

Chapter II

THE RISE OF MALTESE NATIONALISM 1880-1888

The Maltese patriotic consensus, besides postulating that, ideally, the people should control internal affairs, especially public expenditure, embodied, so far, a more or less standard view of *patria*: Malta was Catholic by religion, Italian by cultural heritage, Maltese through local attachments, habits and expectations. The British occupation, however, led gradually to the creation of different kinds of jobs, opportunities and associations, so that the life styles and outlooks of many people began to change: in the third generation since 1800 these people were beginning to make their influence felt. Political beliefs, reflecting the fortress-colony's changing social structure, began to challenge some of the basic assumptions of the traditional outlook until, after a prolonged and bitter struggle, the colonial dynamic altered the patriotic consensus, in some respects almost beyond recognition.

Just as knights were replaced by generals, so barter was replaced by money, sail by steam, protection by free trade: the number of steamships calling at Malta increased from 1 in 1837 to 2,540 with an aggregate tonnage of 2,378,386 in 1876; port statistics showed steamer tonnage to be increasing at the rate of more than 100,000 tons yearly.¹ Harbour activities necessarily underwent a considerable transformation: modern, adequate facilities, such as drydocks, became necessary; so, too, skilled labour to cope with the new requirements. During the Russo-Turkish war (1877-1878), by which Malta's economy was hit, 'nearly half of the population' were said to depend for their existence on harbour activity (the fleet, mercantile shipping).²

The civil population increased from 115,945 in 1828³ to 149,782 in 1881; so, too, did the concentration of people in the harbour areas, especially Senglea, already far the most densely populated area of the islands.⁴

As the school population trebled from 1847 to 1891, certain occupations became more restricted and competitive; so alternative employment avenues became more necessary and precious. In the decade (1842-1852) that moulded the 1880 generation, the number of pupils/students almost doubled, the best instruction being given in Valletta (nearly 30% of the student population), followed by the Three Cities (Senglea, Vittoriosa, Cospicua, with about 39% between them).⁵

When the British first went to Malta there was hardly anybody there who knew English, so they had to use Italian⁶ – Lord Bathurst's pro-English instructions to Governor Maitland as early as 1813 had proved impossible to fulfill;⁷ – but, although Italian continued to be the prerequisite for an education in Malta, a knowledge of English became a useful acquirement to have in addition to it: those who needed or could afford to learn English privately did so, and English was also taught in the schools. No attempt to diffuse English had succeeded in dislodging Italian from its assiduously treasured status.⁸ In 1836–1838 the royal commissioners Cornwall-Lewis and the famous jurist John Austin concluded that Italian was 'far more useful to a Maltese than any other language, excepting his native tongue', adding that the Maltese were 'better acquainted than Englishmen' with 'the prevailing opinions and manners and with the capacities of individuals'.⁹ By 1842, out of the total civil population (including a thousand non-Maltese residents, mostly British), 372 persons (371 in Malta, 1 in Gozo) could speak and read English only (compared to nearly 5,000 who spoke and read Italian only): the ratio of those who could read Italian *or* English was 3:1 in favour of the former.¹⁰ By 1871 the ratio was 2:1 still in favour of Italian.¹¹ In 1881, when as many as 10,281 could read English (compared to 16,817 for Italian), those who wrote only Italian were 7,379, those who wrote only English were 843; the proportion of those speaking English was higher in Valletta, Floriana and the Three Cities than in the country districts and Gozo island.¹²

English was making steady progress; but the knowledge of both Italian and English by educated persons could hardly be the same: Italian was still at the base, English at the surface, of the cultural spectrum. The atmosphere of daily life in educated society was largely Italianate – in theatre and opera, in contracts and accounts, in the names of shops, of streets, and, not least, of people themselves; the four daily newspapers, printed in Valletta, including the 'pro-English' ones, were in Italian: *Corriere Mercantile Maltese*, *Lloyd Maltese*, *Risorgimento*, *L'Amico del Popolo*. Even at popular levels, cuisine and fashions were Italian-like; common folk would also know some prayers associated with the Latin mass or prayer-books in Italian used by the clergy. English had a special appeal in that it was an international language already; its indirect encouragement by government agencies continued unabated; its diffusion was consequently growing.

Matters took a different turn in 1880: from now on, anglicization became the government policy, whether the representatives or the majority of the electorate liked it or not; studying Italian was to be actively discouraged, its use possibly prohibited in education and public affairs. Such, undeniably, was the message conveyed by what Sir Walter Hely-Hutchinson called 'the unholy trinity of commissioners'.¹³

Many Maltese thought that English could be diffused; few were prepared to accept that it should be imposed, still less that it should be made to oust

Italian. The pro-English type was best represented, at first, by those exposed to direct contacts with the British in business or service, and those having a personal acquaintance with life in Britain; the former were more 'pro-government', the latter more 'pro-British' betraying, not simply by their interests, but also in their attitudes, a degree of assimilation to the governing race, admiration for British-like progress, often mixed with an infatuous, misdirected or, sometimes, outright servile, disposition and imitation of British models.

An exponent of the Maltese pro-British mentality was Mr. (later Sir) Ferdinando Inglott, C.M.G. (1820-1893), of Vittoriosa, formerly an employee at the dockyard naval service.¹⁴ In 1840 Inglott had been sent for training as a teacher at Battersea College (under Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth's supervision): 'distinguished for his fine bass voice, and despite the obstacle of an imperfect knowledge of English', he had 'succeeded well, and became the teacher of a model school in his native land'.¹⁵ In 1880 Inglott was the longest-serving head of a government department and an official member of the Council of Government: he thought, like Rowsell, that the university, having 'over-stocked the professions', should be 'suppressed' as Malta was 'too small and too isolated from the scientific world, to be able to maintain a university of name and efficiency'; he thought, like Keenan, that 'none should be appointed as teachers unless possessing a good knowledge of the English language'; he thought, like Cardinal Wiseman whom he had met, that a roman alphabet for Maltese would be 'equal to giving to Europe the key of Oriental literature'. Inglott's self-esteem was hardly remarkable: he hoped that, since he had mentioned the English cardinal's name, his letter to Keenan would not be 'deserving only to be thrown into the waste paper basket'.¹⁶

Far more important as a representative of the pro-British school, and a product of the colonial society, was Sigismondo Savona, the son of a box-office attendant (*biljettinar*) at Valletta's Manoel Theatre:¹⁷ a 'child of the people',¹⁸ Savona's family had somewhat higher social connections.¹⁹ On leaving the lyceum,²⁰ Savona enlisted as a private in the Royal Malta Fencible Artillery, was promoted a sergeant and selected, in 1853, for a two-year regimental schoolmaster course at the normal school of the Royal Military Asylum in Chelsea,²¹ where he 'obtained the first place at the final examination'.²² In London Savona interested himself in political affairs: his permit to be admitted to the House of Commons gallery was signed by Thomas Babington Macaulay,²³ whose writings he had in his private library in Malta and from which he quoted repeatedly in a public lecture in 1865:

The History of England is emphatically the history of progress ... the greatest and most highly civilized people that ever the world saw; have spread their dominion on every quarter of the globe; ... have created a maritime power which would annihilate in a quarter of an hour the navies of Tyre, Athens, Carthage, Venice and Genoa together.²⁴

On his return to Malta Savona replaced the army school's English schoolmaster on the ground that no elementary instruction in language could be imparted by a teacher who was not conversant alike with the language he taught (English) and the pupils to whom he imparted it (Maltese).²⁵

Severing his connections with the regiment in 1865 and establishing the best English language teaching school in Malta, Savona began a weekly paper *Public Opinion* for 'the moral and intellectual improvement of all classes of the population, by means of a sound system of education'; to work for a gradual extension of political liberties as well as the strictest economy in public expenditure, and to promote 'whatever may have a tendency to strengthen the ties which happily unite these Islands to the Crown of Our Most Gracious Sovereign, Queen Victoria'.²⁶ Highlighting a quotation from Milton's *Areopagitica* as *Public Opinion's* motto, Savona was also one of the first advocates of a radical fiscal reform: the 1878 anti-Rowsell riot²⁷ was directed as much against Savona as against Rowsell, who met Savona.²⁸ That demonstration was 'against two gentlemen who are well-known to be actuated by the best and the purest intentions on behalf of the poor working classes';²⁹ the wheat duty was 'as infamous as the English corn law was'. Describing Cobden as 'that great benefactor of mankind',³⁰ Savona was seen at the C.O. as 'the champion of free trade'.³¹ In Cobdenite terms, the free trade principle was 'not just an argument about customs duties' but the principle 'drawing men together, thrusting aside the antagonism of race, and creed, and language'.³² Professing to belong to the Liberal Party and critical of the presence of ecclesiastics in the Council,³³ echoing the utilitarians, Savona aimed for democracy but was cautious in his approach towards an extended franchise:³⁴

it will be well if the majority of the people shall have so far been instructed and educated, as to be enabled to exercise a beneficial and salutary influence on the happiness and prosperity of the greatest number, which is universally admitted to be the object of all good government.³⁵

He strongly felt that it was 'the duty of the government to assimilate, as much as possible, the laws and institutions of the Maltese, to those of England', and to do so especially through 'the study and progress of the English language among all classes', but he acknowledged the necessity, so far, for Maltese schoolchildren to study Italian, since Maltese was not 'a written language':

It is evident that they must first of all be taught that language which is more strictly and indispensably necessary to them. That language is without a doubt the Italian.³⁶

Savona first stood for election to the Council in 1875 and was returned second on the poll, after Cachia Zammit:³⁷ he promised electors that he would never sacrifice his independence to become director of primary schools, professor of English literature or rector of the university.³⁸ In the 1879 public meeting organised by the Reform Committee,³⁹ Savona's main targets were the government's official majority in the Council and the

all too powerful crown advocate Sir Adriano Dingli (1817–1900): this ‘one man’, declared Savona, could render null all that influence with which the British constitution invested the legitimate representatives of the people.⁴⁰

Variouslly described as ‘the dictator’,⁴¹ ‘the real governor’,⁴² the ‘most unpopular man’,⁴³ Dingli was reputed once to have said, rather like Louis XIV: ‘I am the Council’.⁴⁴ According to Dingli’s theory of government, public officers were ‘the servants of the Governor’: only the government was ‘the servant of the public’; they were ‘to obey and carry out the orders they receive from the Government’.⁴⁵ Dingli was a luminous example of the collaborative mechanism described by Robinson:

imperialism was as much a function of its victims’ collaboration or non-collaboration – of their indigenous politics, as it was of European expansion . . . from beginning to end imperialism was a product of interaction between European and extra-European politics.⁴⁶

As the collaborator assumes power, resistance to the government becomes opposition to himself. ‘If there is an appeal to the Governor’, Bayley Potter told the Commons, ‘he refers it to the Crown Advocate’:

If there is an appeal to the Chief Secretary, he also refers it to the Crown Advocate. If the appeal be to the Secretary of State at home, the Crown Advocate writes the despatch that accompanies the appeal; and if the appeal be to the Law Courts, again the Crown Advocate appears and defends the Government – that is himself – before Judges who have been appointed by himself.⁴⁷

‘We, on this side of the room, are more numerous’, Dingli reminded the elected bench.⁴⁸

The son of a knighted Gozitan judge, Dingli had gone over from the opposition to the government side in 1854 when his father became, as he was soon to become too, the chief justice; after a quarter-of-a-century in office Dingli was an autocrat. An exceptionally able lawyer in the local Italianate tradition, he had studied abroad, spoke and wrote English fluently, and was married to an English lady: a combination of consensus and dynamic, he excelled as the synthesis of what was to come.

Next in this line of succession there was after 1880 none other than Sigismondo Savona: ‘the most scholarly and accomplished schoolmaster in the Colony’, whom Keenan had in mind, was to fill the role envisaged for ‘the President of the Education Department’, the one man in charge of all the educational institutions from university to primary schools.⁴⁹ Thus Savona, who allegedly had continued to attend sittings on the elected side when he knew he would be deserting the opposition,⁵⁰ became both director of primary schools and rector of the university, as well as, like Dingli, an official member of the Council and subsequently of the Executive Council also.⁵¹ The zealous anglophile patriot may have learned from Bentham a duty to obey only so far as utility allows, or, like Stuart Mill, equated ‘desired’ with ‘desirable’. Compromising his loyalties with

most electors, including several of his own sympathizers, Savona now had other duties to perform, new loyalties to heed.

He promptly set to work, inspecting government schools, rearranging curricula, preparing to introduce some of Keenan's recommendations, the dominant motif of his reform being the essential superiority of the English language and of British ways but, added to this, there was undoubtedly the practical utility which English had or could have to certain classes in the islands. Savona justified teaching English before Italian in the primary schools on the ground that school-leavers stood to profit from this:

Whether they earn their living on the shores of the harbours, as sailors, firemen, coal-heavers, boatmen or porters; as policemen, artillery men, domestic servants, messengers in Government offices; as labourers or artisans under the Royal Engineer or Commissariat Department, in the Royal Dockyard or the Hydraulic Dock; a knowledge of the English language will prove of great benefit and assistance to them, infinitely more so than a knowledge of Italian.⁵²

English was to be raised to an equal status with Italian in lyceum entrance examinations; English was also to become the medium of instruction in the medical Faculty and in international law lectures at the university. Those who would know English, English history, English literature, English laws, argued Savona, would be able to compete for jobs in the British army and navy, in the British civil service and the Indian empire; even lawyers could find employment in the Vice-Admiralty courts, in the British consular courts in the East and in North Africa, as a few Maltese had done already: 'The key to this wide field for fame and fortune is a thorough knowledge of the English language'.⁵³

English also promised to be increasingly useful in Malta, considering that by 1884 nearly one-third of bread-winners were employed or gained their livelihood chiefly under the immediate direction of British foremen or ship masters, in the dockyard, in and about the ports, in the Royal Malta Fencible Artillery, with the Royal Engineers and other military departments, and as domestic servants to officers and other British residents.⁵⁴ The encouragement being given to English, said Savona, was

not to further any Imperial purposes, but to promote the good of the people of Malta, to enable the Maltese to acquire a complete knowledge of English, to enable the rising generation to go abroad in search of fame and fortune.⁵⁵

Referring to the three 'dockyard' cities Cospicua, Senglea and Vittoriosa, situated alongside the two best sheltered Grand Harbour creeks (opposite from Valletta, in the region known as Cottonera), Savona said

the only language useful to the working classes is the English, so much so that workmen are anxious to go to night schools to learn it, in order to be able to get good situations in the Royal Dockyard. The works in the Dockyard are a godsend to these people, and there are many working men who would make almost any sacrifice to obtain a knowledge of English. This is the reason why English is taught to the children of the working classes, not to cheapen the price of English-speaking servants, but to offer them a wider and better field for occupation.⁵⁶

Savona agreed with Keenan that English and other subjects should be

taught through Maltese, which was to start being studied by means of a newly-composed 'phonetic alphabet', during the first years at school, according to Ahn's method.⁵⁷ Dr. Franz Ahn's method of learning foreign languages through the local vernacular, first launched in 1848, became popular in Britain at the time when Savona was doing his schoolmaster's course at the Royal Military Asylum;⁵⁸ Savona also knew from his teaching experience how the use of Maltese could facilitate instruction, strengthening the motivation to learn. 'At a word of Maltese', observed the chief secretary Hely-Hutchinson, 'the child's countenance brightens – intelligence leaps into the eyes, the mind is awakened and prepares itself to receive and to develop the ideas which are conveyed to it from the mind of the teacher'.⁵⁹ The grammatical use of Maltese was, however, a means to facilitate anglicization, in line with Savona's basic disposition, of which he had given sufficient indication, even as an elected member, when he had declared his belief in the great British empire, all the parts of which should be 'knit together, resolved to do or die for the fatherland', adding fatalistically:

If the French had not been driven from Malta by the Maltese, before they had been two years in the island, it is certain that French would long ago have been the official language of this island. If the Russians had made themselves masters of it, as at one time it seemed likely that they would, I am sure that before this we should all have been thoroughly Russianized.⁶⁰

But Savona's 'fatherland' was hardly the Maltese 'patria': 'Something other than philanthropic sentiment', retorted *Il Diritto di Malta* (Malta's Right), 'must animate those who in spite of history would have us Saracens, who in spite of right want to see extinguished the language expressing our civility, and in spite of common sense want to redeem us of our ignorance through the English language'.⁶¹ 'Nationality', wrote Alfred Zimmern, a Fabian, 'is an element that springs from the deepest side of man's nature; you can destroy it by severing men from their past and from the immemorial traditions, affections and restraints which bind them to their kin and country':

But you cannot replace it; for in the isolated shrunken individual, the cut flower of humanity with whom you have now to deal, *you have nothing left to work on*. Such education as you can give him will be the education of a slave: a training not of the whole man, but of certain aptitudes which may render him a useful workman, a pushing tout, or even a prosperous merchant, but never a good citizen. And he will revenge himself on you, in the subtlest and most exasperating of ways, by triumphantly developing into a bad imitation of yourself.⁶²

After 1880 the *patria* appeared to be endangered in its totality, not merely from the constitutional aspect but, more fundamentally, from its root in such cultural foundations as are inseparable from ideas about nationality and the qualities of nationhood.

1880 was a parting of the ways marking the beginning of a new era in Maltese history. 'Our fiscal system is on the point of being altered', observed the conservative-independent *Malta Times*, 'our very institutions threaten of being shaken, and, last, though not least, our language of communi-

cation is doomed, sooner or later, to undergo a complete change'.⁶³ To change or not to change, to reform or to preserve? These were the questions that troubled people's consciences in the 1880s: asked intensively and abruptly, 'resolved' dogmatically and crudely, they provoked strong contrasting reactions; there were no unequivocal answers. However firmly entrenched in tradition, Malta belonged to a changing world, and was directly linked, economically and politically, to the British empire; but in what direction, to what extent, for what purposes were changes necessary or useful to the Maltese people? Malta's circumstances had, in late years, undergone 'a thorough revolution'.⁶⁴

In the face of a forced assimilation, the Italian language and literary traditions of Malta assumed an exaggerated importance, serving to buttress constitutional demands; anglicization awakened the theory of nationality, converting dormant rights into aspirations, sentiments into political claims, giving *italianità* a purpose similar to that which this concept enjoyed in *Risorgimento* Italy when it served to rally a common feeling of nationality, to arouse the urge for national self-determination. What was seen to exist had to be rendered manifest. Nationality is a state of being, nationalism a state of becoming. Stuart Mill wrote that where the sentiment of nationality exists in any force 'there is a *prima facie* case for uniting all the members of the nationality under the same government, and a government to themselves apart'; adding that this was 'merely saying that the question of government ought to be decided by the governed'.⁶⁵ But

What now seems natural once was unfamiliar, needing argument, persuasion, evidences of many kinds; what seems simple and transparent is really obscure and contrived, the outcome of circumstances now forgotten and preoccupations now academic, the residue of meta-physical systems sometimes incompatible and even contradictory.⁶⁶

The Maltese nationalist party was founded in 1880 to fight anglicization with the weapon of *italianità* and to demand a new constitutional order: ever since 1849 (when the elective principle was granted) no question had so profoundly exercised the minds of those who took an interest in elections as the question of the rival merits of English and Italian.⁶⁷ Savona's *volte face* in June 1880 was a signal for action – and the opposition this time was directed not so much against the foreign commissioners as against the 'insider' who was expected to implement their recommendations. Just a few weeks after Savona's appointment, the highly evocative weekly *Diritto di Malta* was started as the organ of the opponents of Savona and his 'reformist' backers. The 'Anti-Riformisti' of the *Diritto* would combat the three 'infamous', 'infernal' reform schemes,⁶⁸ and those whom they saw as a clique of collaborators: such people who 'forgot that they were Maltese' and served only 'to remind us that we should be the slaves of England', 'to sacrifice our all for the sole benefit of this famous garrison and Royal Navy'.⁶⁹ Savona was seen as the 'protoplasm' of the three commissioners and as 'the embodiment of English sympathies and English ideas'.⁷⁰

The 'Partito Anti-Riformista' (P.A.R.), which a few years later became known as the 'Partito Nazionale' (P.N.), was not simply a pressure group or an action committee (as the Reform Committee had been so far): it was a political party, presenting candidates in its own name at elections, seeking to give coherence and direction to pressures within society, aspiring to acquire power over the personnel and policy of the government; it had a defined, and distinct, platform; a substantially recognizable base in the professional classes; and, generally, a vision of Malta as a nation. Soon, and most importantly, it had a formidable leader in Dr. Fortunato Mizzi.

The son of a Gozitan magistrate, a prominent Malta-educated lawyer, Mizzi was married to Sofia Fogliero De Luna, 'a distinguished Italian lady'.⁷¹ Mizzi's services were eagerly sought by the P.A.R., an indication that the reluctant politician was highly esteemed as a man of principle and a 'pro-Italian': Mizzi repeatedly declined the offer to stand for the 1880 election, recommending another candidate instead, and his name was temporarily dropped from the *Diritto* list.⁷² But within a year or so after 1880, Mizzi's leadership became established firmly, even though at first he may not always have been formally accorded party leader status by his more individualistic colleagues. By 1881 Mizzi was already taking the initiative, calling on his *Anti-Riformisti* to 'resign *en masse*' from the Council in response to public annoyance at government measures. Dr. Agostino Naudi, a P.A.R. moderate who actually sent his own son to the jesuits' college St. Ignatius where English was given priority,⁷³ narrated an incident showing how Mizzi could call personally at the residence of an elected member to discuss 'the situation' and counsel more energetic opposition: on that occasion Naudi hesitated at the prospect of drastic action. 'Be careful', Mizzi warned him, 'for whether you or the others will follow me or not, I still will resign'.⁷⁴ Thus forcing one issue after another, Mizzi quickly assumed the supreme direction of the country: he managed, wrote Edoardo Semini, 'to impose his own will on the whole population'.⁷⁵

An idealist by disposition, a nationalist by conviction, Mizzi was acknowledged to be 'very straightforward',⁷⁶ said to be 'incorruptible',⁷⁷ and always showing a 'devotion' to duty.⁷⁸ Mizzi like Mazzini believed in duty and like him he might have said: 'I may make mistakes, but my heart is true'; he belonged not with 'the men of rights' but with 'the men of duty'. 'Rights belong equally to every individual; the fact of living together in a community does not create a single one', wrote Mazzini in his address to the Italian working class:

Society has greater strength, not more rights, than the individual. How, then, are you going to prove to the individual that he must merge his will in the will of those who are his brethren, whether in the Country or in the wider fellowship of Humanity? ... The theory of rights enables us to rise and overthrow obstacles, but not to found a strong and lasting accord between all the elements which compose a nation.⁷⁹

The utilitarian approach made no sense to this frame of mind: the satirist asked the utilitarian what was the use of a nightingale unless roasted;

Treitschke saw Cobden as 'a man who thought that the cheap production of cotton and quick journeys for commercial travellers were the supreme aims of civilization'; even Stuart Mill exclaimed 'better be Socrates dissatisfied than a pig satisfied'. When Cobden visited Rome he is said to have remarked that the only things worth preserving of its ancient monuments were the aqueducts.⁸⁰ With regard to the language question, Mizzi admitted that English was useful as 'the means of making headway in certain jobs' but, in view of Italian's role in Maltese education and society, he stressed that Italian was 'necessary for all':⁸¹ Italian was 'that language which is used for the progress of the Island and which keeps the population up to the level of other nations'.⁸² Like Mosei Ostrogorski, who described himself as 'a practical moralist', Mizzi could never understand how morals and politics could be based on an identification of private with public interests in the utilitarian sense. The point was, in public life, not to mix up private interest with the interest of all, but to subordinate the former to the latter, enlist it in its service, or, at all events, to restrain it whenever the object of society, which was justice, so required: 'egoism becoming altruism in all men by the association of their interests remains to me a mystery and an idyl'.⁸³

Anglicization naturally proved to be repellent especially to the educated, not only because they understood more fully what the implications were, but also because they had more to lose. Mizzi quoted a lengthy despatch from Lord Grey, written in 1830 at the time of the Belgian revolution, showing what harmful effects were produced by the Dutch kingdom's attempts to force assimilation on their French-educated Belgian subjects: Grey had pointed out the *de facto* position of inferiority in which the Belgian educated classes were being placed in relation to those others who would be lucky enough to make up a phrase in Dutch; this meant not simply the loss of a good subsistence, but the total suffocation of every sentiment of such noble ambition as generally animated all men who had reached the apex of their studies and careers.⁸⁴

Although he was sometimes censored for making use of revolutionary language, Mizzi was not a revolutionary. Replying to a charge from Count Gerald Strickland, Mizzi held that the author of the newspaper article in question did not mean 'to threaten a revolution', that when he (Mizzi) had made use of similar phraseology he had no intention of 'threatening revolutions', as his party's uncompromising opposition to the regime was always carried out within constitutional limits: 'I have always considered it ridiculous to harbour thoughts of revolution in Malta'.⁸⁵ Mizzi shared in common with Parnell, to whom he was compared,⁸⁶ a desire for self-government and, chiefly with that aim in view, he steadfastly opposed coercive measures through obstructionist, but non-violent, tactics. His profound appreciation of the values of political liberty was enshrined in his knowledge and respect for the law. In a characteristic piece of moraliz-

ing, which really summed up his private as well as his public life, Mizzi held honesty to be the primary virtue to be sought for in a public man:

honesty begets independence, inspires eloquence and lends energy, qualities which mere learning cannot possess and which by wealth alone cannot be acquired.

Mizzi's theory of government was the opposite of Dingli's:

peoples are governed not by might but through affection: where the former supplants the latter slaves may be had but not subjects – slaves in whose heart there rankles a hate against their oppressors, whose yoke they endure only so long as they want the strength and the opportunity to shake it off.⁸⁷

1880 saw the formation of another political party besides Mizzi's. This was the Reform Party (R.P.), which emerged from the earlier Reform Committee initiated chiefly by F. S. De Cesare, Roberto De Cesare, Savona himself, under the presidency of Dr. Pasquale Mifsud, and, at first, having the backing of a wide political spectrum including Cachia Zammit, Dr. Agostino Naudi, and others who became P.A.R. supporters soon afterwards. Savona was prevented by his official duties from openly participating in politics and he stopped his *Public Opinion*; but the *Malta Standard*, owned and edited by George Alfred Page, was founded immediately and expressly 'in lieu of *Public Opinion*'.⁸⁸ The R.P. leadership devolved on 'the Venerable President' Mifsud:⁸⁹ A lawyer with a large clientele who was later made a judge, Mifsud was an intimate friend of Savona: he was 'frequently seen' in Savona's company.⁹⁰ More problematical was F. S. De Cesare, a cattle-dealer from Cospicua who was owner-editor of the daily *Risorgimento*. De Cesare liked to style himself as leader of a 'gran partito indipendente';⁹¹ *Standard*, rebuking him for 'fighting without gloves',⁹² put him last on the party's list of candidates who were described as 'men of liberal views'.⁹³ De Cesare posed as an Anglophile liberal – 'the English love and respect us', he said⁹⁴ – but Hely-Hutchinson saw him as 'an untrustworthy beggar who can be made use of';⁹⁵ and Governor Borton snubbed him at a party refusing to shake hands. In his complaint about this incident, De Cesare described Savona as his 'friend', while condemning 'the hostile press of a rival party'.⁹⁶ The 'sterling' patriotism of De Cesare and Savona had not gone by unrewarded, observed the rival *Diritto*: 'to one they gave the meat contract; to the other they gave the mind contract'.⁹⁷

A comparison of the P.A.R. and R.P. lists of electoral candidates shows a certain difference in their social composition: of the former's seven candidates, four (including Mizzi) were lawyers, the others being a small landowner (Cachia Zammit), a merchant and an ecclesiastic; the latter, less a united middle class-*professionista* grouping, had, besides the lawyer Mifsud and the cattle-dealer De Cesare, an aristocrat, Marchesino Giuseppe De Piro, and the retiring chief justice Sir Antonio Micallef. Cachia Zammit, a liberal patriot whom Winston Churchill once described as 'a great orator',⁹⁸ featured in both the party lists, but clearly he was more

inclined towards the P.A.R. So far, having polled the highest number of votes at the previous election (1875), Cachia Zammit was accorded the prestigious status of 'senior elected member' by his colleagues,⁹⁹ and he 'sat first' on the elected bench.¹⁰⁰ In many ways Cachia Zammit was the last of the independents, as now the party nominee quickly replaced the individual candidate.

There was a profound difference in the outlooks and sentiments of the two parties: Cachia Zammit saw 'the destiny, the soul, the political existence of a people' to be 'in their own hands'; *Standard* bore in mind that Malta was a garrison town and a naval station, 'and also contains a number of civilians'.¹⁰² Mifsud was cautious, saying that although he strongly supported the spread of English he was not an abolitionist either with regard to the wheat duty or Italian;¹⁰³ but *Standard* urged electors to vote R.P. 'on the grounds of expediency and utilitarianism'.¹⁰⁴

The R.P. regarded Italian as the 'great impediment to education', holding 'without the possibility of cavil' that the language of the Maltese was 'the Arabic and not the Italian'; instruction in Maltese and English was necessary for the 'humbler classes', but Italian was unnecessary. The R.P. advocated reforms which would benefit 'the community in general, although prejudicial to the interests of a class': unless the language which promised to be 'the prevailing tongue of civilization' was rendered general, and the people educated, Malta would remain backward; the authorities 'at home' would never confer upon the Maltese the exercise of political liberty, the benefits of free institutions, until they would have been so educated.¹⁰⁵ Sketching a caricature of the P.A.R. in unhistorical terms, *Standard* said that the interests of the professional classes and landed proprietors were at stake and they had naturally 'bandied together to oppose all the measures of reform proposed by the Royal Commissioners, and to keep the people in ignorance and darkness':

They are actuated by the very same narrow-minded motives which impelled the English Conservatives of 1830 to oppose the abolition of the corn tax and the extension of popular education.¹⁰⁶

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

Leaders are actuated by the desire to benefit their fellows, as well as by the desire to place themselves in a position of dominance; possessiveness and self-sacrifice are combined.¹⁰⁷

Politicians have made good use of arrogating to language 'the function of the "badge" or "uniform" of a nation';¹⁰⁸ but language lays a kind of

foundation for the more complex structures which correspond to the different aspects of culture.¹⁰⁹ Language loyalty, like nationalism, can be an *idée forcée*

which fills man's brain and heart with new thoughts and sentiments and drives him to translate his consciousness into deeds of organized action. In response to an impending language shift, it produces an attempt at preserving the threatened language; as a reaction to interference, it makes the standardized version of the language a symbol and a cause.¹¹⁰

The 1880 general election, in which the P.A.R. won five seats and the R.P. three,¹¹¹ acted as a catalyst, releasing the growing tensions of the late seventies. A contest between parties rather than between candidates,¹¹² the election was fought with more than usual bitterness and acrimony:¹¹³ the public were 'flooded with manifestoes and declarations' in number 'far exceeding' those made in previous elections.¹¹⁴

The 1880 election, just after Savona became an office-holder, saw the emergence of Mizzi; it epitomised a movement that led to identifiable and lasting political groupings lining up against each other to do electoral battle in the name of opposed causes: 1880 was heralded and for half-a-century afterwards remembered and recalled as the beginning of the nationalist struggle. In this world of 'English' or 'Italian' were Maltese political parties born, conditioned in varying degrees by the urge to depend and the will to be free. The central issue – the language question – became the most distinct single factor labelling the supporters of either party as 'pro' or 'anti' English or Italian. The polarization continued, often assuming different characters, but largely motivated by the same consensus-dynamic interaction that had been set in motion, increasing the pace, intensifying the form, and changing the nature of politics; with the P.A.R.'s strength growing in reverse proportion to the R.P.'s declining fortunes.

Departing from the customary Maltese newspaper criticism of government, the P.A.R. injected the notion of *patria* with a new life: cultural nationalism became the explanation and justification of the quest for political freedoms. Inaugurating its publication by romantically foreseeing an anti-colonial revolution, the *Diritto*, probably referring to Savona, said that 'someone' realized that 'the masses would soon awake' to achieve their rights: he wanted to disseminate confusion 'in order to ward off the approaching dawn of a dreaded day' that would soon emerge 'over the historic waves of the Mediterranean'. Avowing tenacity of purpose in the struggle for the rights of 'the gem of the Mediterranean', the paper, edited by Dr. Ernesto Manara, wanted to 'relift the public spirit, to rally our forces, to address them towards one end and to counsel the proper means for its pursuit'. Considering Malta in her Latin Mediterranean setting rather than as an outpost of empire, the party saw constitutional liberties as the tools of progress, scorned the Cobden Club's civilizing mission, pointed to the contradictions of empire: the British preached liberty among themselves at the same time as they terrorized subjects abroad; acclaimed the march of

industry but suffocated this in the colonies; taught 'philanthropy' but still conserved 'feudalism' at home; the British said they were unfurling the banner of civilization, but their professions in relation to their deeds were nothing but 'Japhet's cloak to hide his father's disgrace'. Terenzio Mamiani (1799-1885) - 'il filosofo della libertà'¹¹⁵ - was not an inappropriate master for the Maltese nationalist ideology: neither a Mazzinian revolutionary nor a papist reactionary, his philosophy of history blended a sceptical disposition with a platonic idealism, appealing to 'the common experience' and 'the natural way' as the synthetical reconciliation of 'external' and 'internal' in the subject.¹¹⁶

Antiriformisti tended to see Maltese nationality in the light of its 'internal' Maltese qualities as reconciled with its 'external' Italian-Mediterranean characteristics. It was even hoped that Maltese could be progressively assimilated to Italian by continuing the latinization process felt since the thirteenth century, or else that, since Maltese was written in the Roman script and contained many loan-words and idioms from Italian, it would be most beneficial if made to seem and sound as similar to Italian as possible: what Keenan wished to do to Maltese in relation to Arabic, the nationalists wished to do in relation to Italian. Extremists could even try to portray the Maltese language as Italian; others, including Mizzi, believed that Maltese, although akin to Italian, had special qualities of its own that distinguished it, what he called *Maltesismi*.¹¹⁷ This view of the native tongue as an Italo-Maltese amalgam was motivated partly by liberal values - 'when a Maltese will have studied and will know Maltese', said Mizzi, 'he will be isolated from all the world'¹¹⁸ - but Dr. Salvatore Castaldi, a Mizzi supporter and an admirer of Gladstone, studied the subject further by comparisons to dialectical distinctions as existing in Italy itself.¹¹⁹ It is curious how one leading P.A.R. *italianista*, Dr. Zaccaria Roncali, could, in the same speech, refer to 'noi' as 'Maltesi' and then as 'Italiani': 'Noi siamo Italiani sotto il vessillo Britannico'.¹²⁰ In describing the Maltese as Italians, explained Mizzi, what they meant to say was that the Maltese were Italians 'in origin'; he then proceeded to make copious reference to past events, attempting to give 'the historical proof of our origin'.¹²¹ The nationalist ardour echoed the flowing style of Dante Alighieri's *Divina Commedia* (which several educated persons knew almost by heart) no less than it reverberated with the strains of Giuseppe Verdi's *Nabucco*, and 'Va, pensiero' would have invited many an *encore* in the opera house those days; mellifluous quotations from the classical authors, even in the Council of Government, reflected the romanticism of the age.

The charge of irredentism was a *leitmotif* in the pro-British version of Maltese nationalism more than it was a corner-stone of the P.A.R. itself. De Cesare alleged that Roncali was 'a paid spy', 'a paid enemy',¹²² subsidized by Italian irredentists 'to create a party hostile to England, to spread disaffection against Her Majesty and to encourage the aspirations of

a few admirers of a united Italy, of anti-Catholic and indeed atheistic Italy'.¹²³ *Standard* described *Diritto* as 'the organ of the party who aim at annexation with Italy'.¹²⁴ Following France's annexation of Tunis (1881), there was a reference in the *Italia Irredenta* organ *Capitan Fracassa* to the Maltese as *connazionali*: The French consul and Savona pointed this out to the authorities. Another case, quoted by Savona in support of having Council's minutes in English only, was a sentence in *Diritto* in 1883 viewing the Maltese as 'un popolo italiano non unito alla sua nazione'.¹²⁵ During the 1884 elections, on the night before the voting, posters were put up in public places with the words: 'Vivano gli Antiriformisti! Abasso l'Inghilterra! Viva l'Italia!'¹²⁶ A political pamphlet, *Appello ai Maltesi*, almost certainly the work of F. S. De Cesare, identified the P.A.R. with the anticlerical, irredentist movements in Italy, appealing to the clergy to arouse the faithful against the nationalists.¹²⁷ The Italian consul in Malta protested, the Italian ambassador in London Count Nigra saw the British foreign minister Lord Granville, about this.¹²⁸ Governor Borton noted that there was a considerable number of youths who had decided irredentist 'leanings' as the Italian irredentist party lost no opportunity in forwarding its views to Malta; these youths engaged in 'energetic canvassing' in favour of Mizzi's party and, Borton thought, the 'preparation' of Maltese soil for the cultivation of irredentist sentiments was the 'direction' in which they desired to move. But, after making due enquiry, Borton concluded that the charge of irredentism was 'unfounded'.¹²⁹ All the leading *Antiriformisti*, including Roncali, denied being irredentists; there was no reason to doubt their sincerity. The Maltese may have had 'no love for the English as a nation',¹³⁰ but there was a Maltese saying 'all foreign nations are bad; the English are the least bad' (*kulhadd hażin, l-Ingliż l-inqas hażin*).¹³¹

Hely-Hutchinson, who believed there was an irredentist party locally, could barely name two of its members: one the Italian professor at the university, the other a Mr. Gollcher, the son of the consul for Sweden:

It is very small, but active, and works hand in hand with the Italian Consul and, if I am to believe what I hear, with agents who correspond direct with Italy. There are probably not more than two dozen altogether.¹³²

A 'small coterie', it was known, favoured annexation to Italy, but in a fortress-colony smaller than the Isle of Wight the British intelligence network would surely have managed to ferret out an irredentist underground movement had any existed; there was obviously no E.O.K.A. or I.R.A.: there never was any violence at all.

Italia Irredenta was most active in the early 1880s; but the Italian premier Agostino Depretis dismissed irredentist fancies as 'des vieux cancans'.¹³³ Italian irredentists were bent on redeeming the northern, not the southern, parts of the peninsula. As a price for the Triple Alliance with Austria and Germany (1882) Italy renounced expansionist ambitions: 'We want only

respect for treaties and the simple maintenance of peace', wrote Italy's ambassador in Berlin to Bismarck, 'renouncing any idea of an increase in our influence in the Mediterranean'.¹³⁴ When Pasquale Mancini, the first southerner to become foreign minister, embarked on an imperial mission, obtaining Assab (1882) and occupying Massawa (1885), he did so with Britain's approval: Italy's friendship with Britain was 'a dogma which remained unchallenged by any Italian foreign minister before Mussolini';¹³⁵ by the time Francesco Crispi began to revive Mediterranean dreams in the late eighties, Malta's political condition had improved.

Italian irredentism is important in Maltese politics because of its indirect repercussions: since Malta was considered a fortress, irredentist associations could lead to groundless suspicions and xenophobic reactions on both sides. 'The more we can anglicize the Maltese and disestablish Italian', noted Sir Robert Herbert, permanent colonial undersecretary, 'the less possibility will there be of the *Italia Irredenta* party obtaining a foothold in the Island'.¹³⁶ 'Not only Imperial interests', added Evelyn Ashley, under-secretary of state for the colonies, 'but Imperial duty call upon us to see that the language of the Empire holds its proper – that is an advantageous – place in the course of studies in schools'.¹³⁷ Years later, when Malta was about to win representative government, Herbert was still wondering what the irredentists might be up to.¹³⁸

Anglicization was difficult to justify as a conscious policy. Sir John Anderson insisted in vain that the question of English or Italian was 'certainly' one which the Maltese should be allowed to settle for themselves;¹³⁹ the only imperial interest involved was facilitating communication between the Maltese and British soldiers and sailors.¹⁴⁰ One secretary of state, Lord Kimberley, could not understand why English should be forced and Italian pushed out:

In Canada we allow both French and English to be used; in Cyprus we shall allow in the Council Greek, English and Turkish; at the Cape I believe Dutch is to be allowed in future in the Parliament. I cannot see why we should force English on the Maltese.¹⁴¹

To be loyal, protested Mizzi, there was 'no need for us either to disown our origins or to repudiate our language'; for eighty years the Maltese had remained loyal under British rule, without becoming villains, but as a proof of their loyalty they did not have to change into passionate admirers of English (*anglomanni*) or to become Englishmen.¹⁴² Capt. Cooper Kirton, P. & O. Co. resident agent, declared that there was 'not one irredentist' in Malta, but if government persisted in their course there would be irredentists, and they would have been made by the government.¹⁴³

In the late seventies *Italia Irredenta* had temporarily included Malta with Nice and Corsica in addition to the 'unredeemed' territories under Austrian domination; but irredentism was really a continuation of the *Risorgimento*: to be an irredentist even in Italy, that is, could mean simply to be a nationalist. There was 'no general doctrine of irredentism, but

ad hoc arguments were devised to serve each immediate political purpose'.¹⁴⁴ Any support for Italian irredentism as an application of the principle of nationality did not mean that the Maltese 'pro-Italians' wished to change masters. 'Patres nostri peccaverunt et non sunt', reiterated Roncali referring to the exchange of British for French sovereignty.¹⁴⁵ When on Mizzi's initiative in 1885 the date commemorating the Great Siege of 1565 began to be celebrated as Malta's national feast, Roncali at a meeting cried out: 'Viva Malta! Malta è dei Maltesi, non degli Inglesi!'¹⁴⁶ Roncali denied having uttered the Garibaldian cry 'fuori lo straniero' as a 'grido' (probably meaning 'tumult')¹⁴⁷ – a cry which any nationalist in any other occupied territory might have uttered; the governor on that occasion was induced to take action by the insistence of a Maltese anglophile, the aristocrat Tancredi Sceberras.¹⁴⁸

To the extent that irredentism existed at all, this served mainly to buttress other political claims: it was not so much an end in itself; the few Maltese irredentists were wishful thinkers rather than political activists. The use of irredentism as a political tool may even be classed, so far, as another 'myth of rejection'.

Myths of rejection were constructed, perhaps unconsciously, to show that Malta deserved to be better treated. Thus it came to pass that on the ashes of extinct civilizations, on the honour and fortitude of long dead predecessors, tapestries of the past could be woven depicting events so varied and distant as the sacred temples of prehistoric times; the grandeur of the Roman empire; the executive powers of medieval institutions (such as the local *Consiglio Popolare*); the Italian Renaissance; Maltese heroism as shown in victories over the Turks (in 1565), over the French (in 1798) when 20,000 Maltese were said to have died fighting). To quote Roncali:

We have been a civilized people since very ancient times, and we were already civilized when another people, who now pretend to have mastered civilization, were in savagery. We have a civilization of which any people may be jealous. Behold our historic temples (*i nostri monumenti antichissimi*) not to be found anywhere else in Europe. . . .¹⁴⁹

The language question was not so much a question of language as of right. The 'politics of language' were essentially a demand for self-determination. The anti-English argument was directed more against coercion (*imposizione*) and substitution of English for Italian (*sostituzione*) than against the learning of English (*diffusione*). By 'diffusion of the English language', said Mizzi,

we do not intend to mean rendering it obligatory, whether by direct means – imposing it in the schools, the tribunals and other Government departments – or by indirect means, such as by not nominating to public offices those who, while fully qualified for a given job, would not be proficient in the English language.¹⁵⁰

Complaining that the designations 'Reformists' or 'Liberal Party' and 'Antireformists' or 'Conservative Party' were frequently applied erroneously, Mizzi wrote that the 'Reformists' or 'Imperialists'

are those who are opposed to what all populations on earth desire, i.e. Self-Government. They, therefore, wish to divest the local Government of all authority – they ask for the importation from England of institutions, whether they be or not adapted to our wants and habits – and they would like the Secretary of State for the Colonies to have the immediate and direct Government of these Islands. . . .

Mizzi could not understand why they styled themselves ‘the Liberal Party’. The ‘Antireformists’ were so called ‘not because they hated ‘all reforms and progress’ but because they were opposed to ‘almost all’ the reforms of the three commissioners:

They aim at Self-Government – they are opposed to all interference of the Secretary of State for the Colonies in local and domestic questions and desire that the reforms, to which effect should be given, should be suggested by a Commission to be appointed amongst the inhabitants of Malta. This party is likewise called the *Conservative Party*, because it has at heart the liberties which our forefathers enjoyed, especially that of adopting the language they spoke.¹⁵¹

In the colonial context the adherence to Italian was as symbolic as it became steadfast: even the temperamental De Cesare, when disappointed, declared defiantly: ‘From today onwards I shall speak in Italian, as I see that speaking English, Italian, Maltese or Turkish in this Council has the same effect’.¹⁵²

Anglicization was aggravated by discrimination: the knowledge of English was used by those in power as a criterion of special merit in individual cases. Mentioning the case of a hand-picked candidate for the chair of political economy whose best qualification was knowing English, Mizzi asked indignantly if this was the way in which the government intended ‘to regenerate the country’.¹⁵³ This ‘regeneration’ idea, taken with Mizzi’s views regarding government as a kind of direct democracy, underlined the resentment of discrimination on grounds of assimilation, the alienation produced by sanctioning indigestible changes from above without any corresponding leavening at the grass-roots. The degree and process of anglicization provoked tangential reactions as those who most expected that they should exercise control over their country’s business were precisely those most subjected to colonial strictures. Hely-Hutchinson’s principle was this:

Insist on a knowledge of English in all public appointments. Appoint no one and promote no one who does not thoroughly understand it. Pay your public service well and make the public officers as comfortable as possible. And let those who oppose English understand that their opposition shuts them out from all hope of employment or favour from the Government. Appeal, in a word, to their personal interests.

Hely-Hutchinson did not care so much about secondary or tertiary education: ‘look well after your primary schools’, he added; ‘see that the boys and girls are taught Maltese and English. And in twenty years there won’t be a chance for the propagation of Italianist ideas’.¹⁵⁴

The language question became so vital a component of nationalism also because of the intimate relation existing between education and feelings about nationality. In the mid-nineteenth century Brauner told

an anecdote of how peasants in the district of Sacz in West Galicia, when asked whether they were Poles, replied 'we are quiet folk'; when asked if then they were Germans, they replied 'we are decent folk'.¹⁵⁵ To preach nationhood, one must first be sufficiently conscious of its existence and conversant with political thought: the educational problem was acute since *patria* and *italianità* became synonymous. No reform could be affected, wrote Mizzi, except by separating the official and the elected Houses, giving more direct influence to the elective House on the executive power.¹⁵⁶ Cyprus, already divided between Greeks and Turks, received no forced moulding of any authentic 'Cypriot' nationality; Malta, which comparatively was so homogenous, suffered the most divisive internal squabbles through the drive for assimilation. In Hong Kong, where everybody spoke Chinese, English was made the medium of instruction and the vernacular largely disregarded;¹⁵⁸ in Malta, where the language of education was Italian, Maltese was being raised into an official language. Strategic preoccupations left little room for educational remedies. Equally, in Malta, as in Hong Kong, the local demand for English was strong: given economic conditions anglicization may have been inevitable, indeed desired by many who were unrepresented politically, yet this financial necessity was hardly an educational need or plan.

At the political level the 'politics of language' were also the 'politics of the wedge': Hely-Hutchinson made it quite clear that he would use political differences, caused chiefly by the language question, as a means of dividing the elected members. During the 1883 election, he hoped there would be 'a divided Council' in order to get work done;¹⁵⁹ when his hope was unfulfilled, he vouched to dedicate all his efforts 'to effecting a split amongst the elected members' by fostering the differences of opinion among them.¹⁶⁰ As a means for effecting the government's reforms, he desired to 'knock the Constitution in the head':¹⁶¹ like a royal commission seventy years earlier, he thought that the Maltese were 'not fit' for representative institutions; once they would have been deprived of elective rights, the 'noisy local politicians' would be treated with 'firmness and patience'.¹⁶²

In addition to distrust fomented by such attitudes of mind, there was the recurring problem of military government. When the colonial under-secretary Evelyn Ashley visited Malta, his attention was drawn to some of the long-standing Maltese grievances, including the request for a civil governor; but it was well known that the War Office was as intransigent in military matters as the Treasury tended to be parsimonious in financial ones: 'We have the Treasury and W.O. to thank', commented Sir Robert Herbert, 'for much of the unpopularity into which we have fallen in Malta'.¹⁶³

To submit to anglicization, in the light of all this, was equivalent to a denial of self. 'We are Maltese and we want to continue to be so', said Roncali; according to a very ancient usage, any government was for the

benefit of those being governed not for that of those governing them. If Britain governed Malta, she did so 'for ourselves, not for herself'; therefore it was incorrect to say English was 'the language of our Government': 'If those who administer our Government are unable to communicate with us, the worse for them. They should learn our language; we do not have to learn theirs'.¹⁶⁴ The Maltese, he added, preferred to be left free to see for themselves what was or was not to their greater advantage; they did not like being spoiled by those who so incessantly strove to promote their welfare: 'We are a free people. . . . We are a free people who have not been conquered'.¹⁶⁵ Such statements were a claim to self-government, if not a thinly veiled presumption of independence: Hely-Hutchinson described Roncali's speech as 'a plea for self-government in its widest sense'.¹⁶⁶

A similarly nationalist reasoning was applied, under a more liberal guise, but with less justification, with regard to the suggested elevation of Maltese into a 'purified' language of study. The local *patois* was considered only an accident of birth, the mark of insularity, if not of inferiority, and anyway useless for educational purposes; it had always been used, informally, to make meanings intelligible to schoolchildren. But it was held that to invent a grammar and alphabet, thus introducing a third language of study, was motivated by the principle, as enunciated by Mizzi, 'inclusio unius est exclusio alterius'.¹⁶⁷ Maltese was being made into a language, said Naudi, 'out of hatred of the Italian language'.¹⁶⁸ What would children, who learned Maltese as they nursed, read in it except some recipe on how to cook pumpkins and egg-plants, observed Roncali. In Wales, although Welsh had a literature by means of which children could improve themselves and develop their intelligence, English was taught orally through Welsh without Welsh itself being studied.¹⁶⁹ The same English government that had done so much to eradicate Gaelic from Ireland, noted Mizzi, now wanted the Maltese to study their native dialect.¹⁷⁰ The idea of having the euphonistic system in England (as intended by G. B. Shaw) had failed, argued Capt. Kirton; it involved 'the destruction' of English.¹⁷¹ Comparing the study of Maltese to that of Latin and Greek,¹⁷² Mizzi said there was nothing wrong in cultivating Maltese for philological purposes; this could serve as a key to other ancient languages.¹⁷³ But 'to put Arabic words instead of the Italian words we use', he said, 'is not to purify Maltese but to create a new language'; the aim of this purification was to destroy or banish from Malta Italian 'which has been amongst us since its birth'.¹⁷⁴ And besides, even if Maltese were 'the most beautiful of all languages, it would still be a mishap for us not to be able to communicate with any other people'.¹⁷⁵

The 'arabization' of Maltese was also opposed because the Arabic heritage had no place in the nationalist Christian-European prototype: the Maltese saw themselves as South Europeans not as North Africans; even

Maltese who settled in North African countries, such as Tunisia, held steadfastly to their language and still more to their religion as characteristics of Maltese nationality and hence of separateness from the Arab Muslim native.¹⁷⁶ Even Savona's party, while holding rightly that Maltese was derived from Arabic, maintained that the Maltese people were Phoenician in origin. Invoking Napoleon's saying that if you scratched a Russian you found the Cossack, the author of a pro-government *Xirka Xemia* (Semitic Society) pamphlet in 1885 affirmed that if you scratched a Maltese you found the Phoenician.¹⁷⁷ The period of Arab rule over Malta from the ninth to the eleventh century was commonly held to have been oppressive; in deriding the use of Arabic sources the 'pro-Italians' could rely on popular feelings about religion and race. Maltese, said Mizzi, 'received its last form from the Saracen domination, so that Maltese is the monument of our infamy and slavery'; it was 'for the sake of patriotism' that the study of Maltese should be confined to the libraries.¹⁷⁸ Mizzi went so far to describe Maltese as 'the curse of the country'.¹⁷⁹

Although the attempt to 'arabize' on Keenan's instructions was a linguistic fallacy when it exceeded certain limits – a rich Romance super-structure could not be discarded – the philological structuring of Maltese necessitated a recourse of the Arabic roots. Maltese was not to Italian what Afrikaans was to Dutch; nor was it possible, out of an admixture of Italo-Maltese elements to create a 'new' language in a way similar to the creation of a 'Common Norwegien' (*Samnorsk*) out of the mutually comprehensible Danish (*Bokmål*) and old Norse (*Nynorsk*).¹⁸⁰ Inglott, the collector of customs, argued that there was nothing strange, when a word or root be found wanting,

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

Malta's university, added Savona, could not gain distinction in any other branch of knowledge except in Oriental languages 'of which we have the basis in our own language'.¹⁸¹ 'I believe the Maltese language is the greatest blessing the Maltese have inherited from their forefathers; and the Government are doing their duty in promoting the cultivation of that language', he said.¹⁸² It was hardly convincing to see even the filibustering Hely-Hutchinson almost turn into a *de rigueur* nationalist by singing the praises of Maltese as Malta's language.¹⁸³

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

a misapplication of the classic nationalist view expressed by Herder, that the nation remained intact provided it maintained its distinctive linguistic traditions; yet *italianità* expressed the average educated man's feelings, and political leanings, better than the vernacular itself. On the other hand, Savona and Inglott were not exactly Douglas Hyde and Eoin MacNeill of the Gaelic League. Perhaps the best clue to this persistent pseudo-linguistic tangle may be found in the exchange of insults between Mizzi and Savona with regard to examples of words having an Arabic or Italian derivation. When once Mizzi was explaining how similar Maltese was to Italian he gave as an example, presumably looking at Savona, the word 'inti traditur' (you are a traitor), whereupon Savona, in a repartee, gave, as his example, the Arabic words 'inti hmar' (you are a fool); Mizzi insisted that the better example was 'traditur'.¹⁸⁴ Indeed it appears that Savona and Mizzi conceived a nation differently: Savona pointed to the message 'to the Maltese nation' by the pro-Maltese language scholar M. A. Vassalli, who had regarded native speakers of Maltese as 'veri nazionali';¹⁸⁵ Mizzi referred to the proclamation 'to the Maltese nation' made by the civil commissioner Cameron in 1801 wherein the Maltese had been promised 'full protection, and the enjoyment of all your dearest rights'.¹⁸⁶

The slow acceptance of Maltese as a language worthy of cultivation was an induced process of growing self-awareness as well as a direct consequence of the wish to impart knowledge through the vernacular; in these respects the *Riformisti* were using the right arguments from the wrong side of the fence. The nationalists, being mostly the products of a special class, construed the nation largely in their own image; they were also the prisoners of a system: they saw the light through iron bars. The laws of sympathy and antipathy were applied to politics: the *Riformisti* were rather like 'the Afrikaners with "English hearts"', the *Antiriformisti* more like 'the Afrikaners with "Dutch hearts"'; with some notable exceptions, the 'Afrikaners with "Afrikaans hearts"' were still in the making.¹⁸⁷

As a result of the opposition to the 'unholy trinity of commissioners', Keenan's school reform was the only substantial change that ensued for the time being: the Rowsell and Julyan recommendations with regard to taxation and anglicization in various spheres other than education were shelved and finally abandoned in 1883.¹⁸⁸

As director of education Savona, the university rector who had not been to university, inspired more fear than awe; he upheld the efficiency ethic and was sometimes prepared to use an iron hand: 'I was a despot in the Education Department', he recalled, 'in the sense that I caused the regulations to be strictly carried out'.¹⁸⁹ In matters of educational reform, however, Savona was less unreasonable than the nationalists were prepared to admit. In fact, Savona was never in favour of any sweeping substitution of English for Italian. On taking office, he pointed out that the amendments

he proposed with regard to the university's *Statuto Fondamentale* did not imply 'the substitution of the English or any other language for the Italian, now or at any future time'.¹⁹⁰ In the face of constant and virulent opposition, Savona modified and moderated Keenan's 'English, and English only' recommendations, even though the changes that he implemented were substantial. But he was upset by Capt. Kirton's allegation that he intended totally to abolish Italian, notwithstanding all promises to the contrary; while emphasising the utility of English and expounding the pro-Maltese language view, quoting various writers, foremost among these Professor Salvatore Cumbo whose *Filologo Maltese* had, decades before, insisted on teaching *via* Maltese, Savona maintained that he had no intention of eliminating Italian from the university, lyceum, or even the upper classes of the elementary schools.¹⁹¹

Savona's first and most significant reform was the new place assigned to English in primary school curricula: this was a case of substitution of one language for another, but Italian could still be learned in the upper classes, not as an extra subject (as Keenan had suggested) but as an integral part of the syllabus. Only about 20% of schoolchildren stayed on until the third class (when Italian would now start to be taught), only about 5% until the fourth.¹⁹² Savona generally sought to break the exclusivity of Italian, not to substitute English for it: he gave priority to the teaching of English instead of Italian during the first years of schooling, thus giving lower and middle class children the opportunity of learning some English, instead of some Italian, in the state-aided government primary schools. Those who sent their children to private schools where they would learn English were, he said,

satisfied to pay ten times and even twenty times as much as was paid at the Lyceum, in order that the young men might have the benefit of learning English better; and more progress was made in English in the schools referred to, for the simple reason that the teaching of English was not confined to the class of English, but all the other subjects were taught in English.

At St. Ignatius College, the school run by British jesuits, fees ranged from £40 to £50 yearly; the college was filled by 'about one hundred boys belonging to the well-to-do classes'.¹⁹³ The task ahead, he thought, was 'not to produce a few advocates and physicians' but to enable the numerous middle class to obtain employment and to give a suitable education to the people in general: 'the ignorance prevailing in Malta among the lower classes is appalling'.¹⁹⁴

As Italian was to continue to predominate at the secondary levels of education, however, from now on there would be a *babu*-like majority, knowing some English, and also reading Maltese, compared to the better educated minority conversant in Italian from early teenage upwards; social elements differing in financial conditions or mental aptitudes would be reinforced and further set apart: certain occupations would be filled by men different not only by their social standing but also in their cultural

sustenance. The criteria of merit made available by the government would contrast more markedly with traditional class standards.

Savona's second very noteworthy change was introducing the teaching of Maltese grammatically by means of the 'phonetic alphabet'. This took the place of the *Società Filologica's* alphabet, accepted as the standard one in schools (and the press) for over thirty years, which had adopted an orthography resembling the Italian spelling.¹⁹⁵ The phonetic alphabet changed letters and spellings by introducing, for example, the letter 'w' corresponding to the Arabic و instead of the Italian 'u'.¹⁹⁶ Vincenzo Bugeja, C.M.G.,¹⁹⁷ who by 1883 was the R.P.'s only elected member, was against the phonetic alphabet; he supported the end but not the means. Ridiculing the idea of Italian being 'nostra lingua', fully satisfied with being Maltese, Bugeja observed that his cook and gardener gave him their accounts written in Maltese, 'the only language in which they can understand what they write, and which they had time to learn'. Then he added:

Being a loyal subject of the British Crown, to which as a true Maltese I desire that my country should for ever be subjected, I believe that it is imperative that my fellow countrymen should learn English, were it only to appreciate the great nation with which we have been most fortunately connected, to learn English ideas, to remain *steadfast* in our allegiance.¹⁹⁸

Savona made as good an 'Aunt Sally' as a nationalist party could have wished for; antagonism to the regime was, through him, so greatly fostered by Mizzi's party that reference was sometimes made to the P.A.R. as 'partito anti-savoniano', to the R.P. as 'partito savoniano'. The causes of opposition during the 1880s were varied as were the stratagems employed by the politicians; a convergence of circumstances, however, propelled the rapid growth of the nationalist party and brought about the near eclipse of its opponents at the polls.

Bold, inventive, dynamic and intransigent, Mizzi tried to rally all the elected members into one opposition party, appealing to their *esprit de corps* by requesting, unsuccessfully, a 'Council Office' for them; the elected members, he said, did not like to have 'witnesses during their conferences'.¹⁹⁹ After an outcry in sections of the press following the passing of the education estimates, Mizzi resorted to the resignation weapon dramatically in 1882. Exhorting his colleagues to take a vigorous opposition line, he voted on his own when other representatives shared his sentiments but frowned on his zeal: when the vote on drainage expenses came up Mizzi demanded a division; he would not ratify a vote that had been 'extorted from the Maltese' when 'opposed by all the elected members'.²⁰⁰ The original estimate for the drainage works had been £75,000, of which the imperial government had to pay three-sevenths; the revised estimate was over £95,000. Quoting what Mifsud and Savona had said in 1879, scorning 'a mere protest' as useless, Mizzi held it was illogical and contradictory to accept an unwanted expense under protest.²⁰¹ The *fait accompli* theory, as he called it, was repellent: the representatives were advised 'once and for all', 'now and for

the future', to change tactics: 'We shall give a new and more secure direction to our way of acting', he announced:

Either the *fait accompli* is a just and valid reason for adhering to such a vote – and in that case why protest at all? – or the *fait accompli* is not a sufficient reason to justify a violation by the Government and therefore to protest is not enough.

Waving all defeatist logic aside, he reminded the elected members that

to say that our opposition to the official majority would not benefit us, is not true. Should we frequently have the Government face the alternative of either withdrawing certain votes or else passing them with the official majority, we would be victorious more often.²⁰²

Soon after this, when a further vote to remodel the drainage was before the Council, only five members attended, all voting against the cost.²⁰³ Determined to draw London's attention to Malta's condition by bringing the legislature into disrepute, Mizzi took to the hustings and resorted to an ingenious device by means of which to force the Council's dissolution: this was the policy of *elezioni ridicole* (foolish elections). As candidate for a vacant Council seat, Mizzi put forward a pauper known as a maker of terracotta statuettes, who suffered from a chronic nervous disease: he was returned with over 600 votes.²⁰⁴ Immediately the pauper's election was announced, Mizzi resigned his own seat, on the ground of decorum,²⁰⁵ but really to make way for a second foolish election and, more importantly, to establish his sway over the P.A.R. Contrary to the governor's expectations, another simpleton, an illiterate organist, was elected: the elected members (except De Cesare who was abroad) all followed Mizzi's lead and resigned their seats.²⁰⁶

Resignation of office, observed Michels, is in most cases a means for the retention and fortification of leadership:

the leaders often employ this stratagem, thus disarming their adversaries by a deference which does not lack a specious democratic colour. The opponent is forced to exhibit in return an even greater deference, and this above all when the leader who makes use of the method is really indispensable or is considered indispensable by the mass.²⁰⁷

Boycotts and monster meetings were Chartist or Parnellite but the only parallel Lord Kimberley knew of for *elezioni ridicole* was the election of a pauper to a school board in his neighbourhood;²⁰⁸ although in fact a similar, if milder, form of protest had been employed in 1849 over the separation question in Port Philip (New South Wales): averring that it was useless to send representatives to the Sydney Council the Melbourne people elected Earl Grey, the colonial minister, in opposition to a local resident, and subsequently nominated five privy councillors in opposition to local candidates.²⁰⁹

A public relations campaign exposing the *Antiriformista* cause, denouncing the 'dictatorship' in Malta,²¹⁰ was launched, Savona being pictured as 'some new Walpole' who had 'in his pocket-book the tariff of the conscience of both the official and the elective members of our Council'.²¹¹ Governor

Borton confessed that undoubtedly for some considerable time past 'a numerous section of the more intelligent portion of the Maltese have maintained that the working of the Council of Government as now constituted is altogether inefficient', he wrote; they wanted domestic matters 'free from the interference of the Colonial Office'. The less numerous party, whilst not altogether approving of the degradation of the Council, were nevertheless disposed to encourage any agitation which might appear likely to lead to a change in the constitution. The more numerous party was headed by Dr. Mizzi who by his ceaseless activity and agitation had succeeded in inducing electors to choose a penniless organist instead of 'a highly respectable candidate'. Mizzi's published programme advocated a considerable extension of the franchise, maintaining the educational test; an increase in the number of the elected members, giving them a majority over the official bench; and lastly an acknowledged principle of non-interference on the part of the C.O. in local and domestic affairs.²¹²

The election of the two simpletons effectively disrupted the Council; the governor's only option was to call a general election prematurely.

Before the election, the franchise was extended to any person over 21 years of age who yearly paid or received £6 rent; the educational qualification was abolished so that out of more than 10,000 persons entitled to vote (compared to less than 3,000 before 1883) most were illiterates.²¹³ This decision, opposed by Mizzi's party as well as by Borton,²¹⁴ had earlier engaged the attention of Lord Kimberley,²¹⁵ and De Cesare had once proposed that illiterates who paid a certain rent should be entitled to vote;²¹⁶ but it was the colonial under-secretary Ashley, who visited Malta at this time, who apparently took the step with the intention of suppressing what he called 'the selfish interests of the upper thousand'.²¹⁷ Among the older people many persons of considerable intelligence and possessing considerable means and local influence were technically illiterate, including several of the larger shopkeepers and tenants;²¹⁸ but the £6 franchise suddenly entitled more than 6,000 people who could neither read or write to vote out of an electorate of slightly more than 10,000.²¹⁹ In practice, few illiterates registered to vote in 1883,²²⁰ and even in 1884 only a few hundred went to the polls,²²¹ but the very fact that all these people could vote changed the nature of electioneering, making this more personalized and scurrilous than before. Party propaganda in Maltese, especially, but not exclusively, by the R.P., came to be used, such flysheets effectively replacing the more formal and respectable personal cards that had been used previously.²²² Mizzi acknowledged proudly that most illiterates voted for the R.P.²²³ The recourse to religious motives and prejudices also increased considerably, as the *Appello ai Maltesi* pamphlet indicated.²²⁴ A vicious circle was produced: 'After all who is telling you', retorted one P.A.R. speaker, 'that we want to despoil the churches, to deny the Pope

his dominions, to starve the monks to death, who are they but three free-masons?'²²⁵

In the same despatch concerning the £6 franchise, Lord Derby laid down another requirement seriously affecting subsequent elections: henceforth there was to be an equal number of official and of elected members, the governor to have the casting vote; but the views of the elected members would be taken into account only if they were unanimous – and on questions which the governor considered not of imperial interest or financially unbearable.²²⁶ In 1875 Carnarvon had rendered the official majority a battering ram for whatever the governor commanded,²²⁷ in 1883 Derby's requirement would portray opposition as irrelevant unless unanimous – an instruction naturally received with disfavour since unanimity was a condition difficult for the elected bench to secure.²²⁸ Now it became more than ever necessary for the P.A.R. to carry the forthcoming election; equally the government required at least some semblance of R.P. representation in the Council.

Borton and Savona both lent a hand to the R.P., the former through a speech at a university ceremony, the latter by a timely series of lectures to dockyard employees.²²⁹ Mizzi's party on their part promised to resign unless their grievances were headed.²³⁰

The P.A.R. had all this time been steadily working to secure the return of an anti-reform Council.²³¹ Apart from *Diritto*, the party now had a daily newspaper as De Cesare had consigned the editorship of *Risorgimento* to Mizzi while he went abroad: *Risorgimento* made 'constant attacks upon Savona's administration of the education department and upon the sinuosities which have at various times appeared in that gentleman's career'.²³² Priests joined with lawyers to oppose English.²³³ In a few years, serving as an outlet for frustrations caused by arbitrary change or uncertainty as to the future, the P.A.R. became an impressive coalition of interest groups and factions, embracing supporters of past administrations, a large section of the public service, the personal enemies of Savona, friends of Dingli and the former chief secretary Houlton and all those who opposed the government because it was the government.²³⁴ A feeling of estrangement was produced by those who absolutely wanted 'to be or to seem British'.²³⁵ Upholding 'nostra causa', deriding 'governo permanente', the P.A.R. attracted the sympathy of the most respectable and influential members of the community – 'il fiore della società', said Mizzi, 'Nobili, Avvocati, Canonici, Preti'.²³⁶ Even *Standard* had to acknowledge that 'Dr. Mizzi's clique' was 'the union of several dissatisfied sections of the community'.²³⁷ Small communities can transmit and implement their narrower unity and authenticity directly through the social structure, i.e. through the face-to-face interactions that are permissible according to local cultural norms;²³⁸ the nation is not an 'economic group'.²³⁹ While the R.P. found

the regime's patronage readily extended to it, the P.A.R. was obliged to prove itself to be that party most representative of public opinion. 'Very careless',²⁴⁰ the R.P. were 'wanting in proper organization', though they were, at all events, amenable to argument, sympathised with England, and were 'prepared to assist the Government in some degree'.²⁴¹

The 1883 election was a big victory for the P.A.R. who won seven seats out of eight: of the leading *Riformista* candidates – Mifsud, De Cesare, Bugeja – only the last was returned, with the lowest number of votes; in the Gozo constituency Mizzi beat Bugeja by 270 votes to 13. The number of voters was also much higher than it had been in 1880.²⁴² The election showed, declared Mizzi, that the party opposed to the imposition of English was 'the party of the population'; the government could not go against public opinion in matters of local concern.²⁴³ This was not an election, said Naudi: 'it is a plebiscite'.²⁴⁴ 'Ingratitude and ignorance go hand in hand', commented *Standard*; 'the Local Authorities will continue steadfastly in their policy'.²⁴⁵

Taking courage from the party's growing strength, Mizzi founded a daily newspaper of his own naming it, expressively, *Malta*:²⁴⁶ in a few years *Malta* became 'the strictly party paper'²⁴⁷ but securing 'the monopoly of public opinion'.²⁴⁸

In December 1883 the elected members voted unanimously against the education vote, thus meeting Derby's requirement of unanimity, but still Sir Robert Herbert and Evelyn Ashley would not budge: they were convinced, like Savona, that the educational change was 'the key to the future destinies of Malta'.²⁴⁹ The inhabitants of a fortress, wrote Herbert, on which the safety of the empire depended 'in an unusual degree', had to be educated in English and in their own language.²⁵⁰ In a despatch dated 18 December 1883 Derby promised the government would stick to Savona's reforms, suggesting also that the elected members did not truly represent the people.²⁵¹

The sitting following the publication of Derby's despatch was a memorable one as each of the newly-elected members, Bugeja alone excepted, delivered an eloquent resignation address and indignantly left the Council chamber. Because Britain knew that the Maltese could hardly resort to violence against her might, said Mizzi, Britain must not weigh upon the Maltese people 'the rod of absolutism' (*la verga dell'arbitrio*).²⁵² 'But if we do not represent the majority', asked Roncali with a heavy heart, 'why have the policemen and the soldiers been called out?'²⁵³

Successfully preconcerted and executed in accordance with the party's electoral pledges, this *en masse* resignation marked a further escalation in the Anglo-Maltese conflict and showed the consolidation of the P.A.R. ranks. Soon after the new Council had met after it had long been disrupted, the body politic was again put into question: London was still faced with the troubles in Malta.

Borton thought that, if given enough time to organize their forces, the R.P. might secure 'at least a partial, if not a complete victory, over their opponents'.²⁵⁴ Derby was prepared to permit the pasting of government propaganda posters in favour of the language policy all over the island.²⁵⁵ The octogenarian Bishop Scicluna, in a message intended for reading in all churches, denied rumours that the British wished to 'protestantize' the Maltese through English, advising ecclesiastics 'to desist from spreading similar rumours among the faithful, especially not to make use of religion for the purpose of rendering the British Government obnoxious to the population'.²⁵⁶ Following pressure from Mizzi and friends having access to the episcopal curia, this circular was withdrawn after it had been read only to some congregations; but the people were asking, said Kirton: 'what ulterior object can the British Government have, in thus forcing the English language?'²⁵⁷

The seven P.A.R. candidates who had resigned were all returned, each with increased support; the R.P. candidates, led in the poll by a resident English businessman, W. J. Smith, reputed to be a freemason, were decisively beaten. The number of votes cast in the election, over 4,000, was the highest on record.²⁵⁸

In the 'national' victory demonstration organised to coincide with the announcement of the election result – aided, probably, by the opening of the railway some months earlier – the crowd of people was 'immense', said the police report: people were 'closely packed together, without any moving room, the windows and house tops crowded, and numbering altogether over 30,000'.²⁵⁹ The 4 June demonstration, complete with banners and flags, torches and brass bands, was the largest demonstration of the time, telling the government clearly enough what 'us' thought of 'them'; yet they were hardly anti-British. Roncali, over-estimating the nationalist zeal of the marchers, objected to placing a union jack at the head of the procession, threatening C. M. Muscat with expulsion from the party if he insisted; but Naudi and Mizzi sided with Muscat and the jack was paraded. When Arturo Barbaro requested the bands not to play 'God save the Queen' before his house, the bands proceeded to do just that. When Roncali addressed the crowd in Italian they shouted 'bil-Malti, bil-Malti', whereupon the speaker changed to Maltese. And when Borton appeared in the palace balcony the crowd cheered.²⁶⁰ Boisterous and jovial, numerous and impressive, stronger however in their numbers than in their resolve, the demonstrators were a show as much of patriotism as of loyalty to the Crown: content to demonstrate provided that nothing serious was contemplated, they would not oppose determinedly a government to which they could see no viable substitute. The intellectuals of the *professionista*-led P.A.R. were trying to attract a following that was only partly receptive to the high flown language of politics; the crowds seemed to be separated from their leaders by a different world of perception,

assumption and relation. But the P.A.R. had succeeded in mobilising public opinion against the government on an unprecedented scale; slowly the party was being constrained to shed its elitist character and to assume a more populist attire. In less than four years, Malta had gone through three contested elections; in each election the P.A.R.'s strength had mounted while that of the R.P. had dwindled: had Bugeja resigned his seat with the rest he probably would not have been returned. Mizzi started to call the P.A.R. by a new name: the 'Partito Nazionale' (henceforth P.N.).²⁶¹

The tide began to turn. 'We can no longer maintain I fear that we are not opposing a *popular* movement', minuted John Anderson, 'and we shall have to face the fact that the elected members can and probably will put a stop to public business until their demands are conceded'; now that they felt sure that they had the people at their back they would be less likely to yield than formerly.²⁶² There was a crisis of direction in formulating a future policy for the colony: would the government be made more autocratic or more liberal? Either way, would a constitutional change of some magnitude not be required? Should they perhaps 'let the Maltese stew in their own juice'? 'If we could only give them some form of municipal government and retain only the general administration', thought Anderson, 'they would have a chance of educating themselves in politics at their own expense'.²⁶³ Although no decision was taken immediately, the nationalist awakening has registered some mark in Britain, and sufficiently so for Derby to be more wary in his attitude towards Malta from now on. The path ahead, however, was strewn with difficulties: General Simmons, who succeeded Borton in 1884, was a good example of the gubernatorial type once described by Savona – 'men brought up in the camp, accustomed to the discipline and the passive obedience required to keep an army together'.²⁶⁴ His language, observed Derby, was 'exactly identical with that of military men in the House of Lords when the question of the (Suez) Canal was discussed. He is really objecting to any constitutional check whatever. His argument is that Malta should be regarded as always in a state of siege'.²⁶⁵ According to Simmons, the Maltese should never have had a Council at all.²⁶⁶ Derby blandly told Simmons not to use his casting vote unnecessarily or to depart from a modicum of regard for the views of the elected members.²⁶⁷

Simmons' 'siege' mentality could be seen from the way in which he expected the Maltese bishop to behave with regard to government policy. It was 'essential that the Government and Church should work well together'; anti-British feeling would subside 'if only there was an enlightened bishop here'. This 'enlightened' bishop would express an opinion that English was no more prejudicial to the interests of the church than Italian, that under the existing circumstances of the union of the Island with Great Britain, and the vast expenditure of British money going on, it would be conducive to the material interests

of the islanders to know English, and thus be able to seek employment from and work directly under those who are desirous of obtaining their services and have the means for remunerating them.²⁶⁸

Simmons began his tenure of office by recommending salary increases in the top offices, then directed his attention to Malta's water supply problems: many of the taverns and grog shops 'used by the men' were in a bad sanitary condition; the soldiers, whose principal amusements were in Valletta, drank 'this impure water' in these grog shops, mixed with spirits or in ginger beer, thus imbibing the germs of a disease (probably enteric fever). It was 'a matter of urgent necessity' that Malta's water supply, especially that of the cities adjoining the harbours, should be reformed. As for the natives, Simmons intended to rule them without 'much discussion and loss of time': 'the clamour raised by the so-called representatives of the people' had 'little or nothing to do with the masses' but was chiefly confined to those classes who, 'residing in the cities', received their higher education 'at the expense of the people'.²⁶⁹

The P.N., who were now holding executive meetings among themselves in advance of Council sittings,²⁷⁰ wanted 'a legislative act, stable and irrevocable' regulating education; but the government thought it 'unadvisable to allow our hands to be bound in this manner'.²⁷¹ When the P.N.'s request for the *status quo ante* regarding language priorities was rejected, they immediately put forward a compromise formula based on the introduction of a strict *pari passu* method for teaching English and Italian contextually, excluding the study of Maltese and the phonetic alphabet. In view of complaints as to 'over-pressure', on the ground that *ex omnibus aliquid, in toto nihil*, they upheld the former 'progressive' or 'successive' method of teaching instead of the recently introduced 'simultaneous' method (controversial in other European countries at this time). After a series of marathon debates all the party's suggestions were rejected, the government being fully aware of Derby's decision not to go back on Savona's reforms;²⁷² but Mizzi gave fair warning that should Simmons resort to his casting vote to scotch their resolution (which he did),²⁷³ they would have no course open to them other than that of refusing the education estimates.²⁷⁴ The government, he said, was obliging them to oppose it and to fight.²⁷⁵ Public instruction was for 'our benefit': if it was to function badly, it had better not function at all.²⁷⁶

When budget time came however, the P.N. discovered that they could not count on Bugeja's support – he refused to vote against the education estimates; Derby's requirement of unanimity could therefore not be met.²⁷⁷

Mizzi invented another stratagem: this was the plan to hold *elezioni infami* (infamous elections).²⁷⁸ Noting that disaffection was growing 'beyond measure',²⁷⁹ holding the electoral manifesto to be prescriptive and binding, Mizzi repeatedly challenged the government to call an election.²⁸⁰ He spoke of 'the struggle of the people against the govern-

ment',²⁸¹ deplored 'the usurpation of our rights', announced that his letter of resignation was ready and only required the insertion of the date.²⁸² The new education system, he asserted, was ruinous and was only being sustained by a tiny circle out of self-interest. Savona was, by any European standard, qualified neither in arts nor in science – a discredit to the university. The government were wrong to allude to 'imperial interests': the Maltese would see their rights respected even if they could not resort to unconstitutional means.²⁸³

As in 1882, Mizzi's strong language was beginning to upset some of his colleagues; it appears that they resented his assertions and disagreed in principle with some of his ideas – with regard to the possibility of floating a public loan for speeding up certain public works, Roncali agreed more with Bugeja than Mizzi.²⁸⁴ When the water supply ordinance came before the Council in May 1886 Mizzi, sometimes supported only by Canon Paolo Agius, sometimes on his own, opposed it in a long series of divisions. Although not himself a landowner, Mizzi ardently believed in the right of property, opposing the least signs of accumulation of power in state hands, even when this was obviously in the public interest. Adopting arguments similar to those used in debates on sanitary schemes, opposing government inspections not subject to legal remedies, defending the property rights of the church and nobility, evidently giving importance to outside pressures, insisting for more time and information, Mizzi then absented himself from the Council for the third reading of the bill in question.²⁸⁵ But if Mizzi had 'lost control of his colleagues',²⁸⁶ he was firmly in charge of popular feeling, due partly to the incessant propaganda of *Malta*. In June, Mizzi and Canon Paolo Agius resigned from the Council.²⁸⁷

In fulfilment of his earlier threat to resort to 'infamous elections', Mizzi presented two candidates to contest the seats vacated: a brothel keeper, believed to live on the immoral earnings of his wife, and an uncouth blacksmith.²⁸⁸ Mizzi's candidates, whose election was contested by a priest and a lawyer, were both returned with large majorities.²⁸⁹ All the elected members, except Capt. Cooper Kirton, resigned.²⁹⁰ But Governor Simmons decided to carry on; the Council became a charade, the brothel keeper and blacksmith becoming the first elected members to address the chamber in Maltese.²⁹¹

Angered by Simmon's perseverance, *Malta* called for the Council's abolition;²⁹² at the same time advances were made to government circles by the P.N. for a *quid pro quo*. Benoit Xuereb (1865–1892), who had been elected P.N. secretary during a meeting at Mizzi's residence in 1885,²⁹³ approached the crown advocate, Dr. Giuseppe Carbone, with a plea for a constitutional compromise – and a threat of mass agitation unless this came about. The P.N. found, Xuereb told Carbone, that it had set at work a machine which was now uncontrollable, hinting strongly at the possibility of using the confessional to stir up the entire population. Carbone deftly

replied that the government was in no difficulty and was in no need of any *coup d'état* to extricate itself therefrom;²⁹⁴ but Xuereb's threat was more loaded than it seemed.

Bishop Antonio Maria Buhagiar, formerly of Tunis, Malta's diocesan administrator since 1885,²⁹⁵ was feared by Simmons, suspected of being a francophile and a Mizzi sympathizer.²⁹⁶ If Bishop Pietro Pace (of Gozo) were passed over in favour of Buhagiar, Simmons had complained, the lesson would be taught to the Maltese clergy that 'they are not to look for advancement to the British Government, but to the influence of a foreign prelate and to the support of political agitators in Malta.'²⁹⁷ As a protégé of the influential French cardinal Charles Lavigerie, Buhagiar was not obliged to Simmons for his appointment: Bishop Pace had rendered a service to the government when Lavigerie had been accorded a tumultuous welcome during his visit to Malta in 1882,²⁹⁸ but the Vatican, perhaps for this reason, saw Pace as being too connected with parties and unable to reconcile party animosities.²⁹⁹ Mizzi had supported Buhagiar against Pace on the ground that the church should be independent of the state.³⁰⁰

The P.N. had another useful contact in Gerald Strickland (1861-1940), a law student at Cambridge where he became president of the Union debating society and of the Carlton Club.³⁰¹ Born in Malta the son of a Maltese noble lady and an English naval captain, Strickland had good connections, including Sir Albert Woods, Garter King of Arms and grand director of ceremonies in British freemasonry,³⁰² and, more importantly, Earl De La Warr, whose family were related to Lord Salisbury and were soon to be related also, by marriage, to Strickland.³⁰³ De La Warr, who frequently addressed the Lords about the British Mediterranean, brought the Malta question before parliament on more than one occasion.³⁰⁴ Meanwhile, Strickland launched a campaign in *The Times*: 'We have been irritated by a Constitution which does not even save the appearance of reality'. Although half the members were elected, the casting vote of 'a military bureaucracy' had long made Malta 'a battlefield between officialdom and Maltese rights', wrote Strickland.³⁰⁵

The Assembly of Maltese Nobility, whose chief contact in Westminster was Viscount Sidmouth,³⁰⁶ also supported the claim for representative government being made by the P.N.³⁰⁷

Two main constitutional projects were submitted to London for consideration: one by Mizzi and Strickland, essentially a request for full representative government, the other by the lawyers Roncali and Magri, upholding the same principle but giving more attention to a financial council.³⁰⁸

Mizzi, encouraged by the prospect of success being in correspondence with De La Warr and Strickland,³⁰⁹ decided to travel to London for consultations.³¹⁰ Mizzi's unceasing initiatives were forcing decisions on reluctant arbiters. 'It would be madness to extend the representative

element', thought Edward Wingfield, 'but it would be difficult, if not impossible, to abolish it'.³¹¹ In Malta the pressure of public opinion was tightening. Although his countrymen were 'not fit' for representative government, the auditor general argued, the government could not abolish the constitution because it would be 'playing into the hands of the agitators'. Carbone, while not in favour of increasing the elected element, decidedly opposed its abolition; preparations for holding elections would take some months: 'meanwhile any new scheme for a constitution could receive full consideration'.³¹²

Only Savona disagreed. Recent events had shown, he said, that in Malta representative government was unworkable.³¹³ He opposed holding fresh elections, advocating instead the suppression of the existing Crown Colony constitution and rule by the governor alone. The details regulating this system could be left to the secretary of state, he added.³¹⁴

Savona's reactionary attitude, typical perhaps of the 'more English than the English' character, was apparently shared by De Cesare;³¹⁵ but, ironically, it proved rather counter-productive. Savona disgusted Anderson – 'all the bitterness of a renegade'³¹⁶ – and dismayed Herbert, who found it strange that Savona could 'contemplate' and 'suppose' that Her Majesty's Government would entertain 'the summary repeal of the constitutional privileges of the Maltese people'.³¹⁷ Hely-Hutchinson realised that such a step would never receive the approval of public opinion in Britain; Simmons, too, felt 'the extreme difficulty' in which the British government would be placed should they be asked to limit the powers of the electorate when, as a rule, the tendency was to extend these powers in all communities at home and abroad where a liberal franchise existed: he conceded that a middle course would have to be followed, 'neither autonomy on the one side nor absolutism on the other'.³¹⁸ Return to Crown Colony government pure and simple was practically out of the question, noted Anderson:

We have everywhere, even in Colonies with a smaller educated community than in Malta, granted a share in the Government to local representatives, and the popular party in Malta have sufficient power through the press and Parliament of this country to prevent any such retrograde step. The only question therefore seems to be how far we can concede the popular demands without endangering our interests in Malta as a fortress and coaling station.

If they went as far as Dr. Mizzi proposed, they would secure the advantage of having what popular opinion there was in Malta in their favour.³¹⁹ Wingfield agreed that there had been too much tendency to snub the elected members.³²⁰ In preferring the Roncali-Magri project to the Mizzi-Strickland one, Herbert still conceded the essential principle: Maltese control over the expenditure in local matters.³²¹

The drift of thought of these permanent officials was important in the formulation of British policy especially since in two years there were no less than four different colonial ministers: Stanley (Jan. 1885–Feb. 1886),

Granville (Feb.-Aug. 1886), Stanhope (Aug. 1886-Jan. 1887), Holland (Jan. 1887-1892). Possibly as a consequence of Home Ruler sympathies there was, from 1886 onwards, a different responsiveness to Maltese grievances: it was now that Robert Meade discovered that the *Malta Standard* and *Malta Times*, the two papers being sent to the C.O., were unrepresentative of public opinion in the colony; he requested regular copies of the more widely read news media.³²² When Gladstone's government was defeated on the second reading of the Irish Home Rule Bill in June 1886, the new Conservative government under Salisbury in no way hindered the impending reform: 'the present Government', said the colonial under-secretary Earl Onslow, was not less desirous of meeting the views of the Nationalist Party 'than any of its Predecessors'.³²³ Indeed Salisbury's administration, particularly Sir Henry Holland (later Viscount Knutsford), was the one who overruled Simmons' lingering objections and took the plunge.³²⁴ Simmons was called to London for talks to finalize decisions with regard to a new representative government constitution; Carbone accompanied him.³²⁵

Meanwhile the P.N. organization continued to improve. The party opened a club in Valletta, named after Mizzi *Circolo Fortunato Mizzi*; it was run by a *Comitato di Direzione*, the secretary being Eliodoro Barbaro. It was this Mizzi club that called and served as the venue for an *Assemblea di Cittadini*, convened to draft the provisions of a representative constitution; almost all those attending the meetings being P.N. members.³²⁶ A *Comitato degli Undici* was elected, under Mizzi's presidency, as the supreme negotiating body.³²⁷

Opposition to the quest for representative government was minimal. De Cesare, whose *Risorgimento* was considered a government mouthpiece,³²⁸ made an abortive attempt to hold a meeting in Floriana coinciding in date and time with a P.N. meeting in Valletta; the semi-religious *Fede ed Azione* organ of the *Società Promotrice Cattolica Maltese*, wanted religious guarantees and was suspicious of Strickland;³²⁹ Simmons tried to convince London that Mizzi could not be regarded as 'an exponent of public opinion in Malta';³³⁰ and Tancredi Sceberras wrote to *The Times* saying that the Maltese did not care about the Council and desired to see it abolished.³³¹ Constitutional reform was a general desire, at least in political circles; the P.N. at this time was on the crest of the wave.

Five candidates were nominated by the P.N. for the vacant Council seats, three pledged to resign on election, the other two, Mizzi and Strickland, to resign on their return to Malta from London. In public meetings in Valletta and Vittoriosa the P.N. secretary Xuereb introduced the five as 'i candidati del Partito Nazionale'.³³² Elected uncontested, the three pledged to resign did so immediately, were re-elected and they again resigned; Simmons was so taken aback that he did not even inform the C.O. of their unchecked successes.³³³

In more than one *cri de ralliement* from London, Mizzi aroused the nationalist agitation to a peak. His appeals, together with news of his meetings in London, were received sensationally and reported with much aplomb in *Malta* and much of the local press. Defending the resort to *elezioni infami* as 'the only weapon that could be clenched' at the time, Mizzi affirmed the need to change policies now that circumstances were changing. Describing the prospect of a new constitution as a step of the greatest importance towards Maltese autonomy, he added significantly that the 'ultimate aim' of the party was to achieve 'a complete autonomy in our affairs'. Making the 1887 elections seem like the final push that would secure a victory in the constitutional negotiations, Mizzi roused his followers to a high pitch of mobilization:

Arise and take action strong in unity and in numbers. Organize your forces. Patriots are to disseminate in town and country inciting one and all to vote for my candidates . . . Let us not give our enemies the chance to make calculations about the numbers of votes. May every elector be a voter, even, if possible, the illiterates.

The 'sacred national cause' would triumph over the regime

which instead of considering us as men having secular rights to govern ourselves, depicts us as slaves to be treated like merchandise. By opposing the *elezioni infami* with high-flown verbiages, the *Riformisti* thought that they could suffocate the heart-rending cry in many a thousand breast inveighing against the absolute power which tears apart our soul and which wants to bind our very thoughts.³³⁴

Mizzi asked electors vividly to recall how many tears the 1849 constitution had made them shed, what betrayals, what corruption and the humiliations that it had mothered, to portray as in battle array all the memories of bad laws promulgated, squandering of money and systematic favouritism:

Close your ears to those who enthusiastically defended Savona's betrayal and who today fight on to prevent his fall and the fall of the bureaucracy that misgoverns us. Break your chains because your life will signify their death!³³⁵

The main object of the new constitution, made known in its draft form in April³³⁶ and introduced in December 1887, was to give to the Maltese representatives 'for the first time, a specific power of deciding questions of finance and other questions of local concern', while reserving full power to the Crown to intervene 'by legislation or otherwise, in regard to any question'.³³⁷ The elected members, fourteen in number, were to be in a majority in the legislature; three of them were to be selected to be salaried unofficial members of the Executive Council.³³⁸ Although not as extensive an achievement as the P.N. had hoped for, the 1887 constitution was unmistakably a success for the party: Mizzi emerged as the strong man who had dared the most and achieved what others had not been prepared to risk, to justify or to condone.

At the next general election, in 1888, the P.N. swept the boards, electing its fourteen candidates by eliminating all opposition from the R.P.³³⁹ Mizzi, as leader of the successful party, Strickland, who received the largest

number of votes in the newly-introduced special electorate, and Dr. Oreste Grech Mifsud, who received the largest number of votes in the general electorate, were appointed to be unofficial members of the Executive Council.³⁴⁰ A compromise was reached over the language question: the phonetic alphabet of Maltese was to be abolished but the teaching of English was to continue with certain modifications.³⁴¹

The P.N. victory was made sweeter by the fact that the R.P. were led to defeat by Sigismondo Savona himself: in 1887 Savona resigned his office and immediately re-entered politics as a tribune, taking charge of the R.P. some of whose members had remained loyal to him throughout. It seems that Savona first quarrelled with Hely-Hutchinson and Simmons over an education commission set up to inquire into the running of the university;³⁴² but Sir Victor Houlton was convinced that Savona had resigned out of sheer ambition as he foresaw that under representative government he stood a better chance to shine.³⁴³ A few months before he turned against the government, Savona had himself presented the Executive Council with a draft project for a new constitution on the lines of the Reform Committee's 1879 petition:

Whatever may be the number, or the standing, of the party led by Dr. Mizzi, I am firmly convinced that the desire for a reform of the Constitution is general throughout the Island, and that the prevailing agitation will go on increasing, unless a liberal constitution is made to the people, as may be compatible with the safety of the fortress.

When Hely-Hutchinson pointed out that Savona's opinion was 'altogether contradictory' to that which Savona had expressed some time earlier, Savona replied that it appeared from a report in *The Times* that the secretary of state for the colonies had promised Dr. Mizzi a reform of the constitution which would give to the Maltese full control in all matters of local concern and, that being so, he considered that his own proposals were the least open to objection. If it should not be possible to abolish the representative system altogether, he said, the only alternative was to grant a new constitution that would satisfy the majority of the people. Savona was however prepared to allow the governor his right of veto if he considered that a money vote, passed by the majority of elected members, was not in the interests of the public service.³⁴⁴ After all this, Savona resigned on the platform that the new constitution was simply not good enough: far from increasing and extending the rights of the people's representatives, said the R.P. manifesto, the constitution had considerably limited them 'leaving the dearest interests of the inhabitants at the mercy of the Government'; they objected in particular to the governor's right of veto and to the salaried unofficial members on the executive.³⁴⁵ Savona's 'Jekyll and Hyde' metamorphosis was put into sharper relief when Governor Simmons, angered by Savona's attacks against the administration in the reborn *Public Opinion* and elsewhere, published the confidential minutes of the Executive Council showing how Savona, as late as October 1886, had

advised that the Crown Colony constitution 'might be revoked or suspended'.³⁴⁶

Much of what the electoral manifesto said was beside the point: the choice confronting the electors was 'Dr. Mizzi or Mr. Savona'; and the burlesque lampoons made of Savona in the Carnival parades were a better forecast than any opinion poll.³⁴⁷

The net outcome of the language question was a new constitutional order and a total electoral victory for the P.N. By 1888 the P.N. had an internal party mechanism: an acknowledged leader, a daily newspaper organ, an executive committee, a party manager, a club or headquarters, and, above all, an accepted creed. Relying on continuity as the leaders of a country in transition, attempting to brake and control the rhythm and methods of change, the party appealed for unity and national consciousness, upholding the historical and juridical rights of the land, fostering a respect for, or at least an appreciation of, constitutional standards and cultural norms. The P.N.'s attention to political rights undoubtedly obfuscated social priorities of a different kind, but in the aspiration of constituting Malta into a separate political community, in the resistance to assimilation and *déraciné* attitudes and mercenary inclinations, in the relation of government to people through the definition of rights and duties of citizenship, the nationalist movement was a radical, if not revolutionary, force that unleashed a new dynamic in Maltese society.

If the word 'revolution' connotes a primarily political reorganization, we might well concede that nationalism is a revolutionary movement – though it is not always violent in its methods, it is always a set of demands, backed by a potential threat of violence, even if only by a kind of 'demonstration effect' from afar. But if 'revolution' is taken to include sweeping socio-economic and cultural changes, then of itself, for all its democratizing potential, nationalism has not always constituted a revolutionary force.³⁴⁸

How far were the masses aroused by the nationalist agitation? How far did political outlooks in general change? The men at the helm were certainly the educated classes, especially the *professionisti* and clergy; but it is significant that the leaders communicated directly with the led in a compact, homogenous society: whether these contacts came about through the religious confraternity or the band club rather than the party itself did not matter. The often good-humoured participation of the crowds in political events, as in the 4 June 1884 demonstration in Valletta, indicated perhaps that they were only beginning to familiarize themselves with the newly-discovered message of 'nazione'; thousands of illiterates did not bother to vote at all. Participation in politics was concentrated mostly in Valletta and the harbour cities, although Mizzi's cry was 'town and country'. Nevertheless, in barely a decade, fighting against manifestly superior odds, the P.N. leadership had rocked some of the traditionally fatalistic assumptions about Malta's political lot, highlighting the relevance of personalities and party politics to national life. Besides fondling the idea

of nationality among themselves in an intellectual fashion, the party had tirelessly disseminated this, in one way or another, among the electorate, reaching many who had no vote, and succeeded, finally, in bringing their endeavours to a demonstrably successful conclusion.

A vindication of the past and a lesson for the future, the grant of representative government showed that even in a fortress-colony an organized, persevering nationalist party stood to gain greater liberties in accordance with the spirit of the times throughout the empire; the challenge before the P.N. now was to make the new constitution work.

NOTES

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- 7 A. V. Laferla: *British Malta* (Valletta, 1947), i.95-96.
- 8 e.g. H. W. Harding: *Maltese Legal History under British Rule 1801-36* (Malta, 1968).
- 9 G. Cornwall-Lewis and J. Austin, *op. cit.*, para. 22, 42-43.
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- 17 *In Nahla*, 5 Dec. 1908.
- 18 So Dr. Enrico Zammit called him in *Una Pagina di Storia Patria* (Valletta, 1884).
- 19 His baptismal godfather (after whom he was called) was a professor; St. Dominic Church Register of Baptisms, Mar. 1837.
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- 26 P.O., no. 1, 18 Feb. 1867.
- 27 *Supra*, i.8.
- 28 C.G., 11 May 1881, 18.608.
- 29 P.O., no. 462, 22 May 1878.
- 30 Savona/Potter, 14 Nov. 1876, P.O., no. 393, 24 Jan. 1877.
- 31 Wingfield min, on Borton/Hicks-Beach, 24 July 1878, 158/249/9674.
- 32 *Free Trade* (ed. N. McCord, David & Charles, 1970), pp. 73-74.
- 33 *Malta Times*, 8 Sept. 1863; *Giù La Maschera*, 3 June 1891.
- 34 The number of electors fluctuated but was usually in the region of slightly over two thousand: those qualified to serve as common jurors had the vote, these being in receipt of £8 as income from immovable property or mercantile firm, or paying £4 in rent, and possessing a competent knowledge of English and Italian. M.B.B. (1875), p. K2, 163/95.
- 35 S. Savona: *The Necessity of Educating the People*, *op. cit.*
- 36 *Ibid.*
- 37 M.B.B. (1875), p. L3, 163/95.

- 38 Textual extract from Savona 1875 manifesto, *Diritto di Malta*, no. 12, 16 Sept. 1880.
- 39 *Supra*, i.8.
- 40 R. De Cesare, *op. cit.*, pp. 20–24.
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- 72 D.D.M., no. 12, 23 Sept. 1880.
- 73 C.G., 26 Mar. 1885, 22.701, 712–713.
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- 104 M.S., no. 17, 29 Sept. 1880.
- 105 M.S., no. 7, 21 Aug. 1880.
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- 229 C.G., 7 Nov. 1883, 2.43-44; Borton/Derby, 21 Oct. 1883, 158/265.
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- 233 Hely-Hutchinson/Herbert, 30 Nov. 1883, 158/266.
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- 238 J. A. Fishman: *Language and Nationalism* (Newbury House, Mass., 1972), p. 10.
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- 242 In 1880, 1,866 electors voted (M.B.B., 1880, pp. K2-K3, 163/99); in 1883, 2,749 voted (M.B.B., 1883, p. F3, 163/102); C.G., 11 Jan. 1884, 9.271.
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- 248 C.G., 16 June 1886, 58.476.
- 249 S. Savona memo., 30 Nov. 1883, conf., enc. 158/266/20456.
- 250 Herbert min. on Borton/Derby, 21 Dec. 1883, 158/266.
- 251 A copy of this despatch was laid on the Council table, 9 Jan. 1884, 8.233, and discussed *in extenso* at the next sitting.
- 252 C.G., 11 Jan. 1884, 9.290-291.
- 253 *Ibid.*, col. 256.
- 254 Borton/Derby, 17 Jan. 1884, conf., 158/267.
- 255 Derby/Borton, 9 Feb. 1884; Borton/Derby, 1 Mar. 1884, 158/267.
- 256 Borton/Derby, 24 Apr. 1884, conf., 158/268; Mizzi/Stanley, 10 Dec. 1885, enc. 158/275.
- 257 C.G., 11 Jan. 1884, 9.275.
- 258 'Squittinio dei Voti', enc. 158/268; Hely-Hutchinson/Anderson, 4 June 1884, 158/267.
- 259 enc. Borton/Derby, 7 June 1884, 158/268; *Parl. Papers 1884* (C. 4165); Simmons/Derby, 30 Aug. 1884, 158/269; Mizzi/Stanley, 10 Dec. 1885, enc. 158/275; C.G., 17 Dec. 1884, 15.486-487.
- 260 Hely-Hutchinson/Anderson, 7 June 1884, 158/268.
- 261 e.g. C.G., 17 Dec. 1884, 15.451.
- 262 Anderson min. on Borton/Derby, 5 June 1884, 158/268.
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- 272 *Supra*, ii.45. See the continuing debate, C.G., 18, 26, 30 Mar. 1885, 21-23.
- 273 C.G., 30 Mar. 1885, 23.761.
- 274 C.G., 18 Mar. 1885, 21.665.
- 275 C.G., 30 Mar. 1885, 23.753.
- 276 C.G., 18 Mar. 1885, 21.665.
- 277 C.G., 13 May 1885, 29.938.
- 278 C.G., 18 Mar. 1885, 21.665.
- 279 *Ibid.*, col. 666.
- 280 C.G., 30 Mar. 1885, 23.750.
- 281 C.G., 26 Mar. 1885, 22.671.
- 282 C.G., 13 May 1885, 29.933.
- 283 *Ibid.*, col. 941-942.
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- 285 C.G., 12, 19, 21, 22 May 1886, 16 June 1886, 54-58.
- 286 Simmons/Granville, 4 June 1885, 158/277.
- 287 enc. *ibid.*
- 288 Davis/Stanhope, 20 Sept. 1886, conf., 158/278.
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- 292 Hely-Hutchinson memo., enc. 158/278/17809.
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- 299 George Errington letter, Rome, 21 Jan. 1885, enc. 158/272/1961.
- 300 *Malta*, no. 363, 23 Jan. 1885.
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- 302 Strickland/Woods, 1886, enc. 158/279/8768.
- 303 E. P. Vassallo, *op. cit.*, p. 8, p. 22.
- 304 Hansard, 3rd ser., 1887, cccxi.1227-1234, cccxiv.681, cccxviii.487-494.
- 305 G. Strickland: *Correspondence and Remarks on the Constitution of Malta* (Cambridge, Deighton & Bell, 1886).
- 306 e.g. Hansard, 3rd ser., 1886, cccv.1149.
- 307 Baron Testaferrata Abela letter, enc. Simmons/Stanhope, 6 Dec. 1886, 158/279.
- 308 enc. Simmons/Stanhope, 24 Dec. 1886, 158/279.
- 309 Anderson min. on Simmons/Stanhope, 20 Dec. 1886, 158/279.
- 310 Simmons/Stanhope, 23 Dec. 1887, conf., 158/279/23535.
- 311 Wingfield min. on Simmons/Stanhope, 4 Nov. 1886, 158/278.
- 312 enc., *ibid.*
- 313 Savona may perhaps had in mind particularly the rumour, denied however by both Xuereb and Strickland, that the hangman might be nominated for election. Carbone rep., 29 Nov. 1886, enc. Simmons/Stanhope, 2 Dec. 1886, 158/279; Herbert min. on Simmons/Stanhope, 29 Oct. 1886, 158/278.
- 314 Executive Council proceedings, conf., para. 5, enc. Simmons/Stanhope, 4 Nov. 1886, 158/278.
- 315 Margin comment on Borton/Derby, 17 Jan. 1884, conf., 158/267.
- 316 Anderson min., 10 Nov. 1886, on Simmons/Stanhope, 4 Nov. 1886, 158/278.
- 317 Herbert min., *ibid.*
- 318 Simmons/Stanhope, 20 Dec. 1886, 158/279.
- 319 Anderson min., 5 Jan. 1887, on Simmons/Stanhope, 24 Dec. 1886, 158/279.
- 320 Wingfield min., *ibid.*
- 321 Herbert min., *ibid.*
- 322 Meade min. on Simmons/Stanhope, 1 Feb. 1886, 158/276.
- 323 Hansard, 3rd ser., 1887, cccxi.1233.
- 324 Holland min. on Simmons/Holland, 27 Apr. 1887, 158/281.
- 325 Simmons/Holland, 2 Feb. 1887, 158/280.
- 326 Dr. Salvatore Grech, not a P.N. member, agreed in principle with the reforms being requested. Barbaro/Hely-Hutchinson, 22 June 1887, enc. 2, no. 14, 883/4.
- 327 enc. 14, *ibid.*
- 328 enc. Simmons/Stanhope, 1 Feb. 1886, 158/276.
- 329 *Fede ed Azione* (edited by Notary Cristoforo Frendo), no. 1549, 3 Feb. 1887, enc. Simmons/Holland, 15 Feb. 1887, 158/280.
- 330 Simmons/Holland, 28 Feb. 1887, 158/280.
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- 332 *Malta*, no. 959, 18 Jan. 1887, no. 1004, 14 Mar. 1887, enc. 158/280.
- 333 Herbert min., 158/281/8143.
- 334 'Appello agli Elettori', *Malta*, no. 959, 18 Jan. 1887.
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- 336 Holland/Simmons, 16 Apr. 1887; Govt. Not. 60, M.G.G., no. 3197, 6 May 1887, 162/26.
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- 338 *Infra*, iii.
- 339 M.G.G., no. 3241, 24 Feb. 1888, no. 3244, 8 Mar. 1888, 162/28.
- 340 Simmons/Knutsford, 5 Mar. 1888, 158/286/4852; 158/286/5059.
- 341 See the rep. by Savona's successor, Dr. A. A. Caruana, Feb. 1888, Senate vol. 1887-1897, R.U.M. Arch.
- 342 Report and Proceedings of the Education Committee of 1887, R.U.M. Arch; 'Ready to Sacrifice on the alter of St. Ignatius', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 19 May 1887, enc. Simmons/Holland, 28 May 1887, 16 June 1887, 158/282.
- 343 Herbert min., 25 May 1887, on Simmons/Holland, 16 May 1887, 158/281.

- 344 Executive Council sitting of 28 Feb. 1887 rep., conf., enc. Simmons/Holland, 1 Mar. 1887, 158/280.
- 345 R.P. manifesto, signed by Savona and his five candidates, 20 Feb. 1888, enc. 158/286; P.O., 27 Dec. 1887; S. Savona: *The Claims of the Maltese to Self-Government* (Lond., 1887).
- 346 Executive Council minutes of 28 Oct. 1886, enc. 3, Simmons/Holland, 30 June 1887, supplement to M.G.G., no. 3206, 8 July 1887, 162/26. The election was somewhat marred by an absurd instance of police bribery intended to harm Savona's party. See S. Savona: *Bribery, Corruption and Malversation at the General Election in Malta* (Valletta, 1888).
- 347 Simmons/Holland, 24 Feb. 1888, 158/286.
- 348 A. D. Smith: *Theories of Nationalism* (Lond., 1971), p. 82.