

the highest bidder, who was sent thither with full powers under a Khatti Sherif from the Sultan. Such governors harassed the people with exactions of all kinds and unjust taxes, enough to reimburse themselves after one year of office. This system lasted for a long period, and greatly weakened the island. Nowhere in the Ottoman Empire was the taxation so oppressive: it reached here 200 piastres a head. Repeated insurrections, which were repressed almost as soon as they broke out, were the consequences. In 1764 a revolt occurred. As soon as Chil Osman Agha entered on his post he issued an order compelling the payment by each Christian subject of 4½ piastres, and by each Turk of half that sum. Within five months he had extorted 350,000 piastres over and above the legal assessment. A special mission was despatched to Constantinople, and the governor received the order not to demand the half. The treachery of Chil Osman, who plotted to murder all the bishops and leading men in his own house, was avenged: the people murdered him. The revolt continued under his successor. Khalil Agha put himself at the head of the malcontentes, and prolonged the contest, which ended with the capture and execution of himself and many others in 1766.

This last disturbance occurred just at the time of the first movements which stirred the Greek-speaking countries, widely divided from one another, to shake off the Turkish yoke: particularly in the islands, where the Greek race had kept itself purest. In these Cyprus, whose circumstances were not so favourable to a rapid development, took no part. So too in the new insurrection and actual war of liberation we find the Cypriot Greeks were not active. The reason may partly lie in the stronger pressure, and more extended power which the Turks could exercise in the island, and which they were bound to keep in constant readiness in so valuable and important a post: partly in the fact that the minds of the islanders were so lulled that no really inspired passion for freedom could touch their feelings. Also Cyprus lay always at a distance from the centre of the movement.

On the other hand Cyprus comes into notice in another contest, though here too it plays but a passive part. The conditions under which countries achieve a political importance and independence of their own remain the same in every age, since what natural position and circumstances ask and offer cannot be entirely and durably replaced by human expedients. When the Ptolemys wanted to found in Egypt a first-class state, the possession of Syria and Cyprus was an indispensable condition. To this end strove the Arabian conquerors of Egypt; and Mohammad Ali, the founder of the latest Egyptian kingdom, holds the possession of these countries also a necessity, without which he cannot assure the independence and stability of his realm. Without these countries Egypt cannot have a fleet: without a fleet it is continually open to attack. Crete would rather dispense with this connection, and the island will more justly be joined to Greece, to which the wishes of its inhabitants point, to round off that power. Mohammad Ali could not be content to found in Egypt a subordinate state, and insisted, after his victories over the Porte in the summer of 1832, on including in the conditions of peace the cession of Egypt, Syria, Crete and Cyprus as well. But the Porte offered to leave the two islands in pawn to England as the price of negotiating peace. England indeed declined to intervene, but the Viceroy of Egypt was nevertheless obliged, in the peace concluded through the mediation of Russia on May 5, 1833, to abandon his claims on Cyprus, though he kept Crete. An exchange might have suited him better, but he was perhaps satisfied with the hope that the possession of Cyprus also could not much longer escape him, and at a cheaper price. But more than Mohammad Ali lost by the exchange of Cyprus for Crete, the Greeks lost by the entire alienation of the latter island. All shows that the calculations of the Porte were wise; and the Turks will keep Cyprus to the last. Many educated and respectable Cypriots emigrated upon the erection of the new Greek kingdom, and like so many Greeks