

A Century of Revolutions: The Cretan Question between European and Near Eastern Politics

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The island of Crete was the last Greek region to be subjugated by the Ottoman Turks,¹ falling after a long and bloody war that lasted from 1645 to 1669.² Following the example of mainland Greece, the island rose against Ottoman domination in 1821 but, despite some early successes, the struggle made little or no progress for three years. No major urban centre was captured by the insurgents, who were restricted to the possession of two forts of limited importance – those of Kisamos and Gramvousa. The presence of a solid Muslim population – almost half the population were Tourkokritikoi (i.e. Turco-Cretans), most of whom sided with the sultan – was certainly one of the reasons for this situation. Another factor in this was the isolation of the island, on account of its distance from the main theatre of the revolution, to overcome which, ‘special commissioners’, unacquainted with local conditions and characteristics, were sent from Greece. Finally, the lack of a fleet of any size accounts for the Cretans’ failure to counter the steady arrival of Ottoman reinforcements. With the aid of the Egyptians, who landed on Crete in 1822 and 1823, long before Ibrahim Pasha’s intervention in the Peloponnese, the uprising was quickly restricted to the western provinces, where it smouldered until it was finally extinguished.

The international treaties of 1829, 1830 and 1832 excluded Crete from the new Greek kingdom,³ a development that provoked strong, though ineffective, protests in both Crete and Greece. The majority of the Cretans were obliged to accept this *fait accompli*, though some, mainly those whose activities on the island had exposed them to reprisals and a number of families of victims of the struggle, chose to remain in Greece, where they had fled after the crushing of the uprising. These and their descendants were to form an influential Cretan lobby, which was to play an important role in Greek political affairs throughout the nineteenth century.

Meanwhile, the vali of Egypt, Mohamed Ali, judging that the services rendered by him in suppressing the Greek uprising had not been

appropriately recompensed by the Sublime Porte, decided to claim actively what had not been granted him voluntarily. In 1831, Egyptian forces successfully invaded Syria and one year later the sultan was compelled to cede the administration of Crete to Mohamed Ali. During the period of Egyptian rule (1831–40), the administration of the island was assigned to Mustafa Pasha, a man of Albanian descent who had been on the island with the Egyptian armies since 1822 and had run the pashalik of Chania since 1824.⁴

The contradictions between the centripetal desires of the Sublime Porte and the centrifugal manoeuvrings of Mohamed Ali were soon sharpened once again. Constantinople became increasingly sensitive to the danger posed for the future of her empire by the fact that the Egyptian, Arabic, Syrian and Cretan provinces were effectively in the hands of the ambitious vali of Cairo. For his part, Mohamed Ali wished to consolidate his position and achieve recognition of his right to bequeath his pashalik to his descendants. A fresh breach was inevitable, and in 1839 the Ottoman armies crossed the Euphrates, but were once more defeated by the Egyptians. Sultan Mahmud died a week later, while the admiral of the Ottoman fleet took his ships to Alexandria and surrendered them to the vali of Egypt. Faced with the vigorous reaction of the Great Powers to the possibility of the complete overthrow of the status quo in the Near East, and under the threat of the bombardment of Alexandria by the European fleets, Mohamed Ali was compelled to back down. In accordance with the Treaty of London, signed in 1840 by Britain, Russia, Austria and Prussia, 'acting at the request of the Şultan', Mohamed Ali retained Egypt for himself and his descendants, but on condition that he returned the other provinces.⁵ After the restoration in Crete of direct rule from Constantinople, the Sublime Porte kept Mustafa Pasha in his position, and the change was not greatly felt by the population. Mustafa Pasha remained on the island for almost thirty years, until September 1851, adding to his name the surname *Giritli* ('the Cretan').⁶

During this period important changes took place in Cretan society, the consequences of which were not long in making themselves felt. The end of the uprising in the 1820s found Crete full of 'ruins and widows'. A good part of the population had either been killed or had abandoned the island, and the unremitting struggle had led to the virtually total annihilation of the men-folk in some regions. The average population density had fallen to about thirteen inhabitants per square kilometre.⁷

In an attempt to bring peace to the island, Mustafa Pasha installed his own administrative machinery, refusing to give important offices to local Muslims. Observing rudimentary principles of equality, he appointed

mixed councils in each Sanjak and introduced the use of the Greek language in public documents.⁸

The Albanian gendarmerie brought from Egypt attempted to enforce law and order, often intervening in support of the Christians and restraining, not without savagery, the arbitrary actions and resistance of the Turco-Cretans: 'Many of the insubordinate Muslims were either beheaded or incarcerated at that time in the prison of the Gramvousa fort.'⁹

Before this period, tax collection was mainly under the control of local agas, who had contracted the right to collect taxes in bulk (*mukataa*). In most cases they secured this right for life (*malikiane aghasi*) and converted it into a hereditary activity, in this way expropriating a large part of the agricultural output. The authoritarian structure of this machinery was completed both at the economic level, through the process of lending and bankruptcy, and at the political level, to the extent that the owner of the *mukataa* usually belonged to the dominant Muslim majority and was supported by its administrative structures. Applying the policy successfully implemented in Egypt by Mohamed Ali twenty years earlier,¹⁰ Mustafa Pasha removed a large part of the *mukataas* from the agas, thereby depriving them of an important source of economic and social power.¹¹

The reorganisation of the Ottoman *timar* system also caused disturbance. In 1828 the Sublime Porte decided that the military service obligations of the *timar*-holders should be brought up to date and obliged them to enrol in new battalions in the regular army, at the same time discouraging the right to use a substitute; this led in practice to the gradual removal during the 1830s of *timars* from those who were not in a position, or did not wish, to fulfil their new obligations and conform with the new regulations.¹²

In conclusion, on the morrow of the rebellion, the Muslim community of Crete was not only decimated, but its access to the machinery of power was reduced, and at the same time the ruling class was largely deprived of its ability to appropriate a significant proportion of the wealth produced by the conquered society. The disenchantment that arose in these circumstances led to the emergence of two phenomena within the Muslim community. A number of Muslim Cretans reverted to Christianity, and many of the rest gradually abandoned the countryside and withdrew to the towns and their environs.

In speaking of a reversion to Christianity, it should be borne in mind that the great mass of Cretan Muslims were descended not from Turkish settlers – the conquest of Crete in the late seventeenth century had taken place at a period when the initial impulse of Ottoman colonisation had run itself out – but from native Christians who had converted to Islam,

basically of their own free will, during the first century of the conquest. It is indicative that these 'Turco-Cretans', as they came to be called, continued to speak Greek and drink the wine produced by their vineyards, contenting themselves with learning by rote some of the verses from the Koran to meet their new religious needs.¹³ Occasionally, the conversion to Islam was feigned and there are references to families who continued to baptise their children for two centuries and to take part in parallel religious ceremonies ('crypto-Christians'), but these tended to be isolated cases.¹⁴

Cases of Turco-Cretans who reverted to Christianity are occasionally found as early as the time of the 1821 uprising. A typical example is that of the Kourmoulides who, led by the chief of the clan Husein Pasha, abandoned Islam *en masse* – over sixty men – and played a leading role in the rebellion.¹⁵ The phenomenon became more common later, during the 1850s, especially after the signing of the Hatti Humayun charter, to which we shall return below. Examples are known of entire villages being baptised *en masse* in the provinces of Mylopotamos and Pediada.¹⁶

Although we do not have the complete quantitative evidence to calculate the dimensions of the phenomenon, it is indicative that the percentage increase of the Christian community between 1834 and 1881 was more than double that of the Muslim community. Even when account is taken of the gradual return of the refugees of 1821, who were mainly Christians, an increase of this scale in the Christian community can hardly be interpreted as the result only of internal demographic growth. The Ottoman administration attempted to cut off this stream by passing a number of restrictive measures, though these led to a rebellion by the people and were the main reason for the removal of the then governor general, Veli Pasha.¹⁷ This incident was an important indication of the decline of the Ottoman regime in Crete.

During the course of the nineteenth century, the countryside gradually became Christian (in 1881, 82.4 per cent of the rural population was Christian) and tightly enclosed the Muslim towns (Muslims made up 70 per cent of the urban population).¹⁸ The steady flight of Muslims from the countryside, and especially from regions remote from the castles, was the result both of the changed terms of exploitation of the land and of the sense of insecurity created within the ranks of the Muslim population.

This development was accompanied by another significant phenomenon – the purchase of land by Christians. 'After 1829, a large part of the land then under Muslim ownership in the most fertile plains, came into the hands of Christians. The complete deprivation of the Turks through this peaceful revolution,' wrote Georges Perrot in 1867, 'is a question of time. Agas and beys, stripped of their estates . . . for a cheap price,

inundate the towns, seeking to survive by renting some of the land that the Turkish administration is wasting, though it is unable to satisfy all the idlers that implore it.' At this point, the comment of the governor general of the island, Ismail Hakim Pasha, is revealing: that while forty years earlier, Christian estates had accounted for one fifth of the total, they had already (by 1866) reached three fifths, according to his calculations; he ends his comment with the estimation that if the Christians persisted systematically, they would ultimately buy Crete from the Turks, without the need for a rebellion.¹⁹

This systematic mass purchase of land by Christians was perhaps the most characteristic sign of the social change in the making in nineteenth-century Crete. 'Cases are rare,' stresses the man in charge of the official census of the island in 1881, 'of a Cretan villager who does not possess his own house and a larger or smaller, fairly productive, piece of agricultural land.'²⁰

This growth of small- and medium-scale property ownership, which was interlinked with the fact that large landed estates based on *çiflik*-type relations were not created on the island (with the exception of a few examples of Church properties) meant that the situation in Crete was very similar to the one that pertained in what was then free Greece. It is revealing that, when it was annexed to Greece in 1912, the island did not bring in its baggage problems of land distribution like those posed in the cases of Thessaly or Epirus. *

At the same time, the contracting of taxes, now removed from the hands of the owners of the *mukataa*, passed largely under the control of Christians, especially the recognized *kapetanei* (i.e. chieftains) of the provinces, who mainly undertook to collect the tithe and the poll tax (the military tax after 1856).²¹

It may be noted, in conclusion, that in 1881 the majority (60.4 per cent) of the Muslims on the island lived in eastern Crete: in Lasithi and above all in Irakleion and the two provinces of Rethymnon that bordered with Irakleion, Mylopotamos and Amari. Twenty per cent of the Muslims lived in the countryside of western Crete, in the administrative regions of Rethymnon and Chania, where they formed only 15.4 per cent of the rural population.²²

All these developments gave Crete a distinctive character within the Ottoman Empire, defined by the following characteristics: in a region that was geographically demarcated by its character (an island), a population was formed that was for the most part homogeneous with respect to its language (Greek), religion (Orthodox Christian) and its clear consciousness of belonging to a particular national group that already

existed as an independent state a few dozen miles away. The censuses of the period before 1881, though rarely agreeing with each other on the precise numbers, nevertheless concur in attesting to a clear and steadily increasing Christian majority that fluctuated between 62.5 per cent and 77.4 per cent, depending on the decade and the source of information. It was a population firmly rooted in their land which had, moreover, officially acquired the right to possess arms.²³

These facts help us to understand the phenomenon of the successive rebellions of varying range and intensity that broke out throughout the whole of the nineteenth century (1821, 1833, 1841, 1858, 1866, 1878, 1889, 1895, 1897), mainly in western Crete – on occasion with the backing of the Greek government but frequently, as we shall see below, even against the wishes of the official Greek state. This phenomenon is not encountered in other Ottoman provinces, where the subject populations were not solid and were not marked by homogeneity of religion, language or collective consciousness, and where the political, social and economic conditions had developed in different directions.

This population was faced with the Muslim community and the Ottoman authority. The former, once very strong numerically, politically and economically, fought a rearguard battle throughout the century, until it was reduced towards its end to the role of a disenchanting minority of 11 per cent, confined to the towns and their immediate environs and cut off from the hinterland and productive activity. The Ottoman authority, on the other hand, was in a state of continual crisis after the middle of the century, incapable of establishing and following a consistent policy, sometimes dangerously compliant and sometimes inappropriately autocratic, as moderation and arrogance succeeded each other with the same frequency that the rulers of the day were sent out – thirty-seven governors succeeded each other in the space of forty-six years, with an average term of office of fifteen months.

THE UPRISINGS OF 1833 AND 1841

The first Cretan rebellion after the Greek War of Independence of 1821 took place as early as 1833, when thousands of Christians assembled, unarmed, in the village of Mournies near Chania to protest against the taxation measures and other arbitrary actions of Mustafa Pasha. Despite the peaceful character of the demonstration, the authorities reacted violently, and forty-one of the leaders of the movement and several other Christians throughout the island were arrested and hanged, as an example to the rest.²⁴

The next rebellion took place in 1839 to 1841. The crisis between the Ottoman Empire and Egypt led, as already mentioned, to the end of Egyptian occupation and the restoration of direct Ottoman rule on the island, and several Cretans, mainly those who had settled in Greece, considered that the time was ripe to raise the Cretan question once more. Through a series of memoranda addressed to the Great Powers, the Cretan Committee sought the unification of the island with Greece or, failing that, the granting of internal autonomy. Placing their hopes in the intervention of the Powers, or at least of Great Britain, which was rumoured to be interested in taking the island under its 'protection', the Cretans arose in a rebellion that began in February 1841 and lasted about five months. During this period, a number of bloody clashes took place, initially in Western Crete and then in the rest of the island, though without a substantial outcome.²⁵ This was followed by a fairly long period of peace, which, remarkably, was not disturbed even during the great crisis of the Eastern Question that broke out in the 1850s and culminated in the Crimean War (1854–6).

THE HATTI HUMAYUN AND THE FIRMAN OF 1858

On the basis of article 7 of the Treaty of Paris, signed on 30 March 1856 after the Crimean War, France, Britain, Prussia, Russia and the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia undertook jointly to guarantee the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire. In the spirit of this principle, any conflict in the East would be a matter of European interest. The same treaty also envisaged the improvement of the living standards of the Christian subjects of the porte. After persistent *démarches* by the Allies, the sultan had already issued an imperial decree (*Hatti Şerif*), the text of which had, in effect, been dictated by Allied ambassadors in Constantinople. In an attempt to give this document the force of an obligation undertaken to the Great Powers, the countries that had signed the Treaty of Paris made explicit reference to it in article 9 of that treaty. 'The firman,' it comments, 'was communicated to the Powers, who noted the great importance of this act of communication.'²⁶

The *Hatti Şerif* of 1856, more widely known as the *Hatti Humayun*, ratified and consolidated the reforms for which it had assumed an obligation with the *Gul Hane* charter of 1839. It provided guarantees for the safety of the persons and property of all the subjects of the empire 'without distinction of class or religion', and confirmed all the privileges that had been granted 'from very ancient times' to all the non-Muslim communities settled in the empire. Any distinction that was intended

to make any population group inferior to another on grounds of religion, language or race 'was struck from the administrative record', and all subjects were to be accepted without discrimination into the public services and the political and military schools. All commercial, political and legal differences between Muslims and non-Muslims were to be referred to joint courts, and freedom of representation on provincial and community councils was to be secured for the various religious communities, as, too, was the principle of equal taxation for all. Other provisions promised the construction of roads, the promotion of public works, the reform of the monetary and finance system, and the founding of banks.²⁷

In 1858, many thousands of Cretans assembled in Pervolia near Chania and threatened to take to arms if the administration did not pass the appropriate measures to carry out the programme of promised reforms. The Sublime Porte, which was then experiencing difficulties in Montenegro, capitulated to these demands and issued a firman which reduced taxes and guaranteed free elections to the councils of elders. The implementation of this firman, however, was blocked by the incompetence of the administrative machinery and the hostility of the Muslim population to any reform. The appointment of Ismail Pasha as governor general of the island in 1861 did not improve the situation. A former minister of trade in Constantinople, and of Greek extraction, Ismail attempted to please everyone, 'promising everything to everyone, without ever keeping his promises'. In this way, he increased the numbers of the disaffected. Relations between Christians and Muslims became increasingly tense. At the end of 1866, the disaffection assumed fearful dimensions and conflict seemed inevitable.

THE UPRISING OF 1866

In May 1866, several leading figures in the Christian population of the island gathered at Aghia Kyriaki near Chania and sent a long report to Ismail Pasha, asking him to convey it to the sultan. In it, ten requests were 'respectfully' submitted, including relief from the inflated taxation, improvement of public transport, free elections to the councils of elders, the creation of a loan bank, improvement of the juridical system and the reintroduction of the Greek language in legal transactions, the securing of guarantees of personal liberty, the creation of schools and hospitals, permission to trade freely from all the ports on the island and, finally, a general amnesty for those who had participated 'in the general uprising in our Homeland'.²⁸

At the same time as submitting this report to the sultan, those assembled in Aghia Kyriaki also put their signatures to a confidential memorandum intended for the three Powers protecting Greece, in which, after referring to their part in the Greek War of Independence of 1821 and, despite this, 'their subjugation once more to the Ottoman yoke', they called upon the Powers to consent to their unification 'with their Greek brothers' or, 'if this is not possible at the present time', at least to the granting of a form of political organisation that would ensure 'Christian and humane' governance.²⁹ After these documents were signed, the assembly was dissolved, leaving a committee to await the official reply.

Before carrying out their plans, the Cretans had been in contact with the Russian and Greek consuls in Chania. The former, though declaring himself 'opposed to revolutionary movements', nevertheless counselled them to pursue certain reforms by peaceful means, including the abolition of the new taxes, free elections to the councils of elders, and so on, promising his 'probable support'. The Greek consul 'avoided giving them encouragement', since the government in Athens strongly disapproved of a Cretan uprising at that point in time, observing that the current political situation in Europe was 'not favourable to a serious enterprise of this nature', and advising the Cretans to content themselves with seeking 'with moderation, relief from some of the unbearable taxes, and nothing more'.³⁰

The situation was already deteriorating, however. The Muslims and their families sought refuge in the fortified towns, while the Christians armed themselves and gathered in the mountains and Ismail Pasha called upon the committee to disband, stating that he regarded its continued existence as a revolutionary act. The Sublime Porte's answer, publicly posted on 20 July, rejected the demands with menaces. 'More than all the subjects of the empire,' it noted, 'the Cretans enjoy benefits,' and 'they have no right or reason to request the abolition of taxes,' while 'with regard to roads, schools, hospitals, etc.,' improvements 'cannot be implemented forthwith, but very gradually'. On the other hand, by advancing these demands, the Cretans 'have risen in revolt, arranged gatherings, and behaved in a way that could not but be described as rebellion'. The governor general of the island was ordered to send forces to arrest the leaders of the 'rebellion', and disperse the rest 'by force', unless they 'submitted and provided written guarantees of their submission in the future'.³¹

After this, the insurgents, who had already formed themselves into a 'General Assembly of Cretans', gathered at Askyphou near Sphakia where, on 21 August 1866, they voted in favour of the dissolution of

Turkish authority and 'the unbroken and eternal unification of Crete and all her dependencies with Mother Greece'. The implementation of the vote was assigned 'to the bravery of the courageous people of Crete, to the assistance of Greeks throughout the world and all philhellenes, to the Mighty intervention of the Protecting and Guarantor Great Powers, and to the omnipotence of God on High'.³²

The insurrection was proclaimed on paper through this vote, and in practice through armed struggle. Five days later, the insurgents laid siege to the Ottoman forces in Vryses near Apokoronas, obliging them to withdraw. In every area of the island the rebels came face to face with the regular army and Turkish Cretan irregulars, who shut themselves up in the forts and made frequent sallies to strike at the surrounding villages.

There followed the longest and most bloody of all the Cretan uprisings of the nineteenth century. It lasted about three years, during which Egyptian forces landed once again on the island to reinforce the Turkish efforts, while on the other side, a large number of volunteers from Greece and also from Europe and America hastened to fight on the side of the rebels.³³ During the same period, five successive Ottoman governors were replaced, in an endeavour to quell the insurrection, and six Greek governments followed one upon the other as a result of the reverberations of their policies on the Cretan question. The kingdom of Greece and the Ottoman Empire broke off diplomatic relations and came to the verge of open military conflict, which was averted at the last moment through the intervention of an international conference convened in Paris to determine the terms on which the crisis could be resolved. During the course of the rebellion thousands were killed on both sides, hundreds of villages were torched and looted, and the productive base of the island suffered a severe blow, while 50,000 women and children fled to Greece as refugees. Amongst them were the seven members of the family of the Cretan merchant Kyriakos Venizelos, who fled from Chania to Kythira and thence to Syros, taking with them their last-born child, Eleftherios Venizelos, then only three years old.

Despite the subsequent isolation of the maximalist supporters of unification with Greece and the predominance of the moderate group that favoured an autonomous principality of Crete within the Ottoman Empire,³⁴ and despite the global sympathy elicited by the struggles and sacrifices, the insurrection failed to influence the prevailing attitude of international diplomacy, which favoured the maintenance of the status quo in the Ottoman Empire.³⁵ After a series of desperate battles, most of the revolutionaries retreated before the superiority of the enemy forces and, having neither food nor munitions, submitted to the Turks or fled to

Greece, though a few isolated groups continued to wander in the gorges, becoming involved in minor skirmishes until the spring of 1869.³⁶

THE ORGANIC STATUTE OF 1868 AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

Despite the failure to achieve its immediate aims, the uprising of 1866 to 1869 nevertheless had a side-effect, the true dimensions and consequences of which were not appreciated at the time. In November 1867, in an attempt to undermine the insurrection by removing the basis for its claims, the Ottoman government announced, through the mouth of the grand vizier Ali Pasha himself, who had gone to Crete for this purpose and was personally handling the entire affair, a special administrative regulation, which was signed by the sultan in January 1868 and became known as the Organic Statute of Crete.³⁷ In addition to the restructuring of the administration of the island, this law provided for the involvement of Christians at every level of the administrative machinery and in the composition of the courts, for the equal use of the Turkish and Greek languages in the administration, for the creation of a local bank and, perhaps most importantly of all, for the election of a general assembly with legislative competence at local level.

These measures might have relieved the atmosphere somewhat, had they been passed in good time in response to the original Cretan demands, but now, after a year of bloody conflict, they appeared to come too late and were predictably rejected outright by the rebels, who had by this time entered on a struggle with broader aims.

Once the insurrection was suppressed, however, the implementation of the Organic Statute ushered in a new period in nineteenth-century Cretan history, though in the end this was not in the direction hoped for by its inspirers.

Probably the most important feature of all was the role played by the institution of the General Assembly. With a mixed membership drawn from both ethnic groups on the island, and elected indirectly by the local elders, this assembly was to meet forty days each year in closed sessions, to pass measures relating to local issues such as transport, public works, the credit system, trade, farming, education, and so on, though its decisions had to be ratified by the governor general and the Ottoman government.

In the early years, this assembly functioned in only a rudimentary manner: the administration interfered in the election process, which was in any case indirect, the representation of the ethnic groups was unbalanced (the Christians, who formed 74 per cent of the population, had a

majority of two and later only one seat), the debates were conducted in an authoritarian manner by the governor general, who was *ex officio* chairman, the assembly was frequently dissolved before the forty days had elapsed and very few of its substantive decisions were in fact ratified. Even in these adverse circumstances, however, its operation created a forum for debate about the basic problems of the people of Crete and revealed the dynamism of the Christian element, but at the same time demonstrated that a basically rational approach to even the simplest of local issues, conflicted *de facto* with the very nature of the Ottoman regime.

THE CHALEPA PACT OF 1878

The sequence of international events in the Balkans from the middle of the 1870s onwards (revolt of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1875 to 1876, intervention of Serbia and Montenegro on the side of the rebels in 1876, the Russo-Turkish War of 1877 to 1878),³⁸ created a highly charged atmosphere in Crete. While not leading directly to an uprising aimed at secession, this encouraged in the ranks of the Christian community on the island the growth of a strong reform movement, to which the General Assembly gave expression. A factor that is perhaps not unconnected with this development is that the original social composition of the body, which was overwhelmingly rural in nature, had begun to change after 1875, when the first new Christian representatives took their seats, most of them doctors and lawyers who had trained at the University of Athens.³⁹

Already in the assembly of 1876, the Christians refused to discuss the usual current affairs and made an issue not only of the unfettered implementation of the Organic Statute, but also of its amendment to conform with the requirements of the principle of equality. Their long memorandum, submitted on 22 May 1876 and conveyed to Constantinople by the governor general, Reuf Pasha, demanded fairer representation of the Christian population in the assembly, the administration and the judiciary, the right to draw up a local budget, the prohibition of incarceration without a previous judicial decision, and the freedom to build churches.

The response of the Sublime Porte, which was publicly posted on 2 August, rejected the demands submitted, apart from a few, such as the founding of a bank, the institution of compulsory public education, the law specifying rules for holding municipal elections, and the right to establish printing presses and publish newspapers.⁴⁰ This attitude, while

satisfying the Muslims, gave rise to intense anger amongst the Christian population. Christian officials, administrative counsellors and judges continued to abstain from their duties, since the assembly, which had been dissolved prematurely, had not had time to renew their period of office; meanwhile, the first armed bands had already made their appearance in the mountains, and the Cretan lobby in Athens was collecting money and munitions. The Ottoman administration attempted to strangle the movement at birth by arresting, without any specific charge, the lawyer Constantinos Mitsotakis, representative of Kydonia and a leading figure in the Christian community. However, it was obliged in the end to set him free, when the electors refused to vote for a replacement and, for the first time in history, a popular demonstration took place in the centre of Chania, in front of the governor general's residence.⁴¹ These events illustrated the profound psychological change in the morale of the Christians and the irreversible decline of Ottoman control over the island.

Meanwhile, in a desperate attempt to forestall the rapid general developments that threatened the cohesion of the entire edifice of the Ottoman Empire, the new sultan, Abdul Hamid II (the third in three months, after a series of coups d'état and resignations) announced the granting of a constitution and the impending election of an Ottoman parliament for the first time.⁴²

This is not the place to examine this political movement in depth, which in any case swiftly proved ephemeral and of no consequence. The Cretans, who were called upon to send two members of parliament to Constantinople, one Christian and one Muslim, treated the entire matter as a threat to their albeit rudimentary autonomy and to any improvements they had managed to bring about in the affairs of their island, and as a retrograde step that restored Crete to the status of merely an Ottoman province, subjected, with no special provisions, to the general institutional framework of the empire. Despite the appeals and the asphyxiating pressure applied by the administration, no more than five Christian electors could be persuaded to take part in the electoral process in March 1877,⁴³ while the two Christian 'members of parliament' who were 'elected' one after the other to represent their fellow islanders in the Ottoman parliament, refused the office.⁴⁴

Meanwhile, the insurrection proceeded, the movements of armed bands about the countryside intensified, and the kapetanei who had lived in exile in Greece since 1868 continued to return to the island. All this culminated in January 1878 in the convening of the 'Pan-Cretan Revolutionary Assembly' at the village of Fres in the province of Apokoronas. Having become embroiled in the war with Russia, the Sublime Porte was not in a

position to mobilise enough forces to suppress the uprising, and was obliged to come to terms with the insurgents. In any case, defeat on the battlefield soon followed,⁴⁵ and the Treaty of Berlin in July 1878 ordained that 'the Sublime Porte is obliged strictly to implement in the island of Crete the Organic Statute of 1868, after such amendments as may be judged necessary'.⁴⁶

Almost relieved that it did not have to cede Crete, like Thessaly and Arta, to Greece, the Ottoman government entered into negotiations, and in October 1878 the Pact of Chalepa was signed in the suburb of this name in Chania and was ratified by a firman of the sultan on 9 November 1878.

The Chalepa Pact brought to the Organic Statute some notable changes which, as was explicitly stated, 'cannot be modified by the [Ottoman] Constitution'. An obligatory term of five years was fixed for the governors of the island, in order to give continuity to the administration, and explicit reference was made, albeit only to the possibility, to his being of Christian descent; and, in either case, he was to be assisted by a counselor of the other religion. A local gendarmerie was created, in which both ethnic communities participated. Administrative correspondence and judicial decisions were to be composed in both languages, while Greek was to be the only official language for sessions of the courts and the General Assembly. The latter was to consist of eighty members, with a clear Christian majority (forty-nine against thirty-one).⁴⁷

THE UNUSUAL 'PARLIAMENTARY' SYSTEM OF CRETE UNDER TURKISH RULE (1878–89)

The Pact of Chalepa was immediately put into practice with the appointment as governor general of Alexandros Karatheodori Pasha, one of the numerous eminent Christians holding high office in the Ottoman administration. The first violation of the treaty occurred a mere fourteen days later, when, instead of serving for a five-year period, Karatheodori was suddenly replaced by his colleague Ioannis Photiadis Pasha.⁴⁸ Photiadis was the first, and only, governor who not only remained in his post for five years, but whose period of office was renewed, ending ingloriously in 1885.⁴⁹ He was followed by a series of three governors, up to 1889, Ioannis Savvas Pasha for twenty months, Kostakis Anthopoulos Pasha for fifteen months, and Nikolakis Sardinski Pasha for sixteen months. It is notable that the Sublime Porte appeared more prepared to appoint governors of Christian origin (which was only envisaged as a possibility in the Chalepa Pact) than to keep them in post for five years (which was an express obligation).

This decade is marked by the longest attempt to apply in Crete a regime that had some, albeit rudimentary, liberal and parliamentary features. Its implementation threw into relief the contradictions and limitations of the regime.

At that period, the division of Cretan society into two political groups – that of the liberals or ‘barefooted’ (xypolitoi) and that of the conservatives or karavanades – had become consolidated. The division, whose roots lay in the distant past, had been established as early as the time of the Organic Statute, which created a complicated administrative machine and an attendant plethora of administrative posts. To capture these a solid political faction was formed, which was on good terms with the administration. This faction included a wide variety of individuals, ranging from those who had taken part in the 1866 events as spies, informers and collaborators of the Turks to the naturally conservative property owners (who were opposed to subversive movements and the attendant dangers), a large part of the senior clergy, and ordinary opportunists who had an eye on financial or other gains.⁵⁰ This faction often formed a *de facto* alliance with the corresponding Muslim party of the beys, in which eminent, wealthy Muslim notables were to be found alongside senior administrative officials and army officers, members of the fanatical religious brotherhoods, the sub-proletariat of Muslim settlers,⁵¹ and ordinary fortune-seekers. The major characteristic shared by these was their steadfast opposition to even the simple reform measures put forward by the Sublime Porte, and their systematic undermining of the governors who attempted to implement them.⁵²

‘The only positive distinction that one could confirm between the two fighting factions,’ notes the young, rising politician, Eleftherios Venizelos, with studied moderation, in one of his first political writings:

was that the one – which consisted from the very beginning of the most vital elements of the land and included almost all the scholars of the day, invariably took the initiative, proved itself more vigorous than the other, played a leading role and invariably fought for various reforms – was more exposed to the wrath of the government and was therefore persecuted and crushed by it, despite often being in a majority, while the other – which contained more conservative elements and consisted mainly of those who had been politically active in the past – was rather reserved in the present and served as the moderating tool of the impulsive power of the first faction.

In this state of affairs, it is very natural that the vigorous faction claimed for itself the title of progressive or Liberal Party and attributed the title conservative to the other, which the latter was quite happy to accept without protest.⁵³

In practice, things were not quite so simple, however, and the rivalry between the two factions had reached the point where it could spark fierce passions, igniting spirits to a level that posed a danger to the cohesion of the island's population. The electoral system was a factor contributing to this atmosphere: half the representatives were replaced every year, being chosen by the electors, who were themselves selected through an indirect method. Moreover, the assembly also served as an electoral court, a circumstance that enabled the (usually conservative) majority of the day arbitrarily to form the political landscape, taking up almost half the parliamentary session of forty days in a usually successful endeavour to invalidate the election of their liberal rivals.⁵⁴ At the same time, the Pact of Chalepa introduced the condition that the majority of public offices should be filled by elections instead of through arbitrary appointment by the Ottoman authorities (the method used hitherto), thus going from one extreme to the other and turning the island into an unending electoral battlefield.⁵⁵

At the end of the 1880s the two parties prepared for a final confrontation. In the spring of 1888, the liberal faction won the elections for the first time. There followed a spate of objections by their rivals, but ultimately the General Assembly proceeded with its task and, in the very short period left between the review of the elections and the end of the session, managed to vote in some important laws relating to the organisation of the municipalities, the organisation of the gendarmerie, the founding of a bank, and so on. One of the new measures involved a revised electoral law that introduced into Crete for the first time the principle of universal (male, of course) secret suffrage.⁵⁶

The following elections, held on 2 April 1889 under this new system, led to a crushing defeat for the conservatives, who managed to return only eleven representatives, and the triumph of the liberal faction, with forty representatives elected. One of these was Eleftherios Venizelos, who had recently (1887) graduated from the law school of Athens University,⁵⁷ and was returned for the first time as representative of Kydonia, in place of his retiring brother-in-law Constantinos Mitsotakis,⁵⁸ who also made over to him the newspaper *Lefka Ori* (*White Mountains*), which he had published since 1880. The newspaper was republished in 1888 by Venizelos, C. Fournis, Ch. Poloyiorgis and I. Moatsos, who formed a modernising group within the Liberal Party that became known as the *Lefkoreites*, after the name of their newspaper.

The side of each of the two conflicting parties of the Christian community was taken by the corresponding factions of the Muslim representatives. As was to be expected, the first sessions of the new General

Assembly were inundated with objections to the elections, further igniting the already strong party passions.

THE 'REVOLUTION' OF 1889 AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

While the review of the elections was still in progress, however, five of the representatives of the conservative faction suddenly submitted a memorandum in which they declared it to be their judgement that no improvement could be made in the affairs of the island under the present regime and that they considered the only solution to be the unification of Crete with Greece; accordingly, they decided to abstain from the work of the assembly, and were followed in this by the other minority members.⁵⁹

This unexpected action took place despite the efforts of the Greek consul in Chania to avert it. The consul's attitude was giving explicit expression to the total opposition of the Greek government under Charilaos Trikoupis to any movement in Crete. The majority were now faced with a terrible dilemma, for if they failed to declare themselves in favour of this untimely conservative initiative, they risked being accused of betraying the national cause.

On 5 June 1889, the General Assembly submitted to the extraordinary imperial emissary Mahmud Pasha a series of economic demands, amongst them the incorporation of customs revenues into the local budget, and the founding of an agricultural bank with the right to issue banknotes. The assembled opposition supporters abandoned completely their demand for unification with Greece and submitted a memorandum in which they sought the replacement of the governor general Sardinski Pasha (the only governor who had not taken the side of the conservative faction but had collaborated with the liberal majority), the invalidation of all the acts of the General Assembly and the dismissal of all civil servants, adding, in a purely demagogic spirit, the cancellation of debts to the state and fairer administration of justice, amongst other things. The Party of the Beys made similar demands in a corresponding memorandum.⁶⁰

The response of the imperial emissary was publicly posted on 22 June. While offering a temporary solution to the financial problems and promising the future creation of a bank, it rejected the other demands, since they had not been submitted through the official assembly but had been formulated by a gathering that did not legally represent the province. This development initially discouraged the assembled representatives, but it was then decided to force the issue by moving to Boutsoounaria, the usual venue for revolutionary gatherings near Chania, it being known that, as Venizelos observed, 'The mere name of this place caused Christian

breasts to beat with a sacred pulse, and sent a corresponding chill down Turkish spines.⁶¹ Rejecting any discussions with their party rivals and all the admonitions of the Greek government, the supporters of the insurrection sought to create a *fait accompli* by terrorising the Muslims of the countryside, in the hope that this would strengthen their final negotiating position.

At the same time, while the imperial emissary was recalled to Constantinople, signs of a hardening of respective attitudes became apparent, with the first armed clashes between Christians and Muslims, and also between Christians of rival factions, while the usual attacks by aggressive Muslim crowds on the Christian inhabitants of the towns also began. Faced with a deteriorating situation, the leaders of the two Christian factions concluded an agreement in principle with the liberals agreeing to consent to the demand for the replacement of Sardinski Pasha, on condition that the armed gatherings of conservatives should be dissolved forthwith. Although the Ottoman government agreed to the now joint demand and hastened to dismiss the governor general on 16 July 1889, the conservative grouping failed to observe the agreement. The dynamic of the situation had made them captives of their own armed bands, who refused to disband and rejected any compromise. This gave the local Turkish governors a pretext for arming the paramilitary Muslim bands which were intensifying their activities against the Christians, whose families rushed once more to the shores of the island in order to flee to Greece by whatever means possible. Already 'armed bands of both religious groups were polluting the country, raping, burning and murdering'.⁶²

In this climate, the Greek government issued a communiqué to the Great Powers declaring its intention to intervene to protect the Christian population, while Constantinople appointed Shakir Pasha as military governor and locum tenens of the governor general, with instructions to restore order swiftly. When he arrived in Crete, Shakir Pasha at once proclaimed martial law and succeeded in a short time in restricting the activities of the intransigent Muslims and driving the armed Christians into the mountains. The majority of the leading politicians, irrespective of party, fled to Greece, Eleftherios Venizelos amongst them.

The most important consequence of the 'revolution of 1889', however, was that it provided the Ottoman government with a pretext for arbitrarily revoking most of the reforms that had been achieved by the Pact of Chalepa, eleven years earlier. A firman issued by the sultan on 17 November 1889 abolished a series of regulations, such as the obligatory five-year term of the governor general, the limited term of presiding judges and public prosecutors (who were now to be appointed for life by

the government), and the practice of giving preference to locals in appointments to the gendarmerie. At the same time it was ordained that in the appointment of civil servants, preference would be given henceforth to those who spoke Turkish, and the number of members of the General Assembly was reduced from eighty to fifty-seven (thirty-five Christians and twenty-two Muslims), who were not to be elected by universal male suffrage but indirectly by electors from each province. An amnesty was proclaimed in theory, though exceptions were made in the case of leaders of the insurgents who had already been condemned by courts martial and politicians who were considered to have played a leading role in the recent 'troubles'. Amongst the latter was included Eleftherios Venizelos who, despite his clear opposition to the recent events, was thus recognised by his rivals in the most official manner as the undisputed leader of the Cretan people.⁶³

THE UPRISING OF 1895

Martial law was lifted and persecutions ceased in 1890. The broader consequences of the events of 1889 were still felt, however, as arbitrary actions by the Ottoman authorities continued and all traces of self-administration were, in essence, effaced: the majority of Christians refused to accept appointment to public office or to participate in the elections that would have given a veneer of legality to the new regime. Sardinski was succeeded by five Muslim pashas, none of whose terms of office exceeded fourteen months.

In March 1895, Alexandros Karatheodori Pasha was put in place as governor general for the second time in his career. Although the experienced former minister of foreign affairs managed to persuade the Christians to end their abstention from public life and to send representatives to the General Assembly, his policy soon led to an impasse. The intransigent Muslims turned to acts of violence, designed to create an unsettled situation that would lead to the recall of Karatheodori to Constantinople, Christian bands proceeded to exact reprisals and also the question was raised of restoring the special regulations of the Pact of Chalepa.

The pasha dissolved the General Assembly, while Manousos Koundouros, a judge from Sphakia, took the initiative in forming a committee known as the Metapoliteftiki (change-of-government) and proceeded to draw up a memorandum, which was approved by the General Assembly that met at Krapí in Apokoronas in September 1895. This memorandum sought the granting of partial autonomy to Crete under a

Christian governor, who would hold office for five years, and the restoration of the Chalepa privileges in an improved and expanded form. This was the first time that an insurrection had not begun with the standard demand for union with Greece, but from the start set itself 'reformist' objectives. Its activities were nevertheless regarded as revolutionary and Karatheodori, having attempted in vain to arrest its leaders, was recalled in February 1896. The general amnesty proffered by his successor, Turhan Pasha, also appointed governor of the island for the second time, met with no response and hostilities intensified, culminating in the siege of Vamos Apokoronou by the insurgents in May 1896.

After these developments, the Ottoman government sent out the former ruler of Samos, Georgios Verovic Pasha, as new governor, and on 31 July, under pressure from the Great Powers, was obliged to cede a new Organic Statute. This provided for the appointment of a Christian as governor general for a period of five years, with the approval of the Powers, for the creation of a Cretan gendarmerie organised and staffed at officer level by Europeans, for the filling of public offices by local Christians and Muslims in the proportions of two to one, and for guarantees of judicial and economic independence.⁶⁴

TOWARDS AN AUTONOMOUS CRETAN STATE

The acceptance of the new charter by the rebels calmed passions for a time, but a fresh impasse soon emerged, when the intransigent Muslims of the island, in collaboration with hard-core circles of the Ottoman government, put into practice a fresh plan to undermine the new regime by creating a climate of terror. This rapidly escalated from the isolated murders of leading Christians to the mass slaughter of the Christian populations of the towns and the torching of Christian neighbourhoods.⁶⁵

The Christians also formed armed bands, escalating their activities in their turn, and the Great Powers sought for ways out of the crisis, finally deciding on international intervention. Meanwhile, the Greek government of Theodoros Diliyannis decided to forestall them by sending an expeditionary force to capture the island (1 February 1897). This decision, taken under the pressure of the intransigents (intransigent political elements and extreme nationalist groups) and public opinion, with no military preparation or diplomatic groundwork, was to lead to the so-called 'unfortunate' Greek-Turkish War of 1897, which ended disastrously for Greece. At the same time, however, it accelerated the development of events in Crete by forcing the decision on an international occupation of the island, leading thereafter to its proclamation as an autonomous principality. This

brought to an end over three centuries of occupation by the Ottoman Empire, the last soldier of which departed the island on 12 November 1898.⁶⁶

NOTES

1. With the exception of the island of Tinos, that was subjugated in 1715.
2. See e.g. W. Bigge (1899), *Der Kampf von Candia in den Jahren 1667–1669*, Berlin; W. Bigge (1901), *La Guerra di Candia*, Turin; R. C. Anderson (1952), *Naval Wars in the Levant 1559–1853*, Princeton; Marinos Tzane Bounialis [1681] (1979), *Diigisis dia stichon tou deinou polemou tou en ti niso Kriti genomenou* [A Narrative in Verses of the Terrible War that Took Place in the Island of Crete], Athens; Th. Detorakis (1990), *Istoria tis Kritis* [History of Crete], Irakleio, pp. 251–70.
3. See e.g. K. Kritovoulidis (1859), *Apomnimonevmata tou peri aftonomias tis Ellados polemou ton Kriton* [Memoirs of the Cretans' War for the Autonomy of Greece], Athens; N. Stavrakis (1890), *Statistiki tou plithysmou tis Kritis* [Statistics of the Population of Crete], Athens, pp. 155–8; I. P. Mamalakis (1983), *I Kritiki Epanastasis tou 1866–1869* [The Cretan Revolution of 1866 to 1869], Athens, pp. 21–4; Detorakis, *Istoria*, pp. 318–50 (see Note 2).
4. J. C. B. Richmond (1977), *Egypt 1798–1952*, London, pp. 45–54; Stavrakis, *Statistiki*, pp. 148–52 (see Note 3); Detorakis, *Istoria*, pp. 351–8 (see Note 3).
5. A. Cahuet (1905), *La Question d' Orient*, Paris p. 99; Stavrakis, *Statistiki* (see Note 3); Mamalakis, *Epanastasis*, pp. 24–7 (see Note 3).
6. Consideration was given, indeed, to appointing him vali of Crete for life, but the proposal aroused strong British objections, and the Sublime Porte was negatively influenced by the example of Egypt; see R. Pashley (1837), *Travels in Crete*, London, vol. I, pp. xxi–xi; Stavrakis, *Statistiki*, pp. 158–9 (see Note 3).
7. See e.g. Pashley, vol. I, p. xxiv, vol. II, p. 325 (see Note 6); M. Chourmouzis Byzantios (1842), *Kritika* [Cretan Affairs], Athens, p. 104.
8. Pashley *Travels* (see Note 6); Stavrakis, p. 156 (see Note 3); Mamalakis *Epanastasis*, p. 24 (see Note 3).
9. Stavrakis *Statistiki*, p. 157 (see Note 3).
10. Richmond, *Egypt*, pp. 45–54 (see Note 4); Stavrakis, *Statistiki*, pp. 148–52 (see Note 3).
11. Pashley, *Travels*, pp. xxv–xxvi (see Note 6); Stavrakis, *Statistiki*, pp. 152–7 (see Note 3).
12. S. J. Shaw and E. K. Shaw (1977), *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Cambridge, vol. II, p. 43.
13. Pashley (see Note 6); T. A. B. Spratt (1865), *Travels and Researches in Crete*, London; Stavrakis, *Statistiki*, pp. 148–52 (see Note 3).

14. F. W. Sieber (1823), *Travels in the Island of Crete in the Year 1817*, London, pp. 56–8.
15. Pashley, *Travels* vol. I, pp. 105–8 (see Note 6); Kritovoulidis, *Apommimonevmata*, pp. 8–13, 28, 100–2 (see Note 3).
16. Mamalakis, *Epanastasis*, p. 30 (see Note 3).
17. Mamalakis, *Epanastasis*, p. 31 (see Note 3); N. A. Tsirintanis (1950), *I politiki kai diplomatiki istoria tis en Kriti ethnikis epanastaseos 1866–1868* [*The Political and Diplomatic History of the National Revolution in Crete 1866–1868*], Athens, vol. I, p. 29.
18. Stavrakis, *Statistiki* (see Note 3).
19. Tsirintanis, *I politiki kai diplomatiki Istoria*, vol. I, p. 62 (see Note 17).
20. Stavrakis, *Statistiki*, p. 198 (see Note 3); I. P. Mamalakis, *Epanastasis*, pp. 24–5 (see Note 3).
21. Stavrakis, *Statistiki*, p. 158 (see Note 3).
22. *Ibid.*, generally.
23. Tsirintanis, *I politiki kai diplomatiki Istoria*, vol. I, pp. 30–1 (see Note 17).
24. Detorakis, *Istoria*, pp. 352–5 (see Note 2).
25. For a detailed presentation of the movement in its international setting, see Miranda Stavrinou (1986), *I Aggliki politiki kai to Kritiko zitima, 1839–1841* [*English Policy and the Cretan Question, 1839–1841*], Athens.
26. Cahuet, *La Question*, p. 170 (see Note 5).
27. *Ibid.*, p. 191. The Hatti Humayun was simply a theoretical document promising reforms and laying down their principles. It had no practical significance without the passing of laws that would have ensured its implementation. This, however, presupposed the political will to do so. Even if the sultan had wished to implement reforms of this nature, and even if politicians with renovating attitudes had surrounded him, he would still have been confronted by the ethics and beliefs of the Muslims and by the countless civil servants who adhered to the old state of affairs. Their resistance would have vitiated all efforts at reform.
28. Domna N. Dontas (1966), *Greece and the Great Powers, 1863–1875*, Thessaloniki, pp. 65–71; Tsirintanis, *I politiki kai diplomatiki Istoria*, vol. I, pp. 114–22, 159–65 (see Note 17).
29. Tsirintanis, *I politiki kai diplomatiki Istoria*, vol. I, pp. 168–75 (see Note 17).
30. Academy of Athens (1957), *Mnimeia tis Ellinikis istorias: I Kritiki epanastasis 1866–1869* [*Monuments of Greek History: The Cretan Revolution of 1866–1869*], Athens, vol. VI, no. 1, pp. 5–9, 12, 33; Tsirintanis, pp. 114–22 (see Note 17).
31. Academy of Athens, *Mnimeia*, p. 39 (see Note 30); Tsirintanis, vol. I, pp. 202–5, 262–5 (see Note 17).
32. Tsirintanis, vol. I, pp. 370–1 (see Note 17).
33. For the activities and the adventures of the foreign volunteers, see, for example, J. E. Hilary Skinner (1868), *Roughing it in Crete in 1867*, London;

- E. Desmaze (1878), *Études et souvenirs helléniques*, Lyon; L. F. Callivretakis (1987), 'Les Garibaldiens à l'insurrection de 1866 en Crète (le jeu des chiffres)', in *Indipendenza e Unità Nazionale in Italia ed in Grecia*, Florence, pp. 163–79.
34. Tsirintanis, vol. I, pp. 294–308 (see Note 17).
 35. On the attitude of the Great Powers toward the Cretan question during that period, see, for example, A. S. Byzantios (1867), *L'Insurrection de Candie et le gouvernement français*, Leipzig; J. Missotaki (1867), *La politique anglaise et l'annexion de la Crète à la Grèce*, Paris; J. Cartwright (1867), *The Eastern Question*, London; J. Cartwright (1867), *The Insurrection in Candia and the Public Press*, London; J. Cartwright (1869), *Turkish Rule in Europe since the Treaty of Paris (1856)*, London; E. Driault (1898), *La Question d'Orient depuis ses origines jusqu'à nos jours*, Paris; K. Bourne (1956), 'Great Britain and the Cretan Revolt, 1866–1869', *The Slavonic and East European Review* 35, pp. 74–94; A. E. Mange (1940), *The Near Eastern Policy of the Emperor Napoleon III*, Urbana; Domna N. Dontas (1966), *Greece and the Great Powers, 1863–1875*, Thessaloniki.
 36. Tsirintanis, vol. III, pp. 528–31 (see Note 17); Detorakis, *Istoria*, pp. 361–77 (see Note 2). For a detailed account of the insurrection by an independent observer, see the book published by the US Consul in Chania, William J. Stillman [1874] (1966), *The Cretan Insurrection of 1866–1869*, Austin.
 37. For a detailed presentation of the Organic Law and its implementation, see Kallia Kalliatiki-Mertikopoulou (1988), *Ellinikos alytrotismos kai othomanikes metarrythmiseis – I periptosi tis Kritis, 1868–1877* [Greek Irredentism and Ottoman Reforms – The Cretan Case, 1868–1877], Athens; and for the broader background R. H. Davison (1963), *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856–1876*, Princeton.
 38. For these events and the Eastern question crisis in the 1870s, see, for example, S. T. Lascaris (1924), *La politique extérieure de la Grèce avant et après le congrès de Berlin*, Paris; D. Harris (1936), *A Diplomatic History of the Balkan Crisis of 1875 to 1878*, Stanford; M. D. Stoyanović (1938), *Great Powers and the Balkans 1875–1878*, Cambridge; S. Goriainov (1948), *La Question d'Orient à la veille du traité de Berlin, 1870–1878, d'après les archives russes*, Paris; L. S. Stavrianos (1963), *The Balkans since 1453*, New York, pp. 396–412; R. Millman (1979), *Britain and the Eastern Question, 1875–1878*, Oxford.
 39. Kalliatiki-Mertikopoulou, *Ellinikos alytrotismos*, p. 238 (see Note 37).
 40. *Ibid.*, pp. 267–88.
 41. K. G. Fournarakis (1929), *Dioikisis kai Dikaiosyni epi Tourkokratias en Kriti* [Administration and Justice during the Turkish occupation in Crete], Chania, p. 58.
 42. H. Temperley (1933), 'British Policy towards Parliamentary Rule and Constitutionalism in Turkey', *Cambridge Historical Journal* 4, pp. 156–91; R. Devereux (1963), *The First Ottoman Constitutional Period: A Study of*

- the Midhat Constitution and Parliament*, Baltimore; R. H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire*, pp. 383–6 (see Note 37).
43. While, even under the provisions of Ottoman law, more than fifty were required.
 44. Kalliataki-Mertikopoulou, *Ellinikos alytrotismos*, pp. 314–18 (see Note 37).
 45. F. V. Greene (1879), *The Russian Army and its Campaigns in Turkey in 1877–1878*, London.
 46. W. N. Medlicott (1938), *The Congress of Berlin and After: History of the Near East Settlement 1878–1880*, London; B. H. Sumner (1937), *Russia and the Balkans, 1870–1880*, Oxford; E. K. Venizelos (1971), *I Kritiki epanastasis tou 1889 [The Cretan Revolution of 1889]*, ed. I. Manolikakis, Athens, p. 322.
 47. Venizelos, *I Kritiki epanastasis*, pp. 324–6 (see Note 46); E. Prevelakis (1963), ‘To kathestos tis Chalepas kai to firmani tou 1889’ [‘The Regime of Chalepa and the Firman of 1889’], *Kritika Chronika* 17, pp. 163–82; Detorakis, *Istoria*, pp. 385–6 (see Note 2).
 48. Being appointed instead as minister for foreign affairs.
 49. He was replaced after being censured by the General Assembly.
 50. Kalliataki-Mertikopoulou, *Ellinikos alytrotismos*, pp. 154–5, 161 (see Note 37).
 51. A population composed of very poor Circassians, Kurds and, mainly, Benghazi immigrants, the so-called Chalikoutides, small groups of which were transported to the island, mainly during the period of Egyptian rule and installed in the suburbs of the main cities, working as porters and so on.
 52. Kalliataki-Mertikopoulou, *Ellinikos alytrotismos*, p. 158 (see Note 37).
 53. Venizelos, *I Kritiki epanastasis*, p. 42 (see Note 46).
 54. The fact that the elections were validated by the old members of the assembly and by those new members whose election was not contested, instigated a massive raising of objections, the so-called ‘strategic objections’, in order to reshape the composition of the assembly that was going to decide on them; see Venizelos, *I Kritiki epanastasis*, p. 91 (see Note 46).
 55. ‘If we take account of three successive years,’ commented the governor general, Savvas Pasha, in 1886:

we shall see that, in addition to the supplementary elections for representatives held annually, the following elections are held in quick succession: for mayors, mayor’s deputies and counsellors, for municipal, provincial and departmental inspectors, for the councils of elders of the towns and villages, for the electors of the departments of the councils of elders, for the electors of the administrators of the vakuf [religious welfare institutions], for the deputies of courts of first instance and magistrate’s courts, for provincial and administrative counsellors, etc., etc. I believe that for any people, a similar electoral system would have given rise to passions much stronger than those amongst us, and parties that would fight each other much more persistently – see Venizelos, *I Kritiki epanastasis*, p. 44 (see Note 46).

56. Chania newspaper *Lefka Ori*, 2 January 1889; Venizelos, *I Kritiki epanastasis*, pp. 50, 90–2 (see Note 46).
57. During his stay in Athens, the twenty-three-year-old Venizelos had a chance to make his first contact with international politics, when he met Joseph Chamberlain (1836–1914) on a visit to Athens, and revealed to him the real situation of the Cretan people. The impression made by the young Cretan student on the British politician seemed quite strong, since Chamberlain was persuaded of the rightness of his views; see reports on this meeting in the Athens newspaper *Nea Ephimeris*, 3 and 5 November 1886. A less well-known meeting, but even more characteristic of the impression that Venizelos was making on his interlocutors, even before becoming famous, is the one with the French politician Georges Clemenceau (1841–1929), who visited Crete a few years later. Asked back in France what impressed him the most – antiquities, monuments and so on – Clemenceau supposedly replied, ‘The biggest impression I got was from a young lawyer of Chania, whose name I forget, but it sounds something like Venezuela.’ The conversation is supposed to have taken place in the Comtesse de Noailles’ literary salon, in the year 1899; see D. Kaklamanos, ‘Venizelos’, Athens newspaper *Eleftheron Vima*, 5 April 1936; and see P. S. Delta (1978), *Eleftherios K. Venizelos*, Athens, p. 8.
58. Constantinos Mitsotakis married Venizelos’ elder sister, Aikaterini, in 1880.
59. The five leading protagonists of this action were A. Kriaris, N. Zouridis, I. Mygiakis, A. Kakouris and I. Anastasakis. See Venizelos, *I Kritiki epanastasis*, pp. 52, 244 (see Note 46).
60. Venizelos, *I Kritiki epanastasis*, pp. 60–3 (see Note 46).
61. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 384.
63. *Ibid.*, pp. 411, 476–9, 496–501.
64. See, for example, I. Pikros (1977), ‘Pros ton polemo tou 1897’ [‘Towards the War of 1897’], in G. Christopoulos and I. Bastias (eds), *Istoria tou Ellinikou Ethnous [History of the Greek Nation]*, vol. xiv, Athens, pp. 106–16; Detorakis, *Istoria*, pp. 390–4 (see Note 2).
65. See, for example, Pikros, ‘Pros ton polemo’, in *Istoria*, pp. 116–18 (see Note 64); Th. Detorakis (2001), ‘Ta Eleftheria tis Kritis-Oi megaloi stathmoi tou Kritikou zitimatos’ [‘The Liberation of Crete – The Main Milestones of the Cretan Question’], in Th. Detorakis and Al. Kalokairinos (eds), *I teleftaia phasi tou Kritikou zitimatos [The Last Phase of the Cretan Question]*, Irakleio, p. 24.
66. Although the autonomy of the Cretan state from the Ottoman government was complete, as suggested by the existence of its own currency, stamps and even its own flag, a metal Turkish flag remained standing on Suda islet, as a reminder of the sultan’s suzerainty. The final de jure abolition of this suzerainty in international law came in 1912, during the First Balkan War, when the Cretan deputies were received in the Greek Parliament and a governor general was sent from Athens to the island.

