabled Grivas’ plan to use youths as the ‘seedbed for EOKA’, although his memoir does not acknowledge his good fortune (Grivas, 1964, p. 34). In the final analysis, establishing youth networks can be regarded as a successful strategy in support of EOKA’s aims.

Society at large

Surveillance conducted by members of the EOKA youth groups meant that if any Cyprus residents wanted to communicate intelligence to the British authorities, they were unable to walk into a Police Headquarters for fear of being witnessed. EOKA also monitored written and telephone communications.

EOKA utilised informants embedded within various government departments to aid intelligence gathering. The type of penetration EOKA achieved is illustrated by the example of members of the Forestry Department, who provided advanced warning of military movements (Darling, 1960, p. 69). In post offices, active members of EOKA intercepted mail addressed to the ‘[CPF], District [Police] Commissioners and Military Headquarters’ (Darling, 1960, pp. 68–69). Lyssiotis asserted that EOKA had informants within the Cypriot

Telephone Authority (CYTA): ‘they knew how to eavesdrop or take messages and they used to inform EOKA if they heard anything suspicious’. EOKA also began ‘tapping trunk telephone lines’ to aid intelligence collection (Interim Intelligence Report, 1955b). Lyssiotis claimed that ‘in every single authority, from the post office, the electricity company and CYTA there were EOKA people there’.

John Newsinger (2015) asserts that widespread infiltration was part of Grivas’ ‘intelligence war’, which invisibly encircled the British (p. 100). This was evident within government departments and also within the interrogation centres, where EOKA informants passed intelligence to Grivas about who had been arrested and ‘what was discussed with the interrogators’ (Dimitrakis, 2008, p. 385). This indicates that Grivas was not only collecting intelligence against the British but also conducting counterintelligence against his own captured fighters.

These surveillance and monitoring activities demonstrate that there were members of Cypriot society who did not support EOKA. Infiltration of these government departments was critical to maintaining influence over the broader population and sustaining EOKA’s campaign of intimidation against those opposed to both EOKA and *enosis*. Moreover, their embedded informants were able to provide sensitive intelligence that facilitated EOKA’s operations.

Cyprus Police Force

According to Dimitrakis (2008), EOKA ‘penetrated all colonial administration echelons’ (p. 384). Perhaps the most destructive for the British authorities was the penetration of the CPF. Like many other areas of EOKA’s intelligence collection, the information provided by the CPF informants directly influenced EOKA’ defensive and offensive counterintelligence activities.

In 1955, Grivas appointed Polycarpus Georghadjis as his head of intelligence. He recruited 20 informants within the CPF (Anderson, 1992, p. 185). Recruitment was inadvertently aided by the British Administration, which excluded those with left-wing leanings from joining the police. Consequently, the CPF ‘was composed of men with right-wing sympathies and many church going nationalists’ (Darling, 1960, p. 70). Many of these men would also have been pro-*enosis*. With support for *enosis* high within the CPF, Grivas was able to recruit selected police officers from every department, who could provide EOKA with detailed intelligence (Corum, 2006, p. 27). Grivas also penetrated the CPF by ‘ordering suitably indoctrinated youths to apply for enlistment’ at lower levels (Darling, 1960, p. 71), and by using trusted recruiters, such as Georghadjis, to recruit from within the senior ranks (Anderson, 1992, p. 185).

EOKA’s informants within the CPF were responsible for key intelligence collection operations, including the theft and transport of ‘classified documents, letters, reports, and

operation orders [...], the surveillance of suspected British informers and the leakage of information of all types, from all departments of the Police Force, including [...] from the [CPF] Operations Rooms' (Darling, 1960, pp. 70–71). George Lagoudontis was recruited in May 1956 and began recording 'top-level British conferences in the Operations Room of the Police Headquarters'. Grivas claimed later that the recordings were passed to an EOKA courier for onward travel and contained high-level intelligence on British operations (Grivas, 1964, p. 74).

By 1958, the British Administration alleged that, out of 932 CPF Officers, '130 were suspected of being EOKA members, 53 had been discharged on political grounds, 40 had been arrested and detained, and 2 were on the run' (Darling, 1960, p. 70). These 225 officers, who were known to be supportive of EOKA, represent approximately 24% of the CPF. The British authorities, however, also knew that there were other EOKA sympathisers 'hiding in the ranks' (Dimitrakis, 2008, p. 385).

By the end of the conflict, the British had not eliminated all EOKA informants from within the CPF (Darling, 1960, p. 70). Therefore, penetration of the CPF can be regarded as successful, with the intelligence gained assisting EOKA in understanding both British and CPF intentions.

Surveillance

Surveillance was an important part of EOKA's intelligence-gathering capability. It underpinned their ability to conduct offensive operations against the British and helped to level an asymmetric battlefield. Grivas wrote that, prior to hostilities, EOKA surveillance had identified key targets that were 'completely unguarded' (Captured Documents, 1956d). Throughout the conflict, surveillance also informed many of the mountain operations. Grivas demanded that detailed intelligence collection was conducted prior to any operation. For example, he informed "Evagoras" that, prior to granting his permission for a planned ambush, further surveillance was needed on the 'habits of the target [...]' and what days or at what time was [the patrol due to] pass the ambush point' (Captured Documents, 1956e).

Intelligence generated by EOKA's surveillance increased their awareness of British Army procedures and guided EOKA's asymmetric response. EOKA identified the tactics the British Army would employ if caught in an ambush, how many of them were likely to be armed, and that if an army patrol was travelling through a village at night, soldiers were under orders 'to get out of their vehicles and walk in groups' (Captured Documents, 1956f).

During the conflict, many Greek-Cypriots were employed in British bases as daily labourers. As the demand for labourers increased, so did EOKA infiltration (Darling, 1960, p. 72). Lyssiotis stated that, although some Greek-Cypriots were screened, 'they couldn't suspect everybody. They had to have some people working there and some of those people were

working against them'. Ongoing intimidation by EOKA or the fear of being branded a traitor are also likely to have played a part in motivating some of these personnel (Darling, 1960, p. 72). It is likely that EOKA infiltrated the British bases by coercing those with existing access, while also taking advantage of limited screening to ensure current EOKA fighters were employed, thus enabling greater penetration.

Infiltration of military bases resulted in the identification of security weaknesses, enabling EOKA to attack the British behind their defensive perimeters. One captured document includes a target pack from a storeman at Royal Air Force (RAF) Dhekelia that he submitted after a thorough reconnaissance of his workplace. The plan included the best time for attack (2–4pm, when the 'Englishman in charge is absent and the armed area guard has moved away'), and the type of bombs needed to maximise success (Captured Documents, 1958a). Grivas also outlined in his memoirs how detailed internal surveillance conducted by EOKA personnel at RAF Akrotiri and RAF Nicosia resulted in destroyed aircraft at each location (Grivas, 1964, p. 172).

Surveillance within towns was also key. A noteworthy example is the targeting of Governor Harding in May 1956 with a time-bomb planted under his bed (Harding to Colonial Office, 1956c). Although unsuccessful, this attack depended upon prior surveillance of where Governor Harding slept, as well as his routine. Surveillance of off-duty soldiers by EOKA identified that, following their regular football matches, they always drank from the same water fountain. EOKA planted an electronically detonated bomb and exploded it after a game, killing two soldiers and wounding five others (Grivas, 1964, p. 96).

EOKA's intelligence-gathering capability was also designed to inform their offensive operations. The widespread penetration EOKA achieved across various government departments was significant and allowed them to gather intelligence to target the British both inside and outside their bases. Therefore, considering Abrahms' model, EOKA's intelligence-gathering capability should be considered entirely successful. Through the intelligence gained from a widespread network of informants and ongoing surveillance, EOKA remained a threat to the authorities throughout the conflict.

Counterintelligence

Defensive counterintelligence

Grivas believed that robust defensive counterintelligence procedures were needed to ensure that the British could not penetrate EOKA, as an informant within his ranks 'could undermine the entire organisation' (Slack, 2019, p. 101). Sophocleous echoed this: 'everybody [in EOKA] was worried about informers'. This section assesses three key objectives of EOKA's defensive counterintelligence strategy: loyalty tests for new members; the oath of allegiance sworn by all new members; and the decentralised cellular structure of EOKA's organisation, which was implemented to limit information sharing.

The analysis here, therefore, tracks the process by which an individual might be drawn towards EOKA, join, and then become an active operative. Gentry (2010) claims that these counterintelligence procedures ensured that Britain never succeeded in penetrating EOKA or actually defeating it (p. 57). This section of the paper assesses the validity of this claim and analyses the extent to which EOKA's defensive counterintelligence objectives were successful.

Loyalty tests

Prior to new members joining EOKA, they underwent loyalty tests to guarantee their reliability. These involved 'committing an offense that would compromise [them] in the eyes of the law', ensuring that they were not working for the British (Darling, 1960, p. 75). In addition, EOKA conducted background checks on individuals before they were accepted. Sophocleous stated that 'it was very difficult to become a member of EOKA. Somebody who knew you, who was a member of EOKA, would talk to you discreetly and take your opinion on how you feel and think about EOKA'. Another former EOKA fighter, Koshis, stated that before a new fighter was accepted 'EOKA checked [their] character. Let's say if you were going around visiting the bars, drinking, or having affairs with people that did not have a good name, [EOKA] didn't choose you to be a member of the organisation' (Granada UK Television, 1984, 22:35).

Defensive measures were implemented at the earliest stage by Grivas in order to minimise the risk posed by untested members and to limit infiltration. Penetration, however, did occur. As early as 1955, the British were utilising informant networks within EOKA to secure intelligence about weapon-smuggling into Cyprus (Interim Intelligence Report, 1955a). Grivas later claimed that British informants embedded within EOKA also provided critical intelligence about the locations of senior EOKA commanders, leading to their arrest (Grivas, 1964, p. 111). Perhaps the most effective penetration operations conducted against EOKA by the British Army were by the "Q-patrols". Formed in 1956, these comprised British officers and ex-EOKA fighters who had turned (Grivas, 1964, p. 105). Over a six-month period, during 1957, their activities led directly to the identification and capture of 35 EOKA fighters, 47 village groups, five policemen and 20 priests, all of whom were helping EOKA (Baker, 1958, p. 63).

In the words of one British officer, however, the military operations conducted against EOKA 'resembled a display of shadow boxing'. Low-quality intelligence obtained by the British Administration produced limited results. The military struggled to find their targets (Cavenagh, 1965, p. 72). The longer term impact of these penetration operations appears to have been limited and did not result in the destruction of EOKA.

Conversely, Grivas appears to have been concerned that Britain's penetration operations were producing results. In a document captured by the British, Grivas wrote: 'I must make

it clear that my men who defect will eventually be punished no matter how long it takes, and my death to traitors' campaign must continue' (CIC Intelligence Review, 1956).

It is impossible to ascertain the number of British informants that had penetrated EOKA, and it remains difficult to measure how successful the "loyalty tests" were. Many EOKA fighters remained loyal. Without loyalty, however limited, EOKA would not have survived at all. What is clear is that the British succeeded in penetrating EOKA. As such, EOKA's loyalty tests can be regarded as only partially successful.

Oath of allegiance

Grivas insisted that all new members of EOKA complete an oath and 'swear in the name of the Holy Trinity to keep secret all [they] know or come to know about the cause of enosis, even under torture or at the cost of [their] life' (Grivas, 1964, p. 20). As Cyprus was a pious society (Crawshaw, 1978), EOKA's decision to include the phrase 'in the name of the Holy Trinity' is significant. Lyssiotis stated that 'when you take a youth of 16–18 years old and you put his hand on the Bible, that had a big effect on [them]'. Lyssiotis added that 'the oath [...] proved allegiance to EOKA and also the Church. It was a double obligation'.

Although the oath was taken seriously by EOKA, its success at maintaining secrecy when challenged is questionable. British records show that many detained EOKA fighters cooperated under interrogation (Darling, 1960, p. 74). According to the Commissioner of Police, Reginald Beresford, '99% of [high-grade] information leading to positive success is derived from professional interrogation of suspects who have something to gain as a quid-pro-quo' (Beresford, Commissioner's report, 1956). Many of those interrogated provided information about other EOKA members, contributing to further arrests. One EOKA fighter passed information that enabled another five arrests (Harding, Situation Report, 1956e). Sophocleous explained that 'confessing and providing information during cruel interrogations was disastrous. It could blow the whole struggle in the air. Everything we fought for would eventually mean nothing and we could in addition become loathsome'.

Grivas recognised the threat British interrogation methods posed to captured EOKA fighters and released a declaration to EOKA stating that 'unfortunately, a good many combatants though splendid fighters on the battlefield, have become mean traitors on being arrested' (Captured Documents, 1956g). Grivas' intent was to execute known traitors in order to terrorise and deter anyone from working against EOKA. A notable example of this is Elias Samaras, who passed information to the British following torture during interrogation. Upon release, and consumed with guilt, he approached Grivas asking for forgiveness but Grivas immediately ordered his execution (Crawshaw, 1978, pp. 316–317). The British accepted that intimidation was a central pillar in Grivas' strategy and that the execution of "traitors" was often 'extremely brutal' and conducted in 'public or in the presence of relatives' (Darling, 1960, p. 73). Levels of intimidation and violence of such severity demonstrate that Grivas

was concerned both for the security of EOKA, and his own safety.

Although British records state that EOKA detainees were cooperative during interrogation, the methods used included torture. Prisoners were reportedly beaten with flat boards and were partly suffocated with wet cloths (Foley, 1964, p. 85; Neillands, 1996, p. 288; Thubron, 1986, p. 38). Others claimed that whilst detained they were repeatedly beaten or raped by British soldiers (BBC, 2019). One former member of British military intelligence who was stationed in Cyprus during the conflict later stated that ‘torture of subjects was endemic’ (French, 2011, p. 145).

At least in retrospect, many EOKA members could sympathise with comrades who broke. Colin Thubron (1986, p. 39) spoke with a former EOKA member in 1973, who freely admitted that ‘plenty of us confessed things’. Likewise, Sophocleous does not blame detained EOKA fighters for speaking when tortured: ‘I don’t think the oath was enough to stop you from speaking. Under the circumstances you did not know how much pain you could tolerate. When they were torturing me the only thing I was always thinking and praying about was to God to help me not to speak’. Lyssiotis was also forgiving of former EOKA fighters who spoke whilst being interrogated, stating that ‘there were quite a few who talked under torture, but nobody knows their limits. I don’t know the maximum I can stand before talking’. Lyssiotis also disagreed with Grivas’ view that fighters who talked under interrogation were traitors: ‘[they] are not traitors, a traitor is somebody who does it because of hate or because of money’.

Grivas’ stance here, therefore, seems to have been notably hard-line even within EOKA. He rarely trusted EOKA fighters once they had been exposed to British interrogation (Crawshaw, 1978, pp. 315–317). This demonstrates that he recognised how successful the British interrogation methods were and, conversely, how unsuccessful EOKA’s oath of allegiance was. Nevertheless, many EOKA fighters clearly believed in the oath and undoubtedly upheld their obligation; therefore, the oath is highly likely to have prevented EOKA fighters from passing intelligence to the British of their own free will. The information presented here, however, suggests that the psychological commitment each member made to EOKA only held until the point at which the pain or fear of torture was greater. As a defensive counterintelligence measure, the oath of allegiance should be seen as only partially successful.

Decentralised cellular structure

Grivas believed that, in order to maximise operational security and minimise the chances of infiltration, a decentralised cellular structure was required to compartmentalise each section and ensure that knowledge regarding fighters’ identities or planned operations was not transferred between cells (Grivas, 1962, p. 29). Sophocleous explained that ‘one of the main rules of the organisation was that we didn’t know the identities of other members’. Some commentators, such as David Anderson, believe that EOKA’s cell structure was effective enough to limit infiltration into the organisation (1992, pp. 208–209). The success of this

measure, however, is debatable. Large-scale arrests highlight that the cellular structure did not successfully protect EOKA. As reported by the Deputy Governor, one arrest operation resulted in the detention of 44 EOKA fighters involved in the smuggling network in Limassol (Sinclair to Colonial Office, 1956). Grivas later conceded that ‘the Limassol smuggling network was broken’ (Grivas, 1964, p. 107).

Although many fighters, such as Sophocleous, appear to have followed the rules set down by Grivas, others clearly did not. In an insurgent organisation such as EOKA, the likelihood of cell members being aware of others belonging to different cells and their wider operations is possible, especially as some EOKA fighters will have been recruited from the same areas, villages or even families. Clear infractions between cells occurred and the system did not adequately protect EOKA. Therefore, the decentralised cellular structure was not entirely successful at achieving its objective and should be seen as only partially successful.

Overall, EOKA’s defensive counterintelligence was far from perfect. From as early as November 1955, Grivas insisted that an intensified campaign against the CPF and their informers was needed due to their ongoing efforts to infiltrate EOKA (CIC Intelligence Review, 1955b, p. 4). In July 1956, Grivas again criticised EOKA’s defensive counterintelligence measures and released a proclamation stating that ‘the enemy has gained valuable intelligence about my organisation through men talking after capture and informers amongst the civil population’ (CIC Intelligence Review, 1956). From 1955 to 1958, which constitutes the majority of the insurgency, Grivas continued to complain about and remind EOKA of the importance of defensive counterintelligence (Slack, 2019, p. 104). Grivas recognised that EOKA’s defensive counterintelligence was not entirely successful. Had he not insisted on high defensive standards, however, EOKA could have been fatally infiltrated and destroyed. Therefore, it is unsurprising that he would complain about, and reinforce, EOKA defensive counterintelligence standards. By maintaining a strict approach, Grivas strengthened EOKA’s defensive counterintelligence, which undoubtedly led to EOKA remaining a significant threat for such a sustained period.

Despite the over-generous assessment of Slack (2019, p. 11) that Grivas displayed a personal ‘penchant for security’, it is important to note that he was also directly responsible for one of EOKA’s greatest defensive counterintelligence failures. In June 1956, Grivas left behind his personal diary when he and his men were pursued through the Troodos Mountains during a British Army clearance operation. The journalist Charles Foley (1964, p. 73) further alleges that Grivas had left ‘a part of his diaries’ to an EOKA member who ‘was persuaded to hand them over to Special Branch, for a large sum of money’. All this provided the British with the intelligence they had been seeking on EOKA’s plans and intentions (Dimitrakis, 2008, pp. 381–382). Furthermore, Grivas later admitted that the discovery of his hides and locations was the result of informants working for the British (Grivas, 1962, pp. 58–59). Therefore, Gentry’s assertion that Britain never succeeded in penetrating EOKA or actually defeating

it (2010, p. 57) is only partially correct. Britain did indeed penetrate EOKA's defensive counterintelligence measures.

In the end, however, EOKA survived. Its defensive counterintelligence strategy, although not perfect, supported its existence and, in terms of Abrahms' model, should be considered overall partially successful.

Offensive counterintelligence

Offensive counterintelligence was critical for EOKA's survival, and Grivas' intelligence collection informed his offensive counterintelligence. Grivas' first objectives were to intimidate and, if necessary, murder anyone who worked against EOKA (Cavenagh, 1965, p. 60). This strategy allowed Grivas to undermine British efforts to infiltrate EOKA. If penetration occurred, it also allowed EOKA to eliminate the threat. Gentry asserts that 'Britain never came close to containing EOKA's offensive counterintelligence effort or penetrating EOKA sufficiently to defeat it' (2010, p. 57). This section assesses the validity of this claim by analysing four separate areas in order to determine the extent to which EOKA's offensive counterintelligence objectives were successful. It considers how the intelligence gained by EOKA's informant networks within government departments, such as CYTA and the Post Office, was used by EOKA in offensive counterintelligence operations, how the intelligence gained from EOKA's informants within the CPF was used to inform EOKA's offensive counterintelligence operations, how effective the assassination campaign that EOKA waged against those opposed to *enosis* and EOKA was, and how EOKA used misinformation and deception against the British to confuse their intelligence collection.

EOKA's informant networks – Government departments

EOKA's informants within government departments provided the intelligence needed to shape their offensive counterintelligence operations. Furthermore, EOKA's ongoing intimidation campaign was used to discourage collaboration with the authorities. In an EOKA Proclamation, Grivas declared that 'whoever betrays to the Police the Cypriot fighters [...] or gives any information against them [...] will be executed' (Grivas, EOKA Proclamation, 1955a). In order to sustain the tactic of intimidation, Grivas used the intelligence-gathering network he had already established to identify those who were willing to snitch on EOKA.

Eventually, the British authorities learnt that embedded informants within the CYTA intercepted phone calls and leaked the content of conversations between British informants and those sympathetic to the Government to EOKA (Darling, 1960, p. 69). Sophocleous claimed that 'many traitors [...] used the phones to report on EOKA for the British' but also 'innocent people [...] used to speak without knowing that when they spoke, they gave information without knowing that they were being listened to'. Therefore, EOKA's covert intelligence-gathering capability enabled the identification of informants and those openly discussing EOKA's activities. Similarly, EOKA informants within the Post Office were able to

intercept letters addressed to the CPF, ‘with, on occasion, fatal consequences for the writers’ (Darling, 1960, pp. 68–69). Lyssiotis’ account corroborates the British records: ‘yes, we had people working inside the post office and they were intercepting and reading mail directed to the headquarters’. Sophocleous, however, stated that most of the mail intercepted by EOKA was sourced within the police headquarters: ‘Greek policemen, members of EOKA, tracked suspicious letters and read them’. The information collected by pro-EOKA police officers allowed the organisation to exact revenge. As stated by Sophocleous, ‘EOKA would be informed, and the traitor would have to face the consequences, sometimes execution’. Thus, two methods of communication that allowed the passing of information on to EOKA were successfully used to obstruct British intelligence collection and terrorise anyone willing to operate against EOKA. As such, this network of informants can be regarded as successful overall.

EOKA’s informant networks – Cyprus Police Force

The CPF used their informant network to identify “traitors” and enable EOKA’s offensive counterintelligence. Polycarpus Georghadjis and George Lagoudontis were critical in this aspect. The informants that Georghadjis had previously recruited into the CPF targeted pro-British Police officers for assassination, and betrayed CPF informants to EOKA (Anderson, 1992). The recordings Lagoudontis made in the CPF headquarters also helped EOKA identify British informants and simultaneously provided high-level intelligence to enable EOKA’s offensive counterintelligence activities against the British. Grivas claimed in his memoirs that the names of three British informants were mentioned in one of Lagoudontis’ recordings. All three were executed by EOKA (Grivas, 1964, p. 74).

Grivas’ offensive counterintelligence efforts undermined the morale of the CPF. In a written threat to the CPF, Grivas warned serving officers to ‘resign or face the consequences’ (Grivas, EOKA Proclamation, 1955b). These were not idle threats. Throughout the insurgency, the CPF suffered 51 killed and 185 wounded by EOKA (Novo, 2012, p. 427). Due to the penetration of the CPF, EOKA developed a detailed understanding of police operations and were able to target key personnel at will (Holland, 1998, p. 60). Indeed, many of the CPF murders were public and brutal. Police officers were executed in the streets, often in broad daylight (Armitage to Colonial Office, No. 511, 1955c). Likewise, Sophocleous stated that ‘there were some police officers that did not support us and actively targeted EOKA, some of them we knew them, so we killed them’. These assassinations undoubtedly sent a clear message to the general public that EOKA’s informant network was broad enough to identify those within the CPF actively working against EOKA, and that this would also extend to those who provided intelligence to the CPF about EOKA.

Ultimately, this violent form of intimidation acted as a warning to serving CPF officers: those who remained loyal to the British Administration and targeted EOKA, would suffer the consequences of EOKA retribution. Grivas’ captured diary declared that one of EOKA’s main

objectives was the ‘execution of police traitors’ (Captured Diaries, n.d., p. 52). Furthermore, concern was voiced in a report for the Colonial Secretary that through the ongoing assassination campaign of police officers, some may be coerced into becoming informants for EOKA (Colonial Secretary, 1955). Sophocleous, however, believes that a separate group of officers existed, beyond those either willing or coerced. These police officers chose to ignore EOKA’s actions and refused direction to target them. Sophocleous claimed regarding these officers: ‘I can say [they] didn’t work with EOKA or with the British’. Governor Harding concurred: ‘it was not unnatural that fear of EOKA should have become an overriding influence in the lives of many police officers and that whilst they continue to fulfil their normal duties conscientiously, they avoided any action which might cause them to incur the displeasure of EOKA’ (Harding, Report of the Cyprus Police Commission, 1956g).

Therefore, although some CPF officers may have been motivated by a desire for *enosis*, this does not necessarily translate into agreement with EOKA or their means. The extreme intimidation methods utilised by EOKA may have influenced the actions of many.

Grivas’ intent of ‘disrupting the police’ (Grivas, 1962, p. 39) was materialised and acknowledged by the British authorities, who concluded that the penetration of the CPF was not only ‘invaluable to the enemy and their activities’ but also ‘struck at the very heart of [Britain’s] counteroffensive’ (Darling, 1960, p. 70). Grivas’ offensive counterintelligence strategy left a CPF that was either sympathetic towards EOKA or unwilling to interfere (Novo, 2012, p. 428). The British Administration was, therefore, forced to recruit and rely on Turkish-Cypriot Police officers to fill the policing void within the CPF. These officers, however, lacked the language skills and were mistrusted by the Greek-Cypriot community (Novo, 2012, pp. 423, 428). Therefore, EOKA’s strategy successfully reduced the ability of the CPF to gather intelligence on EOKA and target EOKA effectively, and can be regarded as successful overall.

EOKA’s assassination campaign

Grivas was determined to target anyone who acted against EOKA. The Chief Constable of Cyprus, G.C White, noted that ‘many terrorist crimes were committed against persons suspected of cooperating with the security forces with the result that the local population were completely terrified at even being seen talking to a policeman’ (White, Annual Report of the Cyprus Police Force, 1956, p. 20). EOKA’s targeting of suspected informers was calculated to generate maximum resonance: ‘Usually the victim was shot sitting in the coffee shop, the centre of village life’ (Foley, 1964, p. 116).

Lyssiotis provided first-hand knowledge of Grivas’ intent and stated that ‘Grivas was very strict. If he suspected somebody, we received orders for his execution’. Sophocleous concurred: ‘humans are weak in so many ways and the British were good at taking advantage of these weaknesses [...] EOKA had to be relentless against traitors’. These points highlight the fact

that EOKA did not enjoy universal support. They also show that EOKA did not feel secure and that ongoing penetration operations conducted by the British Administration potentially impacted on EOKA's security.

The British Administration believed that 80% of those executed for being traitors were not known to them, nor had they provided any information on EOKA (CIC Intelligence Review, 1957b). Indeed, in December 1956, EOKA executed 11 Greek-Cypriots suspected of being informants, although some of these men 'had never cooperated with the security forces at any time' (Crawshaw, 1978, p. 205). Lyssiotis further elaborated that 'in every revolution there are mistakes, either unintentional or sometimes even intentional. [For instance] if I am in the underground with you, and if for any reason I dislike you, I can say that you are a traitor, and I can execute you...' Similarly, Koshis stated: 'I cannot say [that] for sure all these people that we killed were [...] traitors' (Granada UK Television, 1984, 101:16). Eventually, EOKA also began killing innocent family members of suspected informants if they were under British protection or absent from Cyprus (Crawshaw, 1978, p. 205).

The exact number of "traitors" executed by EOKA is difficult to ascertain. The Union of EOKA Fighters claim that only 80 Greek-Cypriots were executed for alleged collaboration with the British (Karyos, 2011, pp. 270–271), while Sophocleous stated that although he was unsure of the exact figure of those executed as traitors by EOKA, the number was 'not more than 90'. Governor Foot claims that the figure was 218 (Foot to Colonial Office, 1958c). Therefore, although this aspect of EOKA's offensive counterintelligence may have targeted informants, it also appears to have been used to terrorise and intimidate Greek-Cypriot society at large into complying with EOKA.

EOKA's assassination campaign was driven by a definition decreed by Grivas' interpretation of what constituted a "traitor". In 1955, this was limited specifically to those who collaborated with the British against EOKA; however, by 1958, the definition had broadened considerably and included anyone who did not give direct assistance to EOKA, did not follow EOKA's direction, or destroyed EOKA paraphernalia (French, 2015b, p. 159). An individual could be the victim of extra-judicial killing without ever passing intelligence to the authorities. EOKA's assassination campaign was clearly used to terrorise; however, in terms of how successful it was in targeting those actively working against EOKA, it limited the British Administration's ability to gather intelligence against them through the assassination of those targeting EOKA. It also, however, undoubtedly killed many individuals who were innocent.

EOKA's misinformation and deception strategy

Grivas' offensive counterintelligence strategy also used misinformation and deception to undermine intelligence collection against EOKA through informants within the CPF. British authorities suspected that, throughout 1956, CPF Officer Lagoudontis was providing early warning to Grivas regarding upcoming cordon-and-search operations. Contained within

a captured document, dated May 1956, is information allegedly written by Lagoudontis, which related to upcoming searches across the Troodos Mountains, where EOKA fighters were hiding. The report also includes the exact date the searches would begin (Captured Documents, 1956c). Indeed, in March and May 1956, Grivas claimed to have received advanced warning of large-scale cordon-and-search operations in areas of the Troodos Mountains where he was hiding. On both occasions, intelligence about his location was accurate (Grivas, 1964, p. 119). Sophocleous explained that a police contact ‘used to inform me that on Tuesday for instance, the police will begin searches in such and such area, so take care’. Success for EOKA depended heavily on the quality and quantity of intelligence they gained, and police informers were critical for EOKA throughout the insurgency. This timely intelligence allowed EOKA fighters to elude capture and remain operationally active. Although the British had accurate intelligence on the location of EOKA fighters, EOKA’s offensive counterintelligence, when used defensively to protect themselves, was able to confuse British operations and undermine its chances of success.

EOKA also used misinformation offensively to confuse the British and CPF intelligence-gathering system and to complicate further their understanding of EOKA’s operations. Sophocleous explained that EOKA ‘used to send the British and CPF letters containing lies. I would pretend that I was a traitor, and I was giving them information about Grivas’ location, and they would launch an operation to find Grivas’. Furthermore, Grivas claimed that some captured EOKA fighters were capable of misleading their interrogators with misinformation, and combined ‘false news with a few true but unimportant facts so as to mislead their interrogators’ (Grivas, 1964, p. 106). One example Grivas provides relates to a captured EOKA fighter who convinced his interrogators that he witnessed Grivas leave Cyprus by boat, which resulted in the British authorities conducting a dedicated coastline search looking for evidence of his departure (Grivas, 1964, p. 107).

Overall, EOKA’s offensive counterintelligence proved to be effective against the British Administration’s efforts to gather intelligence. Their widespread intimidation campaign terrorised Cypriot society and would have, in many cases, prevented people coming forward to report on EOKA. Through the dedicated assassination campaign against suspected traitors, EOKA successfully destroyed the Administration’s ability to generate human intelligence on them. Their misinformation and deception techniques absorbed valuable resources and, in many cases, reduced the chances of discovery. Governor Harding reported that EOKA’s offensive counterintelligence prevented the CPF from being able to function productively (Harding to Colonial Office, 1957a, p. 2). Therefore, EOKA’s offensive counterintelligence should be seen as entirely successful, and Gentry’s claim that ‘Britain never came close to containing EOKA’s offensive counterintelligence’ appears to be correct.

Conclusion

EOKA's intelligence-gathering capability extended from their surveillance networks and youth groups to the servants and employees of government institutions and the CPF, and was pivotal in shaping all EOKA operations. According to John Newsinger (2015), these unseen informants were 'enlisted by Grivas in an intelligence war' that largely left the authorities in the dark, whilst 'their every move was observed' (p. 100).

EOKA's defensive and offensive counterintelligence remained robust enough to prevent the British Administration from ever establishing an informant network close enough to Grivas to undermine EOKA, which remained a key priority for the British for the duration of the conflict (Dean to Foreign Office, 1955, p. 3). Even when penetrations of EOKA occurred, which resulted in arrests, confiscation of important EOKA communiqués, or intelligence derived from interrogation, they provided only limited insight into EOKA (Dimitrakis, 2008, p. 391). Lack of timely and accurate intelligence also undoubtedly contributed to the longevity of both Grivas and EOKA overall. A key reason for this lack of detailed intelligence was that EOKA's offensive counterintelligence campaign against the CPF had 'wreck[ed] its ability to generate [human intelligence]' on EOKA (Gentry, 2010, p. 57). EOKA successfully managed to undermine the British Administration's intelligence-gathering capability to such an extent that they 'never gained enough actionable intelligence to neutralise Grivas [...] or otherwise wreck EOKA' (Gentry, 2010, p. 57).

Targeted killing of British informants was another important objective in EOKA's strategy. EOKA identified threats through their intelligence-collection capability and, subsequently, eliminated both a threat to themselves and a line of intelligence collection for the British as a component of their offensive counterintelligence activity. EOKA's intelligence gathering facilitated their counterintelligence operations. One drove the other in a symbiotic and cyclical relationship. As the British did not identify or disrupt the intelligence-gathering operation EOKA had established within the government institutions, youth networks or informant networks, they were never able to disrupt EOKA's counterintelligence, especially their offensive counterintelligence.

Perhaps one of the most noteworthy reviews of EOKA's intelligence and counterintelligence activities came from Governor Harding himself. In 1955, Harding confidently stated in a press interview that 'I have been given the task of restoring law and order and putting an end to terrorism and intimidation, I believe it can be done, I intend to do it' (Granada UK Television, 1984, 52:50). After Harding left Cyprus in 1957, he conceded that 'I don't believe you can destroy an organisation of that kind which was led by fanatics and had a great deal of support from the civil population either from sympathy or from fear' (Granada UK Television, 1984, 112:02). This acceptance reflects Harding's inability to identify, disrupt and ultimately destroy EOKA. EOKA's intelligence collection and counterintelligence activities had sufficiently protected it throughout the conflict.

Overall, two key aspects successfully supported EOKA's intelligence gathering and counterintelligence activities during the conflict: first, support from the Greek-Cypriot population and second, Grivas himself.

Support from the Greek-Cypriot population enabled EOKA's overall successes. Indeed, EOKA's entire intelligence-gathering operation was built upon this foundation. Without support from the Greek-Cypriot population, Grivas believed that EOKA would not succeed (Grivas, 1962, p. 11).

The vast majority of the Greek-Cypriot population wanted *enosis*. As this paper has shown, however, not all Greek-Cypriots supported EOKA. Indeed, there was a range of "support" provided to EOKA from the Greek-Cypriot community. EOKA relied heavily on nationalism to engender some of this support, whilst intimidation, coercion and threats were used against the less willing. If none of these worked, EOKA employed directed violence and terrorism towards those opposed to their aims. These actions provided EOKA with a Greek-Cypriot population that was largely compliant and willing to provide EOKA with the intelligence they needed. Throughout the conflict, Grivas continued to encourage and enforce this "support" wherever possible, as the intelligence the Greek-Cypriot population provided EOKA, strengthened their understanding of British operations. Had the British Administration protected the Greek-Cypriot population more effectively, the level of support available to EOKA from the latter might have been reduced. This could have had a direct impact on the overall outcome. As far as this aspect of the intelligence war went, EOKA rode their luck to a greater extent than has been recognised.

Grivas' survival is also testament to the fact that EOKA's intelligence gathering and counterintelligence activities were more successful than not. As Grivas directed the fighting for EOKA, replacing him was almost impossible. He recognised this fact and believed that had he been killed, 'the whole struggle would have collapsed because no one could have taken [his] place' (Grivas, 1962, p. 25). As Grivas had centralised decision-making, all messages from his area leaders came to him and he provided the direction needed via a corresponding letter. As such, the conflict was 'almost exclusively directed by [Grivas'] correspondence' (Crawshaw, 1978, p. 348). Overall, this worked out well for EOKA (Slack, 2019, p. 90). It is worth restating, however, that this was a very high-risk strategy indeed. As an obsessive diarist, Grivas' own lapses in this regard could have very easily brought disaster upon EOKA. The judgement of Slack (2019, p. 112) that Grivas 'knew himself', therefore, seems overstated here.

In the final analysis, though, Grivas remained EOKA's 'centre-of-gravity' (Gentry, 2010, p. 57) and his direction prevented the British from ever *fully* penetrating EOKA or destroying it. Grivas' survival directly supported EOKA's survival, and it was EOKA's successful intelligence gathering and counterintelligence activities that enabled this. Indeed, EOKA's

endurance is evidence of their overall intelligence and counterintelligence success.

Ultimately, the success of EOKA's intelligence and counterintelligence activities forced the British to engage in a debate about a political solution to the problem posed by EOKA that resulted in independence. Although some of EOKA's intelligence and counterintelligence activities were more successful than others, overall, they were successful enough to enable EOKA to force political change. Despite this, EOKA's activities can only be regarded as partially successful, if the focus is expanded to include ultimate strategic goals (as Abrahms' model originally intended). In this respect, it should be noted that the key objective of *enosis* was never achieved.

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