

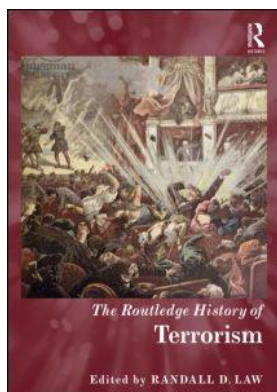
This article was downloaded by: 10.3.98.93

On: 19 Oct 2018

Access details: *subscription number*

Publisher: *Routledge*

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: 5 Howick Place, London SW1P 1WG, UK



The Routledge History of Terrorism

Randall D. Law

Britain's Small Wars

Publication details

<https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315719061.ch13>

Benjamin Grob-Fitzgibbon

Published online on: 02 Apr 2015

How to cite :- Benjamin Grob-Fitzgibbon. 02 Apr 2015, *Britain's Small Wars from: The Routledge History of Terrorism* Routledge

Accessed on: 19 Oct 2018

<https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315719061.ch13>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR DOCUMENT

Full terms and conditions of use: <https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/legal-notices/terms>

This Document PDF may be used for research, teaching and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproductions, re-distribution, re-selling, loan or sub-licensing, systematic supply or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The publisher shall not be liable for an loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

BRITAIN'S SMALL WARS

The Empire strikes back, 1952–68

Benjamin Grob-Fitzgibbon

As dawn broke on the year 1952, the British government was perhaps better manned to oversee security operations in the Empire than at many other times in the twentieth century. On October 26, 1951 – just three weeks after Sir Henry Gurney, the British high commissioner in Malaya, was assassinated by Communist Terrorists – Sir Winston Churchill replaced Clement Attlee as British prime minister, bringing to power a Conservative cabinet more robust in its commitment to empire and more willing to use military force to defend it than its Labour predecessors. Between them, the cabinet and its junior ministers had much wartime service: the Colonial Secretary Oliver Lyttelton and future prime ministers Harold Macmillan and Anthony Eden fought together in World War I, and War Secretary Anthony Head, future prime minister Edward Heath, future defence secretary Lord Carrington, and future colonial secretary Iain Macleod all served in World War II.¹ Yet it was not just military service but the political management of conflict that the cabinet had in droves. During World War II, Eden served first as dominions secretary, then as war secretary, and finally foreign secretary; Lyttelton served as president of the Board of Trade, then as minister of state in the Middle East, and finally as minister of production; and Macmillan served successively as parliamentary secretary to the Ministry of Supply, undersecretary in the Colonial Office, minister resident in the Mediterranean, and air secretary.² In their recent history, members of Churchill's cabinet had killed and had led others to kill on their behalf, and they brought this experience with them into the government in October 1951.³

The conclusion of the Malayan Emergency

This change of leadership had an immediate effect on the way the government viewed the insurgency in the Malayan Federation, now dragging into its fourth year, and it shaped how they approached the problem. As the newly appointed colonial secretary with ultimate responsibility for Malaya, Lyttelton despised his predecessor's "emotional approach to public affairs" and believed that "to imagine that universal suffrage, elections and self-government with a few trades unions and co-operative wholesale societies thrown in spell immediate peace, prosperity and happiness" was an "outrage" to historical good sense and an "affront" to reason.⁴ Democracy was important, yes, but democracy had to be protected with a mailed fist; put another way, the fruit of democracy could only be expected to grow if the field of civil society had first been tilled with heavy machinery, eradicating any weeds that might grow there. In Malaya as elsewhere in the empire, any opposition to British interests had to be eliminated before Westminster could successfully grant self-government to the colonial peoples. Yet in Malaya, Lyttelton was faced not only with the death of Gurney but also with

the retirement of Sir Harold Briggs, the Malayan Director of Operations.⁵ With Briggs and Gurney gone, the guiding lights behind the Briggs Plan (see the previous chapter) were dimmed. Consequently, Lyttelton embarked on a tour of the Federation to assess for himself the situation, arriving in the country in late November 1951. Within a week, he determined that more rigorous leadership was needed. In early December, he therefore recommended to Churchill that the recently vacated positions of high commissioner (Gurney) and director of operations (Briggs) be merged into a single position that would have complete control over all aspects of the Emergency, from policing operations to military campaigns to civil administration.⁶

Lyttelton expanded his vision further in a memorandum to the cabinet in late December, suggesting that Briggs' system of integrating military, police, and civil operations through State War Executives (SWECS) and District War Executives (DWECS) be retained but that the system be controlled by a war cabinet operating from within a single Executive Council rather than under joint control by a Federal War Council (military) and a Federal Executive Council (civil), as was the practice under Briggs. Any separation of civil and military power should be removed with all power invested in a single individual at the top of a rigid hierarchy. Finally, Lyttelton argued that the administration should not rush to introduce self-governance to Malaya but should first establish the solid foundations of civil society, eliminating all existing security threats. The government, he wrote, must adopt the philosophy of *festina lente* – make haste slowly.⁷ The cabinet agreed. In early January 1952, Churchill contacted General Sir Gerald Templer, at that time serving as general officer commanding Eastern Command, to offer him the position of high commissioner and director of operations. In a little over a month, Templer arrived in Malaya.⁸

Templer immediately took a more aggressive approach than his predecessors. Within two days of arriving in the colony, he gathered together all leading civil officers to demand personal responsibility for their actions and to insist that they implement a more rigorous approach to their counter-insurgency operations.⁹ Yet individual accountability was only the beginning. As suggested by Lyttelton, Templer reformed the system of operational control that Briggs had put into place, creating a single Executive Council. Within this council, he established a Director of Operation's Committee (with himself in the chair) that would run the SWECS and DWECS, "advise" the Executive Council on what policies to follow, and in general streamline the management of the Emergency, bringing together all aspects of it under the control of a single committee led by the director of operations – a man who also happened to be the high commissioner chairing the Executive Council to whom the director of operations and his committee reported!¹⁰

Within the Director's Committee, Templer accepted only individuals who were as dedicated to a successful outcome in the Emergency as he was. He began by replacing the police commissioner with the forty-four-year-old Arthur Young, at that time commissioner of the City of London Police.¹¹ Young and Templer developed a close working relationship, Young accompanying Templer on many of the forty-five tours of Malaya – each two to three days long – that he carried out in his first twelve months in the Federation alone.¹² Young would subsequently become commissioner of police in Kenya in 1954 (at the height of the Mau Mau Emergency – see below) and eventually chief constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary in 1969, just as the Troubles in Northern Ireland were beginning (see the next chapter, by Cillian McGrattan). However, policing in a counter-insurgency environment was only as good as the intelligence that fed it, and Templer recognized the importance of sound information to his overall strategy. For that reason, less than a week after arriving in Malaya

he contacted Lyttelton to ask that a high-ranking official from MI5 (Britain's security service) be seconded to Malaya to serve as director of intelligence.¹³ Within days, MI5's Jack Morton, at that time heading up the joint MI5/MI6 Security Intelligence Far East Office in Singapore, was approached, arriving in the Federation in April 1952.¹⁴ Morton took up residence in what Templer called the "inner keep" of the police headquarters, a room established by Templer in February 1952 where high-ranking representatives from the police special branch, the armed forces, the civil service, the Malayan Ministry of Defense, and the intelligence services were physically grouped together in what today would be called an intelligence fusion center.¹⁵

Despite his robust approach, Templer shared Gurney's skepticism of large-scale army sweep operations. Nevertheless, he maintained that the army still had a role to play in the conflict. In addition to conventional operations, Templer believed that special forces would be necessary, and he turned to 22 SAS Regiment to assist him in this.¹⁶ Twenty-two SAS, initially called the Malayan Scouts (SAS), was born in July 1950, when General John Harding, the commander-in-chief, Far East, summoned former wartime SAS commander Mike Calvert to assess the best way out of the Malayan quagmire. Calvert spent close to five months traveling throughout the Federation, speaking to police commanders and men, officers and soldiers, and civil authorities, undertaking police and army patrols, and witnessing the implementation of counter-insurgency policy. He reported to Harding that current operations were "making a lot of noise and achieving very little" and recommended the formation of a special forces unit modeled on the wartime SAS.¹⁷ This Harding authorized him to do, and in July the Malayan Scouts (SAS) received its first volunteers.¹⁸ By January 1951, men from the UK-based 21 SAS (Artists Rifles) regiment were dispatched to form B Squadron, Malayan Scouts (SAS), and by the summer of 1951, the Malayan Scouts had increased its numbers to four squadrons.¹⁹

By February 1952, SAS squadrons had been operating largely autonomously for half a year, broken down into smaller troops that would each carry out operations.²⁰ Templer expanded their use. In February, they launched Operation Helsby, a large three-squadron offensive designed to break the communist base area. The operation was a disaster, with C and D squadrons unable to cross swollen rivers and B squadron missing its drop zone from the air. Nevertheless, Helsby signaled a new approach. By the summer of 1954, when Templer's successor, General Geoffrey Bourne, arrived in the country, the "specialized work" undertaken by the SAS squadrons had become an essential part of military operations.²¹

It was not only in his use of police, intelligence, and military resources that Templer brought innovation to Malaya. Shortly after he arrived in the Federation, Templer uttered his famous words, "The answer lies not in pouring more troops into the jungle, but in the hearts and minds of the people," popularizing the notion of "hearts and minds" in unconventional warfare.²² However, this did not mean that he was opposed to military action nor that he intended to take a "soft" approach. Under Templer's tenure, "kills" and "surrenders" of insurgents increased as British violence became more targeted and the security forces as a whole became more aggressive.²³ Within the New Villages, conditions became for a time *more* draconian rather than less. For Templer, winning the hearts and minds of the population did not mean distributing milk and cookies but rather triumphing in an ideological struggle between communism and the West; if the Malayan people did not voluntarily adopt Western norms, then punitive action would encourage them to do so. As early as March 1952, Templer began to use collective punishments such as curfews, the reduction of rice rations, and fines imposed on villages suspected of aiding the enemy. In at

least one case, he sent all sixty-two village residents to detention camps and destroyed their property as punishment for not providing intelligence information.²⁴ Templer's strategy was one of the carrot and the stick, with the carrot given for cooperation but the stick swiftly wielded if cooperation turned out to be less than forthcoming.

With his approach firmly entrenched by the summer of 1952, Templer worked to secure the loyalties of those within the New Villages while isolating and destroying the insurgency at ever growing distances from the civilian population. In September 1953, Templer devised a system of rewarding villages that had been compliant over a prolonged period of time by designating them "White Areas," where all emergency restrictions were lifted and freedom of movement and action were returned to the people.²⁵ By June 1954, 1.3 million people were living within White Areas.²⁶ When Templer returned to visit Malaya as chief of the Imperial General Staff in October 1955, he was informed that the security situation had improved to such an extent that the security forces were now more interested in the Federation Football Final than best counter-insurgency practices.²⁷

By then, the positions of director of operations and high commissioner had once again been separated, with Sir Donald MacGillivray taking the latter and General Sir Geoffrey Bourne the former. In October 1954, MacGillivray invited five local political leaders onto the Director of Operation's Committee (chaired by Bourne, but now reporting to MacGillivray) and from January 1955 he instructed the chairs of the SWECs and DWECs to likewise introduce indigenous representation. In March 1956, the British transferred all operational responsibility for the Emergency from the director of operations to Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Malay chief minister; from that point forward, British officials began to intentionally devolve more and more power to local authorities. On August 31, 1957, the British government relinquished all sovereignty over the territory, and Malaya took its place as an independent state within the Commonwealth of Nations.²⁸ Although British troops remained in the country until 1960, to all intents and purposes the back of the insurgency had been broken.

In all, between 1948 and 1957, the communist insurgency took the lives of 1,851 members of the security forces and 2,461 civilians, making it one of the deadliest terrorist campaigns of the postwar empire. Yet the insurgents suffered still more, with 6,398 killed, 2,760 wounded, and 1,938 captured after surrender.²⁹ The Malayan Emergency was a long and drawn-out struggle, a close-run affair, but it also proved a testing ground for British counter-insurgency/anti-terrorist tactics, tactics that would be used by the government for many years to come throughout the British Empire and beyond.³⁰

The Mau Mau Insurgency in Kenya

If the conflict in Malaya was a protracted but straightforward struggle against communist insurgents whose aims were clear and whose strategy was understood, the violence that erupted in Kenya in 1952 was far less comprehensible. The first Briton arrived in what became known as Kenya in 1883; before the close of the century, the British government declared a protectorate and by 1901 had laid 582 miles of railway track, assisted the immigration of 30,000 Indians for labor purposes, and encouraged adventurous British settlers with promises of large tracks of farmland. Following World War I, the government launched a settlement scheme for newly demobilized officers, and in 1920 the protectorate was declared an official crown colony.³¹ The British met tribes that opposed their expansion with force and between 1895 and 1920 launched nineteen punitive expeditions against ten

separate tribes. Kenya's largest tribe, the Kikuyu, was pacified earlier than most and as such retained a greater level of cohesiveness into the post-World War I period. Consequently, it was Kikuyu lands that felt the greatest impact of the British settlement.³²

Within the Kikuyu areas, British settlers were joined by missionaries who by 1920 had established Christian missions and church schools, aiming to create an African Christian elite within the tribe. Those who accepted Christianity were rewarded with increased involvement in the political sphere, primarily through the Kikuyu Association (established in 1921). Those who refused were ostracized and formed their own organization, the East African Association, which was explicitly opposed to European settlement in Kenya. The Kikuyu Association was supported by the Local Native Councils, local government institutions established by the British, while the East African Association was allied with the Kikuyu Central Association, which opposed the settler-friendly practices of the Kikuyu Association and Local Native Councils. This political separation was amplified by the migration of Kikuyu squatters to settler lands; by 1931, 1,850,000 acres of a total 6,847,000 acres of settler lands was occupied by squatters. In response to this perceived "crisis," in 1940 the colonial government proscribed the Kikuyu Central Association and between 1946 and 1952 embarked upon a policy of repatriation of Kikuyu squatters onto specially created reservations. By 1952, over 100,000 Kikuyu had been removed in this way. Those repatriated created new pressures on those already living on the reservations, leading in 1947 to a land crisis and peasant revolt that continued to simmer for many years afterwards.³³

In this climate, some Kikuyu who were not loyal to British rule restored the old Kikuyu tradition of oath-taking when faced with war or crisis, beginning in Olenguruone in 1943, spreading beyond that village by 1945, and becoming a movement known to the British and loyalist Kikuyu as Mau Mau by 1948. While there was no rigid hierarchical structure in Mau Mau such as could be found in other organizations such as the Irish Republican Army, nor any distinct event such as the 1916 Easter Rising that gave it its birth, what in 1943 had been a spontaneous and localized response to perceived crisis had by 1948 evolved into a recognizable and widespread movement among the Kikuyu tribe.

Oath-takers pledged their opposition to the colonial government and took part in rituals involving animal sacrifice, sexual intercourse, and the smearing of animal blood on one's genitalia – all repulsive to British and settler sensibilities. It was the nature of these oaths, rather than the level of violence, that shocked the British government, as demonstrated by an army report written in 1953:

The only possible deduction to be drawn from the details of the bestiality and perversion connected with the ceremonies is the horrible one that we are now faced in Kenya with a terrorist organisation composed not of ordinary humans fighting for a cause but of primitive beasts who have forsaken all moral codes in order to achieve the subjugation of the Kikuyu tribe and the ultimate massacre of the European population of the Colony.³⁴

Oliver Lyttelton, colonial secretary until 1954, shared the army's assessment that the Mau Mau threat was of a special nature, writing in his memoirs: "I can recall no instance when I have felt the forces of evil to be so near and so strong. As I wrote memoranda or instructions, I would suddenly see a shadow fall across the page – the horned shadow of the Devil himself."³⁵

Mau Mau moved beyond oath-taking to violently intimidate Kikuyu workers on settler farms and estates in 1949, attacks that escalated into the destruction of Kikuyu property on these farms by 1951. Consequently, the colonial government banned Mau Mau, but to no avail. In January 1952 alone, there were eleven cases of arson against the property of Kikuyu loyalists; in February, there were fifty-eight unexplained grass fires on European estates. Police investigations of these crimes went nowhere, as the Kikuyu population refused to cooperate, so in April 1952 the colonial government enacted the Collective Punishments Ordinance, allowing fines against communities that would not cooperate with the police. The ordinance failed to have the desired effect; by September 1952, the police had documented forty cases of confirmed arson against African loyalists and the murder of twenty-three Kikuyu by Mau Mau.³⁶

It was into this rapidly deteriorating situation that Sir Evelyn Baring arrived as the new governor to Kenya. Baring's first action was to take a seven-day tour of the colony, during which Mau Mau murdered Chief Waruhiu wa Kungu, the most senior African in the colonial administration. Upon his return to Nairobi, Baring laid bare for Lyttelton the gravity of the situation: "There is the attempt to gain control over the whole Kikuyu tribe by attacks on those who refuse to take the Mau Mau oath. There is the determination to destroy all sources of authority other than Mau Mau, hence the attacks first on headmen and now on chiefs." He closed, warning that if Mau Mau could not be quelled quickly, "first there will be an administration breakdown and next a great deal of bloodshed amounting, possibly, even to something approaching civil war."³⁷ Consequently, after less than two weeks in the colony, he recommended that a state of emergency be declared in Kenya. This he was granted, and on October 20, 1952, Baring issued an emergency proclamation and initiated Operation Jock Scott, a security operation intended to arrest the principal ring leaders of Mau Mau and break the movement before it could escalate further.³⁸

Before daybreak on October 21, the British security forces had arrested 106 of the 150 identified leaders. The following day, Mau Mau hacked to death a prominent Kikuyu tribal leader as he attempted to break up an oath-taking ceremony. When the police and army arrived, they could find nobody in the crowd willing to give evidence against the killers. Five days later, Mau Mau murdered its first European victim, a British veteran of both world wars who was slashed in his bathtub alongside his two Kikuyu house servants.³⁹ Following his murder, Lyttelton decided that he ought to see for himself the situation in Kenya and on October 29 flew to Nairobi.⁴⁰ The colonial secretary recognized immediately that there was an unsustainable settler–African dynamic in the colony and warned the European representatives of the Legislative Council that "sixty thousand Europeans cannot expect to hold all the political power and to exclude Africans from the legislature and from the Government. The end of that will be to build up pressures which will burst into rebellion and bloodshed." He also cautioned that Kenya's future security could not rest on the British security forces but only on the "building of a multiracial society."⁴¹

Nevertheless, if Lyttelton's long-term vision was for a multiracial society, in the short term Mau Mau had to be dealt with. Because it came from within the Kikuyu tribe – and because intimidation of Kikuyu loyalists made accurate information on who was or was not Mau Mau difficult – Lyttelton gave Baring permission to institute a wide-scale "screening" of the Kikuyu population to separate the wheat from the chaff. By November 15, 31,450 members of the Kikuyu tribe had been screened, of whom 8,500 were arrested for association with Mau Mau.⁴² In addition to the screenings, Baring instituted a system of collective

punishments that was entirely punitive, rather than linked to the collection of intelligence as was the case in Malaya. By November 10, the security forces had seized nearly 10,000 cattle, sheep, and goats in areas with a high proportion of Mau Mau adherents.⁴³

Such screenings, arrests, and collective punishments did little to quell Mau Mau. On November 22, a retired British naval officer and his wife were attacked in their sitting room following dinner. She survived (albeit with mutilated wrists, breasts, and torso), but he died of his injuries. Four days later, a Kikuyu member of the Nairobi city council and a prominent critic of Mau Mau was hacked to death in a marketplace, his body left on the road for several hours until found by a settler. On December 24, Mau Mau simultaneously attacked five separate Kikuyu homesteads, killing six, and on January 1, 1953, murdered two more British settlers as they shared an evening meal. The most shocking crime to date, however, occurred on January 24, 1953. Mau Mau murdered a settler mother and father outside their home by the porch but slayed their six-year-old son as he slept in his bed, teddy bear in his arms. The press reported widely that one of those who had assisted in the murder was a domestic servant who just days earlier had carried the child when he fell from his pony.⁴⁴

Baring did not stand idly by as these attacks occurred. Soon after the emergency began, he requested assistance from MI5, and a delegation arrived in Nairobi in late November, led by Sir Percy Sillitoe, the director-general. Sillitoe brought with him MI5 officers A. M. MacDonald and Alex Kellar, the latter of whom had worked as head of Security Intelligence first in Palestine from 1946 to 1948 and then in Malaya since 1948. Sillitoe recommended that an intelligence center be established to coordinate all police and military intelligence, and he left MacDonald in Kenya to run it, while Kellar returned to Malaya.⁴⁵ Furthermore, in late November Baring changed the emergency regulations to allow any district officer in Kenya to direct Kikuyu males over the age of eighteen into manual service on behalf of the police or military, and he instituted a large-scale sweep of the Thompson's Falls area where many settlers lived, interning without trial 750 Kikuyu men and 2,200 women and children, and confiscating 5,000 cattle.⁴⁶ Beyond these measures, Baring imposed a special tax of twenty shillings on each member of the Kikuyu tribe for a period of two years to force them to contribute to the cost of the Emergency. In January 1953, he approved a measure passed by the Legislative Assembly that imposed the death penalty on any Kikuyu taking the Mau Mau oath. By the end of the Emergency seven years later, 1,090 members of the Kikuyu tribe had been hanged for this crime.⁴⁷

Nevertheless, Mau Mau violence continued, climaxing in March 1953 at the Kikuyu village of Lari, where Mau Mau burned to the ground fifteen homesteads and murdered 120 people, primarily women and children, as their men were lured away from the village. That same night, Mau Mau attacked the police station at Naivasha, killing six African constables and stealing forty-seven weapons and 4,000 rounds of ammunition.⁴⁸ In response to the Lari Massacre and the attack at Naivasha, Baring increased the mass-screening of the Kikuyu population; by the end of April, 82,840 members of the Kikuyu tribe had been screened, 28,912 of whom were tried and sentenced for association with Mau Mau, 38,947 of whom were released without charge, with the remainder charged but still awaiting trial.⁴⁹ For those interned by the colonial government, conditions were bleak, with a primitive detention system that eventually housed tens of thousands of Kikuyu throughout the duration of the Emergency.⁵⁰

With the Kikuyu population separated, screened, and interned in large numbers, Baring turned next to tackle the Mau Mau fighters who had withdrawn to the forests. To assist him in this task, he appointed General George Erskine as director of operations.⁵¹ Erskine

adopted the committee structure pioneered by Gurney and Briggs in Malaya, working on the one hand to deal ruthlessly with Mau Mau while on the other encouraging the European settlers to give a greater role in governance to the African population. Nevertheless, while the general principle of separating the insurgents from the civilian population was implemented in both Kenya and Malaya, Erskine's task was made considerably more difficult in Kenya by the fact that the separation of the civilian population was into camps under deplorable conditions rather than into New Villages where increasing levels of personal freedom were granted. Consequently, Erskine was never able to integrate the Kikuyu people into his emergency planning and execution in the same way that Templer did in Malaya. Through the brutal application of force, the Mau Mau threat in the forests was largely destroyed by 1956, and by 1959 the government had released close to 77,000 of the more than 80,000 it had held in camps. In 1960, the government declared the Emergency over and in 1963 granted Kenya full independence. Nevertheless, while the insurgency in Kenya had taken considerably fewer lives than in Malaya, the government had viewed Mau Mau as deserving of greater levels of force than the Communist Terrorists in Malaya. This was a dirty war and the civilian population of the Kikuyu people felt the brunt, with ramifications that continue to this day.⁵²

The Cyprian Emergency

If the violence in both Malaya and Kenya could best be characterized as insurgencies – one communist, the other anti-colonial – the violence that erupted in Cyprus in 1955 bore closer resemblance to the terrorism that Britain had faced in Palestine a decade earlier. Cyprus had been in the empire since 1878 when the British seized it from the Ottoman Turks, declaring it a British Protectorate and conferring crown colony status in 1923. Following the collapse of their own empire, the Turks were happy with this arrangement, content to see the island controlled by the British rather than the Greeks, who since the 1880s had been calling for *enosis*, the incorporation of Cyprus into Greece based on its historical Greek culture and civilization. This call for *enosis* provoked riots in 1931, causing the colonial government to react with draconian measures. During World War II, the strategic position of Cyprus became clear, a position made all the more important following the loss of Palestine in 1948, after which all the air bases and military garrisons previously housed in Palestine were transferred to Cyprus. In the face of the increased British presence, the movement for *enosis* picked up pace and in an illegal referendum held in January 1950, 96.6 percent of the Greek Cypriot population voted in favor of *enosis* (the Turkish Cypriots refused to take part, still preferring British governance to Greek).⁵³

In 1951, Lieutenant George Grivas, a retired Cypriot officer who had served in the Greek Army during World War II, returned to Cyprus to advocate a more active campaign for *enosis*. Beginning the following year, he began to clandestinely organize men and weapons for an armed struggle against British rule, preparation that was largely complete by November 1954 when he persuaded Archbishop Makarios of Cyprus of the need for an armed campaign. With the support of Makarios, Grivas organized his men into a terrorist organization called the *Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston* (the National Organization of Cypriot Fighters), or EOKA for short. On April 1, 1955, EOKA launched its terrorist campaign against the colonial government, detonating a series of bombs in or around government buildings in the capital Nicosia, Limassol, and Larnaca and distributing leaflets claiming credit for the bombings.⁵⁴

Using its recent experiences in Palestine, Malaya, and Kenya, the government responded proactively, forming a new committee called the Cyprus Internal Security Committee, chaired by the governor, Sir Robert Armitage, and including in its membership the army, air, and naval commanders in Cyprus, the commissioner of police, and a newly created director of intelligence, first held by MI5 officer Donald Stephens. The latter position was suggested by Templer, who at the prime minister's request traveled to Cyprus to advise the government immediately after the outbreak of violence.⁵⁵ In contrast to Kenya and Malaya, however, no declaration of emergency was issued, the government in London concerned about overstretch given the ongoing conflicts in Malaya and Kenya.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, violence in Cyprus continued, as EOKA detonated bombs at police stations in Nicosia and Kyrenia on June 19, destroyed the front of a police headquarters in Ataturk Square on June 21, attacked with machine guns the police station in Amiantos, and assassinated a police sergeant who had been attached to the newly created Special Branch on June 22.⁵⁷

In the face of this violence, the British government followed a two-pronged strategy, on the one hand refusing Armitage's request for a declaration of emergency, instead requesting that he deal with EOKA through existing police powers, while on the other attempting to establish tripartite political talks between Greece, Turkey, and the United Kingdom to find a lasting resolution to the Cyprus problem. However, the proposed tripartite conference was overshadowed when on the morning it began – August 29, 1955 – EOKA assassinated a police constable in Nicosia. Harold Macmillan, at that time serving as foreign secretary in the new cabinet of Prime Minister Anthony Eden, predicted the conference would fail and an emergency would become inevitable; he therefore arranged for the transfer of seven senior police officers from Kenya and Malaya who had experience countering insurgencies and terrorism, two concepts that were indistinguishable in the British mind at the time.⁵⁸ Macmillan turned out to be right; on September 7, the conference collapsed.

Following its collapse, Eden agreed with Macmillan that tougher action was needed in Cyprus but felt that Armitage was the wrong man to lead such action. Consequently, on October 3 he removed Armitage from the governorship and replaced him with Field Marshal Sir John Harding, who had from 1949 to 1951 been responsible for all British Army troops in Malaya as the commander-in-chief, Far East, and since 1952 had been serving as chief of the Imperial General Staff, holding ultimate responsibility for all military action throughout the empire. Harding attempted political settlement with the Greek Cypriots for a little over a month but was met with more EOKA violence. Therefore, with the cabinet's backing, he declared an emergency in Cyprus on November 26, 1955, making it the third colony in the empire to simultaneously experience a state of emergency.⁵⁹

As in Malaya and Kenya, the emergency in Cyprus was a protracted affair, lasting until February 1959. Throughout its four years, EOKA violence steadily rose, averaging ten kills per month by the summer of 1956 and peaking at twenty-six per month in early 1957. While many of these deaths were the result of simple assassinations or bombings, on some occasions EOKA attempted more audacious attacks, such as in October 1956 when it rigged explosive devices to the water tap used at the rugby practice fields of the Highland Light Brigade, leading to the disembowelment of two soldiers and other serious injuries to four more.⁶⁰ The British security forces in Cyprus did not establish mass internment camps as in Kenya or create New Villages as in Malaya, but their widespread use of curfews, fines, and collective punishment mirrored those earlier conflicts, as did the destruction of property in a punitive manner. Furthermore, in 1956 allegations of torture of EOKA prisoners by British soldiers began to emerge, with the Nicosia Bar Council establishing a Human Rights Commission to

investigate the claims. Although it had no legal authority for action, its findings nevertheless made uncomfortable reading for the British government and drew international attention to Britain's robust approach to terrorism and insurgency.⁶¹

In October 1957, Harold Macmillan – prime minister since January 1957 – replaced Harding with the civilian Sir Hugh Foot, a man who had already served as colonial secretary in Cyprus from 1943 to 1945 and, as brother of the prominent Labour politician Michael Foot, could help with parliamentary opposition to some of the more ruthless aspects of the government's counter-insurgency/anti-terrorism policies. Foot's task was to find a constitutional settlement and end the emergency as quickly as possible. His job was not an easy one, as EOKA murdered the wives of two British servicemen in Cyprus just prior to his arrival, escalating tensions precipitously. Foot would not be deterred, however. When his first plan – announced in January 1958 – failed due to lack of Turkish and then Greek cooperation, he involved the prime minister directly. In June 1958, Macmillan announced in parliament a provisional constitutional plan that he hoped would lead to a permanent settlement. Eight months of tense negotiations between the British, Turks, and Greeks followed, but in February 1959, the three governments issued a joint communiqué announcing a power-sharing plan for the island. EOKA immediately declared a cease-fire, and Foot lifted all emergency regulations. The British government then established a joint constitutional committee to manage the transfer of power. On August 16, 1960, the government granted Cyprus independence. As with Malaya and Kenya, upon independence the new state chose to remain within the Commonwealth; on May 1, 2004, it entered the European Union as a democratic, presidential republic, still within the Commonwealth.⁶²

The Aden Emergency

The Malayan, Kenyan, and Cyprus emergencies were resolved in a manner acceptable to the British government, each remaining within the Commonwealth upon independence and broadly speaking within the British sphere of influence. The same could not be said of the troubles facing the government in Aden. The British occupied Aden in 1839, making it the first colony acquired under the reign of Queen Victoria and the first European possession in the Middle East. Controlled initially by the East India Company, Aden was administered by the colonial government in India until 1937 when it finally received crown colony status, coming under the control of the Colonial Office rather than the India Office. As with Palestine and Cyprus, World War II highlighted the strategic significance of Aden. Furthermore, following the Iranian oil crisis of 1951, the British opened an oil refinery in Aden, relying on the labor of Yemeni migrant workers who by 1959 outnumbered the Adenis. These Yemenis, developing a strong sense of Arab nationalism, sought to undermine British rule at every instance, launching eighty-nine industrial strikes in 1959 alone.⁶³ This opposition evolved into two militant organizations, the National Liberation Front (NLF) and the Front for the Liberation of Occupied South Yemen (FLOSY). On December 10, 1963, the NLF launched a grenade attack against the British high commissioner, Sir Kennedy Trevaskis, killing two and injuring 24. In response, Trevaskis declared an emergency in Aden.⁶⁴

The NLF and FLOSY adopted a dual approach to oppose British rule, waging an Egyptian-supported overt insurgency in the countryside, while in the cities organizing in a clandestine cell structure to practice terrorism.⁶⁵ As in previous campaigns, the British formed a centralized intelligence system to combat this terrorism but opted not to form a committee structure to manage it, as there were no civilian political officials to help facilitate it.⁶⁶

Furthermore, in Aden the British made no effort to separate and protect the broader civilian population; as such, they neglected the “hearts and minds” component of a counter-insurgency campaign that Templer had argued was so important.⁶⁷ After just four years of emergency regulations – compared to eight in Kenya and twelve in Malaya – and facing a financial crisis at home, the British decided to cut their losses in Aden and abandon the campaign. In contrast to the orderly final transfer of power in Malaya, Kenya, and Cyprus, the British withdrawal in Aden resembled that of Palestine, with a departure surrounded by violence and those who had waged the terrorist campaign seizing power. On November 30, 1967, the NLF proclaimed the People’s Republic of South Yemen, the only former British colony to fall under communist influence during de-colonization and one of the few not to remain within the Commonwealth upon independence.⁶⁸ If some success could be claimed in Britain’s other postwar campaigns against insurgency and terrorism, the same could not be said of Aden.⁶⁹

Conclusions

When British forces withdrew from Aden in 1967, the British government had been fighting insurgency and terrorism on a continuous basis since Irgun re-launched its revolt in Palestine in 1944, twenty-three years earlier (and arguably since the beginning of the Irish War of Independence in 1919). And it would not end there. Less than two years after the last soldier left Aden, British troops were once again deployed, this time to Northern Ireland in the face of a new outbreak of terrorism. They would remain there as part of Operation Banner until July 31, 2007, the longest continuous military operation in British history. In the closing years of Northern Ireland’s Troubles, violence declined precipitously, particularly after the Good Friday Peace Agreement of April 1998, but for the British government the struggle with insurgency and terrorism would continue, as the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have created new problems since 2001. As the past two chapters of this volume have demonstrated, the terrorism and insurgency that plagued the British Empire in the postwar period cannot be separated from its larger historical context – from the legacies of World Wars I and II, from the grievances and causes of the insurgent groups themselves, and from Britain’s struggles to manage its own imperial decline and de-colonization. It is a story that continues to this day, and will endure for as long as Britain’s new post-imperial role remains unwritten.

Notes

- 1 Roy Jenkins describes Churchill’s 1951 cabinet as being “like the organization of a vast commemorative pageant for the great days of the war”, *Churchill: A Biography* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001), 842). For more on the individual biographies, see Simon Ball, *The Guardsmen: Harold Macmillan, Three Friends, and the World They Made* (London: Harper Perennial, 2004); Alistair Horne, *Macmillan: The Official Biography* (London: Macmillan, 2008); D. R. Thorpe, *Eden: The Life and Times of Anthony Eden, First Earl of Avon, 1897–1977* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2003); and individual entries in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Oliver Lyttelton perhaps best sums up this attitude, writing in his memoirs of his disappointment at initially being offered the position of minister of Materials and Rearmament and then his subsequent elation at instead being appointed colonial secretary. His sentiments on entering political service well represented other members of the cabinet: “[H]igh political office is only attractive to me in war or times of crisis.” Oliver Lyttelton, *The Memoirs of Lord Chandos: An Unexpected View from the Summit* (New York: New American Library, 1963), 328.

- 4 Ibid., 332.
- 5 Benjamin Grob-Fitzgibbon, *Imperial Endgame: Britain's Dirty Wars and the End of Empire* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 176.
- 6 The National Archives [TNA], Prime Minister's Office [PREM] 11/639, f. 51, Telegram from Oliver Lyttelton, Secretary of State for the Colonies, to Winston Churchill, Prime Minister, December 8, 1951, in *British Documents on the End of Empire*, series B, vol. 3, *Malaya: Part II: The Communist Insurrection*, ed. A. J. Stockwell (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1995), 317–18.
- 7 TNA, Cabinet Office [CAB] 129/48, C (51) 59, "Malaya," Cabinet Memorandum by Oliver Lyttelton, Secretary of State of the Colonies, December 21, 1951, in *ibid.*, 318–31.
- 8 Grob-Fitzgibbon, *Imperial Endgame*, 185–7.
- 9 Richard Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds in Guerilla Warfare: The Malayan Emergency, 1948–1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 145; and Rhodes House Library, Oxford University, Mss. Brit. Emp. S. 527, "End of Empire" Transcripts, 527/9/1, Interview with Leslie Davis, Malayan Civil Service, interviewed by Desmond Smith, August 1981.
- 10 Grob-Fitzgibbon, *Imperial Endgame*, 194–5.
- 11 Noel Barber, *The War of the Running Dogs: The Malayan Emergency, 1948–1969* (New York: Weybright and Talley, 1971), 147; and Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds in Guerilla Warfare*, 143.
- 12 Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds in Guerilla Warfare*, 146.
- 13 Benjamin Grob-Fitzgibbon, "Intelligence and Counter-Insurgency: Case Studies from Ireland, Malaya and the Empire," *RUSI Journal* 156, no. 1 (February/March 2011): 76–7.
- 14 Leon Comber, *Malaya's Secret Police, 1945–60: The Role of the Special Branch in the Malayan Emergency* (Victoria, Australia: Monash University Press, 2008), 179.
- 15 Grob-Fitzgibbon, "Intelligence and Counter-Insurgency," 77.
- 16 Grob-Fitzgibbon, *Imperial Endgame*, 193.
- 17 Michael Asher, *The Regiment: The Real Story of the SAS* (London: Penguin Books, 2008), 302.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 302–3.
- 19 David Rooney, *Mad Mike: A Life of Michael Calvert* (London: Leo Cooper, 1997), 148–50; and Michael Calvert, *Fighting Mad: One Man's Guerrilla War* (Barnsley, UK: Pen & Sword, 1964), 208.
- 20 Grob-Fitzgibbon, *Imperial Endgame*, 193.
- 21 TNA, War Office [WO] 216/874, Letter and Appreciation of the Situation in Malaya from Lieutenant General G.K. Bourne, Director of Operations in Malaya, to Field Marshal Sir John Harding, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, July 17, 1954.
- 22 Grob-Fitzgibbon, *Imperial Endgame*, 192. These words have long been attributed to Templer. That he said them is beyond dispute. However, there is some controversy about whether the phrase actually originated with him. Tim Jones, for example, has attributed the phrase to Sir Henry Gurney as early as late 1948. Tim Jones, *Postwar Counterinsurgency and the SAS, 1945–1952: A Special Type of Warfare* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 100.
- 23 Grob-Fitzgibbon, *Imperial Endgame*, 232–3.
- 24 See Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds in Guerilla Warfare*, 165–70.
- 25 TNA, Colonial Office [CO] 1022/58, Telegram from General Sir Gerald Templer, High Commissioner and Director of Operations in Malaya, to Oliver Lyttelton, Secretary of State for the Colonies, August 28, 1953.
- 26 John Cloake, *Templer: Tiger of Malaya: The Life of Field Marshal Sir Gerald Templer* (London: Harrap, 1985), 260; and Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds in Guerilla Warfare*, 180.
- 27 TNA, WO 216/875, Letter from Lieutenant-General Sir Geoffrey Bourne, Director of Operations in Malaya, to General Sir Gerald Templer, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, October 3, 1955.
- 28 TNA, WO 106 /5990, "Review of the Emergency in Malaya from June 1948 to August 1957, by the Director of Operations, Malaya," September 12, 1957. For more on the constitutional developments that accompanied this counter-insurgency operation, see Short, *The Communist Insurrection in Malaya*; and Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds in Guerilla Warfare*. Malaya adopted its current name, Malaysia, in 1963 when it united with territories on the island of Borneo to create a new federative state.
- 29 TNA, WO 106/5990, "Review of the Emergency in Malaya from June 1948 to August 1957, by the Director of Operations, Malaya," September 12, 1957.

- 30 For example, the most current (at time of writing) British Army counter-insurgency manual still references Malaya, as does the American version. See *Army Field Manual: Countering Insurgency: Volume 1: Part 10* (Warminster, UK, 2010); and *U.S. Army/Marines Field Manual No. 3–24* (December 2006).
- 31 For more on the establishment of Kenya, see Elspeth Huxley, *White Man's Country: Lord Delamere and the Making of Kenya: Volume One, 1870–1914* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1953); John S. Galbraith, *Mackinnon and East Africa, 1878–1895: A Study in the “New Imperialism”* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972); and G. H. Mungeam, *British Rule in Kenya, 1895–1912: The Establishment of Administration in the East Africa Protectorate* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966).
- 32 Grob-Fitzgibbon, *Imperial Endgame*, 209–10.
- 33 David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged: The Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2005), 15–18; and David Throup, *Economic and Social Origins of Mau Mau, 1945–53* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1988), 91–100.
- 34 Imperial War Museum [IWM], Department of Documents [DoD], “Mau Mau Oath Ceremonies,” 1953, in the Papers of Lt. Col. J.K. Windeatt (305 90/20/1).
- 35 Lyttelton, *The Memoirs of Lord Chandos*, 380.
- 36 Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*, 44–53; and TNA, CO 822/438, “Memorandum on Mau Mau Intimidation,” Criminal Investigation Department, Kenya, September 12, 1952.
- 37 TNA, CO 822/444, Letter from Sir Evelyn Baring, Governor of Kenya, to Oliver Lyttelton, Secretary of State for the Colonies, October 9, 1952.
- 38 Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*, 63.
- 39 *Ibid.*, 88–9.
- 40 Lyttelton, *The Memoirs of Lord Chandos*, 382.
- 41 *Ibid.*, 383.
- 42 TNA, CO 822/438, Telegram from Sir Evelyn Baring, Governor of Kenya, to Oliver Lyttelton, Secretary of State for the Colonies, November 15, 1952.
- 43 *Ibid.*
- 44 Grob-Fitzgibbon, *Imperial Endgame*, 237–48.
- 45 Christopher Andrew, *The Defence of the Realm: The Authorized History of MI5* (London: Allen Lane, 2009), 456.
- 46 TNA, CO 822/462, Telegram from Sir Evelyn Baring, Governor of Kenya, to Oliver Lyttelton, Secretary of State for the Colonial Affairs, November 24, 1952; and Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*, 90.
- 47 For a detailed account of these trials, see Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*.
- 48 Grob-Fitzgibbon, *Imperial Endgame*, 251–4.
- 49 TNA, CO 822/440, Telegram from Sir Evelyn Baring, Governor of Kenya, to Oliver Lyttelton, Secretary of State for Colonial Affairs, April 24, 1953.
- 50 For the fullest account of these internment camps, see Caroline Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain's Gulag in Kenya* (New York: Henry Holt, 2005).
- 51 Grob-Fitzgibbon, *Imperial Endgame*, 255–6.
- 52 In June 2013, the British government agreed to pay reparations to Mau Mau fighters who had been tortured in British camps.
- 53 R. F. Holland, *Britain and the Revolt in Cyprus, 1954–1959* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 5–37.
- 54 *Ibid.*, 52–5.
- 55 TNA, CO 926/517, Letter from the Colonial Secretary, Cyprus, to Sir John Martin, Colonial Office, April 27, 1955.
- 56 TNA, Foreign Office [FO] 371/117640, Telegram from Alan Lennox-Boyd, Secretary of State for the Colonies, June 20, 1955.
- 57 Grob-Fitzgibbon, *Imperial Endgame*, 302.
- 58 Bodleian Library, Oxford, Harold Macmillan Papers, Dep. c. 301, Memorandum from Harold Macmillan, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, to Anthony Eden, Prime Minister, August 29, 1955. For more on the relationship between terrorism and insurgency, see Chapter 25 by Geraint Hughes on that subject in this volume.
- 59 Grob-Fitzgibbon, *Imperial Endgame*, 317–24.
- 60 Holland, *Britain and the Revolt in Cyprus*, 154.

- 61 Ibid., 171–2.
- 62 For a more detailed account of these negotiations, see Grob-Fitzgibbon, *Imperial Endgame*, 368–74.
- 63 Ronald Hyam, *Britain's Declining Empire: The Road to Decolonisation, 1918–1968* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 288–9; and Harvey Sicherman, *Aden and British Strategy, 1839–1968* (Philadelphia, PA: Foreign Policy Research Institute, 1972), 1–17.
- 64 David French, *The British Way in Counter-Insurgency, 1945–1967* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 51.
- 65 Ibid., 52.
- 66 Ibid., 100.
- 67 Ibid., 242.
- 68 Grob-Fitzgibbon, *Imperial Endgame*, 376.
- 69 For more on Aden, see Jonathan Walker, *Aden Insurgency: The Savage War in South Arabia, 1962–67* (Staplehurst, UK: Spellmount Publishers, 2003).

Further reading

- Anderson, David. *Histories of the Hanged: The Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2005.
- Bennet, Huw. *Fighting the Mau Mau: The British Army and Counter-Insurgency in the Kenya Emergency*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Elkins, Caroline. *Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain's Gulag in Kenya*. New York: Henry Holt, 2005.
- French, David. *The British Way in Counter-Insurgency, 1945–1967*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Grob-Fitzgibbon, Benjamin. *Imperial Endgame: Britain's Dirty Wars and the End of Empire*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
- Holland, R. F. *Britain and the Revolt in Cyprus, 1954–1959*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Jackson, Robert, *The Malayan Emergency: The Commonwealth's Wars, 1948–1966*. London: Routledge, 1991.
- Stubbs, Richard, *Hearts and Minds in Guerilla Warfare: The Malayan Emergency, 1948–1960*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.
- Walker, Jonathan, *Aden Insurgency: The Savage War in South Arabia, 1962–67*. Staplehurst, UK: Spellmount Publishers, 2003.