

[The Heart Grown Bitter: A Chronicle of Cypriot War Refugees](#) by Loizos
Edition: Hardcover

Anthropological study of Greek Cypriot war refugees, April 5, 2004

Reviewer: [Nikephoros Phokas](#) (Dover, NJ, USA) - [See all my reviews](#)

This work was written by Peter Loizos, a man who at the age of 29 first went to Cyprus to visit his Greek Cypriot father's ancestral village, Argaki, to conduct research in social anthropology. He was raised by his English mother and did not speak any Greek (till after he visited Cyprus) and relates on page 10 how he was an Englishman in every way but he had a Greek name and was made fun of for this name in school. When he visited his Greek relatives in Argaki and experienced their warm hospitality (philoxenia) he realized being teased for his Greek name all those years was worth it. This marks a turning point in his life, his transformation from an Englishman with a Greek name, to someone who has a more developed sense of his Greek Cypriot identity.

This book describes the social relations, politics and customs of the Argaki Greeks before the Turkish invasion, and afterwards their plight as refugees. Little is written about the Argaki Turks for two reasons, most of the young Turks left for Turkish enclaves of their own will and Loizos did not want to cause trouble with EOKA-B or the Greek Cypriots by interviewing them extensively during a period of tensions. On page 41 according to the census there were 1,219 Greeks and 72 Turks in 1960. With most of the Turks in Argaki being outnumbered so badly and being elderly because so many of their young had left for areas where there were more Turks, the claims of attempted genocide that persist from the Turkish side are laughable, as seen from this village microcosm.

The strength of this book is in its anthropological approach, in other areas it is rather weak. On pages 60-61 he rather naively comments that if only Makarios was more conciliatory to the Turkish rebels maybe things could have been different. He ignores that the Turkish Cypriots seemed to have transmitted their historic views of Greeks as inferior Christians subordinated to the sharia even after muslim rule was superseded by the British, and no compromise could be reached for this reason and not because of EOKA-B supporters preventing Makarios from being more flexible as his "wiser" friends suggest. Also too much blame is put on the EOKA-B supporters for the invasion in this book. The divisions in the Greek Cypriot community were fostered by the superior Turkish position in the international arena because Turkey shared a border with the USSR, which was important in the Cold War, and the British playing off the minority Turkish Cypriots during their colonial rule and creation of the 1960 Constitution to prevent Greek desires for enosis. Loizos in this work states that even Makarios supported enosis initially but abandoned this for support for independence, but fails to see how the superior Turkish position in the international arena, the unity of the Turkish Cypriots and the intense disunity of the Greek Cypriots were some of the biggest causes of the Turkish invasion. It would have been nice for him to point out how the Communists in Cyprus played a large role in the invasion. The fact is Greece is a small state and Cyprus an even smaller one; every small state more or less looks for a more powerful foreign patron, in this case the USSR or the United States. The USSR, a nation that did not have much of a blue water navy till the 1960s was no alternative as a foreign patron for an island like Cyprus and the Greek Cypriot Communists towing the Soviet line so fanatically (the author takes them to task for subscribing to the Soviet line in crushing the Hungarian Uprising) and Makarios flirting with the USSR and his non-aligned games only enhanced Turkey's and the Turkish Cypriot position, along with the unpopularity of the Greek junta internationally.

This review is of the paperback edition which is 219 pages long.