



The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History

ISSN: 0308-6534 (Print) 1743-9329 (Online) Journal homepage: <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/fich20>

Integration and Disintegration: The Attempted Incorporation of Malta into the United Kingdom in the 1950s

Simon C. Smith

To cite this article: Simon C. Smith (2007) Integration and Disintegration: The Attempted Incorporation of Malta into the United Kingdom in the 1950s, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 35:1, 49-71, DOI: [10.1080/03086530601143396](https://doi.org/10.1080/03086530601143396)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03086530601143396>



Published online: 01 Mar 2007.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 146



View related articles [↗](#)



Citing articles: 2 View citing articles [↗](#)

Full Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at
<http://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?journalCode=fich20>

Integration and Disintegration: The Attempted Incorporation of Malta into the United Kingdom in the 1950s

Simon C. Smith

Existing interpretations stress that challenges to British interests elsewhere in the Mediterranean were central to Britain's initial support for Maltese incorporation into the United Kingdom. Through a close examination of official British records, this article demonstrates, by contrast, that Britain saw integration primarily as a means of solving the complex constitutional and financial problems which had impeded smooth Anglo-Maltese relations since the restoration of responsible government in 1947. Equally, the waning of British enthusiasm for integration can be traced to concerns about the costs of the scheme, especially in the face of Maltese insistence on 'economic equivalence', rather than to any downgrading of Malta's importance in the wake of the 1956 Suez debacle. The Maltese premier Dom Mintoff's insistence on equivalence as the price of integration and Britain's equal determination to resist such claims provide the key to explaining the scheme's demise. Ultimately, Malta followed a more conventional path to independence within the Commonwealth by September 1964.

The attempted integration of the island colony of Malta into the United Kingdom in the 1950s is noteworthy on account of its uniqueness in the history of British decolonisation. Although a number of other colonies were considered for incorporation into the United Kingdom – Gibraltar and the smaller Caribbean islands for instance – no other scheme of integration was pursued so systematically, or came so close to succeeding. While comparable French island colonies had received representation in Paris as overseas *départements* from 1946,¹ no similar experiment was attempted by Britain, which favoured exporting its constitutional practices rather than integrating the colonial periphery with the imperial metropole. The reasons for Britain's departure in the case of Malta from its established approach to the problems of constitution-making in the colonies are much debated. By contrast with interpretations which suggest that challenges to Britain's position elsewhere in the Mediterranean

Correspondence to: Dr Simon C. Smith, Department of History, University of Hull, Hull, HU6 7RX, UK. Email: S.C.Smith@hull.ac.uk

underpinned its initial support for integration, the principal determinant of policy would appear to be imperial pride at Malta's expression of loyalty to the British connection, coupled with acceptance that Maltese dependency on the metropole would preclude a conventional path to full independence. The resort to integration, moreover, was not so much a reflection of changing strategic priorities in favour of Malta, as a recognition on the part of Britain that the constitutional arrangements put in place at the end of the Second World War had failed to create the stability necessary to preserve Britain's continuing defence interests on the island.

Equally, the reasons for initial Maltese backing for integration require reassessment. Rather than representing an effort on the part of the Malta Labour Party to loosen the grip of the Catholic Church through closer association with Protestant Britain, it constituted an attempt not only to raise living standards through the extension of the welfare state to Malta, but also to afford the island protection from any future changes in British defence dispositions in the Mediterranean. Britain's unwillingness to underwrite such a potentially expensive commitment lies at the heart of the ultimate failure of integration and is, indeed, more significant than any propensity on the part of Britain to reassess its overseas responsibilities following the 1956 Suez debacle. Although changes in British defence policy, the origins of which pre-dated the Suez crisis, played an important role in precipitating the collapse of integration, progress towards implementing the scheme had already stalled by the time of the publication of the controversial 1957 Defence White Paper. The demise of integration, culminating in a declaration of a state of emergency and the imposition of direct rule, represented an ignominious end to a scheme which had attracted the support of politicians at the highest levels in both Britain and Malta.

I

The idea of Maltese integration was first broached by Mabel Strickland, editor of the *Times of Malta* and daughter of the former Maltese prime minister, Lord Gerald Strickland. In an editorial of April 1943, she wrote:

This war has shown that Malta is as much a part of Britain as Portsmouth or Croydon. The one tolerable practical solution to Malta's constitutional and economic post-war problems then would be full political unity with Britain... Let Malta be a county of England, as an integral part of the United Kingdom represented in Parliament at Westminster, and enjoying local government; with all the advantages and responsibilities that this would entail.²

Although Strickland retreated from these ideas lest they inflicted damage on Malta's Catholic identity, integration was taken up by her principal political opponent, the Malta Labour Party (MLP) leader, Dom Mintoff. Integration, which made its first appearance in an election manifesto in 1950, became a key aspect of party policy. MLP success at the 1955 general election allowed Mintoff actively to pursue his integrationist ideas.

R. F. Holland seeks to explain the appeal of integration to Mintoff with reference to the Labour leader's antipathy for the Catholic Church in Malta. '[I]t was as a weapon to break the social power of that institution that integration with a Protestant motherland held its real attraction for Mintoff', he argues.³ Although Dennis Austin recognises the economic draw of integration, he focuses on Mintoff's wish to cement support among the dockyard workers. Integration with Britain opened the prospect of insulating this core constituency against future reductions in British defence expenditure and offered the prospect of tangible benefits, not least an increase in wages.⁴ Also focusing on the Maltese workers whose livelihood was bound up with the British defence establishment, J. M. Pirotta observes that '[a]ny proposal which appeared not only to guarantee the British connection – but also employment at British rates – was bound to win their support.'⁵ In addition, Austin and Pirotta see Mintoff's sponsorship of integration as a means of removing Malta's colonial status in the context of the island's perceived inability to survive economically as a completely separate entity.⁶ Such pragmatism, coupled with a politician's eye for consolidating his support base, doubtless played a part in Mintoff's thinking. Equally, while he clearly felt enmity towards the Church,⁷ a sentiment which was wholeheartedly reciprocated by the ecclesiastical authorities, his policy derived from a more positive source than simple anti-clericalism. The key determinant in Mintoff's sponsorship of closer association was the prospect of achieving 'economic equivalence' through the extension of the social benefits enjoyed in Britain to Malta.

Commenting on the future status of Malta in April 1954, the secretaries of state for the home department and the colonies, Sir David Maxwell Fyfe and Oliver Lyttelton, observed that Mintoff was 'more concerned with economic realities than with questions of prestige'.⁸ Outlining Mintoff's policy, Maxwell Fyfe and Lyttelton explained that '[h]e advocates some form of closer association with the United Kingdom, and seems prepared to face a diminution in political autonomy, and the application of United Kingdom rates of taxation, provided Malta gets in return United Kingdom social services and rates of pay'. Mintoff was thought to favour a position for Malta similar to that of Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom. Accounting for Mintoff's apparent willingness to accept a reduction in the powers of the Maltese legislative assembly, especially in the sphere of finance, Maxwell Fyfe and Lyttelton remarked: 'It is apparently his view that the practical advantages to the Maltese economy would more than compensate for the derogation from local autonomy.' Assessing the rationale behind Mintoff's plan, moreover, a Colonial Office official recorded that '[h]is proposal of economic integration is a long term one and would be independent in any rise or fall in Malta's strategic values.'⁹ Mintoff's decisive victory in the Maltese general election of February 1955 provided him with a popular mandate to pursue his integrationist scheme.

During preliminary talks in June 1955, Mintoff emphasised that there should be a plan whereby wages and social services in Malta would be 'raised simultaneously over an agreed period'.¹⁰ In formal proposals submitted to the British government, Mintoff made clear that his conception of integration involved not merely the extension of British constitutional norms, including parliamentary representation, to Malta, but

also parity in wages and social services with the United Kingdom.¹¹ While he recognised that this could not be achieved immediately and would require a transitional period, he underlined that the Maltese ‘adhered to the British model of the Welfare State’. Referring to Mintoff’s constitutional proposals, the governor of Malta, Sir Robert Laycock, noted that ‘[t]hey are less interested in high-sounding titles for Maltese officials than in the introduction of a Welfare State on the British pattern into Malta as soon as possible’.¹² Although Mintoff accepted that Britain should receive the product of Maltese direct taxation in return, Laycock remained sceptical, pointing out that incomes in Malta were so low that taxation would be relatively light. Moreover, he expected Maltese families to receive exemptions, as well as substantial benefits in the form of family allowances, on grounds of the number of children. ‘In short’, the governor declared, ‘the proposal for the introduction of British social services into Malta, with the single quid pro quo of the United Kingdom taking Maltese direct taxation, is simply a means of securing a large and continuous flow of United Kingdom funds into Malta.’

Drawing parallels with the French overseas *départements*, Oxford don Kenneth Robinson, who had been asked to comment on Mintoff’s proposals, cautioned that ‘once considerations of status are removed, the essential dynamic in “integration” is pressure for parity of social services and particularly social security benefits’.¹³ In an article published shortly after giving this advice, Robinson argued that, above all, incorporation into France was acceptable to the local leaders of the *départements* because ‘it was assumed that integration would bring about equality of social services with France’.¹⁴ Not surprisingly, the French *départements* came to enjoy vastly higher living standards than their independent neighbours through the transfer of the social welfare system enjoyed by metropolitan France to the periphery. Robert Aldrich and John Connell have gone so far as to record that ‘the economic concessions have been so substantial that, in most respects, any semblance of a self-reliant economic organisation has long since disappeared’.¹⁵ Indeed, the ‘transfer economy’ which has grown up in the *départements* and the *territoires d’outre mer* has come to represent a considerable cost to the French economy.¹⁶ A similar transfusion of funds from the metropole was a key objective for Mintoff.

As deputy prime minister in the government of Paul Boffa (1947–50), Mintoff had pressed for Malta’s participation in the American-sponsored European Recovery Programme, or Marshall Aid, to the point of splitting the MLP on the issue. During the integration negotiations, he was equally intent upon securing external funds for the development of Malta. In talks on the level of British economic assistance for the financial year 1956–57, for instance, he rejected the Colonial Office’s ceiling of £5 million. Appealing directly to the British prime minister, Sir Anthony Eden, Mintoff warned that ‘this unilateral imposition would make the existence of my Government extremely precarious, it would wreck all prospects of Integration, and make impossible government of the Island by democratic methods’.¹⁷ In subsequent talks with Governor Laycock, Mintoff reiterated that a £5 million limit would make further progress towards integration ‘impossible’ since it would involve ‘politically unacceptable consequences, especially unemployment’.¹⁸ While Mintoff agreed to resume negotiations

on the basis of £7.5 million over 18 months, coupled with the provision of a British commission to assess Malta's financial needs, his insistence on 'economic equivalence' with the United Kingdom proved an insuperable barrier to progress.

Referring to Mintoff in early 1956, the colonial administration in Malta recorded: 'He is overwhelmed with a sense of being discriminated against and his most sincere principal objective is to get the Maltese recognised as worth as much in pay, prestige and other standards as the Englishmen.'¹⁹ Although Mintoff had initially favoured 'absolute parity', this was refined to the achievement of equivalence over an unspecified period. In the Maltese legislative assembly, he explained that his conception of future relations between the two countries implied 'a willingness on the part of Britain to provide Malta with the funds and physical means required to reach the average living standards enjoyed in Britain.'²⁰ Towards the end of 1956, the secretary of state for colonies, Alan Lennox-Boyd, retorted: 'the emphasis has been increasingly on the obligations of Her Majesty's Government and decreasingly on the contribution of the Maltese people, and they are now publicly pledged to reject integration unless the principle of equivalence is conceded.'²¹ During further talks in February 1957, Mintoff spelt out his conception of equivalence: the attainment within ten years of comparable health, educational and social services; equivalent wages and salaries of government and imperial employees within the same timeframe; the creation of opportunities for industrial development; and 'the acceptance of financial responsibility by the British Government to deal with the result of any unemployment caused directly by U.K. Government action.'²² 'In other words,' observed Colonial Office minister, Lord Perth, wryly, 'give a blank cheque.'²³ Mintoff later asserted that equivalence in social services and government wages and salaries should be achieved regardless of improvements in productivity.²⁴ Justifying this stance to the British premier, Harold Macmillan, Mintoff contended: 'Once the Maltese people agree to undertake the same tax and other burdens of citizenship, they expect to be given the same social treatment and to share the same social benefits.'²⁵ Britain viewed integration from a markedly different perspective.

In the estimation of R. F. Holland, strategic concerns were paramount in initial British support for integration. Referring to the uncertainties following the loss of the Suez base in 1954 and the terrorist campaign launched against the British presence in Cyprus in the same year, Holland argues that 'the prospect of making Valletta – the finest natural harbour in Southern Europe suitable for military purposes – into a "home" port on a permanent basis held a clear-cut appeal.'²⁶ In a similar vein, Stephen Howe contends that the 'actual or threatened loss of bases in the eastern Mediterranean meant that Malta might become, no longer a connecting link in the British defence system, but its front line.'²⁷ Concern that a rejection of Mintoff's ideas risked turning him towards the radical nationalism of Nasser's Egypt or even adopting the extreme measures of Britain's enemies in Cyprus, adds Howe, was 'a major factor, perhaps the major factor, in Britain's surprising willingness to pursue integration'. Nevertheless, the weight of documentary evidence suggests that Britain saw integration primarily as a means of solving the complex constitutional and financial problems which had impeded smooth Anglo-Maltese relations since the restoration

of responsible government in 1947. If defence interests played a part in British decision-making, it was in this context. Indeed, it was endogenous considerations – the malfunctioning of post-war constitutional arrangements, rather than exogenous ones, challenges to British interests in Egypt and Cyprus – that underpinned Britain's initial support for integration.

II

In line with pre-war arrangements, the 1947 constitution had at its heart a division of powers known as dyarchy. Responsible to an elected legislative assembly, the Maltese cabinet managed local issues while the colonial government continued to hold sway over reserved matters such as defence, civil aviation and nationality. In keeping with its 1921 predecessor, the 1947 constitution represented an attempt to respond to legitimate Maltese demands for self-determination, while at the same time preserving British imperial interests. The suspension, and subsequent annulment, of the 1921 constitution by the early 1930s, nevertheless, hardly provided a promising precedent. Indeed, the difficulties of operating a dyarchical system of government soon re-surfaced.

Within months of the promulgation of the post-war constitution, the newly elected Malta government sought financial assistance towards food subsidies. Drawing constitutional conclusions from this request, the head of the Colonial Office's Mediterranean department, J. S. Bennett, observed that the Maltese were 'asking for something which is incompatible with self-government as hitherto conceived'.²⁸ Predicting the breakdown of the constitution, he added: 'I doubt personally whether Malta can be run as a self-contained economic and financial unit, since its economy depends so much on external factors, and since it is so tiny.' Bennett blamed the Maltese themselves for exacerbating Malta's inherent problems: 'Politically, since the split of the Labour Party in 1949, they have fallen short of their self-governing responsibilities by failing to throw up a strong majority Government capable of getting to grips with the country's finances.'²⁹ Another official predicted: 'The day is not far off when we shall have to consider whether the almost certain financial assistance which Malta will expect of us will not involve some modification of her present constitutional status.'³⁰ For Nationalist Party leader and Maltese prime minister, Dr Giorgio Borg Olivier, Malta's destiny lay in the achievement of dominion status.

The term dominion had been coined in 1907 to reflect the growing political maturity of the colonies of European settlement. By the 1950s dominion status had come to imply full self-government within the Commonwealth. In pursuit of his objective, Borg Olivier requested the transfer of responsibility for Malta from the Colonial Office to the Commonwealth Relations Office.³¹ The secretary of state for colonies, Oliver Lyttelton, rejected the Maltese premier's plea on the grounds that Malta's position as a fortress colony necessarily imposed restrictions on self-government. He added that Malta was neither a sufficiently sizeable territory nor qualified financially or economically to become a fully self-governing member of the Commonwealth.³² Instead, he proposed to transfer Malta from the Colonial Office to the Home Office

which already held jurisdiction over the broadly comparable territories of the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. Ruminating further on Malta's future constitutional development, the secretaries of state for the home department and the colonies also suggested the appointment of a royal commission to examine the workings of existing constitutional arrangements. With this proposal, Maxwell Fyfe and Lyttelton were tacitly recognising the failure of the 1947 constitution to provide a stable basis for the governance and future development of Malta. 'Basically, the trouble is that we have tried to give complete self-government in internal affairs (including finance) to a territory which does not, and probably never will, have a viable economy', they conceded.³³

The Colonial Office itself revealed a growing disenchantment with existing arrangements. Bennett's successor at the Mediterranean department, W. A. Morris, identified 'the gap in the constitution' which arose from the fact that 'some actions of the Imperial Government under the dyarchy require co-operation of the Maltese side, without machinery of enforcement'.³⁴ Morris's immediate superior, Assistant Under-Secretary Sir John Martin, was still more forthright. 'A diarchy', he observed, 'is an uneasy form of government and it can only work if there are good personal relations and a spirit of give and take. The latter is conspicuously absent on the side of the Maltese Ministers, whose methods of dealing with H.M.G. are those of a Levantine carpet-seller'.³⁵ The defeat of Borg Olivier by Mintoff in the Maltese general election of February 1955 provided Britain with the opportunity to put its relationship with Malta on a different footing through support for the new prime minister's integrationist agenda.

Despite concerns about Mintoff's temperament, which prompted one Colonial Office official to describe him as a 'psychological case. . . quite incapable of appreciating a different view',³⁶ he was increasingly perceived as Malta's best hope for providing effective government. While he accepted that Mintoff could be 'difficult, hot-headed and even rude', the secretary of state for colonies, Arthur Creech Jones, insisted: 'I see no reason to despair of turning his undoubted abilities into constructive channels'.³⁷ 'For all his wild and anti-British talk', echoed Sir John Martin, 'I should expect him to be a more effective P.M. than Dr. Borg Olivier'.³⁸ 'Mr. Mintoff, as Prime Minister, would at least get something done', concurred J. S. Bennett.³⁹ Mintoff's vision of Maltese integration into the United Kingdom soon received powerful backing.

Reiterating the widely held view that Malta could aspire neither to independent nationhood nor to membership of the Commonwealth, Alan Lennox-Boyd told the cabinet that 'she must look to some form of closer association with a stronger power'.⁴⁰ If the British government dismissed the idea of integration, he warned, Malta might seek closer association with Italy. 'Such a development would be gravely embarrassing, especially at a time when Cypriots were agitating for union with Greece', he added. In cabinet discussions, there was much support for Lennox-Boyd's position, some form of closer association being accepted as 'inevitable'. Nevertheless, concern was articulated on the issue of Maltese representation at Westminster. In particular, ministers feared that a Maltese lobby might hold the balance of power, especially at times when the respective strengths of the two main parties were

comparable. In order to resolve the many issues raised by integration, the calling of a formal conference, modelled on the round table conferences convened to discuss Indian constitutional development in the inter-war years, was suggested. Shortly after this discussion, the foreign secretary, Harold Macmillan, told Eden that 'at this moment in our history the voluntary and patriotic desire of Malta to join us is something we ought not to repel. Centrifugal forces are very strong at the moment. Let us cherish any centripetal movement that we can find.'⁴¹ The Colonial Office, moreover, emphasised that successful integration held out the prospect that 'political, social and economic problems would in future be dealt with in a new spirit of hopefulness and realism, instead of in the spirit of rather sullen frustration that has been evident before.'⁴² Such pragmatic sentiments were more significant in driving integration forward than any sense of residual debt to Malta on account of its war-time role in opposing the Axis powers.⁴³

The Malta Round Table Conference, which included such luminaries as the former Labour prime minister, Clement Attlee, and the Liberal leader, Clement Davies, convened in September 1955. By the end of the year it had produced its report, the central finding of which was that representation for Malta at Westminster was 'practicable and reasonable.'⁴⁴ In an interview given in retirement, Lennox-Boyd admitted: 'I was getting more and more pro-integrationist, with Malta MP's to be included in Westminster, and this report clinched it.'⁴⁵ During the deliberations themselves, the chairman, the lord chancellor, Sir David Maxwell Fyfe (now Lord Kilmuir), informed Eden that the idea of parliamentary representation was held with 'varying degrees of enthusiasm' by the members of the conference. Explaining why the sceptics were won round, however, Kilmuir divulged that 'they are convinced that none of the alternative proposals for constitutional reform seemed likely to attract majority support in Malta and thus to result in the radical and sustained improvement in Anglo-Maltese relations necessary to ensure our defence interests in the future.'⁴⁶ As a safeguard, the Malta Round Table Conference stipulated that it was for the Maltese people to demonstrate 'clearly and unmistakably' their support for Mintoff's proposals.⁴⁷ With this in mind, a referendum on integration was held in February 1956. Its staging served to heighten tensions between the Catholic Church and the Maltese government.

Seeking to underline his independence from the Church, Mintoff had declined to make the traditional call on the archbishop of Malta on taking office. For his part, Archbishop Michael Gonzi was deeply suspicious of Mintoff. As early as 1945 he expressed concern at the 'growth of Left-Wing extremism on the Island', describing Mintoff as 'really a Communist'.⁴⁸ Five years later, with Mintoff firmly established as leader of the Malta Labour Party, the archbishop once more characterised him as 'an extreme Left Wing Socialist'.⁴⁹ Gonzi's hostility towards Mintoff translated itself into a determination to preserve the influence and prestige of the Church in the face of the secularising tendencies of the MLP government. He was particularly concerned that closer association between Britain and Malta would involve 'an increased seepage of "advanced" and possibly anti-clerical notions into the Maltese'.⁵⁰ 'At this present juncture', admitted Laycock, 'the Archbishop undoubtedly fears and mistrusts

Mr. Mintoff whom he regards as a dangerous atheist and enemy of the Catholic Church.⁵¹ Not surprisingly, he mobilised the Church to oppose the referendum, even publicly calling for its postponement.⁵² Despite the opposition of the Church, Mintoff, with nearly three-quarters of the votes cast in favour of integration, appeared to have achieved the 'clear and unmistakable' endorsement recommended by the report of the Malta Round Table Conference. On closer inspection, however, the result seemed considerably less decisive. Although the percentage voting against was relatively low, the very high abstention rate meant that less than half of the total electorate (44.24 per cent) actually voted in favour of integration.

The inconclusive referendum result clearly did little to assist the achievement of integration. Shortly after the poll, the secretary of state for Scotland, James Stuart, remarked: 'The people of Malta are divided and I am assured that they have not the slightest idea as to what the plan involves.'⁵³ He even threatened to resign over the issue, justifying this position with the comment: 'I cannot force myself to believe that anyone has any right to wield powers without responsibility – which is what we seem to be in danger of offering the Maltese.' The cabinet colonial policy committee, moreover, was informed of a growing feeling in the Conservative Party against the integration proposals, a development which had been fed by the unflattering report produced by Tory MPs who had been invited by the Maltese government to observe the conduct of the referendum.⁵⁴ Referring to Eden's demeanour following the referendum on Maltese integration, the leader of the Opposition, Hugh Gaitskell, recorded: 'He seemed to be very nervous about the Back Benchers and to be by no means sure of his own mind in these matters.'⁵⁵ Lennox-Boyd was also reported by Gaitskell to be 'awfully cautious and, again, frightened of the Back Benchers'. Although concerns were clearly growing in Conservative ranks, reservations about integration can be identified from the outset.

Assessing the merits and demerits of integration in April 1954, the secretaries of state for the colonies (Lyttelton) and the home department (Maxwell Fyfe) had commented that 'such a system which has some resemblance to the Union Française⁵⁶ has the inherent defect that the Members elected from these territories soon lose touch and influence with their constituents and have little or nothing to contribute in the day to day life of Parliament at Westminster.'⁵⁷ The two secretaries of state also stressed that it would 'indeed be a farce if on such a subject as commercial television in the United Kingdom, the balance of power, as might well have, rested with Maltese Members.'⁵⁸ Focusing on the transformation in military technology ushered in by the development of thermo-nuclear weapons, J. S. Bennett questioned whether 'a base on a small congested island within easy range of enemy aircraft is not now an anachronism'. Following through the logic of his argument, he remarked: 'if after 150 years the Navy now has little further use for Malta, it would seem an odd moment to choose to link the Island permanently with this country by some form of incorporation.'⁵⁹ The strongest arguments against integration, however, came from the Treasury which fretted over the potential costs of the scheme.

Second Secretary Sir Herbert Brittain underscored Treasury reservations by contrasting the positions of Malta and Northern Ireland. With regard to the latter, he

insisted, 'one is dealing with people of our own standards of living, and, equally important, there is a determination in Northern Ireland to make a substantial contribution to the Imperial Exchequer'.⁶⁰ 'None of these elements is present in the case of Malta', he added, 'and any suggestion that U.K. social services should be extended to Malta would impose a burden on the U.K. Exchequer which seems to be quite unacceptable.' Subsequently, the Treasury estimated the costs of extending British social services and scales of expenditure to Malta at £10 million per annum,⁶¹ which in turn stimulated fears that other colonial territories would seek similarly favourable treatment.⁶²

Concerns about the repercussions of Maltese integration on the wider empire had already been raised by the cabinet secretary, Sir Norman Brook. Concentrating on the constitutional aspects of the scheme, he speculated that once Malta's right to representation at Westminster had been conceded other smaller colonial territories would seek the same status. 'We should then be headed', he complained, 'towards a Parliamentary Assembly representing, not the United Kingdom, but "the United Kingdom and Colonies"'.⁶³ In Brook's opinion, what the Maltese were really seeking was an assurance that their economy would be made viable. In which case, he concluded, 'is there not much to be said for trying to do a deal on "money", which appeals to men of all Parties in Malta and creates no constitutional precedents?'⁶⁴ In an attempt to provide an appropriate status short of integration to those colonial territories deemed incapable of full self-government, the Colonial Office produced the concept of 'statehood'. Territories falling into this category would enjoy self-government in internal affairs while remaining dependent on Britain for defence, foreign relations, security and financial stability.⁶⁵ Despite this constitutional sleight hand on the part of the Colonial Office, the lord chancellor, Lord Kilmuir, remained apprehensive lest the example of a commitment to raise Malta's standards of social services and wages to British levels would encourage other small colonies to press for the same benefits.⁶⁶ Equally, he called attention to the possibility that preferential treatment for Malta might prompt Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales to request greater financial assistance, as well as reviving demands for separate Scottish and Welsh parliaments. In subsequent cabinet discussions,⁶⁷ ministers debated the feasibility of denying Maltese members full voting rights, as well as questioning whether the concession of parliamentary representation necessarily incurred the obligation to raise Maltese wages and social services to British levels. As regards the latter point, the financial secretary to the Treasury, Henry Brooke, strongly opposed any suggestion of according Malta equality in economic standards with those of the United Kingdom.

Eden himself had growing doubts about Mintoff's integration scheme, recalling that 'tensions on the island had their consequences at home, where a number of Government supporters in Parliament showed increasing reluctance to accept Maltese representation at Westminster'.⁶⁸ While Eden resisted the temptation to delay parliamentary discussion of the round table report, the decision was taken to ask the Commons to take note of, rather than formally endorse, its findings. Indeed, Tory misgivings about integration strained the normally good relations between Lennox-Boyd and the Conservative backbench Commonwealth committee.⁶⁹ It was

left to opposition Labour MPs to voice the strongest support for integration when the concept was debated on 26 March 1956.⁷⁰

Aneurin Bevan, former Labour health minister and member of the Malta Round Table Conference, emphasised that it was 'much more congenial to hear of some Colony wishing to set up its home under the paternal roof than to set up house on its own'. Striking a pragmatic note, Bevan told fellow MPs that 'we are not merely asking ourselves whether we could agree to a novel constitutional development, but if we rejected it what sort of Government. . .we would be asked to create in Malta in its stead'. Another Labour member of the conference, Richard Crossman, stressed that '[i]f we were to turn down flat the demand for integration, the demand for independence would be far stronger in Malta and not less strong.' He also chided voices of caution on the Conservative benches. 'I am really rather baffled', he condescended,

how those who are interested in the Empire can look so carefully and find so many difficulties about accepting something which will tie. . .the one surviving stronghold of British power in the Mediterranean to this country. These gentlemen on the other side of the House, who lecture us about the requirements of Imperial strategy, are not prepared to stretch a constitutional point in order to save for us the strategic stronghold of Malta.

Crossman also stated that '[t]he reason for the demand for integration is not because the Maltese people feel British. It is because there is no other way for them to achieve the full rights of citizens except as citizens of the United Kingdom.' Earlier in the debate, Roy Jenkins, Labour MP for Birmingham Stechford, had baldly stated: 'We cannot make a Dominion out of a dockyard, and that is what the position would be.' Former secretary of state for colonies in the Attlee government, James Griffiths, raised the chilling prospect that rejection of integration would trigger a campaign for Maltese independence since Britain would have 'blocked up all the roads to anything like political equality with the people of this country'. Two days after the debate, Mintoff formally acknowledged the support of Labour MPs. In a letter to their leader, Hugh Gaitskell, Mintoff gushed: 'The people of Malta in general and in particular the Malta Labour Party will never forget how, in this decisive hour of their history, the British Labour Party under your leadership have valiantly and solidly stood up for them.'⁷¹ The Conservative side of the House, nevertheless, showed itself to be considerably less enthusiastic about integration.⁷²

In a statement appended to the report of the Malta Round Table Conference, Tory MPs Kenneth Pickthorn and John Scott Maclay had already opposed Maltese Members of Parliament on the grounds that '[t]hey will have equality of function with all other Members of Parliament at Westminster, but will not have equality of responsibility: they will have no responsibility to their Maltese constituents for Maltese domestic affairs, including taxation, which will remain with the Maltese Parliament.'⁷³ Referring to the result of the referendum on integration in the parliamentary debate on the round table report, Pickthorn emphasised that 'whatever else may be said about the result, what cannot be said is that it was clear and unmistakable'. He also argued that integration involved the 'risk of Church *versus* State controversy' in Malta. He

was particularly concerned that such a controversy could provoke anti-British sentiment. 'Anything which we should do', he warned, 'which would cause the risk of an anti-British agitation complicating and complicated by the Church versus State controversy is, in my judgement, the very worst thing, short of extreme physical disaster, that could happen to Malta.' Maclay himself asserted that 'because there is no immediate obvious solution to a constitutional problem or any other problem, because one is in a negative position, it does not mean that it is right to jump into a positive position with positive action, if the dangers of that positive action are considerable'. In a similar vein, the Tory MP for Dorset South, Viscount Hinchinbrooke, expressed concern that '[i]f we grant something too soon which does not represent the real feelings of the people of Malta, and they are disappointed with the result, the danger is much greater', while his colleague, William Teeling, dwelt on the possibility of Malta providing a precedent for the other colonial territories. 'If we go on indefinitely in this way,' he insisted, 'we shall reach a stage where a number of representatives from the Colonies might make a serious difference to this country at a General Election.' As regards the domestic repercussions, of integration, Conservative MP for Wimbledon, Cyril Black, fretted that the Malta proposals risked 'bringing those issues of religious controversy back into the politics of this country'.

While there were notable Tories who did come out in favour of integration, for example Walter Elliott who had participated in the Malta Round Table Conference,⁷⁴ the lack of support for integration from the Conservative benches was palpable. As we have seen, a range of arguments were used to justify scepticism towards the policy. One underlying political objection, however, was the fear that it would benefit the Labour Party. As Macmillan had already noted with respect to Maltese parliamentary representation: 'The trouble is that I suppose it will mean 3 Labour seats.'⁷⁵ With parliamentary qualms, not least among his own supporters, in mind, Eden announced that the part of the integration bill relating to Maltese representation in the Commons would be brought into operation 'only if and when the Maltese people have shown their desire for it in a General Election following the dissolution of the Maltese Legislative Assembly.'⁷⁶ While doubts within the Conservative Party unquestionably played a part, the reasons for the demise of integration remain controversial.

III

Stephen Howe suggests that it was the crisis following Egyptian leader Gamal Abdul Nasser's nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company in July 1956 which precipitated the ultimate defeat of integration. The British fleet despatched to Egypt to reverse nationalisation sailed from Malta. The abject failure of the venture, coupled with doubts about whether a similar expedition could be mounted in the future, argues Howe, undermined Malta's perceived importance: 'the Suez venture, swan-song of British imperial assertiveness, was also that of the traditional Mediterranean naval power on which Malta's importance had so largely rested.'⁷⁷ Taking his analysis still further, Howe contends that 'the Suez crisis itself demonstrated that Mintoff's main

bargaining counter, the naval value of Valletta harbour, was one of rapidly diminishing value.' This argument can be qualified in a number of ways. First, in the aftermath of the Suez war, the chiefs of staff reaffirmed Malta's strategic significance, declaring: 'we see no reason to reduce the present importance of Malta to NATO in global war'.⁷⁸ As regards a limited war, by which the chiefs were referring to Malta's more traditional imperial role as a fortress colony, they recorded that 'the importance of Malta has increased, because it is likely to be the only secure base from which operations in the Mediterranean could be mounted'. The following year, the chiefs stated that there had been 'no fundamental change in the strategic role of Malta in peace or war'.⁷⁹ Malta's significance was still sufficiently high for Britain to conclude military and financial agreements with the island on independence in 1964 guaranteeing base rights.⁸⁰ As late as 1972 Britain engaged in protracted negotiations to renew these rights for a further seven years at considerably higher cost.⁸¹ Not until 1979 did the final Royal Navy vessel depart from Valletta harbour. Reference has already been made to the strong doubts about integration which existed from the outset and preceded the Suez episode. Equally, integration, as we shall see, remained under active consideration until March 1958, nearly eighteen months after the failed Suez invasion. If Suez did play a role, it was in fuelling disenchantment with Mintoff as a partner in the integration endeavour. But even in this regard, strong reservations about the Maltese premier were being voiced well in advance of the Suez war.

Even before Mintoff became prime minister, Governor Creasy had remarked: 'I regard him as "dangerous" in the sense that, if he attained power here, he would not hesitate to upset Anglo-Maltese relations if he thought that that would pay him.'⁸² Shortly after Mintoff became prime minister, Lennox-Boyd expressed 'disquiet' about the new premier's attitude towards financial assistance from Britain, commenting: 'we cannot agree to consider piecemeal proposals. . . or to rescue Maltese Ministers from the financial consequences of policies on which they choose to embark on their own responsibility'.⁸³ By the time of financial talks in London in mid-June 1956 the colonial secretary's attitude towards Mintoff had hardened still further: 'I am getting rather tired of his methods of doing business, particularly his fondness for holding a pistol at Her Majesty's Government's head. I think we must try to teach him a lesson on this issue of future financial aid, even at the risk of precipitating a major political crisis.'⁸⁴ By the end of the month, Lennox-Boyd provided a devastating critique:

I think it is not unfair to say [he told Eden] that the main attraction to us of integration, on the terms proposed by the Round Table Conference, was that it would provide the essential basis of co-operation between us and the Maltese Government and thus avoid the endless frictions and frustrations of our past dealings with Maltese affairs. I have become convinced in these negotiations that Mr. Mintoff is either unwilling to make or incapable of making his contribution to that co-operative endeavour. He shows no inclination to compromise on any issue; and without a spirit of compromise, no scheme of closer association can survive.⁸⁵

Recapitulating these arguments in a cabinet memorandum, Lennox-Boyd warned that 'the implementation of integration may give rise to serious friction in the

near future if not in the long run', placing responsibility for this on 'Mr. Mintoff's erratic and intemperate character'.⁸⁶ Similarly, the official overseeing the Colonial Office's Mediterranean department, Assistant Under-Secretary Eugene Melville, remarked: 'I am myself convinced that Integration won't work – or rather that Mr. M[intoff] won't let it work – in a way which is tolerable to us and which preserves our vital interests in Malta.'⁸⁷ Referring to the contemporaneous Suez crisis, Melville warned: 'Mr [M]intoff will see we are on the rack . . . and keep on putting up the price.' An example of Mintoff's, from the British perspective, untrustworthiness was provided in August 1956 when he ordered Rediffusion Malta, the island's broadcasting service, to be suspended. This action, taken after Rediffusion had been asked by the air authorities to broadcast warnings to fishermen to keep out of the path of aircraft evacuating British citizens from Egypt to Malta, was criticised by Governor Laycock for endangering 'such a vital means of communication in a time of potential emergency'.⁸⁸ Later in the month, Mintoff was reported to have told the Malta Labour Party that the time had now come to deliver a 'crushing blow' to the imperial authorities 'as never before'.⁸⁹ Sir Hilton Poynton (deputy under-secretary of state, Colonial Office) was particularly incensed. 'The admission. . .that Mr. Mintoff is deliberately using the Suez crisis and the Cyprus situation for his own ends', he fulminated, 'surely must remove the last possible ground for thinking that our relations with him can be dealt with on a policy of appeasement.'⁹⁰ Earlier in the year, Eden himself was reported to be 'very distressed' at news of Mintoff's invitation of his nemesis, Gamal Abdul Nasser, to Malta, later confiding that 'Mintoff falls steadily in my opinion'.⁹¹ Disillusionment with Mintoff was mirrored by a hardening of opinion against integration, especially its economic aspects.

In a lengthy submission to the cabinet committee on colonial policy of mid-November 1956, Lennox-Boyd weighed up the pros and cons of economic equivalence.⁹² Summarising the objections, he remarked that 'equivalence is almost impossible to define satisfactorily; it is extremely doubtful whether the Maltese productivity could ever rise sufficiently to make equivalence an economic reality; artificial creation of equivalence might lead to Malta's economic depression'. The colonial secretary also warned that

If the principle of equivalence is conceded for Malta, there is a danger that other claims for privileged treatment will arise in Colonial territories which might think integration financially worth while [*sic*], and even in Northern Ireland where U.K. taxation is fully applied direct and where there is a lesser degree of local autonomy than proposed for Malta.

Chancellor of the Exchequer Harold Macmillan concurred with Lennox-Boyd's arguments, impressing upon his colleagues how 'extremely undesirable it would be to associate H.M.G. with the concept of equivalence'.⁹³ In Macmillan's estimation, acceptance of equivalence would lead to 'endless friction', would 'constitute a drain on our limited resources', and would 'prejudice any reasonable chance of development in Malta itself'. He also called attention to 'how very favourably' Malta was treated in

relation to other colonial territories. To underline his point, he noted that Britain's aid to Malta stood at £17.7 per head of population, compared with an average figure of £0.45 for all colonies. Referring to Mintoff's public commitment to equivalence, Macmillan postulated: 'I think it is fair to point out that such a unilateral declaration on his part is a far from happy augury for integration, since it is clearly an attempt to force us into accepting integration on his own terms, regardless of the consequences to our own – and indeed the Maltese – economy.' Macmillan's successor, Peter Thorneycroft, was equally sceptical about economic equivalence, declaring that it would be 'bound to lead to continued heavy demands upon the Exchequer' which would only increase if Malta's value as a naval base declined.⁹⁴ Thorneycroft advised, therefore, that it would be preferable 'not to commit ourselves to more than a general undertaking to seek to raise the standard of living in Malta'.

Shortly after becoming prime minister in early 1957 Macmillan reviewed the whole question of economic equivalence, arguing that the Maltese 'ought to have the right in principle to belong to the United Kingdom social structure with contributions appropriate to their wage and salary basis, and correspondingly reduced benefits'.⁹⁵ He added the further caveat that 'this would also entail that their taxation system should be comparable to ours as is the Northern Ireland system, and that they should bear Imperial taxes as does Northern Ireland'. Clarifying his position still further at a specially convened meeting of ministers at 10 Downing Street, Macmillan considered that 'the United Kingdom and Malta were not at present comparable and that full economic integration was, therefore, at present impracticable'.⁹⁶ Relaying the impasse which had been reached in discussions with Mintoff on the interpretation of equivalence, Lennox-Boyd informed Governor Laycock that 'we may have finally reached real breaking point over whole integration plan on this single issue'.⁹⁷ The Commonwealth Relations Office, moreover, reported that Mintoff's insistence on equivalence in wages and social services, regardless of improvements in productivity, was unacceptable since it amounted to 'presenting Malta with a blank cheque against United Kingdom Exchequer'.⁹⁸ Mintoff, by contrast, refused to countenance the permanent constitutional integration of Malta in the absence of an assurance that the island would achieve economic parity with the United Kingdom within a specified timeframe.⁹⁹ By early 1957 it was clear that the policy of integration had stalled. Controversy over changes in Britain's defence policy expedited its collapse.

The 1957 defence white paper, the origins of which have been traced to reviews set in train three years earlier,¹⁰⁰ heralded a greater reliance on nuclear deterrence and concomitant reductions in conventional forces. Such a fundamental change in British policy inevitably had repercussions for Malta's defence economy. As the Maltese deputy prime minister, Ellul Mercer, told Minister of Defence Duncan Sandys, 'whereas the British economy was not based on defence, in Malta reductions in defence expenditure attacked the very foundations of the Island's whole economy'.¹⁰¹ Lennox-Boyd himself recognised that 'Malta's livelihood... depends in a unique way on the dockyard, and if this is to be closed or substantially run down, Malta faces economic ruin, and could not sustain anything approaching its present population of 315, 000'.¹⁰² For Mintoff, the dockyard was not merely an economic

issue, but also a political one since its 12,000 workers represented his principal support base. Seeking to stifle criticism by the Admiralty section of the General Workers' Union of his handling of the dockyard crisis, as well as put pressure on the British, Mintoff offered his resignation in December 1957.¹⁰³ Increasing the stakes still further, Mintoff introduced a motion in Malta's legislative assembly which declared that the Maltese people were 'no longer bound by agreements and obligations, and by those so far assumed towards their allies – until the British Government gives a guarantee that the number of their employees in Malta will not diminish before there is alternative employment for those discharged'.¹⁰⁴ Justifying this drastic action, Mintoff dwelt on Britain's alleged failure to honour a commitment made in July 1955 to avoid unemployment, diversify the economy and raise Maltese standards of living. He explained the importance which his government placed on the dockyard issue on the grounds that it was a 'matter of the daily bread of the people'. The 'break with Britain' motion, as it became known, had profound repercussions on Anglo-Maltese relations in general, and the integration scheme in particular.

Towards the beginning of 1958 Mintoff expressly told the commander-in-chief for the Mediterranean, Sir Charles Lambe, that as regards integration he had 'lost faith in the British Government's intentions' and that this left 'only the alternative of "Independence"'.¹⁰⁵ On the eve of Anglo-Maltese talks in London, the first lord of the Admiralty, Lord Selkirk, observed that 'the last two or three months have virtually killed integration dead. Even Alan Lennox-Boyd is tired of haggling'.¹⁰⁶ In his report to the Commons on the March discussions, the colonial secretary averred: 'Overshadowing the whole of the negotiations was the resolution... of 30th December which Mr Mintoff showed no disposition to withdraw'.¹⁰⁷ During the talks themselves,¹⁰⁸ the colonial secretary had made direct reference to the 'break with Britain' motion, telling Mintoff that it was 'completely unrealistic to imagine H.M.G. in the U.K. could do anything to put integration into effect while the resolution stood'. Lord Perth, moreover, stressed the 'grave damage which had been done in this country by the passage of the resolution and the way in which it was done'. Mintoff remained unrepentant. In response to Lennox-Boyd's contention that, owing to the resolution, the support he had garnered for integration had 'disappeared', the Maltese premier snapped: 'if integration was moribund in the U.K. it was dead in Malta'.

Lennox-Boyd's forthrightness was no mere negotiating tactic. In cabinet, ministers recognised that the government's supporters were 'deeply divided on the question of Maltese integration', and that legislation for the purpose 'could only be enacted with the support of the Opposition'.¹⁰⁹ Such an undesirable political situation was foreclosed at the beginning of April 1958 by Mintoff's denunciation of integration and announcement of his intention to seek independence. This had been prefigured in Lennox-Boyd's remark on the break-up of the March talks that 'it is quite on the cards that he will now plan an anti-British campaign'.¹¹⁰

Announcing on 21 April his government's intention to resign, Mintoff declared: 'To earn the respect of other nations, the Maltese people must show that they are prepared to fight the battle for their rights with more vigour and greater sacrifices and

determination than they have shown in the past when fighting other people's battles.¹¹¹ This clarion call sparked demonstrations which the police struggled to contain. Matters came to a head on 23 April when Mintoff, who had agreed to continue in office on a caretaker basis, ordered the withdrawal of mounted police, the cessation of baton charges against demonstrators and the suspension of a number of senior officers. Governor Laycock immediately countermanded these orders and accepted the resignation of the Maltese government. In response Mintoff organised a 'national day of protest' on 28 April consisting of strikes, the closure of schools and businesses and disruption to the island's communications system. Despite Mintoff's subsequent denials, it is clear that a significant number of the violent acts which followed were pre-planned.¹¹² Amid mounting disorder, and against the background of Borg Olivier's refusal to form an alternative government, Governor Laycock was given permission on 29 April to declare a state of emergency.¹¹³ Over three years of direct rule followed.

When integration was reconsidered as a possible constitutional solution for smaller dependencies in 1962, Malta was used to cautionary effect. Assistant under-secretary of state at the Colonial Office, H. T. Bourdillon, mused: 'if three Members at Westminster adapted themselves and became useful Members of the House of Commons, they would cease to be able to represent the Maltese point of view with conviction.'¹¹⁴ Equally, he continued, 'if they stayed "Malta-minded" and thus adequately represented the Maltese point of view, their usefulness at Westminster would have been confined to the odd one or two hours per year which the House of Commons devotes directly to Maltese affairs.'¹¹⁵ Drawing wider conclusions from these observations, Bourdillon stated: 'The moral of all this is simply that the representation of distant places in the Parliament at Westminster is no more than a front-arrangement for public consumption without any real substance in it.'¹¹⁶ A Colonial Office report produced under the auspices of Permanent Under-Secretary Poynton noted: 'In certain circumstances the idea of integration for Malta might be revived, but there seems no likelihood of this in the immediate future, particularly now that the Nationalist Party, which have never supported integration, are returned to power.'¹¹⁷ Indeed, the victory of Borg Olivier's party at elections in February 1962 under a new interim constitution facilitated the achievement of his long-standing vision of Maltese independence within the Commonwealth. Former Colonial Office minister, Lord Perth's, attempt to revive the concept of integration¹¹⁸ on the eve of the island's achievement of independent status fell on deaf ears.

Drawing on the experience of Malta, a conference called in July 1965 to examine future relations between Britain and the smaller colonies highlighted the complexities of integration, particularly with respect to representation at Westminster and the standardisation of social services and taxation.¹¹⁹ Recalling the controversy which had accompanied Malta's attempted integration into the United Kingdom, the Labour premier, Harold Wilson, rejected this policy as a solution to the problems of the smaller Caribbean islands.¹²⁰ There was also a marked reluctance to countenance integration between Fiji and the United Kingdom when the matter was raised in 1967 by the Fijian chief minister, Ratu Mara. Summing up British objections, the

Commonwealth Office noted: 'if Britain were to agree to integration for one territory on advantageous terms there would almost certainly be similar demands from about ten others'.¹²¹ By the end of the decade the Labour government revealed a distinct lack of enthusiasm for closer association when the matter was raised by Major Peliza, Gibraltar's chief minister and leader of the rock's Integration with Britain Party.¹²²

IV

The attempted incorporation of Malta into the United Kingdom remained unique not only in terms of the degree of British support for the scheme, but also in how close it came to succeeding. Initial British backing for integration stemmed from the failure of the 1947 constitution to create the stability and co-operative environment necessary to preserve Britain's imperial interests. Equally, support for integration reflected long-held British assumptions that Maltese dependency on the metropole ruled out the achievement of full independence. Mintoff, by contrast, saw integration as a means by which to raise the living standards of the Maltese to a British level through the doctrine of 'economic equivalence'. The differing objectives of the two sides towards the integration experiment were central to its ultimate failure. Mintoff's determination to achieve equivalence as the price of integration clashed with the British government's concern to restrict its economic and financial liabilities towards Malta. Increasingly bitter wrangling over the costs of integration poisoned the good will necessary to bring the scheme to fruition. It was Mintoff's 'break with Britain' motion at the end of 1957 which marked the parting of the ways between the two sides. After a period of direct rule, Malta conformed with a wider pattern of British decolonisation, following a conventional path to independence within the Commonwealth by September 1964. In this sense, it was Borg Olivier's conception of Malta's future status which prevailed. The attempted integration of Malta was, after all, an aberration in the history of British decolonisation.

Acknowledgement

This article draws on research undertaken for the Malta volume of the British Documents on the End of Empire Project.

Notes

- [1] The islands in question were Martinique, Guadeloupe, Réunion and French Guiana.
- [2] Pirotta, *Fortress Colony: Volume II*, 25–26.
- [3] Holland, *European Decolonization*, 261.
- [4] Austin, *Malta and the End of Empire*, 31–32.
- [5] Pirotta, *Fortress Colony: Volume II*, 26–27. See also, Pirotta, 'The Attempt to Integrate Malta with the United Kingdom', 80.
- [6] Austin, *Malta and the End of Empire*, 32; Pirotta, *Fortress Colony: Volume II*, 27; Pirotta, 'The Attempt to Integrate Malta with the United Kingdom', 80.

- [7] Boissevain, *Saints and Fireworks*, 13.
- [8] 'Future status of Malta': Cabinet memorandum by Maxwell and Lyttelton, 14 April 1954, CAB 129/67, C(54)141, The National Archives (TNA), Kew.
- [9] Minute by J. A. Sankey (assistant principal), 23 Dec. 1954, CO 926/287, TNA.
- [10] Minutes of a meeting between the UK delegation and the Maltese government delegation, 27 June 1955, OPM 512/1955, National Archives of Malta (NAM).
- [11] 'The Mintoff plan': memorandum by the Colonial Office for the Cabinet (Official) Committee on Malta, 28 July 1955, CAB 134/1296, MC(O)(55)3.
- [12] Letter no 250 from Laycock to Alan Lennox-Boyd, 5 Aug. 1955, PREM 11/1432, f. 31, TNA.
- [13] 'Foreign experiments in the "integration" or "closer association" of overseas dependencies and metropolitan countries': paper by Kenneth Robinson, 12 Aug. 1955, para. 19, CAB 134/1296, MC(O)(55)21.
- [14] Robinson, 'Alternatives to Independence', 245.
- [15] Aldrich and Connell, *France's Overseas Frontier*, 286.
- [16] *Ibid.*, 282. See also Aldrich, *Greater France*, 309.
- [17] Letter from Mintoff to Eden, 21 June 1956, PREM 11/1433, f. 118.
- [18] Telegram no 249 from Laycock to Lennox-Boyd, 25 June 1956, *ibid.*, f. 106.
- [19] 'Brief for His Excellency's visit to London on 23 Feb 1956', Papers of Trafford Smith, box 5, file 4, MSS Brit Emp s. 530, Rhodes House Library, Oxford.
- [20] Financial statement covering the year in the legislative assembly by Mintoff, 5 Nov. 1956, OPM 29/1955.
- [21] 'Malta: economic equivalence': memorandum by Lennox-Boyd for the Cabinet Committee on Colonial Policy, 15 Nov. 1956, CAB 134/1202, CA(56)32.
- [22] Minute from Lord Perth to Harold Macmillan, 22 Feb. 1957, CO 926/692, PM(57)8, no 26, enclosure.
- [23] *Ibid.*
- [24] Telegram no 93 from Lennox-Boyd to Laycock, 29 March 1957, PREM 11/1932.
- [25] Letter from Mintoff to Macmillan, 30 March 1957, *ibid.*
- [26] Holland, *European Decolonization*, 262.
- [27] Howe, 'British Decolonization and Malta's Imperial Role', 352.
- [28] Minute by Bennett, 11 March 1948, CO 158/566/89036/9.
- [29] Minute by Bennett, 22 Aug. 1951, CO 158/586/89036/1.
- [30] Minute by P A Carter (assistant principal, Colonial Office), 23 May 1951, CO 158/567/89036/10/1.
- [31] Minute by Henry Hopkinson, 24 June 1953, CO 926/93, no 8.
- [32] Cabinet memorandum by Lyttelton, 28 July 1953, CAB 129/62, C(53)218.
- [33] 'Future status of Malta': Cabinet memorandum by Maxwell Fyfe and Lyttelton, 14 April 1954, CAB 129/67, C(54)141.
- [34] Minute by Morris, 17 June 1953, CO 926/93.
- [35] Minute by Martin, 18 June 1953, *ibid.*
- [36] Minute by Carter, 21 Nov. 1949, CO 537/4956.
- [37] Letter from Creech Jones to Sir Gerald Creasy, 25 Nov. 1949, *ibid.*, no 49.
- [38] Minute by Martin, 15 Oct. 1952, CO 926/110.
- [39] Minute by Bennett, 15 Oct. 1952, *ibid.*
- [40] Cabinet conclusions, 30 June 1955, CAB 128/29, CM 19(55)10.
- [41] Minute from Macmillan to Eden, 2 July 1955, PREM 11/1432, f. 552.
- [42] 'Advantages of integration': paper by the Colonial Office, 8 Aug. 1955, CAB 134/1296, MC(O)(55)8.
- [43] Responding to the argument that HMG remained indebted to Malta as a result of wartime service, J. S. Bennett had asserted as early as 1948 that 'we cannot go on admitting an unspecified moral obligation for ever'. Minute by Bennett, 11 March 1948, CO 158/566/89036/9.

- [44] *Malta Round Table Conference 1955: Report*, Cmd. 9657, 1955, p. 21, para. 82.
- [45] 'Malta': Lord Boyd interviewed by Sir John Martin, 31 July 1975, Papers of Alan Lennox-Boyd, MSS Eng c 3432, f. 122, Bodleian Library, Oxford.
- [46] Minute from Kilmuir to Eden, 26 Oct. 1955, CAB 134/1295, MC(55)9.
- [47] *Round Table Conference 1955: Report*, Cmd. 9657, 1955, p. 21, para. 80.
- [48] 'Interview with Archbishop of Malta': minute by Sir Arthur Dawe, 11 Sept. 1945, CO 158/558/89786.
- [49] Note by Bennett, 25 Sept. 1950, CO 158/590/89844/22, no 7.
- [50] Letter no 248 from Laycock to Lennox-Boyd, 4 Aug. 1955, FO 371/117998/RV 1781/10, TNA.
- [51] Memorandum by Laycock, [Oct 1955], CO 926/321, no 127, enclosure.
- [52] Minute from Lennox-Boyd to Eden, 9 Feb. 1956, PREM 11/1432, PM(56)11, ff. 26–27.
- [53] Letter from Stuart to Eden, 14 March 1956, PREM 11/1491, ff. 6–7.
- [54] Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet Colonial Policy Committee, 17 Feb. 1956, CAB 134/1201, CA 9(56)1.
- [55] Williams, *Diary of Hugh Gaitskell*, 470.
- [56] Established under the constitution of the Fourth Republic in 1946, the Union Française consisted of metropolitan France and the overseas *départements* and territories, on the one hand, and associated territories and states, on the other. The overseas regions elected members to the French parliament, although not in proportion to their populations. A Union assembly with consultative powers was also set up.
- [57] 'Future status of Malta': Cabinet memorandum by Maxwell Fyfe and Lyttelton, 14 April 1954, CAB 129/67, C(54)141. In an interview given in retirement, Lyttelton (then Lord Chandos) produced a similar line of argument. Recording of an interview given on 27 Feb. 1970 by Lord Chandos, MSS Brit Emp s. 525, Rhodes House Library, Oxford.
- [58] 'Future status of Malta': Cabinet memorandum by Maxwell Fyfe and Lyttelton, 14 April 1954, CAB 129/67, C(54)141.
- [59] Minute by Bennett, 10 March 1955, CO 926/292.
- [60] Letter from Brittain to Sir Thomas Lloyd, 22 Aug. 1955, CO 926/249, no 19.
- [61] 'The costs of applying United Kingdom scales of government civil expenditure to Malta': note by the Economic Section, Treasury, for the Cabinet (Official) Committee on Malta, 6 Aug. 1955, CAB 134/1296, MC(O)(55)12.
- [62] Minute by A. N. Galsworthy, 18 Aug. 1955, CO 926/319.
- [63] Minute from Brook to Eden, 4 July 1955, PREM 11/1432, f. 537.
- [64] *Ibid.*, f. 538.
- [65] 'Smaller colonial territories': memorandum by Lennox-Boyd, 7 Sept. 1955, annex B, CAB 134/1295, MC 2(55)5.
- [66] Cabinet memorandum by Lord Kilmuir, 13 Sept. 1955, CAB 129/77, CP(55)121.
- [67] Cabinet conclusions, 15 Sept. 1955, CAB 128/29, CM 31(55)1.
- [68] Eden, *Full Circle*, 388.
- [69] Murphy, *Alan Lennox-Boyd*, 125.
- [70] *Parliamentary Debates, Commons*, vol. 550, 26 March 1956, cols 1797, 1801, 1824, 1871, 1873, 1868, 1917.
- [71] Letter from Mintoff to Gaitskell, 28 March 1956, OPM 190/1956, no 93.
- [72] *Parliamentary Debates, Commons*, vol. 550, 26 March 1956, cols 1810, 1814, 1903, 1839, 1913.
- [73] *Malta Round Table Conference 1955: Report* Cmd 9657, 1955, p. 27.
- [74] *Parliamentary Debates, Commons*, vol. 550, 26 March 1956, cols 1820–26.
- [75] Catterall, *Macmillan Diaries*, 444.
- [76] *Parliamentary Debates, Commons*, 28 March 1956, vol. 550, cols 2157–58.
- [77] Howe, 'British Decolonization and Malta's Imperial Role', 352.
- [78] 'The strategic importance of Malta': Chiefs of Staff Committee report, 28 June 1957, DEFE 5/76, COS(57)150 annex, TNA.

- [79] 'The strategic importance of Malta': Chiefs of Staff Committee report, 25 April 1958, DEFE 5/83, COS(58)122 annex.
- [80] *Agreement on Mutual Defence and Assistance between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of Malta 1964*, Cmnd 3110, 1966; *Agreement on Financial Assistance between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of Malta, 21 September 1964*, Cmnd 3111, 1966.
- [81] *Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of Malta with respect to the Use of Military Facilities in Malta, 26 Mar 1972*, Cmnd 4943, 1972.
- [82] Letter from Sir Gerald Creasy to Creech Jones, 5 Dec. 1949, CO 537/4956, no 50.
- [83] Telegram no 76 from Lennox-Boyd to Laycock, 30 April 1955, CO 926/249, no 7.
- [84] Letter from Lennox-Boyd to Laycock, 5 June 1956, CO 926/251, no 92.
- [85] 'Malta: outcome of recent financial discussions': minute by Lennox-Boyd to Eden, 27 June 1956, PREM 11/1433, PM(56)44, f. 3.
- [86] 'Malta: outcome of financial talks': memorandum by Lennox-Boyd, 13 July 1956, CAB 129/82, CP(56)169.
- [87] Minute by Melville, 21 Aug. 1956, CO 926/327.
- [88] Letter from Laycock to Mintoff, 13 Aug. 1956, *ibid.*, no 429, enclosure.
- [89] Telegram no 332 from Laycock to Melville, 21 Aug. 1956, *ibid.*, no 466. On 3 September 1956, Mintoff told Hugh Gaitskell that 'the people of Malta were sympathetic to Nasser as were all Mediterranean people, because he represented a small country acting against a Colonial power, and that was very different from Mussolini who being a large power was attacking a smaller one. Hence if there were to be war with Egypt over Suez the Maltese people would be much less enthusiastic than they had been during the last war.' Williams, *Diary of Hugh Gaitskell*, 593.
- [90] Minute by Poynton, 22 Aug. 1956, CO 926/327.
- [91] Letter from P. F. de Zulueta to J. B. Johnston, 6 Jan. 1956, PREM 11/1434, f. 19; letter from Zulueta to Johnston, 5 March 1956, *ibid.*, f. 2.
- [92] 'Malta: economic equivalence': memorandum by Lennox-Boyd, 15 Nov. 1956, CAB 134/1202, CA(56)32.
- [93] 'Malta: economic equivalence': memorandum by Macmillan, 26 Nov. 1956, *ibid.*, CA(56)34.
- [94] Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Colonial Policy, 8 Feb. 1957, *ibid.*
- [95] Minute from Macmillan to Perth, 23 Feb. 1957, CO 926/692, no 31.
- [96] Minutes of a meeting, 25 Feb. 1957, CAB 130/122, Gen. 575/1st meeting.
- [97] Telegram no 93 Lennox-Boyd to Laycock, 29 March 1957, PREM 11/1932.
- [98] Telegram no 399 from the Commonwealth Relations Office to UK high commissioners, 4 April 1957, CO 926/693, no 63.
- [99] Cabinet conclusions, 17 April 1957, CAB 128/31, CC 35(57)6.
- [100] Goldsworthy, *The Conservative Government and the End of Empire*, xxviii.
- [101] Record of a meeting at the office of the prime minister, Malta, 26 April 1957, CO 926/694, no 132.
- [102] 'Malta: the naval dockyard': memorandum by Lennox-Boyd, 13 Nov. 1957, CAB 129/90, C(57)268.
- [103] Note of a meeting in the first lord's room at the Admiralty, 19 Dec. 1957, CO 926/855, no 312; Telegram no 103 from Lennox-Boyd to colonial attaché, Washington, 24 Dec. 1957, *ibid.*, no 318.
- [104] *Times of Malta*, 31 Dec. 1957.
- [105] Letter from Lambe to Lord Selkirk, 21 Feb. 1958, ADM 1/27145, TNA.
- [106] Letter from Selkirk to Lambe, 5 March 1958, *ibid.*
- [107] *Parliamentary Debates, Commons*, vol. 585, col. 1040, 1 April 1958.

- [108] Record of a meeting between Lennox-Boyd and Mintoff, 10 March 1958, CO 926/790, no 5.
- [109] Cabinet conclusions, 11 March 1958, CAB 128/32, CC 21(58)1.
- [110] Minute from Lennox-Boyd to Macmillan, 21 March 1958, CO 926/790, PM(58)4, no 36.
- [111] Pirotta, *Fortress Colony: Volume II*, 448.
- [112] *Ibid.*, Volume III, 58.
- [113] Minute from Lennox-Boyd to Macmillan, 30 April 1958, PREM 11/2393, PM(58)12, f. 24.
- [114] Hyam and Louis, *The Conservative Government and the End of Empire*, 743.
- [115] Bourdillon's assessment of the pitfalls of parliamentary representation has been largely borne out by the experience the French *département* of Réunion. See Houbert, 'Réunion – II', 329.
- [116] Hyam and Louis, *The Conservative Government and the End of Empire*, 743.
- [117] *Ibid.*, 747.
- [118] Letter from Perth to Douglas-Home, 25 June 1964, Papers of Alan Lennox-Boyd, MSS Eng c 3421; *Parliamentary Debates, Lords*, vol. 260, col. 990, 28 July 1964.
- [119] Morgan, *The Official History of Colonial Development*, 225.
- [120] Cox-Alomar, 'Britain's Withdrawal from the Eastern Caribbean', 85. In the mid-1960s, Wilson had considered offering Rhodesia a qualified act of Union, with twelve Rhodesian seats at Westminster, but this came to nothing. Ashton and Louis, *East of Suez and the Commonwealth*, lxxvii.
- [121] Lal, *Fiji*, 313.
- [122] Record of a conversation between the prime minister, and the governor and chief minister of Gibraltar, 4 Dec. 1969, PREM 13/2679; letter from Ian McCluney (FCO) to E. Youde (private secretary to the prime minister), 3 Dec. 1969, PREM 13/3226.

References

- Aldrich, Robert. *Greater France: A History of French Overseas Expansion*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996.
- Aldrich, Robert, and John Connell, *France's Overseas Frontier: Départements et Territoires d'Outre-Mer*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Ashton, S. R., and Wm Roger Louis, eds. *East of Suez and the Commonwealth 1964–1971: Part I*. London: The Stationery Office, 2004.
- Austin, Dennis. *Malta and the End of Empire*. London: Frank Cass, 1971.
- Boissevain, Jeremy. *Saints and Fireworks: Religion and Politics in Rural Malta*. London: Athlone Press, 1965.
- Catterall, Peter, ed. *The Macmillan Diaries: The Cabinet Years 1950–57*. London: Pan, 2004.
- Cox-Alomar, Rafael. 'Britain's Withdrawal from the Eastern Caribbean 1965–67: A Reappraisal'. *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 31, 3 (2003): 74–106.
- Eden, Sir Anthony. *Full Circle*. London: Cassell, 1960.
- Goldsworthy, David, ed. *The Conservative Government and the End of Empire, 1951–1957: Part I*. London: HMSO, 1994.
- Holland, R. F. *European Decolonization 1918–1981: An Introductory Survey*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985.
- Houbert, Jean. 'Réunion – II: The Politics of *Départementalisation*'. *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 18, 3 (1980): 325–47.
- Howe, Stephen. 'British Decolonization and Malta's Imperial Role'. In *The British Colonial Experience 1800–1964: The Impact on Maltese Society*, edited by Victor Mallia-Milanes. Msida: Mireva Publications, 1988.
- Hyam, Ronald, and Wm. Roger Louis, eds. *The Conservative Government and the End of Empire 1957–1964: Part II*. London: The Stationery Office, 2000.
- Lal, Brig V. *Fiji*. London: The Stationery Office, 2006.

- Morgan, D. J. *The Official History of Colonial Development, Volume V, Guidance towards Self-government in British Colonies, 1941–71*. London: Macmillan, 1980.
- Murphy, Philip. *Alan Lennox-Boyd: A Biography*. London: I. B. Tauris, 1999.
- Pirotta, J. M. 'The Attempt to Integrate Malta with the United Kingdom, 1955–1958'. Ph.D. diss. University of Reading, 1989.
- . *Fortress Colony: The Final Act 1945–1964, Volume II, 1955–1958*. Valletta: Studia Editions, 1991.
- . *Fortress Colony: The Final Act 1945–1964, Volume III, 1958–1961*. Valletta: Studia Editions, 2001.
- Robinson, Kenneth. 'Alternatives to Independence'. *Political Studies* 4, 3 (1956): 225–49.
- Williams, Philip M. *The Diary of Hugh Gaitskell, 1945–56*. London: Cape, 1983.