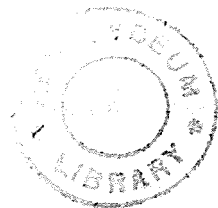


The British Colonial Experience 1800-1964 The Impact on Maltese Society

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Maltese Colonial Identity:
Latin Mediterranean or British Empire?

Influenced by history as much as by geography, identity changes, or develops, both as a cultural phenomenon and in relation to economic factors. Behaviouristic traits, of which one may not be conscious, assume a different reality in cross-cultural interaction and with the passing of time.

The Maltese identity became, and is, more pronounced than that of other Mediterranean islanders from the Balearic to the Aegean. These latter spoke varieties of Spanish and Greek in much the same way as the inhabitants of the smaller islands of Pantalleria, Lampedusa, or Elba spoke Italian dialects and were absorbed by the neighbouring larger mainlands. The inhabitants of modern Malta, however, spoke a language derived from Arabic at the same time as they practised the Roman Catholic faith and were exposed, indeed subjected, to European influences for six or seven centuries, without becoming integrated with their closest *terra firma*, Italy.¹ This was largely because of Malta's strategic location between southern Europe and North Africa. An identifiable Maltese nationality was thus moulded by history, geography, and ethnic admixture – the Arabic of the Moors, corsairs, and slaves, together with accretions from several northern and southern European races – from Normans to Aragonese. Malta then passed under the Knights of St John, the French, and much more importantly, the British. All this time, however, many Maltese were seafarers, sailing to the four winds. Migration, first to the Mediterranean littoral and then to the English-speaking world, and, later, return migration became extremely important.²

The two outstanding dates in the evolution of a Maltese 'colonial' identity are 1798 and 1964. In September 1798 the Maltese, as Catholics perhaps more than as 'nationals', joined forces in a popular uprising against the French. Courageous and successful against superior odds, they had for the first time an inkling of what nationhood (if not statehood) would mean. The second date, 21 September 1964, one hundred and sixty-six years later, marked the attainment of political independence and sovereignty, after a long struggle. In between these two most significant episodes, a Maltese identity gradually took shape and form. I have described it as a 'colonial' identity because it was much influenced by nationalism and imperialism.³

As a British possession, and a fortress, Malta was clearly not a nation-state in the sense of a political entity wherein those who govern share the outlook and aspirations of the governed; but socially, Malta had the characteristics of nationhood. Isolation, homogeneity, and a common historical experience, aided the feeling of being Maltese; the islands were not, like the other British colonies, divided by race, religion, tribe, or culture.⁴ The British experience, without which Malta might have become one more fragment of a united Italy, acted as a stimulus for the Maltese to come to terms with themselves, and set them on the path leading to full and separate nationhood: they matured in the course of outlining their rights and expectations as a people.

The Maltese had, before the nineteenth century, a unity of language – Maltese – and of religion – Roman Catholicism: the islands were 'a melting-pot where an original race and language were formed'.⁵ The Maltese type is 'South European', the 1911 Royal Commission reported:

but the people are fairer in colour, in the towns at any rate, and have a better appearance than south Italians and Sicilians. They are a strong, hardy race, and have a reputation of being temperate, thrifty, and industrious. They are clever and adaptable; generally speaking, however, they appear to lack confidence in themselves and each other, and have little power of co-operation. They are much attached to their native lands, and seldom migrate to distant countries.⁶

The ideas of the Maltese about themselves were much influenced by the Order of St John. The Turkish siege of 1565 symbolizes their legend: the Knights and the Maltese, then

under Grand Master La Valette, repelled Suleiman the Magnificent's invading force, an event which came to be seen not only as a defeat of the Muslims by the Catholics, but also as a European victory over the Ottoman Empire, and even, in the nineteenth century, as a symbol of Maltese fortitude in the face of a foreign enemy.⁷

Sicilian Italian was the language used for all official purposes in medieval times,⁸ but the Order consolidated Malta's Catholic European identity and considerably Latinized the culture of the people. Their building of fortifications, towns (including Valletta), palaces, hospitals, aqueducts, and naval facilities provided wide-ranging employment; Malta coined her own money, had a printing press and university, and standards of conduct and modes of thinking were established with which at least the educated sectors of the native population could associate themselves.⁹

By the nineteenth century Malta had, in appearance, a thoroughly Italianate culture. Practically everybody, educated or not, spoke Maltese in daily life, and there were also a few publications in the vernacular.¹⁰ Maltese, however, had not been made an official language, and had neither a standard orthography nor a literature. For a Maltese to be educated and for him to know Italian was one and the same thing: for countless generations, Italian had been the language of town and gown, of court and cloister.¹¹

Still there was no general national identity for the Maltese. There were several 'identities': a rural peasant one, an urbane cosmopolitan one, even a Gozitan one, and even more parochial ones, centred around the parish square and the family. Religiosity and secularization featured differently in these lifestyles, and perceptions of Malteseness, to the extent that these existed, would have differed accordingly. Though occupations influenced dispositions, indeed allegiances, still there were other elements in common, native-life feelings that transcended the attachments to opposed cultural and/or political pulls.

Malta had a numerous middle class: in the 1870s, the 141,775 inhabitants were mostly artificers and labourers or employed in agriculture. Nearly 10,000 were engaged in commerce, 2,290 belonged to the professions, and 1,210 to the clergy. Of the 2,133

listed as nobles and landowners, the *titolati* (those entitled to precedence as nobles) were relatively few.¹² In 1877 the 'working' or 'poorer' classes were estimated at 112,360, about three-fourths of the population, the remaining one-fourth (36,910) being the 'non-manual' classes.¹³

The parochial structure was intact: religion was at the heart of Maltese life just as the church was physically in the centre of the village, and formed part of the strong social nexus by which the common people looked up deferentially to the 'respectable' members of the community. The parish priest was always at hand with advice not just in his capacity as clergyman but also on a personal level. Similarly, the notary, lawyer, architect, or doctor was close by – one went to his office, he came to one's house – and such people would be presidents of the local band clubs or secretaries of the religious confraternities. Practically everybody went to church – people therefore met in church on feast days, if not daily. 'The principal recreations of the Maltese have, in general, some connection with their religious ceremonies', observed G.P. Badger in 1838; the numerous processions afforded the stranger many opportunities of seeing 'every rank and class of the people, in their best attire, congregated together in crowds' witnessing such scenes.¹⁴

Malta was a closely-knit community partly because the small archipelago (122 square miles in all) could not but give its inhabitants a feeling of being Maltese (*Maltin*), besides being *Sengleani* (from Senglea city), *Żebbuġin* (from Żebbuġ village), *Furjanizi* (from Floriana suburb), and so on. From the Sceberras peninsula, on which Valletta was built in the sixteenth century, one could look across both sides of the majestic harbour to the 'Three Cities' of Senglea, Vittoriosa, and Cospicua, on one side, and to Msida, Sliema, and Gzira on the other, comprising between them one-third of the entire population. Peasants never strayed far from the village squares; farmers, petty vendors, and middlemen travelled by horse-cart from the country to the city to sell their produce or wares; the employees at the dockyard were mostly recruited from the surrounding areas. Before the railway was inaugurated in 1883 a journey by horse carriage from the former capital Notabile to Valletta took three hours.¹⁵ 'As a rule', explained Dr Alfredo Mattei,

the men in the casals get up at four in the morning, go to hear the mass of the *Parroco* and after that they go to Valletta or anywhere else where their work may happen to call them and spend the whole day laboriously at work. Then at the *Ave Maria* at 6 p.m., the poor labourer... rejoins his family, says his prayers, his *Rosario*, and goes to bed ... even at Città Vecchia where you have a few learned gentlemen and a few *Canonici* and *Abatini*, even they get up very early and few study and keep late hours.¹⁶

The mobilization of political opinion within a closely interconnected area of such small dimensions, where gossip and rumour were necessarily rife, was a relatively easy task. Newspapers in Italian and Maltese were 'taken to the cafés where the people congregate and read them'.¹⁷ 'A stranger reading the partisan newspapers', noted a visitor in 1927, 'is liable to be rather staggered at the strength of feeling which seems to exist over politics'.¹⁸

Imperialist strategic considerations sometimes led British colonial policy to be assimilationist rather than, as was more usual, *laissez faire* or 'informal'. Governors were almost all military men, not particularly versed in the art of 'indirect rule'. English colonialism in Mediterranean Europe, especially in Malta, shows how profound cultural clashes motivated collaboration and resistance for well over a century.

Cultural rather than economic, Maltese nationalism, inspiring itself from the native intelligentsia's traditional *italianità*, heightened throughout the Risorgimento, posited Europeanity against the Anglicization policies in public life. It was Dante against Shakespeare, Pope against Queen, the Southern against the Nordic. Political parties came into being to uphold Italian and English values and vice versa, as new alignments, interests, classes, and perceptions slowly evolved. Out of the conflicting loyalties and social engineering, awareness of a body politic developed and the Maltese vernacular gradually emerged as a measure of national identity. Party divisions, however, remained intense.¹⁹

x Language battles may well be said to account for the origin of Maltese political parties. Anglicization could be accomplished only at great cost to human relations inside the colony. But in de-Italianizing Malta, the British forced the birth of a more home-grown product. In resisting assimilation and colonialism, pro-Italians and others engendered a national political consciousness upon which a body politic could feed. Paradoxically, the Maltese language emerged as a synthesis of the pro-English and pro-Italian rivalry.²⁰

Cultural allegiances also came to embody an economic or financial component, however, and were increasingly influenced by this. 'English' or 'Italian' became, to quote Joe Chamberlain, 'a question of bread and butter'.²¹ It was the British occupation, and British colonial policy, that made it so. In the long term, it appeared more profitable for rising generations to adopt and conform to the obvious preferences, or dictates, of the ruling class – the British. The element of *italianità* in Maltese nationalism suffered as a result. But two different visions of what Malta ought to be, of whom the Maltese were and should be, lay at the bottom of the conflict. Influenced by their own education and professions, but also by tradition and a sense of history and continuity, even by religion, pro-Italians saw Malta belonging to a Latin Mediterranean world. By contrast, 'Britishers' saw it as an outpost of empire in the central Mediterranean on the route to India and the Pacific, a harbour, naval station, and garrison town whose economy and survival were tied to its place in the British Empire. These two visions, or interests, also belied different attitudes to government, nationhood, and right – the former being the more *independent*, the latter the more *dependent*.²² There was agreement on some basic tenets where national self-pride was concerned in a general way, but otherwise they saw and sought different directions for the island, especially after 1870.

The British allowed the Maltese the free practice of their religion but denied them, at first, any political rights: critics were persecuted.²³ Although Malta was ceded to and not conquered by Britain, the Maltese came to see little difference between cession and conquest considering the way they were treated;²⁴ it was not until half a century after the occupation that the elective principle was introduced.²⁵ This greatly disappointed the elected leaders of the national *Congresso*, who had taken charge of the anti-French insurrection and now expected to lay down the rules. According to their charter of 1802, the British monarch would have 'no right' to cede Malta to any other power: should he withdraw his protection, sovereign rights would devolve upon the Maltese. The *Congresso*, representing all the cities, towns, and villages, expected a *Consiglio Popolare* to administer the constitution that would be agreed upon, particularly with regard to legislation and taxation, subject to

the King's assent. Finally, the King was to protect the religion of the country, allowing religious freedom, and to ensure the rule of law, safeguarding the rights of life and property.²⁶ The Royal Commissioners of 1812, however, felt 'persuaded of the mischievous effects that would result from entrusting any portion of political power to a people so singularly unfitted to enjoy it.'²⁷

'Was it for this', protested the nobles, 'that we took up arms and made our brave stand against the tyranny of France?'²⁸ 'The Maltese gave themselves up spontaneously to the English and in return freedom was promised to them', complained Giorgio Mitrovich, once described as 'the Maltese O'Connell',²⁹ who, at the head of a *Comitato Generale Maltese*, campaigned successfully for a free press (granted in 1839) and the franchise (granted in 1849).³⁰

Apart from newspapers and elections, public opinion was influenced throughout the Risorgimento by the activities of exiles who found refuge in Malta (among them Francesco Crispi, who later became Prime Minister of Italy);³¹ Mazzinian pamphlets were printed in Malta for distribution abroad;³² the Bishop warned on 'the incalculable damage' which the presence of Italian nationalists was causing 'in this small island whose language they speak'.³³ When Garibaldi visited Malta, he was both cheered and jeered.³⁴ Small, rather crowded, lacking mineral wealth of any kind, and even water, with much of the land barren, 'plain, bare, naked Malta', said Charles James Fox in 1803, should have been placed 'in the hands of the Emperor of Russia',³⁵ but the violation of the Treaty of Amiens was rendered necessary, as Canning noted, by the retention of Malta 'not for its own intrinsic value and importance only', but in view of imperial interests in Egypt and India, and as 'that point upon which the honour of this country was committed'.³⁶ Napoleon's advisers were in no doubt as to Britain's intentions: 'On se demande, Malte vaut-elle la guerre?'³⁷ One of the reasons why Malta was governed by a succession of generals who were at the same time Commanders-in-Chief of the armed forces, was that, as James Lowther told the Commons, Malta was 'not only a colony of some importance' but 'also an important fortress'.³⁸ 'Did not the Duke of Wellington say', wrote Joe Chamberlain, 'that you might as well give a Constitution to a man-of-war as

give it to Malta?'³⁹ The use of the word 'fortress' with regard to Malta was, as in Aden after 1880, 'a statement of policy'.⁴⁰

The conflict between civil rights and military needs was at the heart of Maltese politics. Every time the Maltese petitioners invoked the *Melitensium Amor* argument – the idea that Malta had been freely ceded by the Maltese – the British reiterated the fortress formula, the strategic value of Malta made it unlikely that it could be treated like an ordinary colony. Mistrust was fomented on both sides because of this preoccupation. Misgovernment was inevitable because generals usually had little knowledge of representative institutions and civil affairs: the Head of Government was often not the man in charge of running the country. Sir Alexander Ball's prophetic advice to the Secretary for War as early as 1801 went by unheeded:

The inhabitants conceive their liberty insecure until the military and civil power be divided. They observe that a Military Governor cannot spare sufficient time from his garrison occupations to direct the Civil Administration of the Island without giving too much power to secretaries, who seek their own interest and not the happiness of the people ... I speak from a thorough knowledge of the character and sentiments of the inhabitants, and I now write under the fullest conviction of the necessity of this being attended to, otherwise we shall lose the affection and attachment of these brave Islanders and risk serious consequences.⁴¹

To Maltese politicians, imperialism usually meant thinking of Britain in Malta rather than of Malta, with the Maltese being treated not as a people but as the native inhabitants of a fortress. As Britain did not care for local interests, Dr Fortunato Mizzi once declared he did not care for imperial interests.⁴² British rule in Malta, said Sigismondo Savona, was 'government on garrison principles'.⁴³ 'We are not sheep! We are not soldiers!' shouted F. S. De Cesare at the Governor.⁴⁴ These three journalists and politicians were rivals but, at heart, they all tended to subscribe to a patriotic consensus – that *cumulus* of shared experiences and instinctive attachments, embodying common grievances and expressing similar expectations. Particularly, it expressed the desire, indeed the belief, that a Maltese should not be treated or considered as the Englishman's inferior. To assert publicly that Malta belonged to the Maltese,

as Dr Zaccaria Roncali did in 1885, could be tantamount to sedition.⁴⁵

As Britain was a great industrial and naval power, the Maltese could benefit materially from the application of British technology and financial resources, as well as from the indirect export of capital through the presence of thousands of servicemen; but in all this Malta generally played the role of a pawn.

Subjected to strategic priorities, Maltese constitutional history lacked an evolutionary development: Malta's 'special' position in the Empire was eloquently summed up in 1931 in the observation that it was almost possible 'to plot a graph' of Constitutions 'modelled alternatively on the principle of benevolent autocracy and that of representative government'.⁴⁶

The turning point in Maltese history came at the time of the opening of the Suez Canal, the unifications of Italy and Germany, and the subsequent expansionist or precautionary policies in the big-power rivalry over the Mediterranean and elsewhere. In response to a new calling after 1870, there emerged a different breed of men destined to persevere in national politics and to stamp their marks on Malta's development.

As 'the most advanced post on the European part of the road to India', Malta's value since the Crimean War had grown enormously, wrote the Director of Navy Contracts at the Admiralty, F.W. Rowsell: nowhere else along the route could ships be coaled 'so well, so quickly, or so cheaply as at Malta'.⁴⁷ Gradually colonial government changed from a relatively stable, easy-going routine into a businesslike, intrusive, and more authoritarian rule.

This heightened, indeed provoked, the clash between Anglicization and *italianità*. Preferment for those learning English, or supporting anti-Italian policies, was raised to a method of government, bitterly dividing the local parties, and forcing the issue of identity in 'British' Malta.

The principle was crudely enough enunciated in 1883 by Lieut.-Governor Sir Walter Hely-Hutchinson, whose advice was:

✂ Insist on a knowledge of English in all public appointments. Appoint no one and promote no one who does not thoroughly understand it. Pay your public service well and make the public officers as comfortable as possible. And let those who oppose English understand that their

opposition shuts them out from all hope of employment or favour from the Government. Appeal, in a word, to their personal interests. I do not care so much about the Lyceum and universities. Look well after your primary schools, see that the boys and girls are taught Maltese and English, and in twenty years there won't be a chance for the propagation of Italianist ideas.⁴⁸

An early British-trained Maltese campaigner for Anglicization was a former army sergeant and schoolmaster who later became Director of Education and Rector of the University, Sigismondo Savona. He was an assimilationist, a utilitarian liberal and prone to serve, clearly, as a collaborator. He was not alone in this, so his views and attitudes deserve attention.

After leaving the army, Savona set up his own school in Valletta specializing in the teaching of English. In 1867 he started a paper called *Public Opinion*, of which he served as editor until he successfully contested election to the Council of Government in 1875. After a few years he crossed the floor from the elected to the official side – just as at least one other distinguished member of the same House (the Crown Advocate Sir Adrian Dingli) had done before him many years earlier.⁴⁹

At that time education was directly concerned with re-arranging priorities and curricula in the question of the languages and so, for a very long time, this was by far the most controversial and problematical department to manage. Savona, however, was well qualified for the tasks at hand. In a public lecture to the Maltese Scientific and Literary Society some years after returning from his London training course (where he had been placed first), Savona had favourably quoted Thomas Babington Macaulay that 'the history of England is emphatically the history of progress', and that the English were 'the greatest and most highly civilized people that ever the world saw' who had 'spread their domination on every quarter of the globe' and 'created a maritime power which would annihilate in a quarter of an hour the navies of Tyre, Athens, Carthage, Venice, and Genoa together'. Savona's lecture was called 'The Necessity of Educating the People'. A second edition of it was printed in 1870.⁵⁰

In a strictly utilitarian vein, the Maltese Anglophile leader

spoke convincingly in favour of Anglicization especially for the benefit of the working classes who sought employment, as he noted, 'on the shores of the harbours, as sailors, firemen, coal-heavers, boatmen, or porters; as policemen, artillery men, domestic servants, messengers in government offices; as labourers or artisans under the Royal Engineers or Commissariat Department, in the Royal Dockyard or the Hydraulic Dock'.⁵¹

Savona went further than this, apologizing for Anglicization by implying that Britain was more lenient than other great powers with regards to her assimilation policy. Stating his belief that all parts of the British Empire should be 'knit together resolved to do or die for the fatherland', he declared:

If the French had not been driven from Malta by the Maltese, before they had been two years on the Island, it is certain that French would long ago have been the official language of the island. If the Russians had made themselves masters of it, as at one time it seemed likely that they would, I am sure that before this we should have been thoroughly Russianized.⁵²

This mentality was carried forward in time and in emphasis by Count Gerald Strickland who was eventually knighted and raised to the peerage. Strickland was a wealthy man, the son of an English naval captain and an aristocratic Maltese mother. He received a Maltese education, went to Cambridge, twice married English ladies, and his children could barely speak Maltese. After being elected to the Council of Government as a candidate of Dr F. Mizzi's *Partito Nazionale* in 1889, Strickland soon crossed the floor to the official side to become Chief Secretary to Government, which was practically the most powerful job in the island. He was subsequently made a governor in the colonial service overseas (from 1902 to 1917, serving in the Leeward Islands, Tasmania, Western Australia, New South Wales, and Norfolk Island).

More markedly than Savona, Strickland was a clever administrator and an expert dispenser of patronage. When he eventually re-entered the Maltese political arena in the 1920s, after the grant of self-government, he attracted enough support to become Prime Minister of the same colony where in the heyday of imperialism he had been the Chief Secretary to Government – a case without parallel in the history of the

Empire. A true-blue Tory in British politics, but in Maltese politics daubed as a 'reformer' and as a 'progressive', if not also as a 'radical' figure, Strickland saw Malta in an imperial framework, arguing that imperial and Maltese interests were one and the same thing. The closer Malta was to Britain, therefore, the more she stood to gain from it. The least signs of dissidence, particularly as expressed by *cultural nationalism* in the form of *italianità*, were to be ruthlessly suppressed – albeit always with a semblance of democracy in the name of progress, freedom, and the will of the majority. Colonial administrators did not believe in the consensual ethic, and Strickland certainly belonged with them. Indeed he repeatedly irritated the Colonial Office by his insistence on Orders-in-Council as an easy means for imposing laws whenever he met opposition. At one point he even suggested a startling constitutional provision to enable the governor to legislate 'by proclamation'. This would have been a course rather similar to the one proposed by Savona in 1886 when the latter had secretly proposed the abolition of representative government.⁵³ In a closed gubernatorial autocracy, those belonging to the regime's inner circle and having the ear of the governor, would stand to benefit – since such collaborators and advisers would find it much easier to have their way, whether right or wrong. Strickland's method of dealing, raised to a method of government, was inspired partly by his desire to make the Maltese 'as English as possible' and partly by his ambitious, intolerant, vindictive zeal.

As for the first characteristic, Strickland declared for example that 'We should henceforth be as thoroughly British as possible in speech and in thought as well as in fact.'⁵⁴ Or, again: 'I certainly would strain every effort in my power towards rendering the Maltese as English as possible.'⁵⁵ Strickland actually held that the Maltese race was more akin to some important sections of the English race than to the Latin or Italian race, or to the Semites. He wanted to show, basically, that the Maltese were Aryans not Semites nor Latins. He wrote:

The Maltese are a good-looking, agile race with rounded limbs and well set up; blue and brown eyes are usual and they have a tendency to be stout; the Arabs are thin, lanky, angular, and sallow. The Arabs are nomads by land, and adverse to the sea, and dwell in tents; on the

contrary the Maltese like their Phoenician ancestors delight in buildings of solid cut stone. No close observer could confuse the two races ...

Let it be hoped that a true spirit of unity with the British Empire shall henceforth be based on the fact that Malta is a European portion of His Majesty's Dominions, peopled principally by men of a kindred race to that which is characteristic of the eastern coasts of the Irish Sea, the Isle of Man, and the Islands of Scotland.⁵⁶

As for Strickland's second characteristic, that regarding the methods of government, suffice it to state that he adhered fully to the Hely-Hutchinson principle of appealing to personal interests to obtain Anglicization through systematic discrimination. Strickland actually twisted this further to read in biblical terms: rewarding 'the good' and punishing 'the wicked' – or else, he said, Government will soon come to the end of 'available resources for maintaining discipline and order'.⁵⁷ He upheld the view of 'only giving appointments to those whose loyalty could be relied upon', evidently using the degree of assimilation or at least the servile disposition of the individual as a criterion for determining loyalty and believing that such a policy achieved a marked effect by being followed consistently for a period of years.⁵⁸ 'The law of the survival of the fittest is not of my making', he wrote.⁵⁹

Like Joe Chamberlain and Admiral Sir John Fisher, Strickland upheld the *fin de siècle* imperialism's philosophy of 'thorough' and indeed carried this forward well into the twentieth century. In a letter to the Minister for the Colonies in 1908, Strickland asked, 'Why do we hold Malta?' and continued to answer as follows:

- (a) because it is the key of our Eastern trade, and emblem of sea power held by the strongest from time immemorial;
- (b) because, under present conditions, no European navy can fight us East of Malta and retain enough coal to get home;
- (c) because when the German Emperor gets Trieste, Salonica, or other Mediterranean possessions, his conquests can be made value-less by whoever holds Malta with the sword. No servant of the Crown in Malta should be allowed to forget that, in the interest of the liberty and the prosperity of the Maltese, defence is the principal justification for his existence.⁶⁰

This tallied perfectly with Chamberlain's view. 'In a fortress', he had told the House of Commons, 'anything like open agitation against the Government is a thing that *cannot be tolerated on the face of it* ... you cannot allow sedition to prevail within it.'⁶¹ And Sir John Fisher had seen no difference between Malta and Gibraltar, or indeed Metz and Cronstadt. Malta existed solely for the Navy, he wrote in a memorandum at the turn of the century:

For imperial purposes it has no other value whatever. It produces nothing. It has no manufactures. The Algerian ports have filched the larger portion of its coal trade. Algiers now offers such temptations that it is preferred as a port of call. Malta possesses no military value whatever; it exists *for* the Navy; and it exists *by* the Navy. Without the British fleet in the Mediterranean it could not hold out more than a few weeks against the 87,000 troops available in Algeria. Malta is a fortress, pure and simple, and should be governed as a fortress. Fancy Metz or Cronstadt, with a local parliament, cutting down the governor's electric light or water supply for his official residence, and vilifying the Authorities in language almost too disgusting to repeat! ... It is quite impossible to suppose that either through a seditious press, or priestly pressure, the splendid and loyal feeling of the Maltese for the English (which are heartily reciprocated) should be permitted to be sapped.⁶²

After the Second World War the Malta Labour Party (MLP) attracted many of the pro-Britishers. This was partly because Strickland's Constitutional Party – to which the MLP under Sir Paul Boffa had allied itself in 1927 – had largely died with him; but it was also because the MLP was itself pro-British. Under the leadership of one time Rhodes Scholar Dominic Mintoff, like Strickland married to an Englishwoman, the MLP until 1958 strove for Malta's integration with Britain. Only after that failed did it turn anti-British.⁶³

By contrast, many Nationalist Party (PN) leading figures and ordinary supporters had been interned and deported, without any charge in 1940.⁶⁴ The Nationalists rather successfully opposed the plan and the idea of integration, advocating instead greater internal autonomy. Once again, however, the question of identity, of belonging, of loyalty and affiliation, culturally no less than politically, was at the fore.

At an earlier time, before the First World War, a Nationalist leader Enrico Mizzi had suggested an Italo-Maltese

Federation.⁶⁵ Nothing came of this either – except, indirectly, a court martial,⁶⁶ and later on the deportation of Mizzi – but the proposal was an extension of the deeply-embedded Maltese philosophy of *italianità*, expounded by, among others, Enrico's father and founder of the PN, Fortunato Mizzi, whose wife was Italian.

This philosophy was as much linguistic, culturally, as it was political, constitutionally and juridically.

Feelings of belonging, of national pride, were strongly voiced by the elder Mizzi. In one of his addresses to 'the Patriots' shortly before the grant of representative government in 1887, Mizzi vouched that the 'sacred national cause' would triumph over the colonial regime 'which instead of considering us as men having secular rights to govern ourselves, depicts us as slaves to be treated like merchandise'. His opponents thought, he added, that 'they could suffocate the heart-rending cry in many a thousand breast inveighing against the absolute power which tears apart our soul and which wants to struggle our very thoughts'.⁶⁷ *strang*

In another strident appeal at this time Mizzi condemned 'the bureaucracy that misgoverns us' and he urged his followers: 'Break your chains, because your life will signify their death.' Mizzi's beliefs in representative government are complemented by his views of Malta as an Italian-like island in a Latin Mediterranean context, as opposed to the rival view of Malta in a British imperial context as a bustling garrison centre. When representative government was revoked in 1903, Mizzi gave vent to his party's feelings:

How can an enlightened people who crave for political liberty and are conscious of their dignity as a civilized nation accept such a Constitution? And for what purpose? And what citizens could ever be induced to abandon their own affairs and accept the popular mandate to study and discuss the affairs of Malta, to sweat and create bad blood, to have their nerves continually harassed, to sicken and age prematurely in pursuit of the arduous task of persuading a Government whose interest it is not to listen to reason, to see themselves continually voted down by the official puppets, in a crushing majority, and to have to submit to all decisions, even the most odious ones, passed under the formula 'with the advice and consent of the Council of Government', and in return for all this, to find themselves insulted and maligned in the Government dispatches? No! A people, such as the Maltese, who have a secular name to cherish, and the sympathies of Europe to sustain them, will never accept such a Constitution.⁶⁸

When the Government sought to de-Italianize the sinews of Maltese education, Mizzi expounded the philosophy of *italianità*:

How can we, in the central Mediterranean, surrounded by Latin peoples, how can we, us 160,000 souls, adopt as our language the Anglo-Saxon tongue? How can we, through it, express our sentiments? How on earth could we, caressed by this sun, we who are poetic and a music-loving people, adopt the language of a people who inhabit the Nordic snows? How can we adapt our way of thinking and of feeling to the way of thinking and of feeling of the English people? And if we cannot strip away the soul from the word, that is the thought, how can we ever dress this thought in any other form but that which suits our sentiments, that is the Italian form?⁶⁹

He held that the English language was necessary because 'we are under British rule', but, he added, it should likewise be considered that 'we live in the midst of many nations: Italy, France, Spain, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Tripolitania, Egypt, etc. As we have relations with all these countries, Italian is necessary for us.'⁷⁰

Had it not been for the fact that Maltese was spoken in the island, Mizzi's ideology would have conformed to accepted contemporary theories about self-realization that relate thought processes to language and environment. A mixture of Renan and Herder, influenced generally by Italian and European secular thought and, to a lesser extent, by British liberalism, Mizzian nationalism was the result of circumstances rather than a doctrinaire commitment arising from acquired knowledge through familiarity with writers such as the Neapolitan Gianbattista Vico (popularized in the nineteenth century by Michelet) or the German Romantic school, although Professor Ramiro Barbaro did mention Heinrich Heine, and the *Diritto* had been clearly inspired by Terenzio Mamiani. The equation of *italianità* with self-realization, consonant with nationalist theories about government and regeneration, was reaffirmed by Mizzi and Salvatore Cachia Zammit in their case for retaining Italian in the Courts. (Maltese laws were based on Roman Law, codified and encapsulated in Italian for ages, with all the legal jargon, even that in common parlance, being Italian or derived from Italian.) This is what they believed:

The Maltese will never speak English in the same way as the English people for the reason that there are profound differences in thought

and sentiments between the two peoples. They will speak Italian with English words, but their thoughts must be Italian, however correct the phrases may sound. Obligated to use a language that is not their own and that does not correspond to or naturally express their feelings, the people will lose the native dignity which today is so conspicuous in our courts of law.⁷¹

Such beliefs are good examples of the twofold character of Maltese nationalism – *liberal* in the quest for representative institutions, and *cultural* in the identification of traditional education with the qualities of nationality. These views also underline the fact that Malta was a European colony.

The younger Mizzi's quest for a union with Italy becomes in this context more readily explainable, but Enrico's disposition towards Italy may be compared to Strickland's disposition towards Britain. The maternal influence on Enrico – the language commonly spoken at his home was Italian⁷² – may have, in a way comparable to the paternal influence on Strickland, unduly influenced the son's disposition; although Enrico, unlike Strickland, married a Maltese lady and spoke Maltese. As Britain was the dominating power in Malta, Mizzi was the one who suffered for his ideas, Strickland the one who was promoted. But did not Enrico, like Strickland, conceive of Malta as a separate nation, yet not as potentially an independent state – as a country that would be better off, politically or economically, as part of a larger, sovereign whole? This recurring 'apron-string' theory – that Malta was small enough to cohere as a nation but not strong enough to subsist as an independent state and that the island had a unique nationality but, equally, a strategic importance and a military impotence that so required to be defended from a position of strength – could lead to a comparison between Enrico Mizzi's proposal for federation with Italy to Mintoff's proposal for integration with Britain nearly half-a-century later. How far, if at all, was Mizzi's federation plan what Dennis Austin wonders that Mintoff's integration plan may have been – 'that like Mrs Todgers' embracing of the Miss Pecksniffs "there was affection beaming in one eye and calculation shining out of the other"?'⁷³

In Enrico Mizzi, *italianità*, nationalism, and irredentism were moulded together and almost indistinguishable as separate

aspects of his thinking. Following in his father's footsteps, he was enthusiastic about celebrating the *otto settembre* (the date marking the 1565 siege) as Malta's national day.⁷⁴ He held the Maltese race to be superior to the English, as well as – it would seem – to the Italian (unless the two were the same).⁷⁵ Not unlike his father, Enrico Mizzi apparently viewed the Mediterranean as one ethnico-cultural entity, inhabited by peoples sharing a common affinity. *Italianità*, in this sense, could be seen to include – 'in the classic island of the Knights' where 'every persecution of the Nordic stranger' would always be resisted – all that which seemed un-English or non-British. It would extend to such qualities of Latinity as were usually identified, in Malta, with Italy or the Mediterranean region: 'that serene melancholy of the Orient, such as could not be hidden in the passionate looks of the Spaniards, the Greeks, and the Sicilians'; the traditional women's costume – the *faldetta* – which 'those who had travelled in the Mediterranean, in the Barbary Coast, in the Orient' so liked, and which could be seen 'in a street in Tunis or Tripoli or by the pier in a Sicilian village'; the dark complexion reflecting 'the great sun and the great sea'; the sea breeze; the moonlight; 'the characteristic life of the *mezzogiorno*, in the open air and communally (*in comune*)'.⁷⁶ But Italy was more to Enrico than it had ever been to Fortunato – Italy to him was not only the fountain of culture in Maltese civil life, nor just a political lever with which to win concessions from Britain, but a spiritual mother, perhaps like his own mother, a magnetic caress without which, he felt, the Maltese people could not move towards their natural destination. Malta was 'the furthestmost fringe of Italy' (*l'ultimo lembo d'Italia*),⁷⁷ the Maltese were by 'natural attachment' linked *alla gran madre Italia*. 'The soul of a people' was not transformed in a year, wrote Mizzi:

Centuries of tradition are not cancelled. A mother language is not abandoned for another, like a change of clothes. Certain mental habits, certain social customs, are the outcome of a long and slow elaboration.

The patriotic principles and sentiments of the Maltese, he wrote, should serve as an example to many of 'our brothers across the sea and beyond the frontiers' (*nostri fratelli d'oltremare e d'oltre confine*).⁷⁸

Italianità ceased to be a dominant motif in Maltese national life after the Second World War and after Dr Borg Olivier replaced Enrico Mizzi as Prime Minister and leader of the Nationalist Party in 1950, when Malta again had responsible government.⁷⁹

The other significant cultural development during the colonial period was the emergence of Maltese as a national and literary language. Maltese has had a standard orthography since 1931 and it was entrenched as the official language of Malta in the 1964 Independence Constitution.⁸⁰ English became a second language, but Italian influence continued mainly through the Italian TV channels which came to have a strong following among the better-educated sections of the community. For various reasons, the emancipation of Maltese was controversial, at least until the Second World War.

Paradoxically, it was the British who mainly pushed Maltese, mainly as a medium for the easier and faster spread of English; and that was one reason why the Nationalists themselves opposed it.

It is clear that no instant or static correlation exists between native languages and national cultures, or between ethnic groups and nation-states. While it seems natural that a people sharing common experiences and using the same medium of communication should constitute a nation, the relationship of nationality to nationhood may be complicated by a multiplicity of factors – sectarian, social, ideological. More fundamentally, a sense of common nationality may be hindered by different religions or ethnic origins of the inhabitants of a defined area, resulting for example in conflicting language loyalties, as in Canada. The situation appears even more perplexing when linguistic differences do not stem from perceptibly diverse racial origins, yet serve to polarize opinion in a society having common attributes. Nineteenth-century Maltese society is probably a unique example of the case in which trilingualism became a battleground in the successful quest for a national identity. Maltese nationalism rotated in time on this triple paradox: the championing of Italian as a non-Maltese national language; the active promotion of the Maltese vernacular by the British Imperial power as a means of expunging Italian; and the gradual emergence of Maltese as a national tongue and as the prime expression of anti-British sentiments.⁸¹

Savona, for one, had agreed with British advisers that English and other subjects should be taught through Maltese, which was to be studied by means of a newly-composed 'phonetic alphabet',

during the first years at school, according to Franz Ahn's method.⁸² Dr Ahn's method of learning foreign languages through the local vernacular, first launched in 1848, had become popular in Britain at the time when Savona was following a schoolmaster's course at the Royal Military Asylum.⁸³ Savona also knew from his teaching experience how the use of Maltese could facilitate instruction, strengthening the motivation to learn. 'At a word of Maltese', observed the Chief Secretary Hely-Hutchinson, 'the child's countenance brightens – intelligence leaps into the eyes, the mind is awakened and prepares itself to receive and to develop the ideas which are conveyed to it from the mind of the teacher.'⁸⁴

The pro-British party regarded Italian as the 'great impediment to education', holding 'without the possibility of cavil' that the language of the Maltese was 'Arabic and not Italian'; instruction in Maltese and English was necessary for the 'humbler classes', but Italian was unnecessary. They advocated reforms which would benefit 'the community in general, although prejudicial to the interests of a class': unless the language which promised to be 'the prevailing tongue of civilization' was rendered general, and the people educated, Malta would remain backward. Moreover, the authorities 'at home' would never confer upon the Maltese the exercise of political liberty and the benefits of free institutions, until they would have been so educated.⁸⁵ They said that the interests of the professional classes and landed proprietors were at stake and they had naturally 'bandied together to oppose all the measures of reform proposed and to keep the people in ignorance and darkness':

They are actuated by the very same narrow-minded motives which impelled the English Conservatives of 1830 to oppose the abolition of the corn tax and the extension of popular education.⁸⁶

As it is normally the more educated or imperilled section of any community – that section which is sufficiently self-conscious and free to seek to protect itself against threats to its cultural or economic existence – which assumes the leading role in the anticolonial movement, and thus in the moulding of national consciousness, it was mostly established middle-class families in cities, especially Valletta and Senglea, who were the vanguard of the PN:

Leaders are actuated by the desire to benefit their fellows, as well as by the desire to place themselves in a position of dominance; possessiveness and self-sacrifice are combined.⁸⁷

Politicians have made good use of arrogating to language 'the function of the "badge" or "uniform" of a nation',⁸⁸ but language lays a kind of foundation for the more complex structures which correspond to the different aspects of culture.⁸⁹ Language loyalty, like nationalism, can be an *idée forcée*

which fills man's brain and heart with new thoughts and sentiments and drives him to translate his consciousness into deeds of organized action. In response to an impending language shift, it produces an attempt at preserving the threatened language; as a reaction to interference, it makes the standardized version of the language a symbol and cause.⁹⁰

Government, retorted the pro-Italians, was for the benefit of those being governed not for that of those governing them. If Britain governed Malta, she did so 'for ourselves, not for herself'; therefore it was incorrect to say English was 'the language of our Government'. 'If those who administer our Government are unable to communicate with us, the worse for them. They should learn our language; we do not have to learn theirs.'⁹¹ The Maltese preferred to be left free to see for themselves what was or was not to their greater advantage; they did not like being spoiled by those who so incessantly strove to promote their welfare: 'We are a free people who have not been conquered.'⁹² Such statements were a claim to self-government, if not a thinly-veiled presumption of independence: Hely-Hutchinson described this speech by Zaccaria Roncali as 'a plea for self-government in its widest sense'.⁹³

A similarly nationalist reasoning was applied, under a more liberal guise, but with less justification, with regard to the suggested elevation of Maltese into a 'purified' language of study. The local patois was considered only an accident of birth, the mark of insularity, if not of inferiority, and anyway useless for educational purposes; it had always been used informally to make meanings intelligible to schoolchildren. But it was held that to invent a grammar and alphabet, thus introducing a third language of study, was motivated by the principle, as enunciated by Mizzi, *inclusio unius est exclusio alterius*.⁹⁴ Maltese was

being made into a language, said Dr Agostino Naudi, 'out of hatred of the Italian language'.⁹⁵ What would children, who learned Maltese as they were nursed, read in it except some recipe on how to cook pumpkins and egg-plants, observed Roncali. In Wales, although Welsh had a literature by means of which children could improve themselves and develop their intelligence, English was taught orally through Welsh, without Welsh itself being studied.⁹⁶ The same English Government that had done so much to eradicate Gaelic from Ireland, noted Mizzi, now wanted the Maltese to study their native dialect.⁹⁷ The idea of having the euphonistic system in England (as intended by George Bernard Shaw) had failed, argued Capt. Kirton; it involved 'the destruction' of English.⁹⁸ Comparing the study of Maltese to that of Latin and Greek,⁹⁹ Mizzi said there was nothing wrong in cultivating Maltese for philosophical purposes; this could serve as a key to other ancient languages.¹⁰⁰ But 'to put Arabic words instead of the Italian words we use', he said, 'is not to purify Maltese but to create a new language'; the aim of this purification was to destroy or banish Italian 'which has been amongst us since its birth'.¹⁰¹ And besides, even if Maltese were 'the most beautiful of all languages, it would still be a mishap for us not to be able to communicate with any other people'.¹⁰²

The 'Arabization' of Maltese was also opposed because the Arabic heritage had no place in the nationalist Christian-European prototype: the Maltese saw themselves as south Europeans not as North Africans; even those who settled in North African countries, such as Tunisia, held steadfastly to their language and still more to their religion as characteristics of Maltese nationality and hence of separateness from the Arab Muslim native.¹⁰³ Even Savona's party, while holding rightly that Maltese was derived from Arabic, maintained that the Maltese people were Phoenician in origin. Invoking Napoleon's saying that if you scratched a Russian you found the Cossack, the author of a pro-Government *Xirka Xemia* (Semitic Society) pamphlet in 1885 affirmed that if you scratched a Maltese you found the Phoenician.¹⁰⁴ The period of Arab rule over Malta from the ninth to the twelfth century was commonly held to have been oppressive; in deriding the use of Arabic sources the 'pro-Italians' could rely on popular feelings about religion and race.

Maltese, said Enrico Mizzi, 'received its last form from the Saracen domination, so that Maltese is the monument of our infamy and slavery'; it was 'for the sake of patriotism' that the study of Maltese should be confined to the libraries.¹⁰⁵ Mizzi went so far as to describe Maltese as 'the curse of the country'.¹⁰⁶

Although the attempt to 'Arabize' on Keenan's instructions was a linguistic fallacy when it exceeded certain limits – a rich Romance superstructure could not be discarded – the philological structuring of Maltese necessitated a recourse of the Arabic roots. Maltese was not to Italian what Afrikaans was to Dutch; nor was it possible, out of an admixture of Italo-Maltese elements to create a 'new' language in a way similar to the creation of a 'Common Norwegian' (*Samnorsk*) out of the mutually comprehensible Danish (*Bokmal*) and old Norse (*Nynorsk*).¹⁰⁷ Sir Ferdinando Inglott, the Collector of Customs, argued that there was nothing strange when a word or root be found wanting

if instead of borrowing it from a *foreign* language, we should take it from the language which has the greatest affinity with our own ... It strikes me as being far from patriotic to hear Maltese persons uttering so contemptuous an opinion of their own language.

Malta's university, added Savona, could not gain distinction in any other branch of knowledge except in oriental languages 'of which we have the basis in our own language'.¹⁰⁸ 'I believe the Maltese language is the greatest blessing the Maltese have inherited from their forefathers; and the Governments are doing their duty in promoting the cultivation of that language', he said.¹⁰⁹ It was hardly convincing to see even the filibustering Hely-Hutchinson almost turn into a *de rigueur* nationalist by singing the praises of Maltese as Malta's language.¹¹⁰

The irony was that the colonial regime and its supporters seemed to be intent on being purely nationalistic, though in fact their chief concern was utilitarian; the Nationalists themselves, allegedly on liberal and patriotic grounds, could never abjure the outstanding ingredient of the standard version of Maltese nationality they upheld – that was Italian. To identify not Maltese but Italian with nationhood was rather a misapplication of the classic nationalist view expressed by Herder, that the

nation remained intact provided it maintained its distinctive linguistic traditions; yet *italianità* expressed the average educated man's feelings, and political leanings, better than the vernacular itself. On the other hand, Savona and Inglott were not exactly the Douglas Hyde and Eoin MacNeill of the Gaelic League. Perhaps the best clue to this persistent pseudo-linguistic tangle may be found in the exchange of insults between Mizzi and Savona with regard to examples of words having an Arabic or Italian derivation. When once Mizzi was explaining how similar Maltese was to Italian he gave as an example, presumably looking at Savona, the words *inti traditur* (you are a traitor), whereupon Savona, in a repartee, gave, as his example, the Arabic words *inti ħmar* (you are a fool); Mizzi insisted that the better example was *traditur*.¹¹¹ Indeed, it appears that Savona and Mizzi conceived a nation differently: Savona pointed to the message 'to the Maltese nation' by the pro-Maltese language scholar M.A. Vassalli, who had regarded native speakers of Maltese as *veri nazionali*;¹¹² Mizzi referred to the proclamation 'to the Maltese nation' made by the Civil Commissioner Sir Charles Cameron in 1801 wherein the Maltese had been promised 'full protection, and the enjoyment of all [their] dearest rights'.¹¹³

The slow acceptance of Maltese as a language worthy of cultivation was an induced process of growing self-awareness as well as a direct consequence of the wish to impart knowledge through the vernacular; in these respects the *Riformisti* were using the right arguments from the wrong side of the fence. The Nationalists, being mostly the products of a special class, construed the nation largely in their own image; they were also the prisoners of a system: they saw the light through iron bars. The laws of sympathy and antipathy were applied to politics: the *Riformisti* were rather like 'the Afrikaners with "English hearts" ', the *Antiriformisti* more like 'the Afrikaners with "Dutch hearts" '; with some notable exceptions, the 'Afrikaners with "Afrikaans hearts" ' were still in the making.¹¹⁴

Apart from a handful of scholars, few public figures had upheld the value and the need of Maltese for its own sake in a national context. One of the first publicists to do so – a classic nationalist, in this respect – was Manwel Dimech. A self-made individual and a convert from crime, for half-a-century after his death

Dimech was the unsung victim of clericalism, colonialism, and the surreptitious censures of the closed community. He had begun to muster a working-class following before the First World War, but his social, religious, and political views were, like his outlook on language, considered revolutionary or undesirable. The Church excommunicated him, the faithful stoned him, and the British exiled him to Egypt, where he died. Dimech wrote:

A nation and a language are one and the same thing; if one is lost so will the other be lost. Let us therefore cultivate our language, let us not insult it by using some other language instead of it, because when we insult the language we insult the nation, and when we insult the nation, we insult ourselves.¹¹⁵

Opposed to Strickland, the pro-British leader, Dimech respected the elder Mizzi but distanced himself from any irredentist leaning.¹¹⁶ Ironically, a bitter rival of his was Ġużè Muscat Azzopardi, onetime editor of the Church's paper *Il-Habib*.¹¹⁷ But Muscat Azzopardi was a supporter and active promoter of Maltese – he has been described as the father of Maltese literature.¹¹⁸ Thus, to be a pro-Italian nationalist did not necessarily imply any opposition to the Maltese language *per se*. Gradually it became quite acceptable for authors to publish in Maltese and Italian, or in Maltese and English. The belief in *Malta Maltija* (Maltese Malta) was taking root.

The British presence both restrained and assisted the slow crystalization of a national identity and of a consciousness of it. In terms of nationality, Malta was in a position somewhat comparable in the Empire to Quebec, Ireland, or South Africa and, in Europe, to Poland, Belgium, or other smaller nationalities struggling to survive against superior odds. Economically and strategically, Malta's colonial identity was that of an outpost of Empire: it could be seen alongside Gibraltar and Cyprus in the Mediterranean, Singapore and Hong Kong in the Far East.

In 1964 Malta obtained its independence, retaining initially a constitutional monarchy on the Westminster model: there was pluralism in a parliamentary democracy, an independent judiciary, the right to strike, free elections, and protection under the law.¹¹⁹

It was with independence, and the experimental years of freedom that followed on it, that Malta and the Maltese truly

came to life. This realization becomes more telling when one sees the difference in mentality between 'pre-' and 'post-' independence Maltese, between those who lived through the transition and those who, being overseas, were passed by. I have expressed it thus:

In the history of Maltese culture, Independence is a watershed. Malteseness came of age. Artistic endeavour flourished: subjects and styles changed. Composers orchestrated melody complementing the traditional singing. Painters experimented with collages of native flora and fauna. Architects designed modernized versions of rustic dwellings and farmhouses. Literary criticism developed as new poets suddenly emerged. There was a flair of soul-searching, a rediscovering and questioning of past and present – without the need to present a common front against anyone. Malta assumed its place in the international community of nations *sur le pied de l'égalité* (proposing, for example, a Law of the Sea). Union Jacks were no longer stamped on Maltese history books ... Maltese gradually assumed more importance than English as a medium of instruction, as educational institutions increased and improved, with secondary and tertiary education becoming free by 1971. Maltese Theatre (as opposed to farce) started to be taken seriously, as were original TV documentaries and discussion groups. Tourism boomed: hotels, such as Hilton and Sheraton, sprang up; British settlers came; Maltese tourist guides abounded, talking about archaeological remains, bastions, tapestries, aqueducts, auberges, paintings, and the Blue Grotto, in a babble of tongues from German to Russian, with English and Italian the most popular. Traditional Maltese dishes started to be served in restaurants. Incentive schemes saw the opening of many light-industry factories, causing a radical change in the occupational status of women, especially young women. It was an emancipation. So this cultural revolution, spontaneously influencing Maltese nationality and self-pride, transforming identity or at least the appreciation of it, made little or no practical impact on Maltese overseas who simply could not experience it, except perhaps remotely. Colonial Malta's habits of mind, impressions, and norms persisted untouched by the revitalized air of self-discovery and autocriticism, of challenge and opportunity, except in so far as these were influenced one way or the other by the host society itself.

Emigration from Malta reached a bottom low by 1969.

Naturally there could be no sudden or fundamental break with the past. The new state was, after all, an old nation. Moreover, this challenging self-assessment phase, after centuries of subjection to foreign rule, could turn out to have been just a euphoria. It could be nipped in the bud by neo-colonialism, by statism. A democratic political culture was a fragile reed in Malta, in spite of all make-believe to the contrary. And the overseer could be worse than the master. Monolithic

sanction could be restored by a rather more familiar breed, if not by a new invader as before.

But the soul was stirred. Conscientization became possible. Subjection and alienation could not be quite the same again.¹²⁰

NOTES

¹ See H. Frendo, 'Religion and Ethnic Identity in the Maltese Australian Community'.

² See id., 'Cultural Interaction and National Identity: The Maltese Case'.

³ On this and part of what follows, id., *Party Politics in a Fortress Colony* and other related works published by the same author. In this paper, wherever possible, reference will be made to the original sources.

⁴ See *Problems of Parliamentary Government in Colonies*, 41-4.

⁵ R. Pinon, *L'Empire de la Méditerranée*, 413.

⁶ 'Report of the Royal Commission on the Finances, Economic Position and Judicial Procedure of Malta', 5, 22.

⁷ F. Balbi di Correggio, *Diario dell'Assedio di Malta*.

⁸ A.T. Luttrell (ed.), *Medieval Malta*.

⁹ C.E. Engel, *L'Ordre de Malte en la Méditerranée*; Q. Hughes, *The Building of Malta*.

¹⁰ 'It is mainly Arabic with a groundwork of Punic', the folklorist Manwel Magri told G.M. Hopkins in 1874. 'Newspapers are published in it in European script ...': *The Journals and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, 259.

¹¹ For example, 'Statement showing Language in which judgements in the Courts were delivered between 1530 and 1814', CO 158/341, enc. Grenfell to Chamberlain 24 March 1902.

¹² *Census of Malta, Gozo and Comino*; PP, (1878-9), li, 387.

¹³ PP, 1878-iv-12.

¹⁴ G.P. Badger, *Description of Malta and Gozo*, 98.

¹⁵ B.L. Rigby, *The Malta Railway*, 6.

¹⁶ CG, 23 February 1910, col. 306.

¹⁷ CO 158/264/8247, enc. Borton to Derby, 10 May 1883.

¹⁸ G. Peto, *Malta and Cyprus*, 99. On Strickland's pro-British party and his compact with the Malta Labour Party in 1927, when he became prime minister, *infra*.

¹⁹ On all this, Frendo, *Party Politics*, *passim*.

²⁰ Id., 'Language and Nationality in an Island Colony: Malta', 31.

²¹ Id., 'Language of a Colony: A Study of the Maltese Language Question', 42, and *passim*.

²² For an elaboration and evaluation of such traits and their repercussions in post-colonial Malta, id., 'Messages from Mintoff's Malta: The Grenada of the Mediterranean', 18-33; id., 'Freedom After Independence: A Western European or a Third World Model for the Maltese Islands?'

²³ See Mr. W. Eton's *Vindication of his Public Conduct in Malta*.

²⁴ A. Mifsud, *L'Origine della Sovranità Inglese su Malta*.

²⁵ J.J. Cremona, *An Outline of the Constitutional Development of Malta*.

²⁶ 'Dichiarazione dei Diritti degli Abitanti delle Isole Malta e Gozo', 15 June 1802, 6-7.

²⁷ 'Report of the Commissioners of Inquiry (August 1812)', 130.

²⁸ *Appeals of the Nobility and People of Malta*, 79-80.

²⁹ Cornwall-Lewis to his father, 25 October 1836, in G. F. Lewis (ed.), *Letters of the Rt. Hon. G. Cornwall-Lewis Bart. to Various Friends*. According to Cornwall-Lewis, Mitrovich was 'Malta agent' mainly because he knew English (Cornwall-Lewis to Glenelg, 14 September 1838).

³⁰ Mitrovich to Stanley, 22 May 1859; G. Mitrovich, *Council of Government in Malta*.

³¹ B. Fiorentini, *Malta rifugio di esuli*.

³² For example, *Lettera di Giuseppe Mazzini Ai Signori Tocqueville e Falloux*.

³³ G. Mangion, *Governo inglese, risorgimento italiano ed opinione pubblica a Malta 1848-51*, 51.

³⁴ V. Laurenza, 'Garibaldi a Malta', 143-61.

³⁵ *Hansard*, 1st ser., xxxvi, 1803, 1484.

³⁶ *Hansard*, 1st ser., xxxvi, 1803, 1427.

³⁷ *Rapport fai par Daru*, 23-4.

³⁸ *Hansard*, 3rd ser., ccxxxii, 1877, 388.

³⁹ Chamberlain to Fremantle, 10 January 1896; H.I. Lee, *Malta 1813-1914*, 218. See also H. Frendo, 'Self Identity in the "British" Mediterranean: Gibraltar, Malta, Cyprus'.

⁴⁰ R.J. Gavin, *Aden under British Rule*, 177.

⁴¹ Ball to Dundas, 6 March 1801; F. Mizzi and S. Cachia Zammit, *A Statement of Claims and Grievances of the Maltese*, appendix II.

⁴² CG, 13 May 1885, cols. 941-2.

⁴³ H. V. Wiseman, *The Cabinet in the Commonwealth*, 122.

⁴⁴ CG, 14 December 1881, col. 61.

⁴⁵ CO 158/249/9674, Wingfield minute on Borton to Hicks-Beach, 24 July 1878.

⁴⁶ Report of the Malta Royal Commission 1931, 5-6, 9.

⁴⁷ F.W. Rowsell, 'Malta', 262.

⁴⁸ CO 158/265, Hely-Hutchinson to Anderson, 27 October 1883.

⁴⁹ See Frendo, *Party Politics*, 19.

⁵⁰ S. Savona, *The Necessity of Educating the People*.

⁵¹ Id., *Report on the Educational Institutions of Malta and Gozo*, 6, 22.

⁵² CG, 21 May 1877, xl, col. 418.

⁵³ See Frendo, *Party Politics*, esp. 48, 98-9, 167.

⁵⁴ CG, 6 April 1899, ii, col. 24-5.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 4 December 1895, viii, col. 460.

⁵⁶ G. Strickland, *Malta and the Phoenicians*.

⁵⁷ CO 158/338/45108, Strickland's comment on F. Mizzi's speech, enc. Grenfell to Chamberlain, 16 December 1902.

⁵⁸ CO 159/338/43061, Strickland's letter to Colonial Office, 30 November 1901.

⁵⁹ See *supra*, n. 57.

⁶⁰ CO 158/359/27300, Strickland to Crewe, 23 July 1908.

⁶¹ *Hansard*, 4th ser., ci, 1902, cols. 1187-8, 1196, 1205.

⁶² CO 883/5.6125, enc. 3, 109A.

⁶³ See D. Austin, *Malta and the End of Empire*.

⁶⁴ See R. Bondin, *Deportation, 1942*.

⁶⁵ *Infra*.

⁶⁶ On this, Frendo, *Party Politics*, 163-5.

⁶⁷ See 'Appello agli Elettori', 18 January 1887.

⁶⁸ CO 158/345//35170, enc. 1, Kelly to Chamberlain, 15 September 1903.

⁶⁹ CG, 19 April 1899, v, col. 207. 212

- ⁷⁰ CO 158/336/18207, enc. 21 May 1901.
- ⁷¹ Mizzi and Cachia Zammit, *A Statement of Claims and Grievances*.
- ⁷² CO 158/398, enc. 2, Methuen to Long, 3 September 1917.
- ⁷³ Austin, 31.
- ⁷⁴ E. Mizzi, *Per il VIII Settembre, 1565*.
- ⁷⁵ Id., *Malta Italiana*, 8.
- ⁷⁶ Ibid., 4, 6, 8.
- ⁷⁷ Ibid., 6, col. ii.
- ⁷⁸ Ibid., 8, col. ii.
- ⁷⁹ See H. Frendo, 'Borg Olivier's Legacy', 59-65.
- ⁸⁰ See D. Marshall, *History of the Maltese Language in Local Education*.
- ⁸¹ H. Frendo, 'Language and Nationality', 22.
- ⁸² Savona, *Report on the Educational Institutions*, 8, para. 30.
- ⁸³ See F. Ahn, *Handbuch de englischen Umgangs-sprache, mit deutscher und franzosischer Vebersetzung*, and subsequent multilingual writings.
- ⁸⁴ CG, 9 January 1884, 8.229.
- ⁸⁵ *Malta Standard*, 21 August 1880.
- ⁸⁶ Ibid., 6 October 1880. The Corn Laws were repealed by the Conservatives under Sir Robert Peel in 1846.
- ⁸⁷ *Nationalism. A Report by a Study Group of the Royal Institute of International Affairs*, xvii.
- ⁸⁸ S. Rundle, *Language as a Social and Political Factor in Europe*, 56.
- ⁸⁹ C. Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, 68-9.
- ⁹⁰ H. Kohn, *The idea of Nationalism*, 19; U. Wenreich, *Languages in Contact*, 99.
- ⁹¹ CG, 11 January 1884, 9.248-249.
- ⁹² Ibid., cols. 252-3.
- ⁹³ CO 158/267, enc. Borton to Derby, 21 January 1884.
- ⁹⁴ CG., 11 January 1884, 9.285, 278.
- ⁹⁵ Ibid., col. 260.
- ⁹⁶ Ibid., 18 March 1885, 21.651-652. Since the Act of Union made English the official language in Wales, Welshmen were debarred from taking office unless they were bilingual; only in 1943 did Welsh become admissible in the courts. E.G. Bowen (ed.), *Wales*, 250.
- ⁹⁷ CG, 30 March 1885, 23.746. Gaelic, spoken generally in 1600, subsequently declined through Anglicization; the famine killed it in the 1840s as many Gaels emigrated or died.
- ⁹⁸ Ibid., 26 March 1885, 22.673.
- ⁹⁹ Ibid., 21 November 1883, 4.140.
- ¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 11 January 1884, 9.289.
- ¹⁰¹ Ibid., 30 March 1881, 11.345-359.
- ¹⁰² Ibid., 13 May 1885, 29.958-959.
- ¹⁰³ C. Sammut, 'La Minorité Maltaise de Tunisie: Ethnie Arab ou Européenne?'
- ¹⁰⁴ Anon, *Qari għall-Maltin, maħruġ mix-Xirka Xemia*, 13.
- ¹⁰⁵ CG, 11 January 1884, 9.289.
- ¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 13 May 1885, 29.958-959.
- ¹⁰⁷ See R.G. Popperwell, *Norway*, ch. 3.
- ¹⁰⁸ CG, 30 March 1881, 11.345-359.
- ¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 13 May 1885, 29.964, 967.
- ¹¹⁰ Ibid., 9 January 1884, 9.228.
- ¹¹¹ Ibid., 27 January 1886, 45.190.
- ¹¹² Ibid., 21 November 1883, 4.137.
- ¹¹³ Ibid., 30 March 1885, 23.748.

¹¹⁴ F.A. van Jaarsveld, *The Awakening of Afrikaner Nationalism*, 112.

¹¹⁵ H. Frendo, 'Language and Nationality', 26; but id., *Lejn Tnissil ta' Nazzjon*; id., *Birth Pangs of a Nation*; and id., *Story of a Book*.

¹¹⁶ Id., 'Il-"Ktajjen" tal-Kolonjalizmu', 7; id., *Ir-Rieda għall-Ħelsien*, 159; id., *The Popular Movement for a New Beginning*; id., *Party Politics*, 149-151.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 151; id., *Birth Pangs of a Nation*, 183, showing Dimech's flysheet 'A Cui Mi Rivolgerò? Cui Chiamerò in mio Soccorso?'

¹¹⁸ Id., *Party Politics*, 191, 202-4.

¹¹⁹ See, however, id., *The Popular Movement*; *supra*, n. 22; and Frendo, *Party Politics*, 211-215.

¹²⁰ Id., 'Maltese Settlement', part 3. See also Frendo's series of articles 'Lejn Storjografija Post-Kolonjali'.