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**Imperial Policy in Malta, 1934-1939:
Britain's Need for Benevolent Despotism**

University of Oxford

Master of Studies in Global and Imperial History

Trinity Term 2012

Abstract

After a century of constitutional development, and a decade of self-rule (1921-1930, 1932-1933), Malta reverted to Crown-Colony government in 1934 until 1939. This thesis analyses the nature as well as the ramifications of the British political policy adopted during this period. Malta was run autocratically under absolute British control, while self-government remained a distant promise. In the context of Britain's uneasy position in the Mediterranean in the 1930s, the British authorities started a process of de-Italianisation. This further defined the autocratic nature of the administration as it sought to eliminate potentially dangerous Italian elements in Malta. Nevertheless, as much as being despotic, British rule was equally benevolent. British authorities sought to harness Maltese consent to this type of Crown-Colony rule through a multi-level policy of 'good' governance. To this end, Governor David Campbell initiated a process of social modernisation in the moribund areas of agriculture and health. Governor Bonham-Carter went a step further. He committed himself to closing the distance between the Maltese and the British by attempting to remove racial imperial attitudes towards the natives. Through the constitutional experiment of 1936, Bonham-Carter also set out to 'teach' the conduct of responsible politics to Maltese politicians by passing them the values of civic duty. Although the Maltese politicians opposed Britain's investment in domestic modernisation, and remained resilient in their demand for self-government, the nation's pulse measured differently. The 1935 Jubilee and the 1937 Coronation festivities, used as case studies to evaluate the effectiveness of the benevolent policy as it developed in different stages, both revealed and confirmed Maltese support for British rule. Upon the reintroduction of elections in 1939, both the electorate's poor turnout and the election results reaffirmed this point. Meanwhile, the nation's participation in WWII removed any doubt of where the nation's sympathies truly lay.

Acknowledgements

It would not have been possible to write this thesis without the help and support of a number of people. My deepest gratitude goes to my supervisor whose advice and unfailing support, keen insight and meticulous analysis of my work were instrumental to the completion of this thesis. Similarly, I am indebted to the course convenors whose dedication and assistance were invaluable to my experience at this University. My deep appreciation also goes to several librarians and archivists on whose kindness and efficiency I have depended so much. My deep thanks should also go to my closest friends whose support and great company made this academic experience truly remarkable. Finally, my most sincere gratitude definitely must go to my parents and sisters whose affection, understanding and moral backing have been indispensable throughout.

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List of Abbreviations

CO	Colonial Office
CP	Constitutional Party
Desp.	Despatches to the Secretary of State for the Colonies
FO	Foreign Office
GMR	Government Miscellaneous Report
HC Deb.	House of Commons Debates
HL Deb.	House of Lords Debates
LGO	Lieutenant Governor Office
MBB	Malta Blue Book
MGG	Malta Government Gazette
NP	Nationalist Party
NAM	National Archives of Malta
TNA	The National Archives, UK

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Introduction

Maltese constitutional development since Malta became a British colony in 1800 came slowly but progressively.¹ It reached an apex in 1921 with the granting of a self-government constitution conferring power and responsibility to an elected Maltese Legislative Assembly and Senate. This constitution was suspended in 1930 as a result of a politico-religious conflict and the birth pangs of secularisation in an otherwise staunchly Catholic country. Restored in 1932, self-rule was revoked indefinitely in 1933 for reasons of geo-strategic and political security. The Crown-Colony administration that replaced self-government in 1934 was peculiar to the very particular Maltese case in the 1930s. According to British official sources, this provisional form of government ushered in a constructive phase of state benevolence² dominated by a large-scale programme of social reform and economic development³ spearheaded by a ‘forward and progressive policy’ of paternalist rule.⁴ To the disgruntled Maltese politicians however, it was an unacceptable form of autocratic government⁵ which triggered a ‘state of illegality, stagnation and reaction’.⁶

The three main parties dominating Malta’s political scene in the 1930s were the pro-Italian Nationalist Party (NP), the pro-British Constitutional Party (CP) and the embryonic Labour Party (LP). Relations between them were conditioned by the years-old undercurrents of the ‘Language Question.’ This was the conflict that had emerged in the late nineteenth century between English and Italian sympathisers in Malta following a failed British experiment of anglicisation through education. In a country bearing a centuries-long connection with Italian culture, history, language and religion, this British move could not but leave serious ramifications. Throughout the early decades of the twentieth century, the Maltese political camp remained divided along pro-British and pro-Italian lines as local politics degenerated

¹ Refer to Appendix A: Maltese Constitutional Development, 1800–1939.

² Rothschild, [H]ouse of [C]ommons [Deb]ates, 1 July 1936, vol.314, c.505.

³ The National Archives, [C]olonial [O]ffice 58/515/89036 (Minute, A.B. Acheson, 15 Mar. 1939).

⁴ CO158/503/89036 (Minute, Dawe, 23 Feb. 1937).

⁵ CO158/501 (4 Aug. 1937); *Il Berka*, (11 Feb. 1935), p.2.

⁶ Strickland, [H]ouse of [L]ords [Deb]ates, 1 Nov. 1934, vol.94, c.65; Strickland, HL Deb., 30 July 1935, vol.98, c.927.

into petty party squabbles between the Constitutionals and Labourites on the one hand, and the Nationalists and Church on the other, respectively.

Maltese historiography prevalently depicts this period as that unfortunate phase of ‘constitutional retrogression’ and ‘gubernatorial autocracy’⁷ when Maltese political development reached its lowest point. There were very few historians who spared more than a mere couple of lines to this particular colonial rule and who wavered from this description. Historian Edith Dobie underlines how the decade was marked by an unprecedented form of constructive British interventionism.⁸ Dennis Austin’s presentation corroborates Dobie’s through his formulation of ‘modernizing autocracy’,⁹ a structure of government where one-man-rule runs an efficient administration by applying itself to the practical task of reform.

This study undertakes a deeper analysis of this phase. British authorities invested primarily in the urgent policy of de-Italianisation which sought to eliminate pro-Italian elements that threatened Malta’s geostrategic security in the stormy 1930s. How this strategy warped and woofed into the general policy makes up the subject of Chapter 1. Rather than simply eliminating internal forces of potential danger, however, British rulers had to supply a favourable substitute to the Italian variable. As shall be analysed in Chapter 2, British colonial policy simultaneously pursued a proactive programme of benevolent despotism consumed with the paternalist duty of obtaining for Malta all that which the preceding self-government administration should have, but failed to achieve. This policy translated into three main strands: an unprecedented programme of social modernisation, mainly in the agriculture and health sectors; an attempt to bring down racial barriers between British and Maltese of all classes, and a political strategy of inculcating the Maltese politicians with a strong sense of civic duty.

This dual policy of de-Italianisation and British benevolence followed no particular sequence, with both strands being developed concurrently by two assiduous governors, Sir David Muschet Campbell (1931–6) and Sir Charles Bonham-Carter (1936–40), an equally committed Lieutenant-Governor Sir Harry Charles Luke (1930–8), along with a team of

⁷ J.J. Cremona, *An Outline of the Constitutional Development of Malta under British Rule* (Malta, 1963), p. 37–39.

⁸ E. Dobie, *Malta’s Road to Independence* (Oklahoma, 1967), p. 111.

⁹ Dennis Austin, *Malta and the End of Empire* (London, 1971), p. 16.

Maltese collaborators. As the British authorities allegedly stooped down and reached out to the ordinary Maltese, they sought to manufacture stronger consent while entrenching imperial mentalities deeper.¹⁰ The ramifications and achievements, or otherwise, of this benevolent despotism is dealt with in Chapter 3.

Beyond the use of secondary literature and unpublished scholarly work, drawing from the particular Maltese as well as the broader imperial historiography, this study has benefitted extensively from the voluminous Colonial and Foreign Office files at the National Archives, Britain, and the Despatches to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Annual Departmental Reports and the Lieutenant Governor Office files at the Malta National Archives. These present the official side of the story. The private collections of the Bonham-Carter Papers at the Churchill Archives, Cambridge, and the Harry Luke Files at the Middle East Archives and Rhodes House Library, Oxford, helped supplement the information gleaned from the abovementioned official sources. An equivalent source for Governor David Campbell is not available. Besides the qualitative data, this study occasionally draws on quantitative data too. To this end, the Malta Blue Books, numerical tables in the Annual Reports and the Malta Government Gazettes supplied a relatively reliable and convenient source.

Confining myself to these primary sources, however, would have prejudiced my work to the British or government perspective only: what the authorities planned to do, what they thought they were doing and with what perceivable results. This thesis thus also draws from material which provides the Maltese side of the story. On the one hand, the position of the political parties is derived from the respective parties' newspapers. *The Malta Chronicle and Imperial Service Gazette* and the vernacular *Il Berka* ('The Lighting') were the Constitutional Party's organs. The Labour Party initially owned *Il Cotra* ('The Crowd'), which stopped publication in 1933. The Nationalist Party had the moderate English *Mid-Day Views* and the radical Italian *Malta*. These two newspapers were not available from March 1936 and January 1939, respectively.

¹⁰ J.A. Mangan, *Making Imperial Mentalities, Socialisation ad British Imperialism* (Manchester, 1990), Introduction.

Although after WWI Maltese society had become increasingly politicised, the plural voices of the political parties were not always synchronous with the demands and feelings of the masses. The paucity of sources speaking for the Maltese population at large – owing to prevalent illiteracy – limited me to such petitions, complaints or notes of acclaim which were passed indirectly through trusted intermediaries such as parish priests or notable professional people in the village or town. The non-conventional historical source of photos helped expand my understanding of public opinion. Interviews would have supplied a veritable insight into the average perception of the people and their attitude towards the British authorities. However, limits of time and space precluded me from incorporating this research method, leaving the area open for more thorough future research.

Chapter I

Reactive Policy of de-Italianisation

The imperial policy adopted during the 1934–9 Crown Colony cannot be understood outside the context of the imperial geopolitics. In what was for Britain a vital naval base and garrison fortress, what had top priority in Malta were the maintenance of good order and the security of a docile population. The more so because of Malta's unique experience in the 1930s, its geopolitical value and the security function it served in the empire at a time of growing international tension. The reactive policy of de-Italianisation that ran in parallel with the policy of 'good' governance attests to the ulterior security motives behind Crown-Colony rule in Malta.

Britain's affair in the Mediterranean, beginning in the sixteenth century and lasting roughly for four hundred years, was 'a love-hate relationship'.¹¹ Imperial policy in the region was at best amorphous, fluctuating by varying degrees of commitment depending on international political and economic developments. Each time that another major power reared its head, however, Britain was sure to strike back and assert its supremacy. Throughout the nineteenth century, French emperors and Russian tsars had tried, in vain, to offset British control over the region. By comparison, Italy's bid to establish supremacy in the early years of the ensuing century was more destructive, mainly because of the dramatic way in which it emerged. Whereas British military involvement in the interwar Mediterranean was characterised by the 'euphoria of sleepy contentment',¹² Mussolini's Italy was keen on reawakening the Roman dream of *mare nostrum*.¹³

This latent threat became more pronounced in 1935 when Mussolini undertook the invasion of Abyssinia: 'for the first time for a century, a Mediterranean Power (*sic*) had undertaken a major military and naval operation in the teeth of the strongly expressed disapproval of

¹¹ Q. Hughes, *Britain in the Mediterranean and the Defence of Her Naval Stations* (Liverpool, 1981), p. 9.

¹² E. Monroe, *The Mediterranean in Politics* (Glasgow, 1938), p. 5; J. Darwin, *Britain and Decolonisation: The Retreat from Empire in the Post-war World* (London, 1988), p. 32.

¹³ I. Montanelli and M. Cervi, *L'Italia dell'Asse: 1936, 10 Giugno 1940* (Rizzoli, 1980), p. 114.

Great Britain.¹⁴ Although not a single shot was fired at sea, this belligerent move by a junior partner had an immense effect on British imperial psychology. In the long run, Italian glory in the Mediterranean was short-lived: it was a paper tiger, born to die quickly. Yet, its aggressive ambition steered by a fickle leader jolted the British out of their reverie and caught them between a rock and a hard place over whether to appease Italy or secure their supremacy.¹⁵

Situated almost at the geometric centre of the Mediterranean, Malta's fate had for a century been both concomitant to and reflective of the degree of British commitment in the region.¹⁶ Malta's rundown defence structure in the harbour and the fortresses – obsolete in the face of technological upgrades and chiefly, aerial military development – testified to Britain's general idleness in the region between the two world wars. With emerging problems in the Far East, Britain had shifted its focus, energy and investments away from this sea.¹⁷ Besides, in the early 1930s Britain was still putting its hope on a continued and possibly stronger friendship with Italy.

Indeed, the revocation of the Malta self-government constitution in 1933 was not an affront to Italy as much as a precautionary measure meant to prevent tensions in Malta from marring relations between the two powers. Although the presence of 'Italian influence, Italian propaganda' and 'Italian money'¹⁸ in Malta was the official reason behind the re-establishment of direct Crown Colony in late 1933, it was the tension which the 1932–3 pro-Italian Maltese government provoked, especially following plans to use public funds on promoting Italian language in primary schools, that saw the revocation of self-government. Appeasement won the day: not wanting 'to spoil the Anglo-Italian ship for a ha'p'orth of

¹⁴ E.H. Carr, 'Great Britain as a Mediterranean Power', *Pamphlets on External Relations* (Cust Foundation Lecture, 1937), p. 21.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-21.

¹⁶ D.H. Cole, *Changing Condition of Imperial Defence, Essays on Military Geography* (London, 1930), p. 95.

¹⁷ Douglas Austin, *Malta and British Strategic Policy, 1925–1943* (London, 2004), pp. 30–35.

¹⁸ HC Deb., 13 July 1943, vol.391, in A.J. Stockwell and A.N. Porter, *British Imperial Policy and Decolonization, 1938–1964*, vol. 1, 1938–1951, (2 vols., London, 1987), p. 157.

Maltese tar’,¹⁹ the British resolved to ‘shut the Maltese ministers up, [and] not hurt Mussolini.’²⁰

Eventually though, the British developed a more confrontational stance. As the decade wore on, the British authorities determined to systematically snuff out sources of Italian propaganda²¹ and silence those pro-Italian Maltese who:

render lip service to the Empire but behind it belittle everything British, praise everything in connection with the actions of a neighbouring friendly power and strive for the Italianisation of this island of ours.²²

Believing that ‘tinkering with the Italian-Maltese question is worse than useless’ and that ‘a bold British policy is absolutely necessary’,²³ Governor David Campbell set out to strip the Italian language from its official status in administration, the courts, education and culture.²⁴ This he did in spite of opposition from certain British spheres, namely the Foreign Office and the British Ambassador in Rome,²⁵ and of drawing more attacks from pro-Italian Maltese. The illness which often caused him to be away from the islands for long spells of convalescence in Britain did not hinder his plan. Sir Harry Luke, Lieutenant-Governor since 1930, acted as a reliable substitute during his absence.

Throughout 1934 Campbell promoted English and Maltese as the only official languages of Malta while Italian was replaced by Maltese as the language of the courts.²⁶ Had Campbell had his way, Italian would have been removed from secondary education and the Law course at the University of Malta during that same year too.²⁷ This would have completed

¹⁹ [F]oreign [O]ffice 371/19535 (Minute, 4 Apr. 1935).

²⁰ D. Fenech, ‘How Malta Lost Self-Government, 1930–1933’, Proceedings of History Week (Malta Historical Society, 2011); H. Frenco, *Malta’s Quest for Independence* (Valletta, 1989), p. 194.

²¹ ‘Cyprus and Malta, Points of Similarity’, *The Malta Chronicle and Imperial Services Gazette* [hereafter, *Chronicle*] (14 Nov. 1931), p. 3; ‘Disloyalty, The Tolerance and Indifference of the Imperial Authorities’, *Chronicle* (12 Apr. 1932), p. 3.

²² FO371/18419 (Campbell, Empire Day Speech, 1 June 1934).

²³ CO158/481 (Campbell to Cunliffe-Lister, Strictly Personal and Secret, 16 Apr. 1934); (Campbell to Cunliffe-Lister, Secret and Important, 5 June 1934).

²⁴ CO158/481 (Campbell to Cunliffe-Lister, Secret, 12 June 1934).

²⁵ CO158/481 (British Ambassador in Rome to FO, 30 June 1934).

²⁶ [M]alta [G]overnment [G]azette, Letters Patent, 16 Aug. 1934.

²⁷ CO158/481 (Campbell to Cunliffe-Lister, Secret, 5 Sept. 1934); (Campbell to Sir John, 24 Sept. 1934).

the process of demoting Italian from its official status as a compulsory language in education, something which had already been done in primary schools in 1932.²⁸

Italian culture too was dealt a severe blow. The powers of the existing institutions through which Italian infiltrated Maltese society were either stamped out completely or largely curtailed. Attendance at the *Istituto di Cultura Italiana* (Italian Culture Institute) was restricted to Italians only by excluding British subjects, including those Malta-born children of Italians. Eventually, the *Istituto* was closed down altogether in 1936 for serving as ‘a centre for undesirable Italian propagandist activities.’²⁹ Another school, run and subsidised by the Italian government, and allegedly serving propaganda purposes too, had already been suppressed and eventually closed in 1934. Although the *Umberto I* Italian School remained open during the period, attendance was limited to children of Italian nationality. Activities of the Fascist club, *Casa del Fascio*, were likewise restricted to Italians only.³⁰

Campbell’s predicament of an Italian threat in Malta was proven right in spring and summer 1935 through the activities of Virginio Gayda, editor of the *Popolo d’Italia* (‘People of Italy’) and Mussolini’s top press-man. At the outset of the Abyssinian War, Gayda threatened doom to Britain if she supported the League of Nations’ imposition of economic sanctions against Italy. He wrote extensively of bombing Malta and of destroying the Mediterranean fleet in the Grand Harbour. These outpourings might not have been explicitly Italy’s official intentions; yet, the British Government was unable to ignore them. Hanging like Damocles’ sword, Gayda’s threats drove the British Mediterranean fleet out of its historic base in Malta to Alexandria where it stayed for the winter. The possibility of moving the Navy’s base from Malta to Cyprus was also considered, but proved untenable in the end.³¹

²⁸ For a review of the Language Question in the context of Italian Fascism refer to C. Baldoli, ‘The “Northern Dominator” and the *Mare Nostrum*: Fascist Italy’s “Cultural War” in Malta’, *Modern Italy*, 13:1 (Feb, 2008), pp. 5–20.

²⁹ FO371/20408 (Memorandum, ‘Notes on the Standing of Italian Institutions in Malta’, 22 July 1936).

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ ‘Navy: Rapid Change-Round in Mediterranean May Mean a Shift to Base from Malta to Cyprus’, *News Review* (London, 14 May 1936) enclosed in Rhodes House Library, MSS Brit. Emp.s.286, Box 3/2 (Luke Papers), ff. 1–145.

The authorities immediately embarked on an island-wide programme of passive defence by opening air raid shelters and giving instructions on how to use gas masks if the need arose.³² Pro-Italian Maltese press was suppressed and the newly-introduced medium of the rediffusion was used to fight Italian propaganda.³³ A mimic war was also set up in May 1936.³⁴ Besides military preparations, security action against espionage and internal conspiracy were stepped up. In October 1935, the British authorities arrested and expelled seven Italian subjects ‘for reasons of public order or for activities prejudicial to the interests and safety of the fortress.’³⁵

The Italian Consul-General in Malta, Marchese Ferrante, too was expelled from the islands on grounds of conspiring with the clergy against the British authorities; of inciting disorder amongst university students; of provoking pro-Italians to step up their demand for self-rule; of supplying propaganda material to Maltese newspapers, and of being involved in espionage over British naval movements.³⁶ Ferrante was recalled to Rome in April 1936 in a hushed-up operation³⁷ which seemingly confirms that the Italian government was directly involved in this propaganda.³⁸

Although Malta remained intact during the Italian escapade in Abyssinia, 1935–6 marked a turning point in the British perception of the Italian threat over Malta:

For a number of years one of the main problems in Malta has been Italian penetration and for the last two or three years the Italian Government’s activities in this direction have been almost blatant...In the first years of this penetration movement it wasn’t thought that the Italians had any territorial aims against Malta but latterly it has become necessary to alter this view. Though we were slow to realize the fact, this undoubtedly was the original aim in Malta. Of late Mussolini has formulated grandiose and far-reaching schemes and the inclusion of Malta in a Third Roman Empire is undoubtedly one of them.³⁹

³² MSS Brit. Emp.s.286 (Luke Papers), Box 3/2, ff. 1–145 (Crisis Diary, Aug.–Sept. 1935).

³³ MSS Brit. Emp.s.286 (Luke Papers), Box 3/2, ff. 1–145 (Note of Conference held at the Palace, Valletta, 14 Sept. 1935).

³⁴ *News Review*, 14 May 1936.

³⁵ FO371/20406 (Italian Embassy in London, Aide Memoire, 14 Jan. 1936). The more prominent four were Luigi Mazzone and his two sons, Giovanni and Luigi Filippo (agents of C.I.T., an Italian Tourist Company), as well as Leonardo Fusco (Manager of the Malta Agency of the *Banco di Roma*).

³⁶ FO371/20406 (Sender signature and address cut off, Secret, 14 Feb. 1936).

³⁷ FO371/20408 (No distribution, Sir Drummond, 1 July 1936).

³⁸ FO371/20408 (CO to FO, Most Secret, 13 July 1936).

³⁹ *Ibid.*

Believing that ‘the strictest vigilance on our part is still called for if the menace we have had to guard against in the past is not to re-appear’,⁴⁰ the new governor, Charles Bonham-Carter, felt it necessary to keep a close watch on the new Italian Consul-General, Signor Casertano. Though ‘not serious in themselves’, Casertano’s actions were still ‘a trifle annoying’⁴¹ as they deferred ‘the day when [the British] can say that the influence of Italian ideals and culture in Malta is dead.’⁴² The Consulate subsidised opera in Malta and invited excellent theatrical companies from Italy; it furnished propaganda material to an Italian bookshop in Valletta located next to the Governor’s palace, and solicited the support of the Church for the Italian cause by enlisting influential Maltese ecclesiastics.

It is in the religious sphere that Bonham-Carter invested most of his energies to iron out the kinks. He endeavoured to bring a gradual change in the outlook of the Maltese clergy by transferring the Maltese houses of the various religious orders from Italian or Sicilian provinces to British ones. Additionally, he envisaged changing the curriculum of the Episcopal Seminaries of Malta and Gozo. In this way, the future secular clergy of the two islands would develop an outlook more sympathetic to the English language and British institutions, and be less attached to the culture of Fascist Italy.⁴³

Beyond this ‘*politique de longue haleine*’, Bonham-Carter proved as equally assiduous as Campbell in his bid to remove ‘the enemy from within.’ He dismissed Professor C. Mallia, lecturer of Commercial Law at the University of Malta, and V. Bonello, curator of Fine Arts at the Malta Museum, from their respective positions. The reason was the same for both, and very vague for that: they were accused of having ‘acted against the prejudice of British interests in Malta and in a manner improper in an office of His Majesty’s Civil Service.’⁴⁴ Although British consensus on their dismissal was not unanimous, Mallia and Bonello were both discharged in February 1937.⁴⁵ Actions such as these left the Italian Consul-General lost for words: ‘I do not understand here...I understand so little and sometimes I ask myself

⁴⁰ FO371/21164 (Bonham-Carter to Ormsby-Gore, Secret, 30 Mar. 1937).

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² FO371/22390 (CO to FO, 4 Aug. 1938).

⁴³ FO371/21164 (Bonham-Carter to Ormsby-Gore, Secret, 30 Mar. 1937).

⁴⁴ CO158/501/89001/7 (Extract from Conclusions of Meeting, Secret, 6 Feb. 1937).

⁴⁵ Ibid.

either I am living on moonland or not (*sic*).⁴⁶ But then, Casertano had better watch his steps as his every move was in the meantime being recorded by the MI5 Defence Security Office.⁴⁷

Neither the lifting of the trade sanctions against Italy in July 1936, nor the Anglo-Italian Agreements in 1938 helped to restore stable Anglo-Italian relations. As ‘an atmosphere of suspicion and misunderstanding’ between the two countries persisted in the latter part of the decade, British policy became more assertive.⁴⁸ Besides the continued process of de-Italianisation, defence work was stepped up as provision was made for the protection of the civil population, particularly in and around the Grand Harbour.⁴⁹ By 1938, the Governors’ firm measures acquired the wanted effect and ‘the position may now be described as satisfactory.’⁵⁰ Italian anti-British activities in Malta had lost their sting but caution remained a constant still.

Italian and British sensitivities – both cultural and strategic – crossed repeatedly in Malta, the more so in the 1930s and particularly after 1935–6.⁵¹ However divided British opinion was on the importance of Malta, the empire was not ready to let the islands slip away. The generally complacent British policy of toleration towards Italian sentiment in Malta gave way to a more autocratic and confrontational one as the decade wore on and as Anglo-Italian relations deteriorated further. That which has been outlined above is the reactive policy of de-Italianisation which the authorities adopted to remove those forces that might have brought Italy and Britain in direct conflict over Malta. While securing the British a stronger hold on the islands, however, such a policy did not ensure them natural allegiance of the people at large. It was thus necessary to tailor a proactive policy that would cultivate stronger loyalty amongst the ruled. This is the subject of the next chapter.

⁴⁶ Defence Security Officer, Most Secret, ‘Report on the Italian Reaction to the Dismissal of Vincenzo Bonello and Carlo Mallia, with Comments’, (translated literally) by Raffaele Casertano, the Italian Consul-General, enclosed in CO/158/501/89001/7 (Bonham-Carter to Ormsby-Gore, Secret, 18 Jan. 1937).

⁴⁷ FO371/22391 (British Embassy in Rome to FO, Secret, 16 Nov. 1938).

⁴⁸ FO371/21161 (Cabinet Paper, ‘Present Phase of Anglo-Italian Relations’, Secret, Sept. 1937).

⁴⁹ CO158/517/89152/9 (Bonham-Carter to MacDonald, Secret, 9 Nov. 1938); FO371/23813 (Col. A. Burrows, Memorandum, Very Secret, 7 June 1939).

⁵⁰ CO158/511/89001/10 (Anglo-Italian Relations in Malta, 1938).

⁵¹ H. Frendo, ‘Italy and Britain in Maltese Colonial Nationalism’, *A History of European Ideas*, 15:4–6 (Aug. 1992), p. 733.

Chapter II

Proactive Policy of Imperial Benevolence

Governors David Campbell and Charles Bonham-Carter invested in a constructive policy which sought to neutralise Italian vestiges and legitimate the Crown Colony's despotic rule through a policy of imperial benevolence. The British statesmen did not envisage turning Malta in an *Anglettere d'outre mer*. Rather, they attempted to promote stronger support among the ruled by investing in a modernisation programme and by building stronger ties with Maltese people and politicians alike. The extent to which this was both feasible and ultimately effective depended not so much on official aims as on the Maltese politicians' perception and the public's reception.

Governor Campbell's official declaration of his 1934 political programme laid out the foundations of the proactive policy that would characterise the following six years:

Although I do not pretend to be able to work miracles or to effect changes which will give immediate results, yet, I have every intention of initiating reforms which I trust will eventually not only benefit...social life generally of these islands, but will also help to ameliorate the life of the poor people and workers.⁵²

To this end, Campbell believed that increased state spending in Malta was indispensable if stronger support for British rule were to be won.⁵³ So his argument ran that it could have been John Maynard Keynes⁵⁴ himself stating the following:

A wider circulation of money on a larger scale would be of material benefit to the community as a whole, and it is incumbent on the Government to appropriate as large a sum as possible, within the bounds of prudent finance, for extraordinary works and

⁵² Despatches to Secretary of State for the Colonies [hereafter Desp.], Jan.–Feb. 1934, nos. 1-89 (Campbell, Candlemas Speech, 2 Feb. 1934): Continuing a tradition started under the Order of St. John, the Candlemas Ceremony was used to relay the government programme to the public through the parish priests who annually gathered at the Government's Palace on the second day of February. This ceremony both confirmed and strengthened the hand-in-glove relation of the British State and the Maltese Church.

⁵³ CO158/486/89036, ('Comments on the Estimates and Suggestions for the Despatch', 12 Mar. 1935).

⁵⁴ British macroeconomist dominating the scene in the wake of the Great Depression who contended that governments should increase spending and cut taxes to boost the country's economy.

services needed for the continued progress of the Island, for the development of the remunerative undertakings, and, last but not least, for the relief of unemployment.⁵⁵

Campbell's decision though, derived more from his knowledge of Maltese society and history rather than from Keynesian macroeconomics. Maltese economy had always leaned heavily on centralised state spending. An economic tradition that had mainly developed during the rule of the Order of St. John (1530–1798) as a result of the excessive importation of extraterritorial wealth to the islands, hampered natural economic growth. The Maltese economy developed a weak artificial structure dependent on government intervention and limited private investment. If the flow of state investment stopped, the economy would suffer as a result. The arrival of the British did little to change this. On the contrary, heavy investment in the Grand Harbour's infrastructure and the ripple effect of British spending and use of the islands' services perpetuated it even further.⁵⁶

Slowly but steadily the British authorities became caught up in an eleemosynary economic tradition: 'the Maltese like the Government being run in the way it is...they like the state-subsidised opera, horse-races, carnivals', '*festa*-fireworks'⁵⁷ and 'celebration of Mass in Government Churches.'⁵⁸ Had they removed these, the British would have been charged with 'Philistinism'. Had they laid off the many clerks who overstaffed the Civil Service, the wrath of every family – for 'there are few individuals who do not have near relatives maintained either in whole or in part by the state'⁵⁹ – would have come down on the British administrators.⁶⁰ Efficiency had to be swept under the carpet if the population's adhesion to the Crown was to be strengthened further. In the context of the 1930s direct rule, heavier government spending became central to the Governors' policy more than ever before.

More than the increased spending though, it was the type of investment which stands out, namely, a process of social modernisation which by Maltese standards was probably

⁵⁵ MGG 1935–36, p. 253.

⁵⁶ For a review of Malta's economic background refer to: H. Bowen-Jones, J.C. Dewdney, W.B. Fisher, *Malta: Background for Development* (London, 1962), pp.115–126; B. Blouet, *The Story of Malta* (Malta, 2004), pp. 179–189.

⁵⁷ *Festa* is the feast which every Maltese city, town and village celebrates annually in honour of a patron saint. Some localities even have more than one such feasts, often held in competition with each other.

⁵⁸ CO158/486/89036 (Minute, Davies, 12 Feb. 1935).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ CO158/486/89036 (Minute, Allen, 14 Mar. 1935).

unprecedented in scope. To be sure, this policy was moving in tandem with a similar shift in the broader politics of Empire. Imperial policy during the 1930s, particularly with the passing of the 1929 Colonial Development Act, became centred on the development of the colonies' welfare.⁶¹ Presented as a product of a new altruistic imperialism that made 'advances for aiding and developing agriculture and industry',⁶² the central aim behind this Act was that of 'promoting commerce with or industry in the United Kingdom.'⁶³ Rather than for economic reasons, however, Britain's investment in Malta fell in line with the political policy of legitimating their autocratic rule.

Agriculture was the main area to benefit from this development.⁶⁴ The extensive report compiled by the British Agricultural Adviser F. Stockdale in 1934, clearly attests to this commitment. Malta's successful application for Colonial Development Funds (CDFs) for two projects in this field ensured that it bore some fruit.

The main project financed by a CDF grant of £22,000 was the refurbishment of the existing but largely destitute Experimental Farm and the construction of an adjacent Stock Farm. This was to be in charge of the breeding and rearing of imported animals,⁶⁵ which were later distributed to local farmers and used in the improvement or replacement of weak local breeds.⁶⁶ The Stock Farm also worked on the gradual introduction of an egg incubation

⁶¹ M. Havinden and D. Meredith, *Colonialism and Development: Britain and its Tropical Colonies, 1850–1960* (London and NY, 1995), p. 140; J. Midgley, 'Imperialism, Colonialism and Social Welfare', in J. Midgley and D. Piachaud (eds.), *Colonialism and Welfare, Social Policy and the British Imperial Legacy* (Cheltenham and Massachusetts, 2011), p. 47; J. Lewis, 'The British Empire and World History: Welfare Imperialism and "Soft" Power in the Rise and Fall of Colonial Rule', in Midgley and Piachaud, p. 25; P. Hetherington, *British Paternalism and Africa 1920–1940* (London, 1978).

⁶² D. Meredith, 'The British Government and Colonial Economic Policy, 1919–1939', *The Economic History Review*, 28:3 (Aug. 1975), pp. 484–499.

⁶³ Colonial Development Act, 1929, c.5: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1929/5/pdfs/ukpga_19290005_en.pdf [Last Accessed: 15 Mar. 2012]; S. Constantine, *The Making of British Colonial Development Policy 1914–1940* (London, 1984), p. 187.

⁶⁴ J.B. Greaves, 'Report on Economic Conditions of Cyprus and Malta, With a Note on the Trade of Gibraltar', (London, 1935), p. 39.

⁶⁵ CO158/477 (Campbell to Cunliffe-Lister, 11 May 1934).

⁶⁶ Desp., Sept.–Oct. 1935, nos. 267–347 (A. Azzopardi and F.C. Jessop, Department of Agriculture, 23 Aug. 1935 in Luke to MacDonald, 14 Oct. 1935).

technique⁶⁷ and on the launching of a vaccination programme against the most common animal diseases on the islands.⁶⁸

Beyond animal husbandry, the Agricultural Department forged ahead in improving arable farming. It experimented with developing good manure to increase the fertility of over-exploited soils;⁶⁹ launched a viticulture and oenology scheme and opened nurseries offering hands-on demonstrations of vine planting, pruning, grafting and rearing methods,⁷⁰ and set up a Plant Pathology Brigade to encourage the use of crop sprays, fungicides, and dustings.⁷¹ In accordance with the undertakings of the Conference of Colonial Directors of Agriculture,⁷² the Department also set up an Agricultural Vocational Training School with the objective of creating a new generation of farmers who conformed to the upgraded agricultural standards that were being promoted by the Experimental Farm.⁷³

With another assignment of CDFs of £11,000, Maltese agriculture benefitted through the setting up of the Agricultural Marketing Board.⁷⁴ This was in charge of reorganising local agricultural marketing, and fighting the stagnation caused by the long-time middleman or *pitkali* system.⁷⁵ This systematic scrutiny was paralleled by an equally stringent system of measures for Maltese agricultural exports. Through a strict adherence to stipulated international grading of product quality, the Board sought to both improve the marketability of existent exports while examining the potential for the exportation of other Maltese products.⁷⁶

All throughout, the Agricultural Department invested much of its energies in effective propaganda techniques to reach out to the Maltese farmers, the majority of whom were illiterate. Numerous shows, such as the annual Buskett Agricultural Show and the National

⁶⁷ [G]overnment [M]iscellaneous [R]eport 1936–7, pp. 461–462.

⁶⁸ GMR 1933–4, V2.

⁶⁹ GMR 1937–8, p. 623.

⁷⁰ GMR 1933–4, V6–7; GMR 1934–5, p. 475; GMR 1937–8, p. 623.

⁷¹ GMR 1933–4, V3.

⁷² ‘A Survey of Vocational Agricultural Education in the Colonial Empire’, 24 (CO, London, 1937), p. 4.

⁷³ [L]ieutenant [G]overnor [O]ffice3326/1936 (F.C. Jessop to Luke, 12 Jan. 1937); LGO3326/1936 (Stockdale, 24 Dec. 1936).

⁷⁴ ‘Imperial Grants for Malta: Improving Local Agriculture’, *Chronicle*, 3 July 1934, p. 3.

⁷⁵ GMR 1935–6, pp. 539, 553; H. Bowen-Jones, et al., pp. 333–334.

⁷⁶ *Desp.*, Nov.–Jan. 1936, nos. 348–383 (A.E. Shill, Controller of Agricultural Exports, 9 Oct. 1935 in Campbell to Thomas, 31 Dec. 1935); LGO25/1932 (‘Note on the Marketing of Early Potatoes in the United Kingdom’); GMR 1934–5, p. 503, 505; GMR 1935–6, pp. 550–552.

Fur and Feather Show, were held in style.⁷⁷ The opportunity of using the Church as the authorities' mouthpiece was not overlooked. Director of Agriculture G. Micallef's note of thanks to the Church recurred in almost all of the annual reports:

A word of thanks is due to the Parish Priests and Rectors of outlying churches, for their readiness in complying with my requests to publish notices, instructions and appeals to farmers on urgent matters of interest to the agricultural community.⁷⁸

Such means were bearing the expected results as 'very slowly but progressively farmers are breaking their traditional adherence to old methods and recourse is being made to this Department for advice.'⁷⁹ When in 1935, farmers were invited to visit the Experimental Farm for detailed demonstrations on hygiene and breeding of livestock, a good 1,411 attended. By Maltese standards, this was an encouraging figure.⁸⁰

Next to agriculture, health was the second long-abandoned social sector which attracted huge investments from the colonial government. Chief among the objectives for improvement was the elimination of undulant fever. This years-long scourge was caused by the consumption of contaminated goats' milk.⁸¹ The goat was a household feature of Maltese culture and daily life. It had for years served as the main milk provider. The concentration of the population, the comparatively short distances between the villages and towns, and the lack of cooling facilities explain the custom where shepherds sold fresh milk directly from the goat on customers' doorsteps. This tradition lived on even after it was established in 1906 that the goat was the main culprit of undulant fever.⁸² An average of an annual 1,500 new cases of the fever, from a population of around 250,000,⁸³ was reported as late as 1927–36.⁸⁴

⁷⁷ C. Bonham-Carter, J. Manduca (ed.), *The Bonham-Carter Diaries, 1936–1940: What the British Governor thought of Malta and the Maltese* (Malta, 2004), 1 July 1936, p. 90.

⁷⁸ GMR 1933–4, V5.

⁷⁹ GMR 1933–4, V42.

⁸⁰ GMR 1934–5, p. 471.

⁸¹ For more information on the history of Maltese fever refer to: H.V. Wyatt, 'Brucellosis and Maltese Goats in the Mediterranean', *Journal of Maltese History*, 1:2 (2009), pp. 4–18, and L. Hostman, 'Undulant Fever', *The American Journal of Nursing*, 34:8 (1934), p. 753.

⁸² P. Cassar, 'Sir Themistocles Zammit and the Controversy on the Goat's Role' in *Transmission of Brucellosis (Mediterranean Fever) 1909–1916* (Valletta, 1981), pp. 12, 14–15.

⁸³ Average Population calculated from data in: [M]alta [B]lue [B]ooks 1929–1938, Section 15.

⁸⁴ Calculations from data in: MBB 1927–1936, Section 26.

As a first step, the colonial administration invested an initial CDF grant of £5,000 in setting up a research station for studies on the immunisation of goats. This scheme however set with numerous hurdles and came to a standstill by the end of the decade. Firstly, studies were slowed down after the British pathologist in charge, J.B. Polding, ended up contracting the disease himself. Secondly, the experiment results proved insufficient for the development of a vaccine.⁸⁵ With this project failing to obtain a short-term remedy, the development of a pasteurisation scheme during the same period provided an alternative solution to the elimination of undulant fever.

The Milk Pasteurisation Centre opened four months behind schedule on 11 May 1938. Through a network of milking depots, goats' milk was systematically collected and pasteurised in the central plant. Government distribution initially catered for Valletta, the surrounding city of Floriana and parts of Sliema where British residents were concentrated. Initial quibbling between goat owners and the authorities over the milk price and milking procedure did not portend any good. Yet, once the service started running, the project went relatively well: the number of suppliers increased from 56 in May 1938 to 210 in March 1939.

Parallel to the new system was an initiative to combat traditional perceptions around milk consumption. As the director of the pasteurisation scheme S.F. Barnes reported:⁸⁶

I fully appreciate that, to a person who has been brought up to see his milk produced on the doorstep, it is difficult to believe that a bottle of milk brought round in a wire crate is just the same stuff and has not had all kinds of things taken out or put in.⁸⁷

A series of seven conferences were thus held, bringing together representatives of the main newspapers in Malta to popularise consumption of pasteurised milk.⁸⁸ Possibly more effective were the authorities' appeals to the school teachers,⁸⁹ parish priests and the musical

⁸⁵ LGO1934/1938 (Bonham-Carter to MacDonald, 9 Sept. 1938); GMR 1936–7, p. 178; LGO1934/1938 (Chairman of Undulant Fever Committee to Luke, 25 July 1938).

⁸⁶ GMR 1938–9, p. 245.

⁸⁷ LGO3683/1936 (Talk to the Teachers on Pasteurisation Scheme, 3 Dec. 1936).

⁸⁸ GMR 1937–8 (Milk Marketing Report), p. 145.

⁸⁹ LGO3683/1936 (Talk to the Teachers on Pasteurisation Scheme, 3 Dec. 1936).

band clubs⁹⁰ to encourage their students, followers and members to drink pasteurised milk only.

However broad, this propaganda campaign could not change Maltese habits all too easily. In one instance, the sale of raw milk by private sellers to the Central Civil Hospital, the Orphan Asylum and the Poor House resumed for another five months from the official launching of the scheme. The previous milk providers to these institutions – continuing a long-established family tradition – refused to give up their services before their contracts expired.⁹¹ The sale of raw milk had also to be allowed in Rabat, a town at the island's centre that was cut off from the milking depots.⁹² Likewise, the authorities were compelled to allow the continued daily sale of around 180 gallons of unpasteurised cows' milk in Valletta in face of protests from cow owners whose milk could not be treated in a plant used for goats' milk only.⁹³

In technical terms, by 1939 no clear pattern of milk purchases could be deciphered given the daily and seasonal fluctuations. Demand fell on feast days and public holidays (owing to the drop in demand from the government offices), during Lent (amongst those who abstained from consuming products derived from animals) and in summer when city people moved to the seaside. Health-wise, positive results were quick to show. It is difficult to ascertain that the comparatively low incidence of undulant fever in 1938–9, notably the lowest in many years, resulted from the new trend of pasteurised milk. Yet, it is undeniable that ever since goats were prohibited from Valletta in early 1939, not a single case was reported from there.⁹⁴ Thus, Malta passed from a most ancient method of milk consumption and distribution to an organised system which was more advanced than some of those in other Mediterranean countries or colonies.

There were several other areas which were also invested in and which were no less important than the ones discussed above. By 1938, the first government-run refuse

⁹⁰ LGO917/1937 (Barnes to Briffa, 16 June 1937); (Sec. to Government to 29 Secretaries of Maltese and Gozitan Clubs, 25 Aug. 1937).

⁹¹ LGO2529/1937/14a (Minutes of a Meeting of the Advisory Committee held at the LG's Office, 5 Oct. 1937, Draft Conditions of Agreement for the Purchase of Goats Milk by Milk Marketing Department).

⁹² LGO1935/1938 (Minute, Barnes, 3 Sept. 1938); (Minute, Pace, 6 Sept. 1968).

⁹³ LGO1846/1938 ('Minutes of a Meeting of the Advisory Committee on Milk Marketing', in Barnes to Sec. to the Government, 7 Dec. 1938).

⁹⁴ GMR 1938–9, p. 245.

collection scheme had begun running in Valletta and Sliema;⁹⁵ plans were made for the reconstruction of the *Manderaggio* slum area;⁹⁶ a number of Charitable Institutions⁹⁷ were reorganised, and construction work on the Central Hospital was expedited.⁹⁸ Furthermore, the tourist industry was given a boost with the construction of a first class hotel outside Valletta and the launching of a full-scale programme for the restoration of historical buildings and heritage monuments.⁹⁹

It is difficult to measure the tangible profits of this modernisation process, especially because most of the projects were completed exactly at the end of the period under review. Insofar that the Maltese standard of living was being brought in line with European levels, however, the period marks a big step forward. The outbreak of WWII halted the modernising process and the Malta which emerged after 1945 needed complete restructuring. What followed in the ensuing forty years were prescribed development plans which ushered in a phase of foreign investment, export-led industrialisation and urbanisation.¹⁰⁰

This imperial benevolence, however, did not make Crown Colony rule any more credible or acceptable to the Maltese politicians, pro-British and pro-Italian alike. The Maltese parties were almost unanimous in depicting this direct rule as despotic, a ‘totalitarian regime’ akin to the Fascist or Nazi form of Government.¹⁰¹ This modernisation programme did little to change their perspective. To the contrary, in some cases the plan backfired. Both sides of the political spectrum expressed themselves averse to the hefty government spending in Malta. This opposition was not so much against modernisation *per se* but against the technique of using such projects to ‘kill home rule by kindness’, to borrow from a nineteenth century Conservative policy for Ireland.

⁹⁵ GMR 1936–7, pp. 183–184, 194–198, 201–202; GMR 1937–8, p. 250; CO158/477 (Campbell to Cunliffe-Lister, 2 Nov. 1934).

⁹⁶ LGO475/1939 (*Manderaggio* – Historical Notes).

⁹⁷ Relevant files in LGO1007/1014/1937.

⁹⁸ Relevant files in LGO2745/1938.

⁹⁹ LGO988/1936 (Luke to Thomas, 31 Mar. 1936).

¹⁰⁰ M. Brincat, ‘The Birth of the “Maltese Model” of Development, 1945–1959’, *Journal of Maltese History*, 1:2 (2009), pp. 34–52.

¹⁰¹ CO158/501 (L. Cutajar, 4 Aug. 1937); *Il Berka* (11 Feb. 1935), p.2.

The backlash from the Nationalists could have been expected. They could not allow this ‘most odious British interference in [their] affairs’ to demean Malta to the levels of the tropical colonies. The country had its own expertise and the previous two Nationalist administrations in power between 1921-7 had already drafted similar development plans: whatever Stockdale, Polding, Barnes or any other British expert was proposing, the Nationalists could do it better. Rather than a benevolent form of imperial rule, this policy was for the Nationalist Party a scathingly insulting move of the ‘civilising mission’ type. As the argument ran in the party’s official paper:

Malta has no need of any financial help by the Imperial Government, much less does she want to sink in the estimation of others by asking for it today when her constitutional liberties have been cowardly and iniquitously snatched from her. Therefore, far from welcoming the news of the so-called financial help from London (after all it is very modest and only apparent), we receive the news with regret.¹⁰²

The Constitutional Party’s attacks were no less pronounced. As the party leader Lord Strickland, in his typically outspoken manner, asked in the House of Lords (of which he had become a Peer in 1928):

May I ask why the English taxpayer’s money is wasted to provide the amusements of a home farm, when the leaders of both parties in Malta have in the name of all Maltese repudiated this pauperizing hush money?¹⁰³

‘Malta is not a colony’, Strickland went to say, and therefore it should not be reduced to the position of a beggar state dependent on imperial monies. Like his Nationalist opponents, he believed that if self-government were restored, Maltese politicians would be able to conduct modernisation better, and more importantly, without requiring any outside support.

Opinion within the same parties however varied between the moderates and extremists. The less vociferous English organ of the Nationalists, while hoping that there would not be any ‘unpleasant aftermath’ or ‘talk of charity’, lauded the ‘well-defined plan of agricultural policy’ as an ‘important mile-stone’ promising a ‘progressive period of reform and

¹⁰² ‘Another Speech by the Governor’, *Malta*, 2 July 1934 transl. article enclosed in CO158/477 (Campbell to Cunliffe-Lister, 6 July 1934).

¹⁰³ HL Deb., 22 Nov. 1934, vol. 95, c.90.

reorganisation.’¹⁰⁴ Similarly, the Constitutional organ was not as averse to this policy of modernisation as the party’s leader expressed himself to be. To the contrary, as an article in the paper reads, ‘the temporary suspension of self-government has been productive of reforms that would have been definitely delayed under a constitutional regime.’¹⁰⁵

Yet, this mild support offered little comfort to the authorities. The fact that the more vociferous, and by far the more influential of the Maltese politicians, remained hostile to an autocratic rule which the British were not yet ready to give up, could not be merely overlooked. The preoccupation of the authorities grew even stronger in the wake of the Abyssinian crisis. This forced Bonham-Carter to go the extra mile, which leads us to analyse the second stage in the build-up of the regime’s benevolent politics.

Bonham-Carter believed that by ending British racism toward the Maltese, the latter would become more ‘enthusiastically British’.¹⁰⁶ He claimed to believe that the Maltese were equal to the British: they were after all of ‘European stock’ and ‘of a European standard of opportunity and outlook’.¹⁰⁷ As a first step, Bonham-Carter fought tooth and nail to kill off the typical imperial superiority found amongst the resident British communities in empire. Ignorant of the islands’ history and of the Maltese way of life, British servicemen and their families residing in Malta remained detached from the locals by retiring to their tennis clubs, bars and bridge parties.¹⁰⁸ As Bonham-Carter stated:

The record of our government of Malta can scarcely be called one of our greatest achievements. We have regarded Malta as an important naval base and fortress...and have sometimes forgotten that we owed to its people something more than only peace and protection...Our government of Malta for 137 years has always shown sympathy but it has lacked imagination. Our personal conduct has frequently lacked both.¹⁰⁹

Whether truly so or not, Bonham-Carter was convinced that this discrimination explained past Maltese leanings towards the Italians:

¹⁰⁴ ‘Agricultural Policy: Imperial Authorities and Maltese Farmers’, *Mid-Day Views* (3 July 1934), 2.

¹⁰⁵ ‘Imperial Grants for Malta: Improving Local Agriculture’, *Chronicle*, (3 July 1934), 3.

¹⁰⁶ Bonham-Carter, ‘Address by the H.E. the Governor to the Officers of Units Arriving in Malta’, Appendix C, in Victor Bonham-Carter, *In a Liberal Tradition: A Social Biography 1700–1950* (London, 1960), p. 248, pp. 247–550.

¹⁰⁷ CO158/510/89404 (Bonham-Carter to Ormsby-Gore, Secret, 9 Nov. 1937).

¹⁰⁸ V. Bonham-Carter, p. 207.

¹⁰⁹ ‘Address’, pp. 247–250.

During the preceding few years it had been possible for the Italians to make inroads on the good feeling of the Maltese towards us by propaganda...That situation came about far more as a result of the bad manners of the British than any other reason, and I can assure you that if we had given the Maltese more sympathy and understanding, even from motives of good breeding and courtesy only, the fortress would be stronger from a defensive point of view...If all the Maltese were British in feeling, not only from self-interest but also from devotion to British institutions and affection for the British people, as indeed a great number are, one danger would be removed permanently.¹¹⁰

The Governor's address to incoming servicemen on the islands left no doubt about his aim of bringing an end to this dichotomy: 'I urge you all – including your wives – to guard your tongues and watch your manners and to let us make some amends now and repair the evil which our predecessors in Malta have wrought.'¹¹¹ Such derogatory and highly contemptuous remarks as 'Malts' had to be abandoned while more knowledge, and hence appreciation, of the islands' cultural and historical richness were highly advised. The Governor's appeal extended to the authorities in Britain. He demanded that the Admiralty should deal its Maltese employees the same treatment as the British workers, and that the British authorities should ensure that prospective Maltese emigrants to Australia were given the same opportunities as the British.¹¹²

Beyond these demands, Bonham-Carter set the example himself. The fact that he was naturally very amiable and jovial rendered his efforts even more effective: 'no one who knew Bonham-Carter could fail to thaw in the warmth of his bluff good humour and natural friendliness.'¹¹³ On the one hand, he threw receptions at one or the other of his three palaces, offering a unique opportunity for upper and middle class Maltese to get closer to British officials, while also encouraging the Maltese themselves to forget about their political differences.¹¹⁴ On the other hand, he balanced out this programme of official receptions with the project of 'pastoral visits'.

¹¹⁰ 'Address', p. 249.

¹¹¹ University of Cambridge, Churchill Archives Centre, BHCT4/2 (Bonham-Carter to Ormsby-Gore, Personal, 27 Apr. 1937).

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ 'Obituary, Sir Charles Bonham-Carter, Former Governor of Malta', *The Times* (London, 22 Oct. 1955), p. 16.

¹¹⁴ *Diaries*, 28 Feb. 1938, p. 212.

Shortly after his arrival, Bonham-Carter took the initiative of visiting almost each and every Maltese and Gozitan town and village, something which none of the previous 27 governors had ever attempted. Carefully planned with the assistance of Maltese collaborators, these visits helped the Governor to get closer to the parish priests – by far the most influential figures in the villages – so as to turn the lukewarm support of the Church into active loyalty.¹¹⁵ Besides making acquaintance with the islands' notables, he also entered the houses of the poor, and brushed shoulders with the common people:

The great thing was to show friendship, and to let them feel that we really wanted to help them if we could. I can only say that the response was terrific. At many places people surged round us, clapping and shaking our hands and just wanting to touch us, and we often had real difficulty in getting back into the car. Those were the occasions when I longed for our enemies to see us – enemies abroad such as Mussolini and his gang, and those enemies at home always ready to make out that the British Empire was merely a polite form of tyranny, and a decaying one for that.¹¹⁶

Such confident pronouncements show that, after all, the anti-British sentiment – no less than the pro-Italian one – was not as powerful as Bonham-Carter initially believed or made it seem to be. Sixty such visits ultimately convinced him that '95% [of the Maltese] at least are loyal to the British Empire'¹¹⁷ and that the highly 'vocal' Maltese opposition was nonetheless 'negligible' and 'infinitesimal'¹¹⁸ – a mere 4,000 were really 'pro-Italian in feeling politically and very few indeed actively disloyal.'¹¹⁹ Indeed, there is no reason why to doubt that the population as a whole was actively or passively pro-British.

In an attempt to render this support even more active, and in the hope of reaching out to that 'infinitesimal' number – which was no less important because assumingly 'negligible' – the 1936 Constitution was passed. This was Bonham-Carter's second feature in his equation of benevolent politics. Although not quite as restricted as that of Kenya, but approximating more that of Ceylon or the Straits Settlements of British Malaya, the Maltese 1936 Constitution included only a very small element of representation, and no elective

¹¹⁵ BHCT4/1 (Bonham-Carter to Thomas, 6 May 1936).

¹¹⁶ Quoted in V. Bonham-Carter, p. 210.

¹¹⁷ BHCT12/1 (Bonham-Carter to Victor Bonham-Carter, 23 Apr. 1936).

¹¹⁸ BHCT9/2 (Autobiography, Bonham-Carter, Chapter 14, p. 18).

¹¹⁹ BHCT4/1 (Bonham-Carter to Thomas, 6 May 1936).

principle.¹²⁰ It consisted of an Executive Council of five *ex-officio* members and such other members as the Governor might appoint, subject to the approval of the Secretary of State. The Governor would consult but not necessarily take the advice of the Executive Council, although cases of his dissent had to be reported to the Secretary of State. Legislation could be enacted by the Governor or by Orders-in-Council under concurrent powers.¹²¹ Carrying more weight in Maltese constitutional history, the 1936 Constitution officially scrapped the 1921 self-government. Given all these restrictions, how could it be thought that this constitution would help in gaining wider and stronger consensus?

For Bonham-Carter, the 1936 Constitution provided an interim educational process¹²² which would facilitate the transition to a more democratic government. This was subsumed in the Council's three main objectives: creating a proper and regular channel through which unofficial opinion upon the day-to-day business of the administration might be expressed;¹²³ ending the acrimony and bitterness of the grandiloquent party politics that had hindered the islands' progress, and inculcating the Maltese politicians and public with a sense of civic duty.¹²⁴

Therefore, as Bonham-Carter saw it, the British did not want to kill the prospect of home-rule indefinitely: they wanted to mould it in a way that served British interests best. A decade before, the Maltese politicians had thrown away the opportunity of functioning within self-government, as party pique and political squabbles lost them the chance of acquiring good political skills. They thus had to be educated and trained for another chance in the future.¹²⁵

This setup however did not come down well with the same contending politicians. As one of the more moderate Nationalist members reported with hindsight, '[i]t was Malta's worst ever constitution and within that context, the country had regressed by a hundred years to

¹²⁰ HL Deb., 30 July 1936, vol.102, cc.449.

¹²¹ Refer to Appendix B: Letters Patent 1936.

¹²² Lord Askwith, HL Deb., 5 May 1936, vol.100. c.773. Lord Askwith was one of the 1931 Commissioners who had undertaken an intensive investigation with a view to unlocking the political impasse in Malta in the early 1930s.

¹²³ Earl of Plymouth, HL Deb., 5 May 1936, vol.100, cc.755–756.

¹²⁴ BHCT4/1 (Bonham-Carter to the Members of the Executive Council, Secret, 1936).

¹²⁵ Lord Askwith, HL Deb., 5 May 1936, vol.100. c.773. Bonham-Carter's argument was similar to Lord Askwith's.

the days of the 1835 constitution.¹²⁶ The Constitutionals likewise saw in it ‘a complete denial of the covenanted pledges to maintain responsible institutions in Malta’,¹²⁷ even if, it was always better than being under Fascist Italian rule.¹²⁸ This issue was not confined to Maltese circles only. British Labour parliamentarians in the opposition took note of the Maltese case and lambasted the British Conservative Government for imposing such a dictatorial system on a people deserving responsible government.¹²⁹

Unsurprisingly, Bonham-Carter handpicked the more moderate representatives from each of Malta’s political parties to serve as Executive Council members and to help the administration in its search for wider consensus. The youngest of the NP members, the prominent lawyer Carmenu Mifsud Bonnici was the Nationalist representative. The Constitutional Party nominee was Baron de Piro. The moderate LP leader Dr. Paul Boffa, who was both amenable and easy to work with, was chosen as the Labour representative. As for the non-political representatives, Professor P.P. Debono was drawn from the nobility while Edgar Arrigo, former President of the Malta Chamber of Commerce, stood for the commercial class. Bonham-Carter’s selection was successful as all nominated candidates accepted their new posts,¹³⁰ some even at the risk of being dubbed traitors, as in the case of the Nationalist Mifsud Bonnici.¹³¹

For all his confidence in his policy of treating the Maltese more equally, Bonham-Carter ultimately showed himself to be no less of a despot than he was a well-meaning master. It was slightly ironic to have the constitution being presented as a marker of constitutional development when the people were neither given democratic presentation nor even a semblance of control on local affairs.¹³² By the governor’s not disinterested assessment, however, this experiment was successful. By 1939, the Council had attained the double

¹²⁶ The popular autobiography of a contemporary Nationalist Herbert Ganado is here used as an extension of the Nationalist Party’s voice, even if in comparison to the more vociferous leaders, Ganado was considered a moderate. H. Ganado, *Rajt Malta Tinbidel*, vol. II (4 vols., Malta, 1977), p. 119.

¹²⁷ HL Deb., 30 July 1936, vol. 102, cc.449.

¹²⁸ ‘Il-Gazzetti Taljani u l-Kustjonijiet Maltin’ (trns. ‘Italian Newspapers and Maltese Questions’), *Il Berka* (11 Sept. 1936), p. 2.

¹²⁹ Refer to position taken by LP parliamentarians: A. Henderson, W. Kelly and JJ. Lovart-Fraser in HC Deb., 1 July 1936, vol.314, cc.487–539.

¹³⁰ CO158/493/89008/8 (Bonham-Carter to Ormsby-Gore, Personal, 5 Aug. 1936).

¹³¹ ‘“Public Meeting at Kospikwa”, Dr. Mifsud Bonnici Explains’, *Times of Malta* (28 Sept. 1936), p. 3.

¹³² CO158/501/89404 (Bonham-Carter to Ormsby-Gore, Secret, 9 Nov. 1937).

objective of keeping the promise of responsible government alive while creating the mechanism for the working of a didactic political system.¹³³ The fact that a Nationalist would note that, ‘to be fair, it [the Executive Council] could and did indeed administer well’,¹³⁴ gives some credibility to the Governor’s more sweeping conviction.

Campbell and Bonham-Carter, with Harry Luke as their mutual right-hand man, were the architects of a proactive policy in Malta. Campbell set the ball rolling through a programme of social modernisation. Bonham-Carter contributed through his appeals against racism and his experiment of the Executive Council. This attempt at ‘good’ governance left little impression on the politicians, as it came out clearly in their negative response to both the development programmes and the 1936 constitution. The extent to which this state benevolence was effective on a larger scale and in the long run is analysed in the next chapter.

¹³³ *Diaries*, 19 July 1936, p. 96 and 19 Aug. 1938, p. 259.

¹³⁴ Ganado, pp. 141–142: ‘għad li kellu d-dnub oriġinali li ma kienx jirrapreżenta l-poplu, seta’ jamministra tajjeb u fil-fatt, biex wiehed ikun għust, amministra tajjeb il-pajjiż.’

Chapter III

Measuring the Imperial Policy's Success

One way of determining the tempo of this colonial administrative rule is by analysing those events which could potentially gauge the direction of public opinion. Such two cases include the celebrations of the 1935 Silver Jubilee and the 1937 Coronation. The timing could not have been better for the direct colonial rulers to impress imperial benevolence further. There was not just one but two occasions – one for both the Governors, as it were – that ensured that the message was effectively driven home, whilst simultaneously enabling the authorities to better measure the impact of the broader policy.

In most of their colonies, British authorities made extensive use of the power of indoctrination. One way of binding the Empire was through the celebration of royal occasions. These events ranged from the low-key annual celebrations of Empire Day every 24th May in remembrance of Queen Victoria's birthday, to more unique occasions that generated more hype. Before 1935, the twentieth century had already seen Queen Victoria's funeral in January 1901, her son's coronation in 1902, his funeral eight years after and the coronation of George V a year later.¹³⁵ All these royal occasions followed a pattern of ceremonies which brought the British royalty closer to the public.¹³⁶

The 1935 Jubilee and 1937 Coronation festivities were particularly significant both because of the timing and the weight they carried in the scheme of Malta's Crown-Colony administration. So it happened that during this six-year term, the British authorities had the double opportunity of communicating empire in a more effective way. In April 1935, George V celebrated his Silver Anniversary from his accession to the British throne. Two years later, his second son, George VI, became King. Principally, the use of media helped the authorities orchestrate celebrations in such a way as to mould Maltese affiliations. The extent of collaboration by the traditional authorities, the feedback of the press and the

¹³⁵ A.S. Rush, *Bonds of Empire: West Indians and Britishness from Victoria to Decolonization* (Oxford, 2011), p. 56–65.

¹³⁶ Mangan, p. 9.

general participation of the nation helped the administrators gauge the direction of the population's allegiance.

The programmes were first and foremost an expression of imperial might. The events held for school children, the poor, orphans, and sick in charitable institutions¹³⁷ left no doubt about the aim of imperial indoctrination. Children provided the most captivating audience for the events. Uniform dress and symmetry of decorations – harmonised by the numerous tiny Union Jacks displayed on tables for the lavish tea parties or waved by school children lining the city's main streets – stand out in several photos (refer to Figure 1). '[T]here is no doubt', Campbell wrote in 1935, that the children's 'enthusiasm was genuine' and that the events 'will leave an abiding impression in their minds and will foster the ideals of loyalty and consciousness of their partnership in the Empire.'¹³⁸ The opening of a garden, planting of trees and the establishment of an Arbor Day were part of this plan: as the trees grew, the children who grew alongside them would remember the rationale behind them.¹³⁹ The privileges, loyalty, duty and responsibility inherent in the support for monarchy and empire were thus implanted.

The powerful impact of the conflation of symbols and ideology was not limited to children. It was part of the bigger plan of appealing to stunted Maltese nationalism. This was an abnormal move for, whereas with most British subjects, colonial government sought to curb nationalist emotions, in Malta they were bolstering a Maltese nationalism tied to Empire.¹⁴⁰ On these occasions, the government organisers showed a flair for weaving Maltese traditions into imperial grandeur to achieve this aim. The Water Carnival held during the Jubilee festivities was one such manifestation (refer to Figure 2). Campbell's description evokes the sentiment diffused through the blending of Maltese and British imperial symbols:

¹³⁷ 'Is-Sehem ta' Malta fil-Ġiublew Tar-Re' (trns. 'Malta's Participation in the King's Jubilee'), *Il Berka* (27 Apr. 1935), p. 2; 'L-Ewwel Jum tal-Ġiublew tar-Re' (trns. 'First Day of the King's Jubilee'), *Il Berka*, (7 May 1935), p. 2.

¹³⁸ Desp., May–June 1935, nos. 165–201 (Campbell to Cunliffe-Lister, 31 May 1935); Desp., Apr.–July 1937, nos. 150–252 (Bonham-Carter to Ormsby-Gore, 28 May 1937).

¹³⁹ Parallel case studies: B.L. Moore and M.A. Johnson, *Neither Led Nor Driven, Contesting British Cultural Imperialism in Jamaica, 1865–1920* (Jamaica, 2004), p. 295; Rush, pp. 1–69.

¹⁴⁰ *Problems of Nationality 1918–1936*, W.K. Hancock (*Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs*, Vol. 1, London, 1964) (2 vols.), p. 427.

Around the brilliantly illuminated Fleet Flagship and her sister ships, there moved continuously a multitude of illuminated *dghaisas*¹⁴¹ drawn from every creek of the Harbour.¹⁴²

In the case of the Coronation festivities, this fusion of Maltese traditions with imperial pride¹⁴³ was best expressed through the parade of instrumental bands, a strong cultural component of Maltese villages and towns. No less than 35 such bands marched into Valletta on the occasion and eventually converged on Palace Square where they played ‘God Save the King’ on the appearance of the Governor on the balcony.

The authorities also invested in new technologies that further inflated the image of the Empire’s largesse and prestige. Broadcasting technology was particularly revolutionary in 1935 Malta. The British Broadcasting Corporation, then a recent imperial import,¹⁴⁴ was doing more than what its celebrated remit of informing, educating and entertaining¹⁴⁵ set out. It was also imperialising without necessarily anglicising. Broadcasting the sentiment of empire through the airing of the King’s speech in 1935, with the King’s voice entering the Maltese village squares and private houses, captured the intimacy of the colonial connection:

[T]he silence could literally be felt...when that packed mass of people on the Palace Square heard uttered in his own voice the kindly, simple and paternal message of their King.¹⁴⁶

[T]his was proof, if proof were needed, of the deep feeling towards Crown and state which animates the Maltese people.¹⁴⁷

As the pro-Italian Maltese organ reported, ‘Modern history was made...and duly recorded for posterity’¹⁴⁸ when a Maltese translation of the Governor’s message was broadcast. A similar effect must have been left in 1937, if not possibly incurring the same degree of

¹⁴¹ *Dghaisa* is the traditional Maltese fishing boat.

¹⁴² Desp., May–June 1935, nos. 165–201 (Campbell to Cunliffe-Lister, 31 May 1935).

¹⁴³ Desp., Apr. –July 1937, nos. 150–252 (Bonham-Carter to Ormsby-Gore, 28 May 1937).

¹⁴⁴ MGG 1934, Ordinance no. XXIV.

¹⁴⁵ S. Nicholas, “‘Brushing Up Your Empire:’ Dominion and Colonial Propaganda on the BBC’s Home Services, 1939–1945”, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 31:2 (May, 2003), p. 207.

¹⁴⁶ University of Oxford, Middle East Archives, Sir Harry Luke Private Papers Collections, Box1/1/4 (Speech enclosed in Harry Luke Diaries, 11 May 1935).

¹⁴⁷ Desp., May–June 1935, nos. 165–201 (Campbell to Cunliffe-Lister, 31 May 1935).

¹⁴⁸ ‘The Great Broadcast: Making Modern History’, *Mid-Day Views* (8 May 1935), p. 3.

‘awed hush’¹⁴⁹, when the Coronation service at Westminster was relayed in Valletta’s main square and in some other central places on the islands.

The other innovative component was floodlighting. Malta’s churches, main historical monuments and the bastions were impressively lit at night, searchlights shone from the harbour, a great crown with the letters ‘G.R.’ stood at the innermost part of the Grand Harbour,¹⁵⁰ aerobatics were held by illuminated Royal Air Force aeroplanes while bonfires blazed on hill-points in the countryside. The authorities knew how to captivate the population and inflame the islands with widespread enthusiasm.¹⁵¹

On their part, the Maltese required little persuading to ‘illuminate’ the festivities. Not only were they showing a pride in Empire; they also wanted to make the Empire proud of them. They voluntarily took it upon themselves to decorate facades and balconies (refer to Figures 3 and 4). Decorations in the towns were lavish with main streets lit up with flags by day and lights at night.¹⁵² On both occasions, it was even necessary for the Electricity Department to impose a quota on electricity consumption.¹⁵³ As for the entertainment offered, it seems that the Maltese exceeded the authorities’ expectations:

The Coronation scheme in Valletta is well devised, the streets having an exhilarating tracery of red, white and blue, which even in remote villages the loyalty of the people of Malta is reflected in the flags flying from house-top and balcony.¹⁵⁴

So too the following description captures the aura of enthusiasm, irrespective of class and age:

The scene at *Porte des Bombes*¹⁵⁵ was a remarkable one, every bus, car, taxi and *carozzin*¹⁵⁶ bearing its crowd of holiday-makers; a motley traffic streamed through the

¹⁴⁹ Desp., May–June 1935, nos. 165–201 (Campbell to Cunliffe-Lister, 31 May 1935).

¹⁵⁰ ‘Floodlit Beauty, The *Feu de Joi*’, *Chronicle*, (13 May 1937), p. 4; RHL, *The Programme of the Festivities 5–12 May 1935, to Celebrate the Silver Jubilee of H.M. George V, 1910–1935*, (Malta, 1935).

¹⁵¹ Desp., Apr.–July 1937, nos. 150–252 (Bonham-Carter to Ormsby-Gore, 28 May 1937).

¹⁵² ‘A Week from Jubilee Day, The Celebrations’, *Chronicle* (29 Apr. 1935), p. 3.

¹⁵³ Desp., May–June 1935, nos. 165–201 (Campbell to Cunliffe-Lister, 31 May 1935); Desp., Apr.–July 1937, nos. 150–252 (Bonham-Carter to Ormsby-Gore, 28 May 1937).

¹⁵⁴ ‘Coronation’, *Chronicle* (10 May 1937), p. 3.

¹⁵⁵ *Portes des Bombes* is the main entrance to Valletta.

¹⁵⁶ *Carozzin* is a horse-drawn carriage.

arches, motors, lorries, donkey carts – with a flag stuck in the harness – spring carts and long files of pedestrians.¹⁵⁷

The surprise parade of floral floats which some Maltese volunteered to set up during the Coronation festivities further illustrates the nature of the natives' commitment. These floats included numerous royal crowns, but also a state barge, a cockleshell with the portraits of their Majesties pulled by two stately white swans, amongst several others¹⁵⁸ (refer to Figures 5 and 6). Indeed, what Lieutenant Governor Luke quite sweepingly concluded of the Jubilee, that 'probably in no other dependency of the British Empire has it been possible to celebrate the Jubilee more spectacularly, more picturesquely and more beautifully than in these Islands',¹⁵⁹ must have been true for the Coronation too.

Another important feature in these celebrations was the role played by the Church. On both occasions the Church 'co-operated spontaneously and whole-heartedly'. By committing itself to celebrating Empire, the Church automatically ensured that the whole population would follow suit. The Archbishop ordered the illumination of a good number of churches, including the Co-Cathedral of St. John, in which the famous Perellos tapestries were displayed for the occasion.¹⁶⁰ Furthermore, the *Te Deum* was chanted in most of the churches and prayers were offered for the King and the Royal family at these respective events.¹⁶¹ The 'gratifying anxiety' with which the clergy offered to help and the 'public demonstration of the solidarity of Church and State in their loyalty to the throne'¹⁶² left no doubt as to where the population's affection lay.

The question which automatically arises though is the extent to which whatever the official publications and the pro-British press published is indeed reliable. Was public enthusiasm so obviously natural? How could the Governor say with certainty that the 'spontaneous and

¹⁵⁷ 'Malta Celebrates the Coronation: A Day of Rejoicing, Thousands Cheer the Governor', *Chronicle* (13 May 1937), p. 3.

¹⁵⁸ 'Yesterday's Procession, Malta Stages Splendid Show, Floral Beauty and Gay Design', *Chronicle* (15 May 1937), p. 3.

¹⁵⁹ Sir Harry Luke Private Papers Collections, Box1/1/4 (Speech enclosed in Harry Luke Diaries, 11 May 1935).

¹⁶⁰ Desp., May–June 1935, nos. 165–201 (Campbell to Cunliffe-Lister, 31 May 1935).

¹⁶¹ 'A Week from Jubilee Day, The Celebrations', *Chronicle* (29 Apr. 1935), p. 3; Desp., Apr.–July 1937, nos. 150–252 (Bonham-Carter to Ormsby-Gore, 28 May 1937).

¹⁶² Desp., 21 May–28 June 1935, nos. 165–201 (Campbell to Cunliffe-Lister, 31 May 1935).

sincere expressions of loyalty'¹⁶³ were reflective of 'the devotion of Malta to the Crown and loyalty to the empire'?¹⁶⁴ Was it not rather the magic of bunting and lighting which did the trick in attracting the masses?¹⁶⁵ How could it be sure that this manifestation of affection was not 'a mere outward show carefully fostered by officialdom, but a spontaneous contribution by the people'?¹⁶⁶

A positive interpretation of the celebrations in explaining Maltese feelings towards the Crown needs careful qualification. Studying the terminology used in describing the success of the Jubilee and Coronation events does not necessarily help us get a better picture of the population's receptiveness. Colonial discourse in official documents and pro-British papers on the one hand, and the countering journalism of the opposing Nationalists on the other, only give that 'product' which the individual bodies wanted to sell. Yet, the very fact that even the pro-Italian Nationalist Party's organs, the *Malta* and *Mid-Day Views*, could not help but laud the events and the general enthusiasm which they created – if not without a clear attempt at downplaying it – is very telling.

True enough, the NP papers' description of the modest response of the people who only 'soberly participated'¹⁶⁷ in the Jubilee celebrations makes the above-quoted pro-British *Chronicle*'s comments appear exaggerated. Furthermore, the same old bottom line for the restoration of Maltese self-government recurred in almost all articles in the pro-Italian press that covered these events:¹⁶⁸ the 'temporary loyalty' manifested during the occasions would become permanent and it would cost nothing, if responsible government were returned as a reward by the British Crown.¹⁶⁹ This said, the Maltese Nationalists still wanted to make sure that their allegiance would not be doubted. The Resolution which the NP passed in 1937 is very revealing:

¹⁶³ Desp., Apr.–July 1937, nos. 150–252 (Bonham-Carter to Ormsby-Gore, 28 May 1937).

¹⁶⁴ Desp., May–June 1935, nos. 165–201 (Campbell to Cunliffe-Lister, 31 May 1935).

¹⁶⁵ Some insight taken from R. Colls, *Identity of England* (Oxford, 2002) pp. 106, 138.

¹⁶⁶ 'A Lesson of the Jubilee', *Chronicle* (13 May 1935), p. 3.

¹⁶⁷ 'The King's Jubilee', *Mid-Day Views* (7 May 1935), p. 3.

¹⁶⁸ 'Per il Giubileo di S. M. Il Re', *Malta* (4 May 1935), p. 1; 'Malta Nel Giorno dell'Incoronazione di S.M. il Re' (trns. 'Malta on the Day of the King's Coronation'), *Malta* (11 May 1937), p. 1.

¹⁶⁹ 'Aftermath of the Jubilee', *Mid-Day Views* (2 May 1935), p. 3.

[A]ny participation of the Nationalists...in the festivities of the Coronation does not have nor could it have any other meaning than that of a devoted and loyal homage to the Sovereigns, who are justly over and above party politics.¹⁷⁰

Although no words of praise were lavished towards the authorities in 1937 just as they had not been in 1935, the events were covered copiously in both cases, with plenty of background information on the Royal Family being published, as in the other newspapers.¹⁷¹

Besides the written sources, the rich depository of visual sources in relation to these two events further helps us in elucidating some qualitative meaning. Visual sources are not an indispensable guarantee of historical objectivity: what and how something is shot, the colour scheme and photo editing, may reflect the ulterior motives of the photographer. Whether there was any hidden agenda of imperial propaganda behind the photos used in this analysis¹⁷² is not clear. Yet, hardly could the element of national fervour have been skewed in all dimensions.¹⁷³

On the one hand, the Crown Colony did not have an extremely tough struggle in seeking stronger national consent. Very few Maltese believed they would have been better off either as an independent country or as part of Italy. Rather, they liked being British, both on account of the job security that the British military and navy offered around the harbour, and of the multiplier effect of the British hefty expenditure on the islands.¹⁷⁴ In fact, even if not to the comfortable degree of placidity found in Gibraltar,¹⁷⁵ the Maltese were generally complacent. On the other hand, as these manifestations of loyalty show, the British imperial policy of state benevolence was clearly rendering this attachment stronger still. By the end

¹⁷⁰ 'Nel Giorno dell'Incoronazione di S.M. il Re' (trns. 'On the Day of the King's Incoronation'), *Malta* (11 May 1937), p. 1: 'qualsiasi partecipazione dei nazionalisti...alle feste dell'incoronazione, non ha nè puo avere alcun altro significato all'infuori di quello di un devoto e leale omaggio agli Augusti Sovrani, i quali sono giustamente messi al di fuori e al di sopra di ogni partito.'

¹⁷¹ Ganado, pp. 51–53; Detailed description of the Jubilee is also to be found in the Ganado's autobiography. The extent of furore is captured in his descriptions as much as they were in the official publication and pro-British press.

¹⁷² National Archives Malta, Photo Collection.

https://secure2.gov.mt/nationalarchives/nationalmemoryproject.aspx?page_info_id=8

¹⁷³ R.A. Achterberg, *Photographs as Primary Sources for Historical Research and Teaching in Education: The Albert W. Achterberg Photographic Collection* (Texas, 2008), p. 85.

¹⁷⁴ Munroe, p. 43; P. Borroughs, 'Colonial Self-Government' in C.C. Eldridge (ed.), *British Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century*, (London, 1984), p. 40.

¹⁷⁵ Munroe, p. 43.

of the decade, and as in 1936, the real challenge to the authorities remained the Maltese politicians.

Pressure from all political quarters for more constitutional power persisted, this time threatening to seep through into other social levels too. As Governor Bonham-Carter was to note after his return from summer leave in 1937:

In the country districts there is still little demand for any change, and agitation would come from the villages only if worked up by the politicians; but this could easily and quickly be done. Moreover, I have been told by four unofficial members of the Executive Council that a definite wish for some representation in government is showing itself even in country districts, and that among the dockyard workers there is a definite demand for a share in the administration of their country. This has been confirmed by requests made to me when making official visits to villages on two occasions lately. All newspapers are now demanding a return of responsible government almost daily.¹⁷⁶

As the Governor chose to believe, the demand for more constitutional power did not strictly translate into opposition against the policy of the Crown Colony: it was rather based upon a deep conviction of the inherent right of a highly civilised European people and proud British subjects, to a larger share in the management of their own internal affairs.¹⁷⁷ Bonham-Carter initially, and privately, believed that the time was not yet ripe for self-government to be restored.¹⁷⁸ Yet the energies which he put into the didactic experiment that he had begun in 1936 ran short of reaching its aims for consensus amongst the Maltese politicians. Agitation from this side continued to build up during 1938, from the pro-British as much as from the pro-Italian party, to the extent that it could no longer be dismissed as harmless. Ultimately, this forced the Governor to acquire from a very reluctant Secretary of State, a concession for a partly-elected Council in 1939.¹⁷⁹

The 25 February Letters Patent proclaimed the creation of a four-year Executive Council made up of five *ex-officio* members, three official members nominated by the Governor, two nominated non-official members and, the tentative return to representative government, ten

¹⁷⁶ CO158/513a (Bonham-Carter to Ormsby-Gore, Secret, 24 Dec. 1937).

¹⁷⁷ CO158/513a (Bonham-Carter, 'Malta Constitution', 18 Jan. 1938); Sharing the same view: J. Wedgwood and M. Jones, HC Deb. 14 June 1938, vol.337, c.140.

¹⁷⁸ *Diaries*, 11 Apr. 1938, p. 226.

¹⁷⁹ BHCT4/3 (Ormsby-Gore to Bonham-Carter, Secret, 4 Feb. 1938). Refer to Appendix C: Letters Patent 1939.

elected Maltese members.¹⁸⁰ The reintroduction of the elective principle was counterproductive, however. The limited participation that was granted to the Maltese politicians clearly frustrated their more ambitious demands.¹⁸¹ To be sure, the Constitutionals were more willing to make this constitution work, however faulty it was. Although acknowledging that the 1939 constitution was a step forward from that of 1936, the Nationalists still could not accept that the Governor held almost absolute control. Indeed, in comparison to the 1921 constitution, that of 1939 ‘was miserable.’¹⁸² An ill-timed decision to undertake taxation changes that hit the nobility and the clergy hard fomented further opposition from all sides. A large number of the nobility, the ecclesiastical Chapters and the NP did not even attend the official ceremony proclaiming the new constitution. Meanwhile, propaganda against the Governor, from different sources and for varying reasons, was infiltrating the lower levels of society too.¹⁸³

Yet, to what extent was this a manifestation of a nation’s protest?¹⁸⁴ An analysis of the July election shows that the Maltese politicians’ outcry for representation was not reflective of any desperate nationwide wish. Of a population of over 250,000 people, only 49,948 Maltese were registered to vote, that is, only one in five people. Eligible voters had to be over 21 years of age, able to read and write, pay rent and receive an income.¹⁸⁵ Although there was a fall of 10 per cent in the number of registered voters from the previous election in 1932, the voter turnout for the 1939 elections had fallen disproportionately: whereas 3,952 abstained in 1932, this figure soared to 11,510 in 1939, clearly showing that not even eligible voters were interested in politics.

The Constitutional victory is very suggestive of where the electors’ sympathies were. Although the CP had been pressing most ardently for home rule ever since its revocation in 1933, it still was the strongest pro-British party. The very fact that this party won and not the

¹⁸⁰ J.J. Cremona, *The Maltese Constitution and Constitutional History since 1813*, (Malta, 1994), pp. 39–42.

¹⁸¹ CO158/513a (Bonham-Carter to Ormsby-Gore, Secret, 24 Dec. 1937); CO158/523/89008 (Maltese Personal Informant to Perowne, 10 Mar. 1939).

¹⁸² Ganado, p. 141: ‘Kienet kostituzzjoni wisq aħjar minn dik tal-1936, li ma setgħetx tkun aħjar, imma kienet kostituzzjoni hazina għaliex il-gvernatur kellu l-hbula kollha f’idejh. Fejn dik tal-1921 kienet miżerabbli.’

¹⁸³ ‘L-Ewwel Meeting tal-Partit Kostituzzjonali: “Xejn Taxxi bla Rappreżentanti tal-Poplu”’ (trns. ‘The First Meeting of the Constitutional Party: “No Taxation without Representation”’) *Il Berka*, (27 Feb. 1939), p. 4.

¹⁸⁴ CO158/523/89008 (Bonham-Carter to MacDonald, Secret, 28 Feb. 1939).

¹⁸⁵ MGG, Electoral Register, Suppl. LVII, 9 May 1939; MBB 1932, Section 10.

pro-Italian NP – which had won the previous elections before the period of Crown Colony – showed that the electorate was veering away from pro-Italian sentiments.¹⁸⁶ While taking into account all the variables, the increase in votes which the CP obtained over the staggering losses of the NP clearly indicates that the pro-Italians were in a minority. Indeed, whereas the pro-British CP gained 4,133 votes, the pro-Italian NP lost 17,159 votes.¹⁸⁷ The reactive policy of de-Italianisation had apparently reaped the desired results while the proactive policy of imperial benevolence had seemingly managed to secure more support, even if still within the limits of tight government representation.

The outbreak of WWII cut the newly-elected Council's experience short. As the Governor made it appear though, the body was working smoothly: 'the leaders of the three political parties privately admitted – although in public they pretended otherwise – that this structure presented the best permanent solution.'¹⁸⁸ Whether this was truly the case is to be questioned. This setup however definitely was not the permanent solution to Malta's political and social needs in the wake of the War. In 1947 self-government was restored with a Legislative Assembly of 40 members elected for the first time by universal suffrage regardless of education, sex, or property-holding.¹⁸⁹

But the War simultaneously served to attest that, rivalries apart, the Maltese people would support their masters when these needed it most. Soon after the first Italian bombing on 11 June 1940 (the first aerial attacks ever suffered by Malta) successor Governor General Dobbie broadcast to the Maltese nation:

I want to express my admiration of the way the people of Malta have carried themselves in the very trying circumstances which they have had to face. It was splendid and was exactly in keeping with what I knew they would do.¹⁹⁰

Similarly, Colonial Secretary Lord Lloyd's final judgement of Bonham-Carter's rule reads:

[I]t is very hard to estimate the full value of what you achieved in good will and in the dividend of sympathy and understanding...[however] the proof of it is shown in the splendid deportment of the Maltese today [during WWII] in their difficult situation.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁶ Ganado, p. 143.

¹⁸⁷ Refer to Table 1 in Appendix D.

¹⁸⁸ V. Bonham-Carter, p. 231.

¹⁸⁹ Cremona, pp. 42–56.

¹⁹⁰ A.E. Abela, *Governors of Malta* (Valletta, 1991), pp. 89–93.

And as the comments of the Governor's son reveal:

The magnificent loyalty and resilience shown by the Maltese during the war, particularly during the air-raids and near-starvation days of 1941–42, were not merely a matter of native courage, self-interest and contempt for the enemy. It was something far more positive than that. The mainspring was a renewed faith in Britain. For that, the conduct of government and the personality of the Governor in the years 1936–1940 were largely responsible.¹⁹²

To be sure, although the 1934–9 Crown Colony was not the exclusive force behind this collaboration, it had evidently harnessed the more pertinent objective of political security, amongst politicians and common people, alike. This was expressed in an unremitting support that gained for the nation the exceptional honour 'for gallantry' of the George Cross.

The systematic indoctrination of the Jubilee and the Coronation, outside the bounds of formal policy-making, was designed to foster a widespread sentiment that elevated British institutions, customs, values and morality.¹⁹³ These manifestations were effective and powerful in the maintenance of and the reaction to British rule in Malta. The very fact that these events were accepted, promoted and freely contributed to by Maltese of all classes and ages points out to a content population which not only consented to being British but also manifested strong ties to the Crown. The political opposition at the close of the decade and the pressure for more electoral powers tones down the overly optimistic impressions which the authorities had of their policy's success. Nevertheless, the results of the 1939 elections and, carrying more weight, the nationwide support to the British in WWII left no doubt about the whole nation's position in the imperial equation.

¹⁹¹ BHCT4/5 (Lord Lloyd to Bonham-Carter, 23 Oct. 1940).

¹⁹² V. Bonham-Carter, p. 231.

¹⁹³ Moore and Johnson, pp. 309–310.

Conclusion

Following the revocation of the self-government constitution in 1933, Malta reverted to Crown-Colony rule. This was necessary due to Britain's geostrategic imperial interests and the need to maintain cordial relations with Italy without endangering the balance of power in the Mediterranean. Almost as an immediate follow-up, the British initiated a reactive policy of de-Italianisation that extended to the end of the decade following the deterioration of Anglo-Italian relations in the second half of the 1930s. Owing to the fortress nature of the islands, the British however, needed to secure stronger support of the population. Not yet ready to acquire this through the elected representatives, the authorities preferred instead to seek consent to their despotic rule through 'good' governance.

Building on the already existent compliance of the majority of the Maltese, the authorities forged a proactive policy of pronounced state benevolence which served simultaneously to substitute the Italian variable while further strengthening local support to British rule.¹⁹⁴ It was an experiment worth a trial.¹⁹⁵ Governor Campbell launched a series of modernisation programmes in those areas where development was most required, namely in agriculture and health. Whichever the ulterior imperial motive, between 1934 and 1939 Malta and the Maltese benefitted from £138,848 of Colonial Development Funds which were invested in eight projects, and of which this study has focused on the more prominent ones.¹⁹⁶ Taking control of the islands in the wake of the Abyssinian Crisis, while still faced with continued opposition from the Maltese politicians, Bonham-Carter extended this benign policy by fostering direct ties with Maltese politicians and people alike.

The Maltese politicians proved difficult to win over. Their bone of contention was not anti-imperialism: pro-British Maltese politicians opposed direct colony rule as much as pro-Italians did, and even amongst the latter, pro-Italianism was not entirely synonymous with anti-imperialism. It was rather the impending denial of self-government which stood in the way of more cordial relations. Yet, the fact that by 1939 the pro-Italians had lost the

¹⁹⁴ Jim Davidson, 'A Three-Cornered Life: The Historian W. K. Hancock' (Sydney, 2010).

¹⁹⁵ Dennis Austen, p. 16.

¹⁹⁶ Meredith, p. 490.

electorate's support indicates that the policy of de-Italianisation, combined with proactive imperial benevolence, satisfied the main objective behind the imperial British policy. This reaffirmed what the nationwide enthusiasm during the Jubilee and Coronation festivities had already shown. Rather than the disgruntled population which the local politicians claimed to speak for, the majority of the Maltese openly expressed a strong imperial attachment which was made stronger by this Crown-Colony rule.

When external factors of imperial security were concerned, the British were sure to have the upper hand. Britain had to act despotically in Malta in order to preserve its geostrategic interests. Yet, the fact that the British Government withdrew the constitution, set up a despotic one-man rule, and introduced limited representative power at the end of the decade, does not mean that this phase was either invariably retrogressive or monochromatic for all. Constitutionalism was not everything, especially to the neglect of other elements, including social and economic progress. Nor were 'the Maltese' one monolithic group, with one mind and one aspiration. This would be overlooking the fact that the Maltese did not always share the politicians' demands, and that the political groups disagreed about many issues, between as well as within themselves. The benevolent component with which the authorities tried to legitimate Crown-Colony rule did indeed win them enough support to see them through the decade. In the end, the nationwide response in WWII removes any doubt about which of the despotic or the benevolent nature of British imperial policy between 1934–9 carried more weight and long-lasting effect.

Illustrations

Figure 1



Rec. no. 873: School boys at the Manoel Theatre on the occasion of the coronation of King George VI, May 1936, Royal Studio, NAM.

Figure 2



Rec. no. 2124: Water Carnival on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of King George V, May 1935, Hammet Photo Studio, NAM.

Figure 3



Rec. no. 2159: Commercial decorations at the 'Royal Restaurant' on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of King George V, May 1935, Hammet Photo Studio, NAM.

Figure 4



Rec. no. 1624: Decorations of a shop in Valletta on the occasion of the coronation of King George VI, May 1937, The Grand Studio, NAM.

Figure 5



Rec. no. 2144: The float which won first prize in the Battle of Flowers on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee, May 1935, Hammet Photo Studio, NAM.

Figure 6



Rec. no. 1659: Floral float depicting a royal crown and a portrait of King George VI and his family, May 1937 [photographer unknown], NAM.

Appendix A

Maltese Constitutional Development 1800-1939

- 1800–1835:** Crown Colony under the absolute rule of the Governor
- 1835:** Crown Colony with Advisory Council of Government. A minority of two nominated Maltese in Council
- 1849:** Introduction of the elective principle. A minority of four elected Maltese in Council
- 1887:** A majority of eight elected Maltese with increased powers but no responsibility
- 1903:** Revocation of constitution and a return to 1849
- 1921:** Self-government constitution conferring responsibility to a Maltese elected majority
- 1930:** Suspension of self-government
- June 1932:** Restoration of self-government
- Nov. 1933:** Revocation of self-government and return to Crown Colony
- 1936:** Governor ruling through an Executive Council of nominated Maltese
- 1939:** Restoration of a partly-elected elected Council of Government

MALTA

LETTERS PATENT passed under the Great Seal of the Realm dated the 12th of August 1936 constituting the Office of Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Malta and providing for the Government thereof.

EDWARD THE EIGHTH by the Grace of God of Great Britain, Ireland and the British Dominions beyond the Seas King, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India.

To all to whom these Presents shall come, Greeting!

Recites Letters Patent.

WHEREAS by the Letters Patent mentioned in Part I of the First Schedule to these Our Letters Patent provision was made for the government of Our Island of Malta and its Dependencies (hereinafter referred to as "Malta"); and by the Letters Patent mentioned in Part II of the First Schedule to these Our Letters Patent the Office of Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over Malta was constituted:

AND WHEREAS We are minded to make other provision than is contained in the said Letters Patent:

Now know ye that We do declare Our Will and Pleasure as follows:—

Revokes Letters Patent.

1. As from the date of the coming into operation of these Our Letters Patent the Letters Patent mentioned in the First Schedule hereto are hereby revoked, but without prejudice to anything lawfully done thereunder.

Office of Governor constituted.

2. There shall be a Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over Malta, and appointments to the said Office shall be made by Commission under Our Sign Manual and Signet.

Governor's Powers and Authorities.

3. We do hereby authorize, empower, and command Our said Governor and Commander-in-Chief (hereinafter called the Governor) to do all things that belong to his office in accordance with these Our Letters Patent, and such Commission as may be issued to him under Our Sign Manual and Signet, and according to such Instructions as may from time to time be given to him under Our Sign Manual and Signet or by Us through one of Our Principal Secretaries of State, and in accordance with such Orders in Council and other laws as shall from time to time be in force in Malta.

Publication of Governor's Commission.

4. Every person appointed to fill the Office of Governor shall with all due solemnity, before entering on any of the duties of his Office, cause the Commission appointing him to be Governor to be read and published in the presence of the Chief Justice or, in his absence, of some other Judge of the Superior Courts of Malta and of such Members of the Executive Council as can conveniently attend, which being done, he shall then and there take before them the Oath of Allegiance and the Oath for the due execution of the Office of Governor in the forms set out in the Second Schedule to these Our Letters Patent, which oaths the said Chief Justice or Judge is hereby required to administer.

Oaths to be taken by Governor.

Office of Lieutenant-Governor constituted.

5. There shall be a Lieutenant-Governor in and over Malta, and appointments to the said office shall be made by Commission under Our Sign Manual and Signet.

The Lieutenant-Governor shall do during Our pleasure all things belonging to his Office in accordance with such Commission as aforesaid and such Instructions as may from time to time be given to him by Us, under Our Sign Manual and Signet, or through one of Our Principal Secretaries of State, and in accordance with such Orders in Council and other laws as shall from time to time be in force in Malta.

Whenever the office of Lieutenant-Governor becomes vacant, or if the Lieutenant-Governor is administering the Government of Malta, or is absent from Malta, or otherwise becomes incapable of, or is from any cause prevented from, performing

the duties of his office, the Governor may by an Instrument under the Public Seal of Malta appoint some fit and proper person to act provisionally as Lieutenant-Governor. Any person so provisionally appointed shall do during Our Pleasure all things belonging to the office of Lieutenant-Governor in accordance with the terms of his appointment and such instructions and laws as aforesaid, and shall cease to act as Lieutenant-Governor so soon as We shall have appointed another person to the said office by Commission under Our Sign Manual and Signet, or as the substantive holder of the office shall cease to administer the Government of Malta or shall return to Malta or shall again be able to perform the duties of the office, or as the Governor shall appoint another person to act provisionally as Lieutenant-Governor.

6. The Governor shall keep and use the Public Seal of Malta for sealing all things whatsoever that shall pass the said Seal.

7. There shall be an Executive Council for Malta, and the said Council shall consist of such persons as We shall direct by Instructions under Our Sign Manual and Signet, or through one of Our Principal Secretaries of State and all such persons shall hold their places in the Executive Council during Our Pleasure and subject thereto for such period and upon such conditions as may be specified in any such Instructions.

8. The Governor may, in Our name and on Our behalf, make and execute, under the Public Seal, grants and dispositions of any lands within Malta which may be lawfully granted or disposed of by Us.

9. The Governor may constitute and appoint in Our name and on Our behalf all such Officers in Malta as may be lawfully constituted or appointed by Us.

10.—(1) The judges of the Superior Courts of Malta shall be appointed by the Governor in Our name and on Our behalf.

(2) No person shall be qualified to be appointed a judge of the said courts unless, during a period of not less than twelve years, or during periods amounting in the aggregate to not less than twelve years, he has either practised at the Bar or served as a magistrate in Malta, or has partly so practised and partly so served.

(3) A judge of the said courts shall receive such remuneration as may be determined by the Governor from time to time:

Provided that the remuneration of a judge shall not be diminished during his tenure of office.

(4) A judge of the said courts shall vacate his office on his attaining the age of sixty-five years, and may be removed from his office by Us on the ground of proved misbehaviour or incapacity.

(5) The provisions of subsections (1) and (2) of this section shall not apply to a judge of the said courts who was appointed before the commencement of the Malta Constitution Act, 1932.

11. The Governor may, subject to such instructions as may from time to time be given to him by Us through one of Our Principal Secretaries of State, upon sufficient cause to him appearing, dismiss or suspend from the exercise of his office any person holding any public office in Malta except the office of Judge, or, subject as aforesaid, may take such other disciplinary action as may seem to him desirable.

12. When any offence has been committed for which the offender may be tried in Malta, the Governor may, as he shall see occasion, in Our name and on Our behalf, grant a pardon to any accomplice in such offence who shall give such information as shall lead to the conviction of the principal offender, or of any one of such offenders, if more than one; and further may grant to any offender convicted of any such offence in any Court within Malta, a pardon, either free or subject to lawful conditions, or any remission of the sentence passed on such offender, or any respite of the execution of such sentence, for such period as he may think fit; and may remit any fines, penalties, or forfeitures due or accrued to Us:

Public Seal.

Executive Council.
Constitution of.

Grant of lands.

Appointment of Officers.

Judges' appointment, tenure and remuneration.

Dismissal and suspension of officers.

Grant of pardon.

Remission of fines.

Succession to Government.

13. Whenever the Office of Governor is vacant, or the Governor is absent from Malta, or is from any cause prevented from, or incapable of, acting in the duties of his Office, then such person as We may appoint under Our Sign Manual and Signet, or if there is no such person in Malta and capable of discharging the duties of administration, the senior Member of the Executive Council of Malta shall, during Our pleasure, administer the government of Malta.

Before assuming the administration of the government such person shall take the oaths directed to be taken by the Governor in these Our Letters Patent in the manner prescribed, which being done We do hereby authorise, empower and command such person to do, during Our pleasure, all things that belong to the Office of Governor, as provided in these Our Letters Patent :

Provided that the Governor and any other person aforesaid whenever and so often as he is on a passage between any two places in Malta, or is visiting any of the neighbouring territories in the exercise or discharge of any powers or duties conferred or imposed upon him by virtue of his Office shall not be considered to be absent from Malta within the meaning of these Our Letters Patent.

Any such person as aforesaid shall not continue to administer the government after the Governor or some other officer having a prior right to administer the same has notified that he is about to assume the administration.

Appointment of Deputies to Governor.

14. In the event of the Governor having occasion at any time to be temporarily absent for a short period from Malta, or in the exercise or discharge of any powers or duties conferred or imposed upon him by virtue of his Office, to visit any neighbouring territories, he may by an Instrument under the Public Seal of Malta appoint any person to be his Deputy within Malta during such temporary absence, and in that capacity to exercise, perform, and execute for and on behalf of the Governor during such absence, but no longer, all such powers and authorities by these Our Letters Patent or otherwise vested in the Governor as shall in and by such Instrument be specified and limited, but no others. Every such Deputy shall conform to and observe all such Instructions as the Governor shall from time to time address to him for his guidance. Provided nevertheless that by the appointment of a Deputy as aforesaid the power and authority of the Governor shall not be abridged, altered, or in any way affected otherwise than We may at any time hereafter think proper to direct.

Governor empowered to make laws.

15. The Governor may make laws for the peace, order, and good Government of Malta.

Power of disallowance.

16. Any law enacted by the Governor may be disallowed by Us through one of Our Principal Secretaries of State.

Whenever any law has been disallowed by Us the Governor shall cause notice of such disallowance to be published in the Malta Gazette and a certificate of such disallowance, certified under the Public Seal of Malta, to be enrolled in the Office of the Registrar of Our Superior Courts in Malta.

Every law so disallowed shall cease to have effect as soon as notice of such disallowance shall be published as aforesaid.

Power reserved to legislate by Order in Council.

17. We do reserve to Ourselves, Our heirs and successors, Our and their right, with the advice of Our or their Privy Council from time to time to make laws for the peace, order and good government of Malta.

Saving of existing laws, etc.

18. Subject to the provisions of these Our Letters Patent all laws, ordinances, proclamations, regulations and other enactments in force in Malta at the date on which these Our Letters Patent came into operation shall remain in force except so far as the same shall be repealed amended or otherwise affected by or under any Order in Our Privy Council or any law made by the Governor as hereinbefore provided.

Laws to be printed in Gazette and enrolled.

19. The Governor shall cause every law enacted as aforesaid to be printed in the Malta Gazette, in both the English and Maltese languages, for general information, and shall as soon as practicable also cause a fair copy of such law signed by

him and printed in the English and Maltese languages, to be enrolled on record in the Office of the Registrar of Our Superior Courts in Malta, and such copy shall be conclusive evidence as to the provisions of every such law.

Provided that the validity of any such law shall not depend upon the enrolment thereof.

20.—(1) The English language as the official language of the British Empire, and the Maltese language, as the language of the people of Malta, shall be the official languages of Malta.

Language.

(2) The English language shall be the official language of administration and the Maltese language shall be the official language of Our Courts of Law in Malta.

Provided that it shall be lawful for the Governor to make provision by Ordinance for the use of the English language in any proceedings before any Court where any party or any accused person is a person who does not speak Maltese as the principal language to which he is accustomed.

(3) (i) The English text and the Maltese text of all laws shall be the only official texts of the law and if there shall be any conflict between the English and Maltese texts of any law the English text shall prevail.

(ii) All laws in force at the date on which these Our Letters Patent come into operation, of which there is no Maltese text, shall be translated into Maltese; and until the translation of any such law shall be published by Order of the Governor the English text thereof shall be the only official text.

21.—(1) All persons in Malta shall have full liberty of conscience and the free exercise of their respective modes of religious worship.

Religious toleration.

(2) No person shall be subjected to any disability or excluded from holding any office by reason of his religious profession.

22. We do hereby require and command all Our Officers, Civil and Military, and all other the inhabitants of Malta to be obedient, aiding and assisting unto the Governor.

Officers and others to obey the Governor.

23. In the construction of these Our Letters Patent the term "the Governor", unless inconsistent with the context, shall include every person for the time being administering the Government of Malta.

Term "the Governor" explained.

24. We hereby reserve to Ourselves, Our Heirs and successors, full power and authority from time to time to revoke, alter, or amend these Our Letters Patent, as to Us or them shall seem fit.

Powers reserved to His Majesty to revoke, alter or amend present Letters Patent.

25. These Our Letters Patent shall be read and proclaimed at such time or places within Malta as the Governor shall think fit, and shall commence and come into operation on a day to be fixed by the Governor by Proclamation in the Malta Gazette.

Proclamation of Letters Patent.

MALTA

LETTERS PATENT passed under the Great Seal of the Realm constituting the Office of Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Malta and providing for the Government thereof.

Dated the fourteenth day of February, 1939.

GEORGE THE SIXTH, by the Grace of God of Great Britain, Ireland and the British Dominions beyond the Seas King, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India.

To all to whom the Presents shall come, Greeting!

Recites Letters Patent dated 12th August, 1936.

WHEREAS by Letters Patent under the Great Seal bearing date at Westminster the Twelfth day of August, 1936, (hereinafter referred to as "the Letters Patent of 1936") the Office of Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over the Island of Malta and its Dependencies was constituted and provision was made for the Government thereof:

AND WHEREAS We are minded to revoke the said Letters Patent and to make other provision than is contained therein:

NOW KNOW YE that We do by these presents declare Our Will and Pleasure as follows:—

PART I.

PRELIMINARY.

Interpretation.

1. (1) In these Letters Patent, unless the context otherwise requires, —

"Malta" means the Island of Malta and its Dependencies, including the territorial waters thereof;

"Governor" means the Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Malta and includes the officer for the time being administering the Government of Malta;

"The Council" means the Council of Government constituted under these Letters Patent;

"Member" means a member of the Council;

"Minister of religion" means any clergyman, minister, priest, or other person who exercises spiritual functions or performs the offices of religion for or in respect to any Christian or other church, community or body;

"The Gazette" means the Malta Government Gazette.

(2) For the purposes of these Letters Patent, the following persons shall not be regarded as persons holding office of emolument under the Crown in Malta, that is to say, —

(a) persons in receipt of a pension or other allowance from the Crown who have ceased to be in the service of the Crown in Malta.



(b) Officers of our Naval, Military or Air Forces in receipt of retired or half pay, and

(c) Teachers at the Royal University of Malta who are neither prohibited by the terms of their employment at the said University from the private exercise of their profession nor obliged to place their whole time at the disposal of the Government.

(3) The Interpretation Act, 1889, shall apply for the interpretation of these Letters Patent as it applies for the interpretation of an Act of Parliament.

2. These Letters Patent may be cited as "The Malta Letters Patent, 1939". They shall be proclaimed within Malta as soon as practicable in such manner as the Governor shall think fit, and shall thereafter come into operation on a day to be fixed by the Governor by further Proclamation in the Gazette:

Short title and commencement.

Provided that the Governor may, at any time after the first Proclamation under this section, by law made in pursuance of his power to make laws under the Letters Patent of 1936, make provision for constituting electoral divisions, for determining the qualification, and regulating the registration, of voters, for regulating the election of Members, for the determination as provided in these Letters Patent of questions as to the right of any person to be or remain a Member, for prescribing penalties in respect of offences under any such law and generally for the purpose of enabling the election of Members to be held as soon as possible after the day fixed as aforesaid, and of otherwise facilitating the bringing of the provisions of these Letters Patent relating to the Council into operation.

3. (1) The Letters Patent of 1936 are hereby revoked.

Revocation of Letters Patent of 1936, etc.,

(2) Subject to the provisions of these Letters Patent, all laws in force in Malta at the date on which these Letters Patent come into operation shall remain in force except so far as the same shall be repealed, amended or otherwise affected by or under any Order in Our Privy Council or any law made in pursuance of the powers contained in these Letters Patent or other lawful authority.

(3) The revocation of the Letters Patent of 1936 shall not affect any appointment made prior to the date upon which these Letters Patent come into operation.

PART II.

THE GOVERNOR, LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR AND EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.

4. There shall be a Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over Malta, and appointments to the said Office shall be made by Commission under Our Sign Manual and Signet.

Office of Governor constituted.

5. We do hereby authorize, empower and command the Governor to do all things belonging to his Office in accordance with these Letters Patent, and such Commission as aforesaid, and such Instructions as may from time to time be given to him by Us under Our Sign Manual and Signet or through the Secretary of State, and in accordance with such Orders in Our Privy Council and other laws as may from time to time be in force in Malta.

Governor's Powers and Authorities.

Publication of
Governor's Com-
mission and
taking of oaths.

6. Every person appointed to fill the Office of Governor shall with all due solemnity, before entering on any of the duties of his Office, cause the Commission appointing him to be Governor to be read and published in the presence of the Chief Justice or, in his absence, some other Judge of Our Superior Courts of Malta, and of such Members of the Executive Council as can conveniently attend, which being done, he shall then and there take before them the Oath of Allegiance and the Oath for the due execution of the Office of Governor in the forms set out in the Schedule to these Letters Patent, which Oaths the said Chief Justice or Judge is hereby required to administer.

Office of
Lieutenant-
Governor
constituted.

7. (1) There shall be a Lieutenant-Governor in and over Malta, and appointments to the said Office shall be made by Commission under Our Sign Manual and Signet.

(2) The Lieutenant-Governor shall do during Our pleasure all things belonging to his Office in accordance with these Letters Patent, such Commission as aforesaid, and such Instructions as may from time to time be given to him by Us, under Our Sign Manual and Signet or through the Secretary of State, and in accordance with such Orders in Our Privy Council and other laws as may from time to time be in force in Malta.

Succession to
Government.

8. (1) Whenever the Office of Governor becomes vacant, or the Governor is absent from Malta and there is no subsisting appointment of a Deputy under the next succeeding section of these Letters Patent, or the Governor is from any cause prevented from, or incapable of, performing the duties of his Office, then such person as We may appoint under Our Sign Manual and Signet, or if there is no such person in Malta and capable of discharging the duties of administration, the Senior Member of the Executive Council then in Malta and so capable, shall, during Our pleasure, administer the Government of Malta, first taking the oaths directed to be taken by the Governor in these Letters Patent and in the manner herein prescribed; which being done, We do hereby authorise, empower and command such person to do, during Our pleasure, all things that belong to the Office of Governor, as provided in these Letters Patent.

(2) Any such person as aforesaid shall not continue to administer the government after the Governor or some other officer having a prior right to administer the same has notified that he is about to assume the administration.

Appointment of
Deputies to
Governor.

9. (1) Whenever the Governor has occasion to be temporarily absent for a short period from Malta, he may by an Instrument under the Public Seal appoint any person to be his Deputy within Malta during such temporary absence, and in that capacity to exercise, perform, and execute for and on behalf of the Governor during such absence, all such powers and authorities by these Letters Patent or otherwise vested in the Governor as shall in and by such Instrument be specified, but no others.

(2) By the appointment of a Deputy as aforesaid the power and authority of the Governor shall not be abridged, altered, or in any way affected otherwise than as We may at any time hereafter think proper to direct, and every such Deputy shall conform to and observe all such Instructions as the Governor shall from time to time address to him for his guidance.

(3) Any appointment under this section may at any time be revoked by the Governor or by the Secretary of State, and shall cease and determine upon the return of the Governor to Malta.

10. Whenever the Office of Lieutenant-Governor becomes vacant, or if the Lieutenant-Governor is administering the Government of Malta, or is absent from Malta, or is from any cause prevented from, or incapable of, performing the duties of his Office, the Governor may by an Instrument under the Public Seal appoint some fit and proper person to act provisionally as Lieutenant-Governor. Any person so provisionally appointed shall do during Our pleasure all things belonging to the Office of Lieutenant-Governor in accordance with the terms of his appointment and as provided in these Letters Patent, and shall cease to act as Lieutenant-Governor so soon as We shall have appointed another person to the said Office by Commission under Our Sign Manual and Signet, or as the Governor shall appoint another person to act provisionally as Lieutenant-Governor, or as the substantive holder of the Office shall cease to administer the Government of Malta or shall return to Malta or shall again be able to perform the duties of the Office, as the case may be.

Succession to
office of Lieut-
Governor.

11. The Governor shall keep and use the Public Seal of Malta for sealing all things whatsoever that shall pass the said Seal.

Public Seal.

12. There shall be an Executive Council for Malta, and the said Council shall consist of such persons as We shall direct by Instructions under Our Sign Manual and Signet, or through the Secretary of State, and all such persons shall hold their places in the Executive Council during Our pleasure and, subject thereto, for such period and upon such conditions as may be specified in any such Instructions.

Executive
Council.

PART III.

CONSTITUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENT.

13. (1) There shall be a Council of Government for Malta and the said Council shall consist of twenty Members, that is to say, five *Ex officio* Members, three Official Members, ten Elected Members and two Nominated Members.

Constitution of
Council of
Government.

(2) The Governor shall be President of the Council and shall be entitled to speak in the Council in all respects as if he were a Member.

14. (1) The *Ex officio* Members shall be the persons for the time being lawfully discharging the functions of Lieutenant-Governor, Legal Secretary, Attorney General, Treasurer, and Secretary to Government.

Ex officio
Members.

(2) If an *Ex officio* Member is administering the government of Malta he shall be deemed, for the purposes of this Part of these Letters Patent, not to be discharging the functions of the office by virtue of which he is an *Ex officio* Member, and shall accordingly cease to be an *Ex officio* Member for the period of such administration.

15. (1) The Official Members shall be such persons holding offices of emolument under the Crown in Malta as the Governor may from time to time by Instrument under the Public Seal appoint.

Official Members.

(2) Every Official Member shall hold his seat in the Council during Our pleasure, but shall in any case vacate his seat at the next dissolution of the Council after his appointment, or previously thereto if his appointment shall be disallowed by Us through the Secretary of State, or if he shall cease to hold office of emolument under the Crown in Malta.

(3) Any person vacating a seat in the Council under this section may, if qualified, again be appointed as an Official Member.

(4) The Governor shall without delay report to Us every appointment of any person as an Official Member.

Elected Members.

16. The Elected Members shall be persons elected under any law made in pursuance of the powers contained in these Letters Patent.

Nominated Members.

17. (1) The Nominated Members shall be such persons, not holding any office of emolument under the Crown in Malta or otherwise disqualified in accordance with the provisions of these Letters Patent, as the Governor may by an Instrument under the Public Seal appoint.

(2) Every Nominated Member shall hold his seat in the Council during Our Pleasure, but shall in any case vacate his seat at the next dissolution of the Council after his appointment, or previously thereto if his appointment shall be disallowed by Us through the Secretary of State, or if his seat shall become vacant under the provisions of these Letters Patent.

Any person vacating a seat in the Council under this Section may, if qualified, again be appointed as a Nominated Member.

(3) The Governor shall without delay report to Us every appointment of any person as a Nominated Member.

Precedence of Members.

18. (1) The Members shall take precedence as We may specially assign and in default thereof as follows:—

First, the *Ex officio* Members in the order in which their respective offices are mentioned in section 14 of these Letters Patent.

Secondly, the other Members who are Members of the Executive Council according to their seniority therein.

Thirdly, the Official Members who are not Members of the Executive Council according to the priority of their appointments as Official Members, or, if appointed by the same Instrument, according to the order in which they are named therein.

Fourthly, the Elected and Nominated Members who are not Members of the Executive Council according to the length of time during which they have been continuously Members of the Council.

Elected and Nominated Members who are not Members of the Executive Council and who have been continuously Members of the Council for the same length of time shall take precedence among themselves according to the alphabetical order of their names.

(2) For the purposes of this Section—

(a) Members elected at a general election shall be deemed to have become Members by virtue of that election on the date of the return of the first writ thereat;

(b) a Nominated Member shall be deemed to have become a Member on the date of the Instrument by which he was appointed; and

(c) in ascertaining the period for which any person shall have been continuously a Member, no account shall be taken of any interval necessarily following a dissolution of the Council.

19. No Member shall sit or vote in the Council until he shall have taken and subscribed before the Governor, or some person authorised by the Governor in that behalf, the Oath of Allegiance in the form set out in the Schedule to these Letters Patent:

Oath of allegiance.

Provided that every person authorised by law to make an affirmation instead of taking an oath in Our Courts in Malta may, instead of taking the said oath, make an affirmation in like form.

20. (1) Whenever there shall be a vacancy in the number of persons sitting in the Council as *Ex officio*, or Official or Nominated Members, by reason of the fact that—

Provisional appointment to fill vacancies.

(a) an *Ex officio* Member is administering the government of Malta; or

(b) one person is lawfully discharging the functions of more than one of the offices the holders of which are *Ex officio* members; or

(c) no person is lawfully discharging the functions of an office the holder of which is an *Ex officio* Member; or

(d) an Official Member is lawfully discharging the functions of an office the holder of which is an *Ex officio* Member; or

(e) any Official Member is suspended from the exercise of his functions as a Member; or

(f) any Official or Nominated Member is dead, or the seat of any such Member is otherwise vacant for any cause other than the dissolution of the Council; or

(g) any such Member is declared by the Governor by an Instrument under the Public Seal to be incapable of discharging his functions as a Member; or

(h) any such Member is absent from Malta;

the Governor may by an Instrument under the Public Seal appoint some other person to be provisionally a Member for the period of such vacancy.

If the vacancy is in the number of *Ex officio* or Official Members, the person so appointed shall be a person holding office of emolument under the Crown in Malta; and if the vacancy is in the number of Nominated Members, the person so appointed shall be a person qualified in accordance with these Letters Patent to be appointed as a Nominated Member.

Any such appointment shall cease to have effect if and when it shall be disallowed by Us through the Secretary of State, or revoked by the Governor.

(2) The period of any such vacancy shall terminate if the provisional appointment of a person to fill it shall be superseded by the permanent appointment of a Member in the place of such person, or when the circumstances giving rise to the vacancy shall otherwise cease to exist.

(3) Subject to the provisions of these Letters Patent, every person so appointed shall, as long as his appointment shall subsist, be to all intents and purposes—

(a) in the case of a vacancy in the number of persons sitting in the Council as *Ex officio* Members, an Official Member, being deemed, nevertheless, for the purposes of section 13 of these Letters Patent, to be an *Ex officio* Member; and

(b) in the case of a vacancy in the number of Official Members or Nominated Members, an Official Member or a Nominated Member, as the case may be.

Suspension of
Official Members.

21. The Governor may, by an Instrument under the Public Seal, suspend any Official Member from the exercise of his functions as a Member. Every such suspension shall be forthwith reported by the Governor to the Secretary of State, and shall remain in force unless and until it shall be either removed by the Governor by an Instrument under the said Seal, or disallowed by Us through the Secretary of State.

Qualifications for
Membership by
election or
nomination.

22. Subject to the provisions of the next succeeding section, any person who is a British subject of the age of twenty-one years or upwards and is qualified to be registered as a voter for the election of Members shall be qualified to be elected a Member or to be appointed as a Nominated Member, and no other person shall be qualified to be so elected or appointed or, having been so elected or appointed, shall sit or vote in the Council.

Disqualification
for Membership
by election or
nomination.

23. (1) No person shall be qualified to be elected a Member or to be appointed as a Nominated Member, or having been so elected or appointed, shall sit or vote in the Council, who

(a) is a minister of religion; or

(b) holds any office of emolument under the Crown in Malta; or

(c) is an uncertificated or undischarged bankrupt; or

(d) is of unsound mind or is interdicted for prodigality by a competent Court in Malta; or

(e) has been sentenced by a competent Court in any part of Our dominions or in any territory under Our protection, to death, penal servitude, hard labour for any period, or imprisonment for a period exceeding one year; or been convicted in Malta of any crime against the peace or honour of families referred to in Chapter II of Title VI of the First Part of the Second Book of the Criminal Laws of Malta; and in either case has not either suffered the punishment to which he was sentenced, or such other punishment as may by competent authority have been substituted therefor, or received a free pardon.

(2) No person who has acted as a Registering or Revising Officer or Election Commissioner in connection with the framing or revision of a voters' list for any electoral division shall be capable of being elected as a Member for that division while such list is in force.

Vacation of seat
of Elected or
Nominated
Member.

24. (1) If any Elected or Nominated Member —

(a) shall be absent, except on the ground of illness, from the sittings of the Council, for a period of two calendar months during any session without the leave of the Council; or

(b) shall for the period of one month be a party to any contract with the Government of Malta for or on account of the public service; or

(c) shall take any oath or make any declaration or acknowledgment of allegiance, obedience or adherence to any foreign Power or State; or

(d) shall do, concur in or adopt any act done with the intention that he shall become a subject or citizen of any foreign Power or State; or

(e) shall cease to be qualified for election or appointment as a Member,

his seat shall become vacant.

(2) Any Elected or Nominated Member may resign his seat by writing under his hand addressed to the Governor, and upon the receipt of such resignation by the Governor, the seat of such Member shall become vacant;

Provided that no such Member shall, without the permission of the Council signified by resolution, resign his seat while any proceedings are pending in respect of his conduct in the Council or as a Member, and no Elected Member shall, without such permission, resign his seat while any proceedings are pending in respect of his election, if it is alleged in those proceedings that any corrupt or illegal practices took place at his election.

25. (1) A person shall be liable to a penalty of ten pounds for every day on which he shall sit or vote in the Council knowing, or having reasonable grounds for knowing, that he is disqualified for so sitting or voting or that his seat has become vacant.

Penalty for unqualified persons sitting or voting in the Council.

(2) Such penalty shall be recoverable by action in Our Civil Court in Malta at the suit of the Attorney General.

26. All questions which may arise as to the right of any person to be or remain an Elected or Nominated Member shall be referred to and decided by Our Court of Appeal in Malta in accordance with the provision of any law for the time being in force.

Decision of questions as to qualification or vacation of seats.

PART IV.

LEGISLATION AND PROCEDURE IN THE COUNCIL.

27. Subject to the provisions of these Letters Patent, it shall be lawful for the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Council, to make laws for the peace, order and good government of Malta.

Power to make laws.

28. Subject to the provisions contained in the next succeeding section, all questions proposed for decision in the Council shall be determined by a majority of votes of the Members present and voting. If the votes shall be equally divided, the Governor, if present, shall have a casting vote; and in the absence of the Governor the Member presiding shall have a casting vote in addition to his original vote. The votes of Members shall be taken in the inverse order of their precedence.

Voting.

29. If the Governor shall consider that it is expedient in the interests of public order, public faith or good government (which expressions shall, without prejudice to their generality, include the responsibility of Malta as a component part of the British Empire, and all matters pertaining to the appointment, salary and other conditions of service of any public officer or officers) that any bill introduced, or any motion, resolution or vote proposed for decision in the Council should have effect, then, if the Council fail to pass such bill, motion, resolution or vote within such time as the Governor may think reasonable and expedient, the Governor at any time within his discretion may, notwithstanding any provisions of these Letters Patent or of any Standing Orders of the Council, declare that such bill, motion, resolution or vote shall have effect, and thereupon the same shall have effect, as if it had been passed by the Council, and in the case of any such bill the provisions of this Order as to assent to bills and disallowance of Ordinances shall apply accordingly.

Governor's reserve power.

Report of declarations made under preceding section and power of revocation.

30. (1) The Governor shall forthwith report to the Secretary of State every case in which he shall make any such declaration under the preceding section, and the reasons therefor.

(2) If any Member objects to any such declaration, he may, within seven days of the making thereof, submit to the Governor a statement in writing of his reasons for so objecting, and a copy of such statement shall, if furnished by such Member, be forwarded by the Governor as soon as practicable to the Secretary of State.

(3) Any such declaration, other than a declaration relating to a Bill, may be revoked by the Secretary of State, and the Governor shall notify such revocation in the Gazette; and from the date of such notification any motion, resolution, or vote which shall have had effect by reason of the declaration revoked shall cease to have effect, but without prejudice to anything lawfully done thereunder.

Presentation of Bills for assent.

31. When a Bill passed by the Council is presented to the Governor for his assent he shall, according to his discretion, but subject to the provisions of these Letters Patent, and to any Instructions addressed to him under Our Sign Manual and Signet or through the Secretary of State, declare that he assents, or refuses his assent, thereto, or that he reserves the Bill for the signification of Our pleasure:

Provided that the Governor shall in every case reserve for the signification of Our pleasure any Bill in any way repugnant to or inconsistent with the provisions of these Letters Patent.

Commencement of laws.

32. (1) No Bill shall become a law until either the Governor shall have assented thereto in Our name and on Our behalf, and shall have signed the same in token of such assent, or until We shall have given Our assent thereto by Order in Our Privy Council or through the Secretary of State.

(2) A law assented to by the Governor shall come into operation on the date on which such assent shall be given, or if it shall be enacted that it shall come into operation at a later date, on that date.

(3) A Bill reserved for the signification of Our pleasure shall become a law so soon as We shall have given Our assent thereto, either by Order in Our Privy Council or through the Secretary of State, and the Governor shall have signified such assent by Proclamation in the Gazette. The law shall come into operation on the date of such Proclamation or, if it shall be enacted that it shall come into operation at a later date, on that date.

Disallowance of laws.

33. (1) Any law to which the Governor shall have given his assent may be disallowed by Us through the Secretary of State.

(2) Whenever any law has been disallowed by Us, the Governor shall cause notice of such disallowance to be published in the Gazette and a certificate of such disallowance, certified under the Public Seal of Malta, to be enrolled in the Office of the Registrar of Our Superior Courts in Malta.

(3) Every law so disallowed shall without prejudice to anything lawfully done thereunder, cease to have effect as soon as notice of such disallowance shall be published as aforesaid; and thereafter any enactments repealed or amended by such law shall have effect as if such law had not been made.

34. The Governor shall cause every law enacted under these Letters Patent to be printed in the Gazette, in both the English and Maltese languages, for general information, and shall as soon as practicable also cause a fair copy of such law, signed by him and printed in the English and Maltese languages, to be enrolled on record in the Office of the Registrar of Our Superior Courts in Malta, and such copy shall be conclusive evidence as to the provisions of every such law :

Laws to be printed in Gazette and enrolled.

Provided that the validity of any such law shall not depend upon the enrolment thereof.

35. Subject to the provisions of these Letters Patent, the Governor and the Council shall, in the transaction of business and the passing of laws, conform as nearly as may be to the directions contained in any Instructions under Our Sign Manual and Signet which may from time to time be addressed to the Governor in that behalf.

Governor and Council to conform to Royal Instructions.

36. (1) Subject to the provisions of these Letters Patent, and of any Instructions under Our Sign Manual and Signet, Standing Orders may be made for the regulation and conduct of the proceedings of the Council and the despatch of business.

Standing Orders.

(2) The first Standing Orders shall be made by the Governor ; and thereafter Standing Orders may be made, and the first Standing Orders aforesaid and subsequent Standing Orders may be amended, added to or revoked by the Council :

Provided that no Standing Orders made, or amendment, addition or revocation effected, by the Council shall have effect unless and until approved by the Governor.

(3) Without prejudice to the generality of the provisions of subsection (1) of this section, Standing Orders may provide for the regulation, restriction or prohibition of motions, resolutions, questions, discussion or debate relating to the defence of Malta or to the use or teaching of any language therein.

Standing Orders making provision for any of the matters referred to in this subsection may be made, amended, added to or revoked by the Governor at any time.

37. (1) The proceedings of the Council and all debates and discussions therein shall be conducted in the English language :

Language of debate, Bills and records.

Provided that if, and as long as, the Governor, or the Member presiding in the Council, is satisfied that any Member is unable to express himself adequately in the English language, he may authorise such Member to address him within the Council in the Maltese language.

(2) Every address delivered in the Council in the Maltese language shall be translated orally into the English language while it is being delivered or immediately after its delivery, as the Governor or presiding Member may direct. Such translation shall be given by an interpreter appointed by the Governor.

(3) Every address delivered in the Council shall be printed in the journals and proceedings of the Council in the language in which it was delivered ; and an English translation of any address delivered in the Maltese language shall be printed with the record of the address in that language. Such translation shall be made by an interpreter appointed by the Governor.

(4) Every Bill and every proposed amendment of a Bill shall be printed in both the English and the Maltese language.

(5) Save as aforesaid all journals, entries, minutes and proceedings of the Council shall be made and recorded or printed in the English language only.

Governor or Member appointed or senior Member to preside.

38. The Governor, if present, or in his absence any Member appointed by him in writing, or in default of such appointment, or in the absence of the Member so appointed, the Member present who stands first in order of precedence shall preside at meetings of the Council.

Council may transact business, notwithstanding vacancies.

39. The Council shall not be disqualified for the transaction of business by reason of any vacancy or vacancies among the Members.

Quorum.

40. No business except that of adjournment shall be transacted if objection is taken by any Member present that there are less than seven Members present.

Questions, etc., for debate.

41. Subject to the provisions of these Letters Patent and of Standing Orders made thereunder, any Member may propose any question for debate in the Council; and such question, if seconded by any other Member, shall be debated and disposed of according to the Standing Orders:

Provided that no Bill, vote, resolution or motion shall be proposed without the consent of the Governor, if in his opinion or in that of the presiding Member, such Bill, if enacted, or such vote, resolution or motion, if passed by the Council, would—

(a) dispose of or charge public revenue or public funds of Malta, or revoke, alter or vary any disposition or charge thereon, or impose, alter or repeal any rate, tax or duty; or

(b) suspend the Standing Orders or any of them.

Sessions of Council.

42. The sessions of the Council shall be held at such times and places as the Governor shall from time to time by Proclamation appoint. There shall be at least one session of the Council in every year; and there shall not be an interval of more than twelve months between the last sitting of one session and the first sitting of the next following session.

Prorogation and dissolution of Council.

43. The Governor may at any time, by Proclamation, prorogue or dissolve the Council.

Duration of Council.

44. The Governor shall dissolve the Council at the expiration of four years from the date of the return of the first writ at the last preceding general election, if it shall not have been sooner dissolved.

PART V.

LANGUAGE.

Meaning of "enactment".

45. In this Part of these Letters Patent, unless the context otherwise requires, the word "enactment" includes the whole or any part of the Malta (Use of English Language in Legal Proceedings) Order in Council, 1899, and of any Act, Ordinance or other law enacted, or Proclamation issued, in Malta, and of any instrument made under any such Act, Ordinance, law or Proclamation and having the force of law.

46. (1) The English language as the official language of the British Empire, and the Maltese language, as the language of the people of Malta, shall be the official languages of Malta.

Official languages of Malta.

(2) The English language shall be the language of administration and, subject to the provisions of the next succeeding section, the Maltese language shall be the official language of Our Courts of Law in Malta.

47. (1) The Governor may, with the approval of the Secretary of State, make provision by Proclamation for all or any of the following matters :—

Power to regulate by Proclamation the use and teaching of languages.

(a) The use of the English language in any proceedings before any Court—

(i) where any party or any accused person is a person who does not speak Maltese as the principal language to which he is accustomed;

(ii) when, in the Governor's opinion, it shall be expedient, in the interests of justice, that the English language shall be used.

(b) The teaching of any language, or the use of any language as a medium of instruction, in the Royal University of Malta and in any school.

(c) The language to be used in any circumstances in which the use of any specified language is prescribed by any enactment in force at the date upon which these Letters Patent come into operation.

(2) In the exercise of the powers conferred upon the Governor by this Section he may amend, add to, revoke or replace any enactment which relates to the use or teaching of any specified language and which is in force at the date when these Letters Patent come into operation.

(3) Any Proclamation made under this section may, with the like approval, be amended, added to, or revoked, or replaced by further Proclamation.

48. No Bill, vote, resolution or motion shall be proposed in the Council, if, in the opinion of the Governor or presiding Member, such Bill, if enacted, or such vote, resolution or motion, if passed by the Council, would :—

Exclusion of Bills, etc., relating to the use or teaching of languages from consideration by the Council.

(a) amend, add to, revoke, affect the operation of, or be in any way inconsistent with, provisions relating to the use or teaching of any specified language contained in any enactment or any other law;

(b) make provision for the use or teaching of any specified language in circumstances for which no such provision is made by law.

49. (1) The English text and the Maltese text of all laws shall be the only official texts of the law and if there shall be any conflict between the English and Maltese texts of any law the English text shall prevail.

Language of official texts of laws.

(2) All laws in force at the date on which these Letters Patent come into operation, of which there is no Maltese text, shall be translated into Maltese; and until the translation of any such law shall be published by order of the Governor, the English text thereof shall be the only official text.

PART VI.

MISCELLANEOUS.

- Grant of lands.** 50. The Governor may, in Our name and on Our behalf, make and execute, under the Public Seal, grants and dispositions of any lands within Malta which may be lawfully granted or disposed of by Us.
- Appointment of Officers.** 51. The Governor may constitute and appoint in Our name and on Our behalf all such Officers in Malta as may be lawfully constituted or appointed by Us, all of whom, unless otherwise provided by these Letters Patent or by any other law, shall hold their offices during Our pleasure.
- Judges' appointment, tenure and remuneration.** 52. (1) The judges of Our Superior Courts of Malta shall be appointed by the Governor in Our name and on Our behalf.
- (2) No person shall be qualified to be appointed a judge of the said Courts unless, during a period of not less than twelve years, or during periods amounting in the aggregate to not less than twelve years, he has either practised at the Bar or served as a magistrate in Malta, or has partly so practised and partly so served.
- (3) A judge of the said Courts shall receive such remuneration as may be determined by the Governor from time to time:
- Provided that the remuneration of a judge shall not be diminished during his tenure of office.
- (4) A judge of the said Courts shall vacate his office on his attaining the age of sixty-five years, and may be removed from his office by Us on the ground of proved misbehaviour or incapacity.
- (5) The provisions of subsections (1) and (2) of this section shall not apply to a judge of the said Courts who was appointed before the commencement of the Malta Constitution Act, 1932.
- Dismissal and suspension of officers.** 53. The Governor may, subject to such instructions as may from time to time be given to him by Us through the Secretary of State, upon sufficient cause to him appearing, dismiss or suspend from the exercise of his office any person holding any public office in Malta except the Office of Lieutenant-Governor or Judge of the Superior Courts, or, subject as aforesaid, may take such other disciplinary action as may seem to him desirable.
- Public Service Commission.** 54. (1) There shall be a Public Service Commission which shall advise the Governor, whenever he shall so require, in the exercise of the powers conferred upon him by section 51 of these Letters Patent and in such other matters relating to the public service as he shall refer to them.
- (2) The said Commission shall consist of such persons in the public service of Malta as the Governor shall appoint; and the Governor may, by regulation, prescribe the duties of, and the procedure to be followed by, the Commission and the number which shall form a quorum.
- (3) The Governor may revoke any appointment made by him under this section.
- Grant of pardon.** 55. When any offence has been committed for which the offender may be tried in Malta, the Governor may, as he shall see occasion, in Our name and on Our behalf, grant a pardon to any accomplice in such offence who shall give such information as shall lead to the conviction of the principal offender, or of any one of such offenders, if more than one; and further may grant to any offender convicted of any such offence

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in any Court within Malta, a pardon, either free or subject to lawful conditions, or any remission of the sentence passed on such offender, or any respite of the execution of such sentence, for such period as he may think fit, and may remit any fines, penalties, or forfeitures due or accrued to Us.

56. (1) All persons in Malta shall have full liberty of conscience and the free exercise of their respective modes of religious worship.

Religious
toleration.

(2) No person shall be subjected to any disability or excluded from holding any office by reason of his religious profession.

57. We do hereby require and command all Our Officers, Civil and Military, and all other the inhabitants of Malta to be obedient, aiding and assisting unto the Governor.

Officers and
others to obey
the Governor.

58. We do hereby reserve to Ourselves, Our Heirs and Successors Our and Their undoubted right, with the advice of Our or Their Privy Council, to make laws for the peace, order and good government of Malta.

Reservation of
power to make
laws by Order in
Council.

59. We do hereby reserve to Ourselves, Our Heirs and Successors full power and authority to revoke, add to or amend these Letters as to Us or Them shall seem fit.

Reservation of
power to amend,
or revoke Letters
Patent.

Source: MGG 1939, Letters Patent, 25 Feb. 1939, pp. 244–257.

Appendix D

Table 1: 1932 and 1939 Elections Results

General Elections	1932	1939
Registered Voters	52,610	47,306
Votes Cast	48,658	35,510
Nationalist Party	28,777	11,618
Constitutional Party	15,023	19,156
Labour Party	4,138	3,100
Other Parties	367	1,265

Source: D. Nohlen and P. Stöver, *Elections in Europe: A Data Handbook* (Baden-Baden, 2010), p. 1306.

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CO158/501/89001/7; CO158/505; CO158/510/89404; CO158/511/89001/10;
CO158/513a; CO158/515/89036; CO158/516; CO158/517/89152/9; CO158/523/89008;
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