

# THE AWAKENING

BY

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LUX

## FOREWORD

The monthly contributions to "The Bulletin" over the pen-name CATO appear in booklet form at the solicitation of numerous readers of that independent and deserving newspaper. The writer demurred somewhat before assenting to the re-publication. He was prevailed upon to do so by the insistent submission that in those articles are reproduced facts and aspects of our agitated existence, during the war and after, up to the initiation of the popular regime, which merit to be more durably recorded. They are stated to depict a prevailing condition of thought and action parallel to the feelings and the behaviour of a doped patient, after an operation. Half dazed, he gropes about and mumbles inordinately, until the effects of the anaesthetic cease completely. Likewise our people, blinded, stupefied and rendered speechless by devastating influences, lost the faculty of gauging the real value of all that forms the essence of its life, past and present, and of its hopes and expectations for the future. There only remained extant and operative the animal instincts of self-preservation and materialistic well-being. With the passing of the causes the crystallised war mentality, a compound of fear, subservience and greed, began to melt away. Visions of loftier sentiments and ideals loomed in the clarified horizon. Longings for peace, security, freedom and leisure blossomed forth from the receding chaos.

A push towards this salutary revival has been given — it is urged — by the writings herein reprinted. Their challenge to the advisability, honesty and usefulness of recent momentous reforms and deliberations roused — as was to be expected — a storm of protests and recriminations from interested quarters, not always kept within the bounds of objectiveness and property. To them it was replied in a short preface to the article on "Legal Men Outclassed", which may as well conclude this foreword, as follows:—"The author has elected not to disclose his identity, preferring that his views be received and adjudged according to their intrinsic value, irrespective of personal considerations. He is also disinclined to be drawn into polemics. Not being out for militant politics or for other ventures of the sort, his statements are inspired by one aim —

“confessedly ambitious —: to try and bring a few of his countrymen  
“back to reason. A state of mind this, which unluckily lost poise  
“and stability through certain forms of war accidents, such as ire,  
“fear or self-conceit. His commentaries on recent and current events  
“are sincere. But he is far from expecting that they should convince  
“all. And he feels particularly grateful to the sundry dissenters, who  
“have found his observations and conclusions to be sheer nonsense,  
“and yet have taken all the trouble to dissect and crush them. To  
“these comrades in journalism he addresses, as a reward for their  
“interest, only one retort: Chi si contenta, goda.”

## The Political Trials \*

THE four political trials have at long last been brought to an end. The order of the Court forbidding the publication of comments has lapsed. It may now perhaps serve some purpose to refer briefly to a few departures from the established rules and custom governing criminal actions, which have been detected and generally deprecated.

At the time of Carmelo Borg Pisani's impeachment disclosures were made by him — under circumstances which have not come to light — connecting several Maltese residents in Italy with certain anti-British activities during the war. Starting from that information, the Intelligence Authorities, military and civil, undertook lengthy and expensive investigations in that country, the outcome whereof was the decision to institute proceedings against a few individuals on the charge of high treason or conspiracy. So far so good. Except perchance for an excessive zeal displayed by one of the police officials in obtaining and transcribing statements of the suspected men. And for some rumoured petticoat wire-pulling intended to quicken the inquisitions.

Eighteen persons — the small fry, it was remarked — were arrested in their abodes in March 1946, and carried the following day to a Camp at Portici, near Naples. No chance was allowed them to collect their belongings or to seek legal advice. After three or four weeks detention, they were flown to Malta in two groups, on the 6th and the 20th April respectively. Some witnesses, mostly Maltese Italians, were also brought, who had jumped at the opportunity of visiting their relatives and friends in Malta, and of looking after their interests.

It may be safely allowed that during military occupation it was not illegal to apprehend in Italy Maltese suspected guilty of crimes against the safety of their State. We have also to own that their removal to Malta to be tried by their nationals (there was a danger of their being taken to England) constituted a just and liberal treatment.

It cannot, however, be gainsaid that their detention and isolation for a month or so, without a knowledge of their fate, jarred on that basic principle of British justice, the

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Habeas Corpus, which requires every arrested person to be charged within 48 hours. Another fundamental rule was infringed which enjoins a perfect equality at a trial between prosecution and defence. In this case, the Police had the leisure of months and years to gather evidence on the spot, interrogating would-be witnesses and ransacking departmental offices, in search of damning documents. Prisoners, on the contrary, were denied time and permission to procure means for their justification where the alleged offence was supposed to have been committed. They were held up by surprise, refused all communication with anybody, and brought over to Malta, where it became manifestly hard and prohibitively expensive to get proofs from abroad under prevailing conditions.

The criminal investigation against the two groups was successively, ably, and speedily carried out by Magistrate (now Mr. Justice) Albert Camilleri.

On the 31st of May the Attorney General filed four bills of indictment. One dealt with all the members of the first group (barring he who was acquitted by virtue of a *nolle prosequi*). Against six of them a charge of conspiracy, punishable with imprisonment and hard labour, was preferred. The remaining two were accused, besides, of high treason, for which the sole penalty is death. Not less than three bills were issued with regard to the components of the second group, although the counts were identical for all, viz. high treason and conspiracy.

It is not clear why prisoners summoned to answer for distinct crimes, subject to different penalties, were for the purpose of the trial kept together, whilst others who were deemed responsible of the same offences punishable alike by death, were divided into three batches. A surmise may be advanced that the prosecutor arranged matters in such a way as to have all the accused, including those whose case of conspiracy could be dealt with by the ordinary Court presided over by one Judge, tried by a full Court consisting of three Judges. This guess, however, would lead to the innuendo — not to be thought of — that the learned gentleman entertained some doubts as to the ability of the ordinary Judge to conduct the proceedings.

However that may be, this thing is certain: the disadvantage caused to the individuals indicted with the lesser crime by such arbitrary shuffling of the charge-sheets. Besides the artificial enhancement of their responsibility when associated with that of the

alleged worse offenders, their trial could be disposed of within a very short time. As it happened, they had to wait in jail nine months until the others could exhaust — under great odds — their line of defence for the object of escaping capital punishment.

As the law now stands, only the prosecutor may apply for the regrouping or the separation of the trials, after they have been previously fixed according to the bills of indictment. Experience has shown that this flaw should be removed, by extending the initiative also to counsel for defence and to the Court.

When the four causes were brought up on the 2nd July for the preliminary pleas, the three members of the Court were challenged from sitting. The ground urged was that, in passing sentence of death on Carmelo Borg Pisani for treason and conspiracy, they had found guilty of the latter offence also his associates, whose names he had given, i.e. the accused now on trial. The Court adjourned to consider the point raised, and on the 10th July delivered an elaborate judgment in favour of their absention. Hypereritics may perhaps have preferred that the learned Judges did not wait to be challenged.

On the other hand, the dogged insistence in opposing the plea displayed by the prosecutor, who on similar contentions normally relies on the discretion of the Court, gave rise to sharp criticism. Which became more marked when he formally demanded that the order of abstention given by the Court — absolute for the four cases — should apply only to the charges of conspiracy. The preposterous request, which implied that only the three Judges who had abstained from sitting were competent to deal with the more serious charges, was dismissed outright.

In this connection, one is led to marvel that the public prosecution in trials of such gravity was left in the charge of the junior Assistant Counsel for the Crown. Important cases in England are conducted by the Attorney General and the Solicitor General, or by one or two eminent K.C.s briefed for the purpose. It must in fairness be admitted that professors Buhagiar and Mamo acquitted themselves admirably in the discharge of their onerous duties, faced as they were by such a team of formidable adversaries. They cannot, however, help being young, and lacking that full experience which is gathered from a long and continued practice in the criminal arena. To quote an instance, when it took the Government one month to appoint the surrogated Judges, a wiser counsel would not have ask-

ed them to expedite the proceedings, because some witnesses were anxious to leave, and would have saved himself the rebuff rightly administered by the Court.

The trials, long in themselves, were further delayed by the evidence of the accused being dictated to the Registrar, instead of being taken down by the stenographer as heretofore. The patience and receptivity of the jurymen were thereby unduly taxed, and the proceedings, formerly so quick and exciting, became dragging and monotonous.

Another novel feature was brought in, this time by learned counsel for defence. They filed a writ of summons (a heterogeneous procedure in the Criminal Court) asking that the order disallowing the pleas put forward *in limine litis* (except the challenge of the ordinary Judges) be reversed or annulled. Did the Court really need a week to brush aside the unheard of contention?

The ability of the Judges in directing the four long, complicated trials is beyond question and commendation. Listeners may have considered the first summing-up somewhat crude, and allowing glimpses into the Court's mind anent the responsibility of the accused. It certainly provoked another plea against their sitting in the second case, which was dismissed on the ground that it came too late.

But the outstanding grievance which the accused men were made to endure was that they were kept in prison awaiting their trial for nine to eleven months. The resulting consequences brought prejudice to their case. Some witnesses for the prosecution were permitted to go back home, and could not be heard orally at the trial. The jurors are stated to have complained on this score, debarred as they were from putting questions to them. Moreover the proffered evidence by rogatory letters, to be heard in Italy, had to be given up by the defence, because it would have prolonged the proceedings for many more months.

It was indeed a miracle that, confronted as they were by such heavy odds and difficulties, the prisoners managed to set up such a valid and strong barrage against their accusers.

A final remark may not be amiss concerning the extreme severity and rigidity of our laws — which are apt to defeat their own ends — in comminating for high treason the one and only penalty of death. The enemy may be helped in various degrees and under divers contingencies, of fact and of mind. There are surely instances of lesser gravity, when capital punishment is obviously out of proportion to

the actions and the intent of the offender. We have as a matter of fact read about trials of British military men who, after falling prisoners to the Germans, fought in the ranks of the latter against the Russians, and were only sentenced to short periods of imprisonment, and in some cases to a mere reprimand. No wonder that the moderating common sense of the jury suggests to them the utmost care and caution in returning a verdict of guilty against persons, who may have only been the victims of circumstances.



## Self-Government by Act of Parliament \*

**WE** would be unpardonably dull and improvident, in tackling the question regarding the return of Self-Government, if we failed to learn the lessons taught us by our past political misfortunes. We would in that case have to shoulder the responsibility for the wreck of our endeavours and aspirations which will inevitably ensue.

First and foremost, it behoves our dignity of a free though subjected people to deal with the British Government, in this as in all other controversies, with heads erect and unbending spirit. We must press forward our claims not as suppliants or debtors that go a-begging for alms or gracious concessions. The knowledge and consciousness of our just cause should earn us the position of equals, insisting on the discharge by the other party of its duties and obligations, in exchange for our unabated loyalty to what is owed by us. So much is due to our ancient civilization, which has by the learned scientist Ugolini been proved to have radiated its light to the East. This we deserve, because our forefathers made a free gift of our unconquered and strategical Islands to the British Crown under certain conditions, which we are consequently entitled to see respected and carried out, regardless of all previous infringements.

A paramount reservation made in placing Malta under the protection of the British Sovereign, and implicitly accepted, was that the Maltese should administer their own affairs. In a judgment of our Court of Appeal (*Strickland vs. Galea*, 22/VI/35), after an exhaustive survey of those historical events (which the Privy Council in *Strickland vs. Sammut*, 29/VI/38, held to be correct) the conclusion was reached that we possess an undeniable title to a Representative Government.

In claiming, therefore, Autonomy for our Islands, and in defining its extent and limitations, our spokesmen should not rely only on recent pledges given by the head of the London Government when the war was still raging. Much older and more binding agreements (style them "gentlemen's", if you wish) can be quoted, which have suffered no loss or abridgment for the manifold violations by the stronger nation during the last century and a half.

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To come to the present negotiations. It is as clear as daylight that a Constitution, which is not safeguarded by an Act of Parliament, the more so if it contains loopholes, and is shaped in such terms as allow all powers to revert to the Governor at his beck and call, is no Constitution at all. It is not worth the paper on which it is written, and should be refused, with thanks. What use can be made of an imposing statue erected in granite or bronze, but with feet of clay, liable to crumble down at the first gust of an adverse wind?

Remember we must, and remind those who may not know or have forgotten. During 1920 the details of the first liberal Constitution were being examined and discussed. The National Assembly urged to the very end that the grant should be incorporated in an Act of the Imperial Parliament. That request was not complied with. In a dispatch accompanying the final instruments of 1921, the Secretary of State for the Colonies gave an assurance that, although Self-Government for Malta had been enacted by Letters Patent, its provisions were to be deemed none the less irrevocable, as if they had been laid down by an Act of Parliament. Very few years elapsed. In 1929, the Strickland Ministry complained that they could not get through their budget and their laws against the opposition of the Senate. That self same Secretary of State, instead of instructing the Governor to dissolve the Houses for an appeal to the electorate, proceeded to amend the Constitution by virtue of new Letters Patent. The powers of the Senate were to be curtailed. A bare majority of the two Chambers sitting jointly, and not a two-thirds majority as previously required, would effect the change.

Another year passed. Governor Du Cane in 1930 suspended Self-Government on the alleged ground that an Emergency had arisen. The Bishops of Malta and Gozo—according to His Excellency—should not, in a Catholic country, have forbidden *sub gravi* the flocks entrusted to their care from casting their votes at the Elections in favour of the members of a Government, who had persistently acted in antagonism to the doctrine and interests of the Church, disregarding the warnings repeatedly made to them to desist.

Readers will also recollect that Responsible Government, after a dictatorial rule lasting two years, was restored in 1932 at the suggestion of the Royal Commission. Not many months had gone by before the Police Force, the backbone of every Executive authority, was in 1933 by fresh Letters Patent removed from the subjec-

tion to the Ministry, and transferred to the Imperial branch of the Diarchy. Following immediately upon this startling innovation, came the Governor's *ukase* whereby Self-Government was once more abruptly brought to a standstill, the Ministers being dismissed, and all powers passing back to His Excellency. No real grounds for this so called new Emergency were disclosed, other than a supposed fear of a financial bankruptcy. This plea was easily disproved by the presence in the Treasury coffers of a balance amounting to a quarter of a million pounds, which the incoming Luke and successive one-man administrations did not take much time in squandering. The discharged Ministers had asked in vain for leave to divulge the circumstances of that serious *coup d'état*. It transpired however that they were found guilty of having added the word "*Fermata*" on the bus stages placards in the streets, and of having increased the number of secondary schools!

Moreover, the fact should not be overlooked that, whenever laws which had been passed illegally, through breaches of the statute, were judicially pronounced to be null and void, the Colonial Office readily intervened by Orders in Council, ratifying and legalizing all blunders and contraventions committed by the complacent Administration.

But the crowning feat in disregarding solemn pledges of irrevocability occurred when a member of the Bench was summarily removed from his post, contrary to the explicit constitutional guarantee of independence ensuring his continuance in office *quamdiu se bene gesserit*. No charge was preferred against him in support of the unheard of measure. On the contrary, during discussion in the Council of Government anent his pension, Lieutenant Governor Jackson unequivocally affirmed that no doubt could be entertained as to that official having fully deserved it, as he had faithfully and satisfactorily discharged his duties to the end.

It stands to reason that all these and other memorable and unjustifiable imperial encroachments into the normal exercise of the powers, which the 1921 Letters Patent recognised as pertaining to the legitimate representatives of the people, would not have taken place, had the Charter been approved by the British Parliament.

It is a fact that the Malta Responsible Government was ultimately repealed by that Parliament. Not without encountering the strenuous opposition of not less than 112 Commoners, who refused to become accessories to the gross injustice meted out to the Maltese community. It must however be evident that such reactionary acts

can less easily be submitted to the criticism and deliberation of the two Houses in London, with the accompanying publicity and comment of a powerful press and a liberal-minded nation, than be carried out by the Colonial Secretary in a hush-hush manner, by a mere stroke of the pen.

The argument that the coming Constitution can only be withdrawn by an Act of Parliament should bear no influence on the subject. We know full well that an explicit clause to that effect is superfluous. It is laid down beyond question on the authority of *Campbell vs. Hall* that when the Crown grants a liberal Constitution, it forfeits its prerogative, i.e. its right to legislate in all matters, unless such power is reserved by it, and only to the extent of the reservation made.

This consideration should persuade us of the necessity to resist all attempts tending to keep for the Crown the right to amend the clauses relating to reserved matters, if such amendment is meant to include any increment to the number and quality of those matters. Such provision, coupled with that visualizing the state of emergency, would obviously render nugatory the grant of political emancipation. It would indeed leave the Imperial Authorities free to invade, when and how they please, the whole field of administrative activity which, with the loud-sounding names of *Parliament*, *Ministers*, *Executive*, *Privy Council*, etc., is supposedly to be vested in the chosen leaders of the people.

As already pointed out, such betrayal of the national birthright of the Maltese to govern themselves will be more easily and frequently perpetrated were responsible Government to be enacted by Letters Patent, and made to comprehend the Emergency and the Amendment of Reserved Matters clauses. The danger would be, if not removed, at least rendered more remote, if Self-Government were restored by an Act of Parliament.

No reason whatsoever has been vouchsafed for the refusal to satisfy this public desideratum, which renders the Imperial attitude somewhat suspicious. Hence the urgent need that this requirement should constitute a *conditio sine qua non* for the acceptance of the offered Autonomy.

## Megalomania \*

**T**HE privileged geographical position with which Nature endowed our Islands has made them in all ages the coveted prey of the mightiest power that consecutively swayed over the Mediterranean. The rôle they have played throughout the centuries in the development of world events have drawn to their shores a continuous stream of wealth, prosperity and fame unsurpassed in the history of small peoples. Within their microscopical boundaries emerged buildings, institutions and happenings of the first magnitude, which might form the envy of great nations.

A place that can claim as its own such a number of well-preserved neolithic temples, a perfect system of imposing fortifications, a portent of art as St. John's is, magnificent with its unique vault, pavement and tapestries, such striking pages of valour and glory as the Great Siege and the defeat of the Napoleonic forces; a place that possesses an old University, a Metropolitan, a Parliament, a Naval Commander-in-Chief, and an up-to-date aerodrome with a score of daily arrivals and departures, may deservedly thank Providence for not having left it behind in the distribution of her favours.

No wonder that this condition of things, disproportionate to our size, has, like the fumes of a generous wine, mounted to our head. That it has created a puffed-up mentality which makes us think and see big. As a consequence of which we are inclined to choose, in shaping and airing our needs, grievances and aspirations, such models as London or Paris, expressing contempt for the efforts of more modest centres.

This frame of mind which disdains the mediocre to run after what is best may safely be diagnosed as megalomania, from which we are suffering, and which, if not timely cured, may lead us to disaster.

The latest product of this derangement is the name "The Nation (Malta)" with which the organ of a newly-hatched party has been baptized. The high-sounding appellation may serve to tickle the amour propre of some gullible electors at the polls. But, considered seriously, it appears absurd.

Promoters of arabicized Maltese may be pardoned for styling  
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Malta a nation in order to bolster up their lame language policy. But unsophisticated observers will find it difficult to class our Island along with the greater nations, England, France, Russia, Italy, Germany, U.S.A., or even at a par with the smaller States, Belgium, Holland, Norway, Sweden, Greece, Jugoslavia. If Malta is a nation, what would Sicily be, or Sardinia, Corsica, Cyprus, Corfù, Madagascar? And why should the title be denied to each and every island of the Greek Archipelago, the birthplace of mythology and the cradle of a superb ancient civilization? At this rate we shall soon have UNO composed of 550 instead of 55 nations.

The foregoing observations and criticism are offered not for the sake of belittling our undoubtedly noble rank and damping our excusable complacency. They are prompted by purely practical intent, which unfortunately is not easy of accomplishment. We must try to climb down from the ethereal and ephemeral regions of imagination and vanity to the lower strata of ways and means for daily subsistence. Without renouncing one jot of our lofty ideals, which are part and parcel of our soul, it behoves us to concentrate also on the economical problem, which looms large on the horizon, threatening to submerge our hopes of a liberal government.

Two figures from the Budget, £975,918 and £4,796,953, denote the comparative expenditure of the financial years 1932-33 and 1947-48. A jump of 500% in fifteen years. And the recurrent outlay promises to soar higher up with the advent of Self-Government (a costly enterprise), with the invoked development of social services, the promised revision of salaries and wages, and the progressive extension of education. To which has to be added the unpredictable capital required to carry out the announced extraordinary works for a new electric power station, an automatic telephone system, and a water development scheme; besides the ambitious projects of reconstruction, improvements and embellishments, dished out to us by the foreign planners.

Happy times were those — not more than 30 years ago — when the Blue Book had one page with only seven words printed in capital letters: **THERE ARE NO TAXES IN MALTA.** Which of course was only partly true, as it did not take into account the mild import dues on wheat, tobacco and spirits. During the first Great War direct taxes — on successions and donations, on entertainments and stamps etc. — were introduced and import duties were increased and extended to other articles. Temporarily, it was stated, to defray

the swollen expenditure. When peace came far from being withdrawn or mitigated, taxes and dues were gradually stiffened and generalized. Everything is now hit, except capital and income, which will not go free for a much longer period.

It stands to reason that we must pay an adequate price for the benefits of progress, for a higher standard of living, material, social and intellectual. But surely all advance should find a limit in our precarious financial potentiality. Individuals who live lavishly beyond their means are treated as spendthrifts and interdicted. There is no reason why the same consideration should not apply to governments.

To come down to exemplifications, the case of St. Luke's hospital is illuminating. The designers' fees alone exceeded eight thousand pounds. Hundreds of thousands were disbursed for the structural works. Other huge sums were voted for the equipment (£144,600 last year for heating, lighting and laundry installations) and for erecting a boundary wall. Other amounts will be required for the completion of the hospital. What however should be a cause of grave concern is the huge expense which the running, the upkeep and the gradual improvement of the institution will entail annually. What the medical needs of the Island will come up to may be gauged by this significant fact. All the doctors who came out from the University last year were immediately engaged for service by the Health Department.

As regards St. Luke's it is fruitless to cry over spilt milk. But a lesson can be learnt. We must resist any temptation to burden our treasury with the grand projects, which are hanging in the air as a result of elaborate and expensive planning and reporting. New Law Courts, for example, and a modern University, for which sites have been earmarked outside Porta Reale and near Sarria. Why cannot the old Seat of Justice be reconstructed and refitted at a low cost, and the Seat of Learning remain where it is?

In similar grandiose style which has become an obsession, Government Departments keep being multiplied and enlarged. Apart from the several Control offices created by the war, which show no signs of disappearing, the number of civil employees is constantly augmenting. That of heads and subheads has concurrently increased. The Lieutenant Governor, if he does not go with the coming of the Constitution, can surely do without one or two of his imported assistants. It is not clear why the Attorney General should need four

other Crown Counsel to perform the duties, which up to 1940 were assigned to only one assistant, and which in 1936 were partly devolved to the Governor's Legal Secretary. Furthermore, the academic chairs at the University have been divided and subdivided to a striking degree. In at least two cases two professors were appointed for the same subject, owing to some difficulty in choosing between two candidates. All this, it is argued, makes for specialization. But can we afford it? Other Offices do not lag behind in the path of expansion. The Health Department for one, whose octopical branches absorb the activities of wellnigh two-thirds of the medical profession. And the Police, which a few years ago was headed by one Superintendent, and a few Inspectors, and now is under the orders of a Commissioner, a Deputy Commissioner, an Assistant Deputy Commissioner, several Superintendents and a score of Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors. We are in this respect at a level with the big centres. But are we in a position to bear the expense?

The clamour for an all round revision of salaries and wages is well justified and is being met with. Are we certain, however, that we are not heading towards the pitfall of inflation, higher prices running after enhanced income in a vicious circle?

It has been hinted that Responsible Government will prove to be a costly affair. In this connection it is to be hoped that the deputies of the people will not claim an excessive remuneration, and will rest content with a modicum.

The moral to the foregoing somewhat erratic remarks seems to be that a brake should be timely applied to the race after extravagance, to which the war has accustomed us. It is imperative for the party in power courageously to launch a relentless campaign for austerity and retrenchment. The axe must inexorably fall on all parasitical growth that is not needed for the modest, yet comfortable, subsistence of a small, though cultured and well bred, people. All ambitious schemes should be set aside for better times. All departments should be duly pruned and shorn of worthless red-tape, without impairing their efficiency.

If the Services call for additional defence facilities, more girdles and better accommodation, let them turn to their own inexhaustible resources. Above everything let us never lose sight of our limited potentialities, and drop, once for all, what constitutes Malta's main cause of perpetual disquiet: our deeply-set mania of aggrandizement.



## Change of Culture by Letters Patent \*

THE National Assembly made, *inter alia*, a very weighty and far-reaching declaration. "The British and the Maltese cultures are the cultures of the people". It is not exactly the case of *Roma locuta est, quaestio soluta*. That august body does not claim, we venture to believe, the supreme authority of the Vatican, nor the infallibility of the Pope. Enough that the solemn pronouncement found ready favour with the Constitutional Commissioner. The Colonial Secretary, it is safe to surmise, will overcome all scruples, and incorporate the momentous clause in the Instruments purporting to restore the so-called Self or Responsible Government. What matters if, in so doing, he shall contradict one of his predecessors in office who, in 1921, officially recognised Italian as the language of our culture. It has always been the prerogative of governments and politicians to change their mind on anything with impunity. The other day the War Minister gave it to the Commons as indispensable for the safety of the Empire that recruits under the new Conscription Bill should undergo training for a period of 18 months. The following morning Mr. Bellenger stated he was satisfied with 12 months military service.

Some thin-skinned objectors may be tempted to hold that the Assembly, in categorically defining what is the culture of the Maltese, slightly overstepped its terms of reference. The drafting of a Constitution — they point out — merely necessitated the fixing of the official languages. This may be true. But the fact must not be overlooked that, during the last war and its aftermath, the people and its delegates laboured under abnormal conditions. Their thoughts were conceived and deliberations taken mostly *ab irato* for the ravaging effects of the enemy bombs. You cannot expect, in similar contingencies, a subtle discrimination between what came *intra* and what fell *extra vires*. Their cogitations and actions merely reflected what at that particular moment appeared to be safer and less compromising.

Other habitual fault finders are also apt to contend that the culture of a people is not an opinion or fact, which can be altered overnight, as one changes his coat, or enforced by statute. You

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can — they argue — impose a particular language, or two, to be spoken in parliament or in the Law-Courts, to be taught in the schools, to be used in notarial deeds. Culture, however, is quite a different matter — they maintain —. Its elements and factors are complex and comprehensive, and take a long time to gather, to develop and to settle. Not years but centuries. When fully ripened and established, culture is difficult, if not impossible, to eradicate in favour of a new one. The substitution, if workable, cannot be improvised. It requires a prolonged process of continuous elaboration.

These strong points, although incontrovertible, are of no avail at this juncture. The National Assembly (to be precise, the Left wing thereof, the Centre and the Right having mostly kept away or abstained from voting) has worked out the nigh to impossible, has created the portentous. If the Letters Patent shall reproduce the amazing declaration, as they surely will, the metamorphosis overnight shall be an accomplished indisputable fact. The law, as much as a Court's final judgment, *facit de albo nigrum et de nigro album*.

It will be of interest to probe the manner in which the epoch-making event came about, and place into relief some of its outstanding results. A demented continental autocrat entertained the clumsy idea of claiming these Islands for his country. He had also the effrontery of putting his plan into execution, not through the competent diplomatic channels, but resorting to devastating methods. What more logical sequel — as a reprisal — than to ostracize from these shores the seven century-old culture, which was his and had been our own? There is no denying the fact that the shaking off entailed some sacrifice. That culture gave the world Giotto and Michelangelo, Galileo and Marconi, Dante and Manzoni, Verdi and Respighi. It was the culture of most of the Popes. It produced our Ciantar, our Abela, and the Gafas, Gerolamo Cassar, Bosio, Rigord, G. Zammit, Judge Debono and our Mons. C. Psaila of the first manner. The documentary history of that culture lies stored (why did not the bombs make of it an auto-da-fè?) in our Archives, the Order's, the Curia's, the Cathedral's, the Courts', the Government's, and in the Public Library.

The rich inheritance justifiably cast off had, as stated, to be superseded by something equally, if not more, acceptable. To tell the truth, politicians of the modern school are not wanting who

keep asking: "why ideologies at all? what is the use of high culture? Bread and butter we need. The rest is bunkum". Luckily these materialists are few in number. The majority have instead persisted in exclaiming: "Culture must be. But why only one? The other nations are quite happy with one. Why should we be, when we can have two"? And thus the British Culture was adopted, indubitably one of the world's noblest and best, and the Maltese Culture came into existence.

The way for the former had long been paved by a certain section of the press. It was heralded by the founding of a first rate College, munificently endowed, and the establishment of a British Institute (with a non-Catholic Director), lavishly financed by the wealthy London British Council. The response has been prompt and the progress magical. The street appellations, in bright porcelain tablets, anglicized with pleasing effect. What more becoming, say, than *Conception Street*, reminder of our first instant of uterine life. All Christian names also elegantly turned into English. British surnames added to the local ones. Local surnames spelt anglically: *Manjohn* for Mangion, *Xerry* for Xerri (with apologies to a well known beverage). The ecclesiastics have given a fairly good example. They have changed their names and dropped the traditional titles "Sac." "Don" "Fra" "Padre" for the new one "Rev. Father", irrespective of whether they are lay or regular priests. Strange that the British military chaplains continue to be styled "Padre".

Religious undercurrents have swollen considerably. To the Grand Orient, the Oddfellows, the Buffaloes and the YMCA, which we have long been harbouring, are added the Toc H and other beneficent societies, which with monies and social events are doing spade work, especially among our youth, and in dockland. Protestant propagandists are taking the trouble of door-to-door visitations to convey the teachings of their bible right into our own homes. Concurrently with all this, Malta is being flooded with the most modern and illuminating British and American literature. Realistic fiction and rationalistic productions — best sellers — are widely distributed at rock-bottom prices among subscribers to the various Book Clubs. English dailies are rushed here by air, teeming with spicy particulars of the last sadistic crimes and sensational divorces. We are also regaled with scores of magazines from the other side of the Atlantic, all gorgeously illustrated, and graphically reproducing the unbridled delights of night, seaside and film life, and bringing into fashion

and relief the now famous two-piece and nylon beach suits, which our shops were offering for sale.

But the aforesaid does not satisfy our need and greed for a loftier elevation. And we can now boast of yet another Culture, distinct from the other, but ever so much nearer to our heart. The Maltese Culture. To be frank, we cannot say that it is there yet. Enthusiasts opine that it was there all the time, in an embryonic or dormant state, waiting, like the fairy princess, to be awakened. History recalls two unsuccessful attempts to call it into being. The early nineteenth century witnessed the vernacular serve as a medium for proselytizing the Maltese to the anglican faith. A strong Committee *ad hoc* was formed in London, with plenty of funds. Among its activities may be mentioned the erection of the Protestant College in Sliema, which became later by purchase the St. Ignatius' College of the English Jesuits. Also the securing of the services of the writer Vassalli, who passed to the schismatic persuasion, and translated the protestant bible. The same man who is now extolled as the Dante of the new culture, and proposed as *Pater Patriae* by one of the Bulletin's correspondents. That first campaign ended with the conversion of four or five families.

The second effort was made in the eighties, by Tagliaferro, Bellanti and a few others of "fettul duħħani", "kasba kebbusia" and "makhad..." fame. Discredited and lacking support, their *Xirca Xemia* fizzled away in a very short time.

But full success is assured to the present third movement. Born and reared under the auspices of war-time politicians, sponsored by the State, the Legislature and the Seats of Learning, adopted by the Church, it is moving forward with increasing momentum. Inspired poets, prose-writers, essayists, playwrights and journalists have sprung from nowhere by the dozen. Textbooks, novels, *kalepins*, grammars, verses and pamphlets are being turned out at a terrific speed. The University portals are only accessible to those who are found efficient in the national tongue. The Chief Justice's retrogressive proposal to restrict the compulsory study of Maltese was flatly dismissed, and the mover placed in the necessity of resigning as a member of the General Council.

The *novus ordo* is already showering its blessings on the fortunate inhabitants. With their language radically cleared of all obnoxious continental infiltrations, the eyes of the world are being opened to consider our hidden African or Middle-East descent. One or two

of the Services have already classified native subordinates as belonging to a non-European stock, and treated them accordingly. And one of the Dominions has recently denied our compatriots recognition as British subjects. More of these complimentary incidents will surely follow.

Better still. We have welcomed the Maltese names assigned to our squares, streets and alleys as a striking feature. What more suave to the eye and to the ear than "Misrah il Palazz" (why not "Misrah id-dar il cbara"?). An odious exception exists as regards "Piazza ir-Regina Adelaide" (formerly Piazza Celsi). Does not the term "Misrah" suit Her late Majesty equally well, or what? The language itself, shorn of all heterogeneous growth, has come out crystal clear and simple. So handy to denote all meals, breakfast, lunch, banquet, dinner and supper by only one word 'ikla', also in official programmes and menus. So convenient to have one term 'plir' signifying every up-right object, pillar, kerbstone, column, obelisk, monolith (as in Mifsud Bonnici's Voyage to Rome). Orthography has also gained in terseness and facility. Maria and Giorg have become Marija and Gorg, Caccia is turned into Kacca, and so forth.

Furthermore. The ennobling titles of Notabile, Vittoriosa, Cospicua, Invitta, deservedly conferred by previous Sovereigns on our ancient cities, have been officially suppressed. Thanks to the supplanting of our old language, no more importation of renowned sacred orators. We are trying to do without them. No more engagement of foreign primadonnas, tenors and other artists of the lyric opera, with strangers as conductors and professors of the orchestra, chorus and ballet. All such talent is available locally. No more invasion of exotic drama and comedy, and performers thereof. We have no lack of composers, producers, translators; and dramatic companies crop up like fungi. Encouragement and patronage are rife. The contests daily, the prizes generous. Inauguration of a Conservatoire of Music and of a National Theatre "to which visitors from all the world will flock" (vide *Bulletin* of the 13th) only a question of time.

In one word, opinions may differ as to whether our material standard of living is up to the mark. This, however, is positively certain. Intellectually and culturally we stand high, very high indeed. Which is also due to the stupendous declaration quoted at the inception of this appreciative script, and which the long expected Letters Patent will surely ratify.

## Who is in error? \*

"SALUTARIUS" has broken a lance in favour of Freemasonry and Protestantism in Malta, to which he admittedly belongs. He has taken exception to implied strictures in my article (1) which, according to him, are based on erroneous facts. As he is courteous and evidently in good faith, he will allow a contradiction of his denials.

He writes: "British Freemasonry is not concerned with religious matters." It is far from easy to find out the doings of a body which are enshrouded by a tombal secrecy. And therefore safer to follow the precepts of the Church. Canon 2335 of the new Code lays down: *Nomen dantes sectae massonicae aliisdem generis associationibus quae contra Ecclesiam vel legitimas civiles potestates machinantur, contrahunt ipso facto excommunicationem Sedi Apostolicae simpliciter reservatam.* No discrimination is made.

He says further: "Masonic officials in Malta pledged the local Catholic Ecclesiastical authorities that no Maltese or other known Catholic would be admitted to membership." Taking his word for this, though most unbelievable, occurrence, can he give an equal assurance that there are no recent names of Maltese on the lists of the several lodges? Many are known of the past, some are suspected in the present.

He adds: "There is no masonic propaganda in Malta." The démenti comes from H.G. the Archbishop's last Lenten Pastoral: "In the second part of the Pastoral (the précis of the "Times of Malta" is cited) His Grace dealt with another danger "amongst us", that of Freemasonry which has Satan as its founder and leader, and the substitution of the reign of Christ with Paganism as its aim. This will never take place as it was Jesus Christ Himself Who said that the gates of hell would not prevail. But this does not mean that Freemasonry is causing no evil in the Church of Christ. His Grace said he did not want to talk about certain promises made to certain people in order to allure them to sell their souls in exchange for some promotion, or other material benefit. This was a thing that was well known and was causing great injustice.

"The Archbishop said he wished to refer to an organization which  
\* Published on the 3rd of July, 1947.

(1) "Change of Culture by Letters Patent".

International Masonry had established in Malta amongst Maltese youths known by the initials "I.M.C." This secret organization has already corrupted young men in the Dockyard, some schools, especially secondary, and among some youth movements, and is distributing large sums of money and bad books. His Grace wondered how Christian parents could shut their eyes to the fact that their sons had their pockets full and spent lavishly, and did not try to know where the money came from....." (Apologies for the long quotation).

"Salutarius" declares also that "Toc H is harmless". And yet Catholics have been recently warned against singing or playing in and attending Toc H 'social' gatherings. He is finally categorical: "that the only known instance of recent times in which Protestant propagandists have been active here was quickly nipped in the bud." Not at all, dear sir. The two young bible zealots are still making their round of domiciliary visits, and being politely shown the door.

This much anent the alleged "error" and 'personal enmity' of CATO.

## Birth of a Language to Order \*

**N**OT MANY years ago the Maltese parlance stood in a position parallel to that held by the "volgare" in Italy, in the XIII century. The language of Rome had been corrupted into what was generally designated as low latin. It formed the ordinary speech of the people, quite sufficient for domestic and trade use. The classic tongue of Cicero and Horace was practically dead, as a common medium of expression. It became confined to the cloisters, and to the philosophers and humanists of that age. A change occurred when itinerant troubadours dropped down in the peninsula and versified and chanted, on the market-squares and within the regal Courts, in their "lingua romanza". Sicilian minstrels, in imitation, composed and sang amorous ballads, followed by Frederick II and his courtiers, who made of their Island the cradle of the italian language (whence it immediately spread to Malta). A contemporary move was started in Florence, where the tuscan "volgare" was developed and ennobled by the masterly handling of such eminent pioneers as Jacopone da Todi, Cavalcanti, Alighieri, Boccaccio, Petrarch and the Sieneese St. Catherine.

Here, before the storm against our traditional culture burst out in all its fury, the vernacular, with an arabic background (the inheritance of a protracted Saracen domination), enriched and mellowed by a generous flow of neo-latinisms (the product of racial and spiritual connections), was used by the population in their daily intercourse. It lived and thrived harmoniously along with italian, the well established instrument of all higher and intellectual activities. Books and pamphlets, recording our legends and chequered history, were widely circulated among the lower classes. Melodious maltese "lieders" were sung in minor tone with guitar accompaniment. Hilarious pochades in patois entertained and amused crowded houses of gay spectators.

To justify the decreed proscription of italian, a pretext was sought by crafty politicians and unscrupulous officials, stirred up and urged on by one who had sucked that motherly language since his birth, and imbibed it afterwards by long draughts in the bracing atmosphere of  
\* *Published on the 19th July, 1947.*



the Alban hills. "If maltese is taught and made compulsory in all schools and classes" — they sophisticated — "it will be logical to argue that our children, although naturally bright and linguistically minded, cannot cope with three tongues at the same time. And so italian shall have to be immolated".

This tricky contrivance gave the stimulus for, and the *raison d'être*, of maltese, reborn and raised to the status and the dignity of a literary language. In truth, it possessed no fixed grammar, no standard vocabulary, no literature to speak of. To which failings it was not difficult to remedy. A sort of grammar was improvised by commission in London, the labour of a british savant, familiar with oriental idioms. A dictionary, baptized as Kalepin, was speedily compiled. Books, old and new, were collected from anywhere, reprinted, advertized and awarded prizes.

A graver problem, however, had to be tackled. Maltese was known from childhood to everybody. All who learned italian could read, understand and write the vernacular comfortably well. The publications of A. Preca, G. Muscat Azzopardi and A.M. Galea were accessible to the readers; and so were the newspapers issued in the dialect. The comedies of C. Camilleri found an appreciative audience. What else then remained to be taught by pedagogues? To surmount the obstacle, a step further was advanced in the chosen path of double-dealing. The newly hatched lingo would be so transformed idiomatically and orthographically, as to render it intricate and a hard nut to crack. To wade through the ensuing jungle and jumble a pilot would be imperative. Schools, books and tests would provide the necessary guidance.

The shrewd device was put into action with alertness and success. Maltese, which after all had its particular charm and importance in glottology, sustained a ruthless process of spoliation and eviration. Chief criterion directing the operation: hatred of anything italian.

All other languages show a marked tendency to expand, to enrich their glossary, by absorbing terms originating from elsewhere. The British vocabulary would appear scant indeed, if it stuck merely to anglo-saxon words. It is instead the most plentiful, for having freely assimilated Greek, Latin, French, Italian and other foreign elements. A page taken at random will demonstrate the remarkable paucity of its native terms: ebullition, eccentric, ecclesiastic, echelon, echo, éclaircissement, éclat, eclectic, eclipse, eclogue, ecology, economy, éçu, ecstasy, ecumenic, eczema, edam, eddy,

edelweiss, eden, edentate, *edge*, edible, edict, edifice, edile, edit etc. Only two words, those in italics, are original.

Outside contributions have, besides, the merit of improving the style and elevating the tone of written compositions and vocal utterances. The works of Gibbon and Macaulay, as well as the leading articles of the London "Times", are palmary evidence of what eminence can be attained by the aid of classical wording. Even the Royal Commissioners of 1931 had this truth in mind when, in recommending the substitution of maltese to italian in some Courts, commented that the former would benefit by appropriating italian legal terminology.

All this notwithstanding, an inverse plan was deliberately adopted for Malta. Maltese was shorn of neo-latin terms (english ones duly respected), though long accepted and extensively used, in favour of words of arabic origin, mostly forgotten or newly created, all rough and harsh-sounding. The change could not always be effected. Long lists of names, such as those relating to marine craft and parts thereof, and to fishing tackle, everything pertaining to the Church, its liturgy and its paraphernalia, and all abstract nouns could not find their counterpart in the oriental sources.

In many cases words denoting one thing were loaned to express also something different. To quote a few examples out of numberless: "Dahla" which normally means "entrance", has been assigned the place of "introduzioni" or "prefazioni" on the opening pages of books. What would one think if, on english or italian volumes, the term "Entrance" or "Ingresso" were printed instead of "Introduction", "Preface" and "Introduzione" "Prefazione"? The same remark applies to "hargia", exit, now being used for "edizione", edition, which is no longer wanted. "Midrub" formerly conveyed the idea of a person wounded by the throw of a missile. Its use is now extended to all wounded, to sacrifice the doomed word "ferut". In some instances one word alone is made to signify several others, erstwhile having an italian origin. Thus, "mexxei", one who makes you walk, may stand alike for director, conductor, chairman, president, commandant etc. "Ghaqda", or "Xirka" may mean, *ad libitum*, society, company, board, association, corporation, body etc. Poetry is deemed to be good and inspired when formed exclusively of pure maltese. Variety of wording, a factor of elegance in style, is utterly disregarded.

The reform, besides impoverishing our would-be language, often

debases it, rendering it vulgar-sounding and disrespectful. Is it not offensive to good taste to read, in solemn pronouncements, such expressions as “fliet ir-rapport”, “chella titkanzah biex tifem”, reminiscent of acts and sensations not mentionable in good-mannered circles? And what regard is shown of a person or saint, in qualifying him as “nadif” (i.e. smelling of soap and brush), instead of “pur”, for his moral integrity? The exemplifications may be multiplied *ad infinitum*.

The new linguistic product has also, as stated, an orthography complicated to the condition of a puzzle. In Turkey the late Ataturk abolished the traditional lettering in favour of the european system. In Germany the gothic alphabet is being gradually dropped. In America english spelling has been made phonetic, and all write “valor” for “valour”, “center” for “centre”, “thro” for “through”. But not in Malta. Arbitrary, illogical rules have here prevailed instead. The letter “c”, when hard, was turned into “k”. The guttural “k” was converted into “q”, robbed of its “u” sound. “U”, when a consonant or alone, became “w” (double u), an imprest from english (all british accessions are welcome), which however does not permit two “w”s (quadruple u) together, as in new maltese. “I”, followed by another vowel, must bear a “j” between, or change into two “j”s. The apostrophe has yielded its place to the hyphen. The novel alphabet can boast of two “g”s, two “h”s and two “z”s. This transformed — or deformed — orthography named after its producer, the Ghakda, was enforced by government with divers sanctions. Two editors, for not heeding the warning, were interned and subsequently deported. Since then, their newspaper has come out flourishing its four “u”s.

This newly-shaped, shrunken, rough-voiced tongue, clothed in a camouflaged garment, which they hardly recognize as their own, fifty thousand children and youths, in all elementary, secondary and university classes, are spending long precious years to master, being none the wiser at the end, but having learnt to hate it in the meantime.

*Cui bono?* one is cheerlessly tempted to enquire. Have we made any step forward towards becoming a nation, many ingredients whereof shall always be lacking? On the contrary can it be gain-said that we are drifting—at least in world-wide opinion — towards connection with the Levant? Will our future traders, without a knowledge of italian, be able to correspond with firms in Italy, with

merchants in North Africa and in South America, and will the young generation travelling in Italy speak and understand the language of that country? Will future officers, in a new war (God forbid it) or in peace — analogous to wartime, — be competent to serve as interpreters or 'liaison' in Italy? Furthermore, will our children, equipped only with maltese and english, compete successfully with their british co-candidates? Has the level of elocution and oratory in the Councils, in the Law Courts, on the pulpits been enhanced by the use of maltese? Has our chief Seat of Learning soared higher in decorum and influence by donning the peplum of maltese as a medium of instruction? Can Latin, French and Spanish be more easily learnt through maltese or english than through italian, which belongs to the same stock as those? Can our sons attain the eminence and high reputation, here and abroad, of Sir U. Mifsud, Sir A. Bartolo, Dr. A. Dingli, Mons. George Caruana, Dr. Giov. Grech, Dr. G. Colombos, Dr. Paul Cremona; to mention only absents or lately deceased?

If the reply to all these queries is, as no doubt it is, in the negative, there was no real honest scope for the birth, on the ashes of italian, of a maltese language to order.

## Hands off the Alma Mater \*

THE "Bulletin" has taken up the cudgels against the Bill for the Constitution of the University, now before the Council of Government. It appeals for support, which must be given ungrudgingly. There can be no hesitation in asserting that the proposed law does not confer autonomy to our Alma Mater. Far from it. The outcome of the Ordinance will spell complete subservience to the imperial branch of the future diarchy. It will create no more nor less than another "reserved matter", not recommended by the National Assembly, not discussed with the Constitutional Commissioner, without a trace in the Letters Patent, but smuggled at the eleventh hour through the window of the unrepresentative Council.

The "Times of Malta" is all for the new order. No wonder. Blind upholder of imperialism *a tout prix*, it readily jumps and gloats at anything that makes for the ulterior denationalization of Maltese institutions. In this instance, the turn has come of our ancient seat of learning, founded more than two centuries ago by Father Costaguti. The decree goes that, to survive, it should be reshaped according to the British pattern (?). And accept subjection to the Inter-University Council for Higher Education in the Colonies. And sell itself to the Inter-University etc., for a plate of lentils valued at £120,000. Critics of the reform so suddenly sprung upon us are — in the words of the "Times of Malta" — sheer irresponsibles, ignorant of the Constitutions of British Universities. Indeed, according to the Asquith Report "it is essential that Colonial Universities should be autonomous in the sense in which the Universities of Great Britain are autonomous." It serves our purpose to consider what sort of autonomy is ensured by the Bill. And what resemblance our Alma Mater shall bear to Oxford or to Cambridge.

To begin with, English Universities are private, not State institutions. They are self-supporting, and receive practically no money from the Government. Obviously, no title Parliament holds for controlling their expenditure and prying into their doings. In Malta, instead, it is laid down in the Bill that "money voted by the

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Legislature for use by the University will be allotted in the form of block votes". And yet the Legislature will have no say as regards the expenditure and the policy of the University, except through the appointment of six of its members to sit on the Council, presumably in a minority. In other words, the Maltese taxpayer will pay the piper, but will not call the tune.

Secondly, in England the Chancellor of the University is periodically elected by ballot, and so is the vice-Chancellor. With us the Chancellor will *de iure* be the Governor, who shall under the coming Constitution also be the autocratic head of the imperial side of the diarchy, vested as such with full legislative and executive powers within the ambit of the reserved matters. The vice-Chancellor, Principal Academic Officer, *ex officio* Vice-President of the Council, Chairman of the Senate and of each of the Boards of the Faculties, will be appointed by the Chancellor i.e. by the Governor, after *consultation* with the Council. Whose members, therefore, will have only a consultative voice.

The same diversity applies to the members of the Senate and of the Council, who are in England chosen by election, and here will three of them be also the nominees of the Governor, and must presumably bear the qualification of a *persona grata*.

Where — we venture to ask — do we find the similarity of our future principal Seat of Learning to its British counterparts? And what measure of autonomy is it possible to envisage in a statutory condition of things where Vice-Chancellor A or S or Z will rule supreme, seconded by a handful of yes-men councillors, as the *longa manus* of the Governor?

No thanks shall go to the superannuating Rector who, after the coup d'état of 1933, aided and abetted Lieutenant Governor Luke in abolishing the truly quasi-autonomy of our University and its ancient culture, and in suppressing the gallant patriotic association of students if, as a result of his playing the shuttle between here and London, he will have nothing better to offer than the Bill under censure.

It remains to be seen whether the noble Maltese people who, once upon a time, redeemed their Islands for forty thousand gold florins, will allow their Alma Mater to be bartered for a money consideration.

## Legal Men Outclassed \*

**W**HAT has befallen lately the members of the legal profession? To the fore, once, leaders, numerous and vociferous. Backsets, now, in the ranks, scarce and almost silent. Out-manoeuvred in the top positions, in the vanguard places, by their rivals, the medical men. How distant appear the glorious times of Fortunato Mizzi, Zaccaria Roncali, Alessandro Chapelle, Oreste Grech Mifsud, Francesco Azzopardi, Sir Ugo Mifsud!

A gynecologist of outstanding repute is at the head of the Labour Executive; a general practitioner of vast experience at the leadership of the Labour Party; an oculist of world-wide fame at the presidency of the National Assembly; a most learned psychologist at the helm of a motley confederation named after democracy; and a renowned surgeon at the top of the academical body. Sole exception, the *dux* of the veteran Nationalism laureated in, but not practising law. Even the chief of the Stricklandian detriti has chosen to cross to the magistracy, after having successfully promoted cordial relations between the two races.

Besides, what explanation can be suggested of another odd phenomenon? A Committee was deputed by the National Assembly to discuss and bargain over the draft Constitution with Sir Harold McMichael. Other secret seances were subsequently held with the delegates of the Colonial Office, and finally with the Governor and his advisers. As members of that Board were chosen three medical doctors, a Monsignor, and one or two others. But not one lawyer. Not one by his studies made proficient in Constitutional law.

Absenteeism, therefore, of our legal luminaries. A few of them have submissively accepted such minor functions as secretaries, treasurers, propagandists.

In attempting to fathom the mystery of this abnormal state of affairs, one is drawn to detect the product of a peculiar trait in our character. A tendency to usurp one another's job or craft. Have we not witnessed barristers turned into experts of automobiles or ballistics or calligraphy; clerks specializing in art criticism, in the assessment of legal fees, in the teaching of economics; doctors star-

\* Published on the 23rd August, 1947.

ring as artists, as comedians, as theatre impresarios; capitular canons deed-making as notaries public? There is not, of course, the shadow of an insinuation that politics are a closed shop, inaccessible to all but the learned followers of Themis. It is nevertheless true that the main function of parliament is law-making, which is primarily the business of the doctors of law, as the words 'legislature' and 'Legislative Assembly' manifestly denote.

A second conjecture suggests that apathy may be at the bottom of the advocates' aloofness. But their Chamber has always been recognized as the centre of pure and active patriotism. And its members as a whole would not, in time of national need, desert their posts or shirk their duties for mere indifference.

There remains one other guess which has all the appearance of approaching nearer to reality. The legal family, professionally cunning, has better than all seen through what one has to expect from British liberality. England was bound to redeem the promise exacted by the Americans, as a *sine qua non* for their entry in the war: the spreading of greater democracy among her colonies. And Downing Street pledged its word to grant Autonomy to the Maltese. Since then, its endeavours went to render the concession more gaudy than substantial, more nugatory than effective.

For that object a hint was dropped for the formation of an Assembly, with uncertain representative character, self-entrusted with the drafting of a Constitution. The purport — fully carried out — was that the Constituent body, housed by the Governor, obsessed as it continued to be by the mentality special to the war and its aftermath, should ask for the minimum instead of claiming the maximum, as the Burmese did, and the Cypriots and the Ceylonese. Further limitations were propounded by the Constitutional Commissioner. The process of elaboration has all along been pompous and lagging. It has to leave to the interim Government, — stated to survive for the transaction of ordinary business — time to pass reactionary and highly controversial legislation.

The outcome of all this painstaking will shortly be made known. But it can easily be surmised. A mutilated Self-Government, more illiberal than that of 1921. To us the thankless privilege of plunging head over heels in the quagmire of heavy taxation, in exchange for the doubtful benefit of being allowed to wrangle over municipal and parochial problems. To the imperial side of the diarchy the auto-



cratic exercise of all the higher powers set forth in a longish list of reserved matters.

And so a rampant militarism, under the cloak of defence, with ever-increasing inroads into the domain of private property, of civic and personal freedom. And so a supreme sway on anything touching foreign relations: passports, visas, leave to travel, emigration, immigration, currency, shipping, aviation, telegraphy, radio, trade and commerce with countries overseas. And so an exclusive mastery over culture and language. Also, a long string of sanctions: veto, suspension and withdrawal of the Constitution, emergency, ratification of the Government's blunders and illegalities, and of the laws judicially pronounced to be null and void. To all this may be added the University, now granted another travesty of autonomy, with the Governor as statutory Chancellor, having the right to appoint the Vice-Chancellor and three other members of the Council besides the nominee of the British Inter-University Committee, and the means to coax at least four of the 12 elected members into forming a stable omnipotent majority.

*Rebus sic stantibus*, no marvel if the legal profession has generally deliberated that there is neither sense nor scope in trying to batter the Chinese wall of British unrelented hegemony, in running after the escaping mirage of political liberty, a boon for which it has long been ordained that no place can be found in an island fortress.

And, consequently, the public weal of the near future remains in the charge of the disciples of Æsculapius. May those eminent leaders, who have so often cured the physis, be also successful in healing the psychic ailments of our people, who, at the eve of the loud-trumpeted change, feel despondent, cheated and denationalised. And may the aforegoing lamentations turn out to be the forebodings of a too pessimistic Cassandra.

## Emergency Powers make of the Constitution a Bauble \*

ONE need not have been a prophet or his son to predict what we now know we shall have. A Charter which falls far short of the pledge solemnly made — in fulfilment of England's undertaking vis-a-vis America relative to all the Colonies — to grant Malta a *bona fide* democratic government. The long-advertised Letters Patent — as explained by the suavely worded dispatch from Downing Street — bear only the name and the cortex of a liberal Constitution. They are bare and hollow inwards, and carry practically no improvement on the present imperial autocracy. Limited powers are pompously conceded to the elects of the people. But even these abridged functions are open to be stayed and superseded by the dominant authority, at any moment, at its complete will and discretion.

To be fair, the pattern — but not to that extent — was laboriously moulded by the National Assembly. Or rather, by its Leftist minority. The graver Centre and Right majority, after the experience of the first sitting, was driven to keep away from the bullying, the chair-handling, and the late hours aptly put into action with obstructionist discourses, of the adverse upstarts. The Assembly and its delegated Committee (from which legal men were banned) even came in for the unstinted encomium of the London spokesman. But there surely cannot be two opinions that the ultimate goal reached is disappointing and humiliating in the extreme.

The 1921 Self-Government, decidedly not perfect, still proved to be fairly workable. It might have gone on swaying over our destinies, without serious hitch or hinder. But with a shameless volte-face, the imperial and ultra-imperialistic authorities, unleashed and urged on by a systematic arch-saboteur of Constitutions, high-handedly usurped, for flimsy pretexts, the reins of local administration, to the exclusion of Ministers and the Houses.

First Proconsul Du Cane, in 1930, dreamt of spying in the Letters Patent a lurking emergency clause, justifying him in bringing the current general elections to a sudden standstill, and in proclaiming his dictatorship. The Court of Appeal, however, found that he had been labouring under a delusion, and pulled to the ground the legislative edifice erected by his preposterous intervention. The King

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in Council rushed to the rescue. The gubernatorial blunders were discreetly ratified (His Excellency being shipped to the French Riviera, never to return) by an Order, whereby the emergency clause was statutorily enacted for the first time. On the strength of it Governor Campbell, 'consulente Lucas,' in 1933, blew up to the sky the so-called Autonomy, recently restored at the suggestion of the Royal Commission. But that royal Instrument was also impugned as "ultra vires", the Sovereign having forfeited the prerogative of law-making for Malta (except on reserved matters) when he granted the Constitution. And it would have, in all likelihood, been judicially pronounced vitiated by nullity, had not the omnipotent Westminster parliament complacently stepped in with an enactment, which gave back to the Crown — according to a ruling of the Privy Council not concurred in, on better authority, by most of our Judges — the lost prerogative.

This time the Emergency Clause prominently figures among the Reserved Matters in the Letters Patent. Its inclusion had met with a stiff opposition from the Constitutional Committee and the unanimity of the Press, mindful of recent experience. But London, for overt reasons, remained adamant. Worse still. Its operation has been indefinitely widened. Heretofore, the emergency could solely emanate from exigencies of "public safety and order". Henceforward, it will be made drawable also out of the requirements of "supply" and "services". Two terms these, so vague and far-reaching in their use, that they can be construed and strained to cover each and every aspect of the Island's life and activity.

As if these expressions were not encompassing enough, the analogical phrase "and matters of the same nature" has been added, which completes the all-embracing incidence of emergency, thus stretching its exercise *ad infinitum*. The clause, in one word, is meant to prove to be the Sword of Damocles, hanging over the heads of Ministers and parliamentarians, as a warning to behave, i.e. to think, deliberate and act orthodoxically to British policy, or loose their political existence.

Other novel features contribute in worsening the liberality of the in-coming Responsible Government, if a paragon be instituted with its precursor. The Senate has disappeared in the grave, with no likelihood of a resurrection, after a decade. With it is gone a valuable safety-valve against factious and hasty legislation, deleterious to the body-politic. Are we so incurably blind to our insular

shortcomings as to pretend to be thus far ahead, constitutionally, of the British of the Magna Charta, and the French of the 1789 Revolution? They still require the safeguard of a House of Revision. We claim that we do not. Whatever will be fabricated in our unicameral legislature will come out faultless, above all criticism. The "Nation" will outstand as a beacon of wisdom to the great, but less gifted peoples!

Then comes Women's Suffrage. The measure, though intrinsically rational and fair, can hardly be commended as ripe for present Malta and Gozo. The most favourable estimate of our clever and energetic Pankhursts cannot count on more than ten per cent. of our excellent housewives and home-loving spinsters, urban and rural, who understand, desire, need, or care for, the franchise. The rest will either apishly duplicate the votes of their husbands, or else keep shy from the polls. And yet the destiny of our Islands may hang on this unconscious incognita.

The Language Clause next. The embargo on the dethronement of English from its pre-eminence has been extended to Maltese. The infliction upon our youths of a long-years' drudgery in studying their own parlance — perpetrated for the egregiously accomplished purpose of ousting Italian — will therefore continue in perpetuity. Without reflecting that the high percentage of failures in all public tests clearly reveals that either the Ghakda reformed vernacular is too hard to tackle, or that no incentive is found in learning what is practically useless and already known. Moreover, the proviso that "no alteration shall without Our (i.e. the King's) prior consent being obtained through a Secretary of State, be made, either by legislation or by law, regulations or practice from time to time in force regarding the use, as a medium of education or instruction, or the teaching of any language in any University, school or other educational institution in Malta" is the quintessence of boldness and drasticity, unheard of even under a Nazi or Fascist regime. It certainly deals a knock-out blow to the supremacy of the people, and to the boasted pseudo-autonomy of our University.

What marvel if the newly disclosed novelties gracing the Charter, just proclaimed by fanfares and flag-hoisting, have generated a widespread feeling that the Maltese — guilty of being small and incapable of reaction — have again been hood-winked, this time more hurtlingly than ever. Is it because they wear the G.C.?

Will our medical leaders remissively accept this predicament? And will our American allies be made conversant with it all?

## Electoral Whims and Mannerisms \*

THE stage immediately preceding the hustings is known to develop a peculiar countenance of the country's life, which is worthy of close observation. The usual calm and imperturbability of the metropolitan atmosphere gives way abruptly to a ruffled phase of collective nervousness, intolerance and strife. In the keen competition for power, passions and instincts run amok. They burst out in the shape of irrational recriminations, illogic reasonings and reciprocal acrimonies. The conflict is normally bloodless. It may at times degenerate into the free use of the fist and the hurling of missiles. For which contingency a bodyguard of bullies is enlisted and lavishly salaried by the political parties best provided with funds.

One thing, however, characterizes that period of diffused frenzy and incontinence. The deliberate misrepresentation of events and intentions for the purpose of duping the electors and securing their votes. At no other time can more opportunely be queried with Pilate: *quid est veritas?* It has become a long-standing custom with democracy, in the process of vote-catching, to camouflage beyond recognition what are, and should be treated as, concrete facts. The performance works through a well studied, quasi scientific technique of veiling and halving of truth accompanied by a dialectical effort of interested suggestions. Scant documentation in support of accuracy is, as a rule, requested. The time is too short for enquiries. The electorate being as it is, partly ignorant and partly indifferent, makes a facile receptacle of the literature copiously dished out from all quarters. And there is danger of the suffrage being diverted into the wrong channels.

The political campaign now with us in full swing does not go totally immune from such unfair methods. It may perchance not prove amiss to offer a few comments on contemporary happenings.

To the Governor is owed the pride of place. *Noblesse oblige* (with apologies to his socialistic preferences). After all, it is he that, by dissolving the Council and issuing the writ, has set the ball rolling. His valedictory oration to the Tapestry Chamber was discreetly

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brief. One may be grateful for his frank acknowledgment that the demise of the Macdonald legislature will not be unduly mourned. But his expectation can by no means be shared that a fair number of enactments, approved by his self-styled caretaker administration on the eve of Self-Government despite unanimous public opposition, will remain on the Statute Book.

The “uncrowned queen” next. Ditto Ditto, without the apologies. According to her own unsolicited Press statement, the news that she is not standing for election has caused disappointment and disillusion to her admirers numbering legions. On the other hand, the D.A.P., (1) where some erstwhile followers of her illustrious parent (to whom a monument is being appropriately erected by the anglicized and phoenicianized Malta) found a welcome pale, has avowedly disowned her. No question that such an ultra-imperialist could join forces with abhorred (by her) nationalism. Neither that a pure aristocrat and staunch Conservative could connive with those professing the tenets of Marx and Proudhomme. In effect, it is against the British socialist government that her well groomed paper goes for once out of its established way of burning incense to the dicta and the facta of Downing Street. There remained the P.P., (2) nearest and dearest to her cherished ideals, as the heir and successor of the really defunct Constitutional party. But only very few known members rallied under its standard, whereof the Chairman trekked to the Bench, and the Secretary withdrew, bag and baggage, to the labourers’ fold. And so the gentle newspaper magnate remained — maybe was left — free to indulge in her favourite, but by now ineffective, wire-pulling.

Proportional Representation, our radicalized system of voting, originated in England, for export only. It can boast of sundry merits and satisfactory results. Minorities are thereby ensured adequate representation. But disadvantages are not wanting. Foremost, that minorities are not seldom placed in the unnatural position of being called to decide which of two contending groups, none of which commands a working majority, should assume the government. A coalition is struck under the terms dictated by the privileged few, who, any discord occurring, can provoke the fall and the change of the Ministry. No party administration is, under such

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(1)—*Democratic Action Party.*

(2)—*People’s Party.*

circumstances, safe and stable. Besides, candidates of the same party in a constituency are put in an unwholesome rivalry between themselves, someone (present company excepted) being tempted, for securing success, to rob by stealthy manoeuvres the number one votes allotted by agreement to another. The bad example finds imitation in the hirelings, who now and then accept remuneration from one of the sides, and carry out the canvassing for the benefit of its opposite.

The electoral turmoil has also disturbed the suffragettes' camp. Dissensions, resignation, promotion, dispersal of women aspirants to a seat in parliament on the various platforms, have formed part of the news. Dissensions alike, and press diatribes, between the promoters and extollers of the sham autonomous University, flamed by programmatic disagreement.

The "Times of Malta" had an extra sound motive to be seriously perturbed. The once court-martialled and recently banished veteran patriot, head of a party harpingly proclaimed to be dead and entombed, had been on a Sunday morning carried shoulder-high through Strada Reale by an enthusiastic crowd, at the strains of national songs. And the legend was resorted to that there was booing. Yes. Only by one: the protesting editor of the 'Nation', who is far from being the spokesman of the "nation". The same distraught paper blundered so badly as to qualify the nationalist re-affirmation of our traditional language and culture as "obscurantism". Tantamount to define Renaissance as the prolongation of the Dark Ages. It also called "sabotage" Dr. Mizzi's denunciation of the new Constitution, forgetting that with the same breath came out its admission that the emergency clause is too vague and provides "no limit" to the Colonial Secretary for its exercise.

Of the disparaging epithets hurled by contesting politicians at each other, the most funnily ludicrous was penned by a prominent labourite, who branded Dr. Pace as "stupid". Lack of brains cannot surely be ascribed to that mind-gifted and energetic fighter. Had the imputation been made by somebody else, it might have easily rebounded as a boomerang to the starting point.

It is indeed an axiom that public men need to lay bare for criticism the innermost recesses of their personality, physical and intellectual, as well as moral and financial. They have to wear for the occasion a steel breast-plate against below-the-belt attacks of unscrupulous adversaries. They must prove to be, as Caesar's wife,

inviolable and incorruptible. The ordeal discourages the choicest elements from coming forward. The more so when the most they can attain, if winners at the polls, is to serve under a Charter, which makes the people's will practically subservient to the imperial *diktat*.

In the meantime all means are devised to entangle issues, to perplex minds, to obtain wrong results. Promises of an utopian future, incapable of accomplishment. Reports of a public meeting as a huge success or a solemn fiasco, according to the colour of the paper publishing the information. Photo-taking of a scarcely attended gathering from three different angles, to simulate three different portions of the crowd. Catchy captions under similar photographs, explaining that the supporters occupy the hill and the railings, when it is evident that the occupiers were hecklers and opposers, whom the Police had roped away from the speakers and from mischief. Offer or payment of money to the tenant of a house in Misida for hoisting a party's flag, in deceitful emulation of a "Maduma" banner fluttering on the roof of an authentic nationalist. These and other tricks are played on a gullible electorate to sidetrack them in the election of their popular rulers. In Malta as well as everywhere.

Thanks to Heaven for some redeeming episodes that reveal the nobler traits of human nature, not effaceable by the present interlude of internecine squabbles. Such is Dr. Mizzi's pledge to invoke the moral support of the independent States of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations Organization, should all endeavours to have the new worthless Constitution ameliorated fail. Such is the *beau geste* of a young legal man, (1) who reacted against the "Times of Malta's" professional terrorism turned against him, by changing his decision of refusal to one of acceptance of the candidature under the Nationalist leader.

All told and considered, however, politics are often a necessary evil and an indispensable dirty affair. They surely offer a thankless job. Public men generally deserve, but rarely get, the praise and the gratitude of their fellow countrymen. The cry of "Hosanna" and "Crucifige" will alternately ring into their ears. Their venture may lead to the summit of fame. It may also drag to poverty or to an early grave.

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(1)—Dr. Toni Pullicino.



## A Superb Revival \*

**W**HEN the battle of Malta, protracted, relentless, brain-racking abated, the Island was left in a pitiable condition. Edifices in ruin, offices dislocated, services in a chaos, bodies emaciated by prolonged privations, sleepless nights and unending worry, movements controlled, food scant, prices at a high level, black market rampant; all these and other distresses contributed in defacing the formerly fair aspect of town and country, in rendering life hardly worth living.

But still more radical changes Malta suffered, affecting her spiritual and moral values. Terrorism raining havoc not only from the sky, hatred instilled and nourished by boundless, groundless propaganda, thought and speech muzzled, the press monopolized, all these factors went a long way towards nigh to killing the soul of the people, and subduing their ideals and aspirations to the meanest bondage. The denationalizing machine had been put in motion before the war started, in prevision of, and alleged precaution for, the war. The commencement of hostilities gave the signal and furnished the pretext for a fierce antinationalist night of St. Bartholomew. The veteran organ was suppressed, all the staff being detained and subsequently exiled, along with scores of other patriots, against whom no charge could be preferred. Hundreds of other exponents of the same creed were summoned by the Police Commissioner and severely warned. One of them collapsed and died on the spot. All through the conflict and its aftermath perquisitions, espionage, arrests, prosecutions became a daily occurrence. The traditional language was hunted and ousted from the innermost corners where it had fled and absconded. All placards and signposts, all names, public prayers, writings and utterances, deeds and documents were anglicized or turned into the imposed vernacular. Religious orders were estranged from their ancient provinces. The flow of clerics to the roman seats of learning was diverted to more northern channels. A crime, provoking the protests and jeers of bystanders, even to wish a *bongiornu* or *bonasira*. An offence, meriting apprehension and lock-up, the mere chanting of a neapolitan ditty.

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To one who was unavoidably absent, to return and be confronted with this transformed and deformed aspect of his country caused a poignant pang and bitter impression. Impossible to believe that it was not a mask, but a genuine, deeply-set and permanent feature. And it proved hard to hold back, in the spasm of grief and disillusionment, the Carduccian cry: *La nostra patria è vile!* The hope, however, intervened, nay the certainty, that beneath the deceitful surface of an apparently general perversion to a disgusting ultra-imperialism, kept forcibly underway by a tremendous posse of influence, there lay deep strata of sound and healthy feelings. The certainty that these sentiments, unsoiled by unclean contacts and hardened by dire threats, were endeavouring to break through the crushing weight, in a feverish attempt to come out once more in the daylight. And indeed the wishful expectation did actually materialize to an extent which it was then fool-hardy to foresee.

The first dawn of a national revival broke out when the monopoly of the imperially chauvinistic newspaper, bound hands and feet to the chariot of the domineering power, came to an end. A fearless, open-minded, independent weekly essayed to challenge the prevailing conspiracy of silence shielding the doings of the Palace coterie and its ramifications, by opening its columns to the airing of grievances and the free debating of matters of public interest. Published under heavy odds, undaunted by enticements and menaces, the *Bulletin* soon bloomed into a daily fighter, widely circulated and greedily read.

The next harbinger of better times had its manifestation in the cordial welcome extended to the repatriated deportees by the people, whose enthusiasm the authorities prevented from exploding by keeping all but the familiars outside the Customs barriers. Then came the public acclamations on the memorable acquittal of all the accused in the patched up political trials. To which followed the unexpected liquidation of the reactionary party, self-destroyed by the violence of its vindictive misdeeds and the abjection of its subservience to London authority. Nor did any injection of fresh energy succeed in galvanizing its spent vitality.

The sequence of favourable events gave excellent ground to anticipate a parting of the ways, the opening of a new page. A propitious occasion was offered by the announcement of a constitutional reform, supposedly terminating the present autocratic regime in favour of a rule by the chosen of the population. Politics at the

time lay benighted, stunned to a profound lethargy by the continuous violent blows of bureaucracy. An exception lurked in the workmen's camp. Organization, discipline and propaganda—tutored by cognate bodies in England — welded together a proletarian army, instructed for action, the goal being the betterment of the labourers' conditions of work and living. For some time the arena was theirs and clear. But their attitude soon waxed dangerous and overbearing. The more so when the Socialist party in England swept the polls, and when a Socialist solicitor was chosen for the governorship of Malta.

When, however, they started a ruthless attack on capitalism and proclaimed their resolve, after conquering power as they were certain of doing, to heal the bankrupt budget and actuate the social reforms by wholesale direct taxation, an alarm was sounded by the landed aristocracy. A ready response came from the industrial and commercial nabobs. The two powerful elements joined forces in the determination to resist and frustrate the preposterous claims of the Labour Party. On the other hand, in the sister island a movement was on foot to secure the best material well-being for Gozo, the Cinderella of our archipelago. The means excogitated would consist in electing as representatives in parliament none but resident Gozitans; the mandate, in blackmailing the party in power towards satisfying their desiderata.

So far Mammon inspired the instincts of the roused politicians. And the furtherance of the economical prosperity, desired or threatened, by one class or an island, to the exclusion and the detriment of another, built up the platforms for the electoral struggle. No thought or consideration was for one moment reserved for the loftier planes where the soul and the mind thrive and operate. Worse still. When a voice was heard, solitary at first but soon widely re-echoed, that no State can prosper without ideals and aspirations of a psychic character, an outcry was raised in the three materialistically minded groups denouncing ideologies as pernicious to the public welfare.

And so the assistance proffered to the conservatives against the marxist agitators, in exchange for their adherence to the nationalist tenets, was summarily brushed aside. Even by those erstwhile patriots, who had solemnly proclaimed the language question to be a matter of principle that brooked no derogation nor postponement. For these same individuals the name of their old leader was to be

tabooed as alienating the suffrage of the electorate. Instead, an unnatural pact was signed with the worst enemies of nationalism.

Which last-named party rose as one man to fight its battle alone. Contrary to its adversaries, it possessed no funds, the sinews of war. It could not count on support from the high. But it fully and confidently relied on the sanctity of its cause, on the disinterestedness of its purpose. The truth is there, which tolerates no denial. What happens to be the aboriginal offspring of natural forces and conditions cannot be permanently suppressed. It may endure passing oppression, darkening, oblivion. But the moment arrives for its complete reassertion and rehabilitation. And to these natural causes which cannot suffer obliteration are surely assignable our many affinities to the nearest continent.

No wonder that, when the clarion was sounded, eager streams of followers rallied from everywhere, representing all classes, all occupations. Mostly youths, the conquerors of the future, full of fervour and enterprise. No wonder that the congress halls were packed to overflowing, the squares were thronged with ovating supporters, the demonstrations warm and spontaneous, the spirits highly strung and dashing.

The stupendous revival, so sudden and significant, disconcerted the plans of the whole range of opposite combatants, as well as of the authorities, local and central. Aghast with surprise and concern, they all turned their guns against the reborn and rejuvenated army. Calumnies, lies, vituperations, threats and libels, police attacks and brutal striking with batons, bombs and petards were all set in action to stem the surging avalanche of fiery upholders of our natural characteristics and traditional conquests. With no effect.

Whatever the verdict of the hustings, whatever the proportion of members elected, the battle has been won already. Nationalism is as alive and efficient as ever. The ashes of Mitrovich, Mizzi, Sceberras and Mifsud may well continue to rest in peace within their honoured graves. Whichever group climbs to power will again have to reckon with the valid collaboration or the strenuous opposition of the nationalists. Until the language clauses of the Charter are repealed, which made His Majesty's recent announcement to the Commons of the Malta Self-Government sound ironical. Until our old language and culture shall regain the privileged positions they held and to which they are entitled.

