

RELIGIOUS SYMBOLISM IN A CHANGING MALTA

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THIS paper attempts to analyse the interaction between social change and religion in Malta. I do not intend to go into the at times overdrawn theoretical discussions on what one means by religion; in the Maltese context *questions related to problems of ultimate meaning* have, for centuries, been answered within the framework of one religious ideology – that of the Catholic Church. In a sense, therefore, this discussion will have to restrict itself to an analysis of the interaction between social change and one particular form of structured religion. On the basis of my data I should then like to suggest ways in which the Maltese experience might contribute some valuable insights to the theoretical discussion on secularization.

Since the end of Islamic rule in Malta, Maltese identity hinged on two primary principles: *language* and *religion*. All the islanders speak Maltese, a language in its own right. Although Semitic in its grammatical structure and syntax, it is written in Roman script and, like the race, has received a number of Romance and Anglo-Saxon accretions. The history of literary Maltese has been erratic, and it took very long for the local language to acquire the status and the official recognition it currently enjoys.¹ Although interest in written Maltese is about two centuries old, the status of Maltese was generally restricted to that of a second-class culture carrier. Several Maltese intellectuals had, at various times, tried to engender a love for the language, and to develop its literary potential.² Their motives, and at times their methods as well, were not uniformly acceptable to all the factions in Malta, and in effect Maltese persistently acted as a buffer against acculturation. At times this buffer was believed to be necessary as a safeguard against the suspicion – not always unfounded³ – that education, and the development of the local tongue, was simply a subtle method of conversion. At other times, language came to symbolize the Maltese

dislike of the colonizers' way of government and of the lack of understanding of the needs of the locals.⁴ The persistent use of Italian as the language of culture and in the internal administration of the island, and indeed the whole language question that bedevilled Maltese politics in the 1920s and the 1930s confirmed this. The forceful imposition of English as *official language* in the 1921 Letters Patent⁵ could not but consolidate for a further two decades the position of Italian as a surrogate of indigenous identity. Paradoxically enough the chances of Maltese to develop along the lines which a number of a political Maltese intellectuals had indicated were further stifled.

The other basic component of Maltese identity is *religion*. A long-standing tradition, attested to by archaeological discoveries, claims that the Maltese were converted from paganism to Christianity by the apostle Paul when he was shipwrecked on his way to Rome for judgement.⁶ Contrary to popular belief, recent research suggests that the presence of Christianity was not continuous in Malta since Apostolic times. Evidence for any Christian presence during the centuries of Islamic rule between 870 and the XI-XII centuries is indeed fragmentary.⁷ Soon afterwards however, Christianity regained ground⁸ and contemporary Maltese still take pride in their fathers' courageous participation in the defence of Christian Europe against the onslaught of the Turks in 1565; in the way the Maltese ousted the French from Malta in 1800 when anticlericalism began to show clearly beneath the *liberté, égalité, fraternité* motto of the French revolution; and in the vigorous way in which they affirmed their religious tenets from the day when they sent their first dispatch to Lord Nelson.

Despite the power over the minds of the Maltese it eventually gained, Christianity was always an import for Malta; and insofar as the spiritual direction of the Church lies outside the islands, it remains an import, relying on edicts and directions that come, ultimately, from without. Yet the process of religious socialization has been long and thorough, never succumbing to the demands made from conquerors, and steadily absorbing the preoccupations of folk culture into a Catholic matrix. In different circumstances, religion allowed the Maltese to consolidate their sense of separate identity around it, even in the face of invaders whose formal religious profession was, at times, also to the Church of Rome. This could take place because religion had gradually come to constitute distinctive local customs, it had come to sanctify distinctive traditions, and legitimized and permeated activities which had else-

where lost their distinctively religious character.⁹ The Church was the symbol of Maltese national identity and the repository of distinctive Maltese customs.¹⁰ The contrast of the secularized or profane soldiers with the Maltese ideal of religion was often sharp, and all the more strongly asserted because the Church was the only really viable local institution which mobilized popular sentiment, which was a focus of folk attitudes, and which provided opportunities for local leadership.¹¹

Language and religion, then, came to be the primary sets of symbols around which indigenous life in Malta centred. The need for such a system of symbols such as this was mandatory for the preservation of the local community throughout its modern history. Like many of its island neighbours in the Mediterranean, Malta has a history of conquest, struggle and occupation; and experienced several quite different influences since paleolithic man first built his giant temples at Hagar Qim and Mnajdra. For centuries Malta was occupied by foreign powers, it was run as an island fortress,¹² and as such needed an indigenous force to weld together all the elements necessary for a separate identity.

The overall image of pre-Independent Malta is one of a *convent-cum-fortress* island. Structurally the indigenous population was broken down into a number of tightly-knit communities dispersed in the various settlements, and had religion to cement them and to 'protect' them from alien influences. Over the last two decades however, Malta has lost both its '*fortress*' and its '*convent*' status; and has joined the bigger nations in the rat-race for a new identity and a new mode of living in the developed, and the emancipated community of nations.

The need to abandon Malta's *fortress* status in favour of a more equitable and directly productive society had long been felt by Maltese leaders, as well as by well-intentioned visitors who from time to time visited Malta and suggested remedies for its economic ills.¹³ In 1945 for example, Sir Wilfred Woods, who had been sent to Malta specifically to investigate the financial situation of the islands had this to say:

for centuries, the economic structure of Malta has been artificial in the sense that it has been based on the invisible exports of services, which, since the political connection with Britain, has taken the form of labour for the Defence Departments in the U.K. ...¹⁴

Further on in his report, Woods suggested that,

if any considerable expansion of Malta's national income apart

from employment in the U.K. services is possible at all, it will have to come from more intensive exploitation of the land, the production for export markets of a limited range of consumer goods which her resources in labour may make possible, or some combination of these possibilities.¹⁵

The changeover from 'fortress' to an industrialized country was held back by several factors. British military interests in Malta persisted well into the fifties, and it seemed then that only some form of constitutional arrangement with Britain other than total dependence on the policies set by Whitehall, could safeguard the British military interests in the Mediterranean and simultaneously ascertain for Malta an increasing level of per capita income. Political integration with Britain was, as a matter of fact, the set programme for Malta by the mid-fifties, and was abandoned only after the change in defence policy affected by the British Government on the adoption of the East of Suez policy by Lennox Boyd in 1958.¹⁶ By the late fifties, it became obvious that Malta's ultimate future lay with some form of independence, something to which the Nationalists had aspired as early as 1921¹⁷ and which Mintoff had begun to demand very vociferously soon after the collapse of his integration proposals.

Besides the developments on the level of big-power policies, several other factors at home were intensifying the call for self-determination. With the introduction of free and compulsory education in 1948, the process of politicization was expected to become more widespread; and the demands for self-assertion and self-determination were re-inforced. In many respects in fact, the period 1947-1958 could be called the formative period of Maltese nationality. Widespread education was providing the skills which would become so necessary as Malta changed its role from that of fortress to an industrialized country. The definitive departure from the old way of life came in 1958 when economic planning was first introduced; and when the changeover of the Dockyard from a predominantly military arsenal to a commercial enterprise was announced.¹⁸ Malta was now set on the paths of industry and tourism. Deep structural changes in the Maltese economy were in the making. From very early in the infrastructural phase, new factories started to sprout everywhere; new hotels started to dot Malta's beaches. By 1975, employment with the Services establishments had gone down from the 21,000 level it had been in 1951 (when it was 24% of the gainfully occupied population) to a mere 4166 (3.9%). Over the same period the percentage share of jobs claimed

by the manufacturing sector alone had risen from a mere 10.0% to 29.0%. The number of tourists visiting Malta sprang from a mere 12,583 in 1959 (the year following the creation of a Tourist Board) to 372,516. In just eighteen years in the tourist industry, Malta started to receive more than one tourist per annum for every person living on the island.¹⁹

The effects of these sudden departures from the traditional way of life, and most especially the rapidity with which they came about, have had far-reaching effects on all the aspects of the lifestyles of the Maltese. A few important features of this change could be isolated:

(a) *assertion of Maltese national identity*. When political independence was achieved in 1964, the Maltese finally had an opportunity to start doing things 'the Maltese way', to look for an indigenous tradition of ordering public affairs, to assert Maltese style, and to restore, resuscitate, or re-create Maltese institutions. Foreign powers should now treat Malta as an equal. Such a prospect was not without difficulties. Malta's social and public life had been dominated by foreign institutions and run by foreign personnel; indigenous political consciousness had been affected and moulded by institutions imported from Britain; disparity in size and in economic viability between Malta and other independent states could not but affect her relations with them.

Increasingly it became apparent therefore that to survive Malta needed to exploit her natural assets, and to sell herself to a client who had a completely different set of values from those of her previous military occupant. Suddenly, folklore, tradition, sandy beaches, local artisanship and religious pageantry itself became wares which had to be exploited and sold.

(b) *Wider opening to other cultures*. The process of indigenization just described inevitably had to be balanced by a wider opening to alien cultures. The developments in industrial output and in touristic appeal generated a need to establish economic, cultural and diplomatic ties with other nations. Better communications – by sea and air – had to be secured, and the already existing telephonic and telex communications with the outside world expanded. Contact with other cultures, and their values as widely divergent as could be conceived of in a mixture of communist Chinese experts and Swedish tourists, was further intensified with the advent of television;²⁰ and by the increased demand for foreign printed media as a result of the population's general advances in literacy. This, and the impact of tourists seeking to shed the constraints of their normal lives, gave a new ethos to the islands.

(c) *New patterns of extended socialization.* On the more localized level, the daily experience of many people began to be completely different from those of their fathers, or even of their elder brothers and sisters. The extension of education into the prime of adulthood not only raised the aspirations for achievement of Malta's new generations, but it also provided a new context for extended socialization. In the same manner, the increasing congregation of workers in the concrete dens of the Marsa Industrial Estate, was a new socio-psychological experience for many people, necessitating socialization to new conditions, and an effort at adjustment between traditional mores – such as those obtaining on the family's *razzett* – and those developing within industry. The involvement of women in factory life – an entirely new phenomenon – was a virtually revolutionary circumstance. From a dependence on an employer who was personally known, and with whom a long-standing relationship often evolved, work relations became more impersonal, the cash-nexus assumed a larger role, and individual autonomy was a new possibility. As has been argued, 'what is most fundamental here is not the quantum of remuneration, but the fact that these young men and women have obtained independent employment.'²¹

(d) *A new diffusion of interests.* Democratization on all levels has increased the associational aspects of life. Maltese society is gradually losing its *gemeinschaftlich* characteristics. Family grip over the individual now diminishes as the individual reaches maturity; and the village's grip over the family as a unit has practically disappeared. Self-assertion and creativity are now positive values in the educational system: both represent an assault against the old kinship and community structure. In industry, new patterns of association, focusing, at the extreme, on collective bargaining, and strike action, represent new conceptions of the in-group, demand new loyalties which conflict with older patterns. The increased use of the vote, and the demand for its responsible use, represent a radical democratic and ultimately individualistic perspective, that stands in sharp contrast with the old community allegiance. Conscious interests, consciously-formed associations have not only caused the erosion, but have positively militated against the old 'natural' and 'given' social units, often to the bewilderment and shock of the older generations.

The effects of economic planning, therefore, did not merely dismantle the physical features of Malta as a fortress, but, re-inforced by educational changes, also opened Malta's convent doors to values previously excluded by its insularity.

Such a process came largely through a substantial decrease in the legitimating power of the Church on the *local* level. To the Church, in fact, the supra-village forces operating in Maltese society were disrupting its traditional form of societal organization, and hence they were disrupting the source of its strength. The second book of the *Codex Iuris Canonici*, the body of legislation that regulates internal organization within catholicism, makes it clear that traditional Church structures are essentially based on territorial divisions;²² authority is to be exercised hierarchically, starting with the Pope at the very top, down to an ordinary Church rector at the very bottom.

Social change in Malta, as has already been indicated, went counter to this 'philosophy' of relationships within the community. Within a very short period of time, the barriers which had so strongly separated the different communities were destroyed, and the internal cohesion that for so long had characterized this type of society were diluted by the greater mobility necessary for a person's education, work and recreation.²³

Cutting across this process of deep social change induced by Malta's economic needs, a further 'event' intensified the process of what might be called 'deconventionalization'. For ten long years, the church in Malta underwent the traumatic experience of its dispute with the Malta Labour Party. The tendencies Mintoff had shown as early as 1939²⁴ when he was still a university student gradually evolved into a clear programme for the effective 'secularization' of Maltese life, and for the planned diminution of the Church's superintendency and traditional legitimating power. Over the fifties, and through the sixties until final agreement was reached in 1969, all the Church's attention was directed at keeping Mintoff out of power, and to fight the secularising trends to which he was committed. Frequent public meetings, especially during the two elections of 1962 and 1966, and before the 1964 referendum preceding Independence, were used by each side to attack, contradict, and argue against the other party. Very often, Mintoff attacked the rallies organised by the Junta²⁵ of gross misrepresentations of what he said and of what he was advocating for the nation's good. The other parties, and the Church itself, obviously did their best to persuade people that Mintoff's socialism was a threat to the nation's economy, tradition, and future. What is particularly interesting is not, however, the tenets of each faction. It is rather the recognition of the fact that Malta's acculturation was not resulting only from the new ethos imported recently into the island

by books and tourists. It was being forcefully generated by an effective agency rooted in Maltese social structure itself, viz. a political party the leader of which had, since 1949, when he assumed its direction, avowed himself in favour of a deep structural alteration in the traditional ordering of Maltese social mores.²⁶

Various areas where the affects of Malta's loss of its previous 'convent' status can be felt can be referred to at this point. Only a number of areas where such an effect was mostly felt could be mentioned:

(a) *Vocations*. The vocation to the priesthood is no longer considered as a status route by parents. Its attractiveness no longer lies where it might have been in past years: the priest is no longer in practice the only person with a high level of education. He is no longer the person to whom everyone would go whenever all sorts of difficulties arise. The process of structural differentiation in society at large started to attract young men with leadership orientations into the more lay professions, and although vocation trends do not in general and as yet, indicate substantial downwards shifts, the percentage intake from people within the relevant educational catchment area is much lower than previously.²⁷

(b) *Village festas*. In village society, the normal festa in honour of the patron saint, and quite commonly that in honour of the secondary titular saint organised by the opposing faction or *partit*, were the most important events of the year. With the extension of leisure facilities, and the greater availability of quick transport, festivities are no longer tied exclusively to a Church once-in-a-year event; but have become a constant feature of Maltese life. Much of the symbolism of traditional folk-life – which used to reach its climax in the village festa – steadily lost its earlier significance and ceased to be intrinsically justifiable or beneficial. Even other previously all-important events like the Good Friday processions underwent the accretion of instrumental and pragmatic values that had been quite alien to them in earlier times. Gradually people became more self-conscious about such festivals, and from natural parts of social life in its various manifestations, they became to be regarded less as coherent elements in everyday activity, less as essential features of the community's symbolic universe, and more as isolated, saleable artefacts of culture, to be produced and performed 'to order' for outsiders for whom they bore no intrinsic meaning but only the qualities of spectacle. What was once sacred, jealously-guarded, and good-in-itself, had become another item to be put in the balance of payments as a credit-earning product.²⁸

(c) *Education.* Before the introduction of compulsory education in 1947, the Church practically controlled the educational system in Malta. It was very well represented at the University, it ran the teachers' training colleges, it owned the most important secondary schools with the exception of the Lyceum and one big secondary school for girls, had several primary schools, and monopolised nursery education. The Church's overriding presence in secondary schools persisted until 1966 when free secondary education by the state was extended to all and the school leaving age was raised. Teacher training is no longer run by religious. The percentage intake of students in the other Church-run educational institutions has now gone down considerably, and nursery education no longer is a virtually Church monopoly. Religion too is no longer a compulsory subject in schools, and is very often dropped as an academic subject in favour of one of the other 'more useful' subjects.

By the mid-sixties and early seventies, therefore, the traditionally most important institutions of Maltese social life had undergone radical change. On the one hand, the young 'State of Malta' was reaching out for full maturity and was already making its voice listened to in spite of its smallness.²⁹ The Church, on the other hand, was engaged in a serious attempt to re-tailor itself according to the ideas emanating from the turmoil brought about by Vatican II.³⁰ In Malta itself, the paradox for the Church at this critical period of self-appraisal was the recognition that it was, faster than ever before, losing its symbolic effectiveness. The reason for this was of course not very difficult to see, even though many church leaders in fact failed to do so. As long as culture, tradition, national life-style, and religion were intertwined in a complex set of mutually supportive attitudes and values, the Church was the dominant indigenous institution. Once the connections were broken – as they were when Independence was attained and national identity could now start being built on purely secular values – the way was open for a process of diminution of the significance of the Church in Maltese national life.

The effect of social change in general, and of the new theological stances emerging after Vatican II, on the life of the leaders of the Church could not be of equal incidence. Although they had trained for the same role-set, and although they were all supposed to be operating within the same institutional set-up, priests for example actually differ extensively in their world-views.³¹ For the first time in Malta's history a number of orientations towards the traditional form of religious symbolism are openly adopted in Malta without fear of global exclusion and of social extortion by an

overtly religion dominated social system.³² The resultant pluralistic situation is a completely novel experience among indigenous Maltese; and though strains and tensions still erupt at times of conflict on a micro level (in small groups, or within households), they no longer evoke the kind of macro level dissension that characterized Maltese public life in the 1960s.³³

What does secularization mean in the Maltese case? And what, if any, is the specific function of religion at a time when social forces in Malta are forcefully pressing for the rapid establishment of a welfare state?

(a) The conscious departure from *wertrationalität* to *zweckrationalität* referred to above, and the rapid blurring of practically all urban/rural borders have resulted in social forces that make traditional religious structures less relevant on the macro-societal level. The shift among the clergy towards a dialogic stance is not an independent phenomenon.³⁴ It follows on the social consciousness of a people increasingly aware that their dependence on religion need not be as exhaustive as it previously had been. Certainly there has been a diminution in the social significance of religious structures and institutions as traditionally understood. The Church has become to occupy a less conspicuous and less presidential place in the affairs of the nation. Traditional church gatherings, festivals and activities can no longer claim exclusively to portray national identity and solidarity. Grandiose church structures and activities are losing their previous universally accepted symbolic content. The diminution of the Church's legitimating power occurs as the local/rural context – in which religious virtues and morality had been primarily conceived – becomes a context in which men fear cultural deprivation.

(b) The disintegration of the Church and religion on the macro-societal level does not, so far at least, indicate a parallel disintegration on the micro-societal level in Malta. Although the global influence of the Church and of religion on society may appear to be on the decline, an unmistakeable revival of religious feeling, of inquisitiveness about religious tenets, belies a shift towards a more communitarian rather than a hierarchical conception of Church belonging. Interest in the activity of the religious leaders arises more out of a desire to further one's knowledge of religious doctrine, rather than to participate in parochial organisation. The decline of traditional religion, with its concomitant features, is in fact giving way to more personalised, nucleated meetings. To a large extent this is a natural extension of the new creeds created by the emerging societal ethos of a Malta the population of which

begins to suffer from the ills of compartmentalised education, work conditions and leisure facilities; in other words of the loss of person-to-person interaction associated with the decline of *Gemeinschaft* and the rise of *Gesellschaft*. Paradoxically perhaps, the loss of the traditional *Gemeinschaft* is creating a demand – even if such a demand is not always clearly articulated – for a quick return to it.

(c) Such a replacement of mass church education by more personalised nucleated meetings has been accompanied by a somewhat strange phenomenon: the Church in Malta spontaneously exhibited an attempt to develop the service ethic, and to consolidate its grip on the level of the total society by providing services, as an auxiliary agency, in certain departments of life where it supplies a lack that in more developed societies might be met by functionaries of the state. This itself is perhaps the best instance of the interaction of social change and the new *gesellschaftlich* characteristics evolving in Maltese society and in Church structures themselves. The various welfare commissions set up by enterprising individual priests as para-ecclesiastical agencies³⁵ are in themselves an acknowledgement that it was almost mandatory for a process of structural differentiation to take place within the Church itself. Rapid social change created new needs, and the Church in Malta, in an attempt to come to terms with the new societal needs, found itself developing ways and means whereby to meet the more complex demands of a people liberated from the local community and requiring more sophisticated, more specialised and more technical forms of advice. Whether this extension of one of the Church's features – the *Koinonia* in the theological jargon – persists in this form when the state is willing and ready to take over these activities is as yet very difficult to say. The fact remains that such a critical period of societal development was instrumental for new ideas – say on the emancipation of women and birth control – to be filtered to the population at large, and for them to acquire legitimation by none less than an offshot of traditional ideology.

In theoretical terms, therefore, one could conclude that the Maltese experience of religion-social change interaction over the last two decades suggests:

(a) that contrary to what Larry Shiner seems to imply secularization and the extent of structural differentiation characterizing a society undergoing rapid social change need not be two independent phenomena. In the Maltese case, the two prove to be closely interlinked, with secularization – here understood of course as the loss of social significance by religion – directly resulting from

differentiation;³⁶

(b) that the Maltese experience seems to vindicate the Parsonian approach to secularization in that religion still acts as a source of both legitimation and change even if it tends to lose part of its former function of paramount ascendancy in all sectors of social life.³⁷ The frequent attempts by the leaders of both Maltese political parties to prove that they and their party are actually doing best in actualizing the Christian Code is indicative enough of how true this is.³⁸ The Maltese experience does not fulfill the conditions of say, Sorokin's 'zero-sum concept',³⁹ neither does it fit into any scheme of secularization that postulates a 'total emptying of religion's social significance';⁴⁰

(c) the foregoing assertions are evocative of possible fusion of what might be considered two of the most popular theories of religion in the literature: the Marxist and the Durkheimian. Even though mass education and the resulting new aspirations are making the Maltese eager for the establishment of a meritocracy, remnants of the old structures – patronage and client relationships in politics e.g. – persist.⁴¹ In such conditions, religion and not politics may in the long run prove to be best carrier of the egalitarian ethos in Malta.

At Church everybody is treated the same, and the shift towards a dialogic stance among the Maltese clergy indicates more an awareness to persist in that direction. As such, religion would be thriving on empirical social conditions, and, at least partially, on the impossibility of the 'secular institutions' to actualise the thrust of the new Maltese societal ethos. In this sense, Marx's assessment of religion as expressing and reflecting, in his own words, 'real distress', and the suggestion that the existence of religion is 'a protest against real distress' might come to be vindicated. The other aspects of his theory of religion do not however seem to fit in with what is happening in Malta: as an important carrier of change, religion could not be called 'the opium of the people', but rather a source of light. It is precisely in these terms that elements of Durkheim's understanding of religion – most especially religion understood as a focus of common identity – seems to me to be more appropriate than ever. A theory of religion incorporating the above elements from what are normally considered exclusive theories of religion appears to me to be the best possible explanatory system for current Maltese religion and religiosity.

NOTES:

¹ See D. Marshall, *History of the Maltese language in Local Education* (Malta, MUP, 1971); and H. Frendo 'Language of a Colony' (Malta Univ. M.A. Thesis, 1974). Maltese became, in conjunction with English, Malta's official language by letters Patent of 12 August 1936.

² Canon Agius De Soldanis (1770) published the first Maltese grammar in 1770. He was the first Maltese scholar to insist on the need for a standard orthography for Maltese.

³ The British operated in Malta through the Church Missionary Society and used the island as a centre for all the Mediterranean, publishing the Bible in various languages. See Parl. Papers, *Reports of the Commissioners appointed to Inquire into the Affairs of Malta 1838* (140-I), pp. 15-17; and C. Sant *It-Traduzzjoni tal-Bibbja u l-Ilsien Malti 1810-1850* (Malta, MUP, 1975). When press censorship was relaxed in 1839 (Ordinance No. IV of 1839) a stream of 'newspapers' started to be published, by the Protestants in Malta, rhythmically to be rebutted by similar publications, primarily edited by Jesuits in Malta. The 1883 elections were fought specifically on this issue.

⁴ The election of two simpletons (Ciappara, a pauper of seventy eight with chronic nervous disease, and Baldacchino, an obscure and illiterate organ grinder) to the Executive Council in 1882, intended to bring in a halt the administration of the island, was one such symbolic gesture by the Maltese.

⁵ The Malta Constitution Letters Patent 14 April 1921, art. 57, i-iii.

⁶ Acts of the Apostles, xxvii, 27-xxvii, 11. An early Christian presence in Malta is confirmed by the archaeological evidence, particularly by the catacombs around Mdina.

⁷ This remains a debatable issue. The most recent and elaborate study, A. T. Luttrell, 'Approaches to Medieval Malta', in *Medieval Malta: Studies on Malta before the Knights*, ed. A. T. Luttrell (London, British School at Rome, 1975), 19-41, 60-64, 69-70, tentatively concludes, after a discussion of the evidence and of the incorporations previously advanced, that there is no firm evidence for the continuity of Christianity in Malta between 870 and circa 1200.

⁸ See A. Luttrell, 'The Christianization of Malta', *The Malta Yearbook 1977* (Malta forthcoming).

⁹ This point has been made very clearly by David Martin: 'in a general way a nation denied self-determination by another dominating society will either seek sources of religious differentiation, or use the pre-existing religious difference as a rallying point'. In G. Walters (ed.), *Religion in a Technological Society* (UK, Bath University Press, 1968), p. 35.

¹⁰ The extent to which this is true is suggested by the following examination question, set in the Urban Studies paper for the B.A. in Architectural Studies: 'The State, the Church and the Market were the three forces traditionally at work in an urban settlement. Discuss how the town plan tends to reflect their relative strength at any one time.' (June '76).

¹¹ An excellent recent illustration to this is provided by D. Fenech, *The Making of Archbishop Gonzi* (Malta, Union Press, 1976). An example from the XVIII century can be found in Ph. Callus *The Rising of the Priests: its implications and repercussions on ecclesiastical immunity* (Malta, MUP, 1961).

¹² Independence was attained in 1964. The natural step from a Constitutional Monarchy linked to a foreign-born and foreign-maintained monarch, to an indigenous Republic was taken a decade afterwards, and came into effect with the appropriate constitutional amendments in December 1974.

¹³ Various examples could be cited. Towards the end of XVIII century, at a time when M.A. Vassalli believed that the Order of the Knights was in serious difficulties, rather than joining the subservise elements then being cultivated on the island by the French, he wrote an important memorandum to the Grandmaster in which he advocated that the Order should rationalize her activity and develop relationships with the East. His ideas were considered impractical, however, and he eventually joined the Jacobite faction. See F. Panzavecchia, *L'Ultimo Periodo della Storia di Malta sotto il Governo dell'Ordine Gerosolomita* (Malta, Stamperia del Governo, 1835), pp. 342-47. See also G. Mitrovich, *The Claims of the Maltese founded upon the Principles of Justice* (London, Mills & Son, 1835); and his *Indirizzo ai Maltesi* (Londra, dai Torchj di Mills e Figlio, 1835), in which he made substantial claims for better salaries and pensions for the Maltese. Similarly, see N. Zammit, *Malta e Sue Industrie* (Malta, Stamperia di Governo, 1886), pp. 33-42, 116-22, and especially 123-26. Zammit criticizes the widespread belief in luck among the Maltese; and insists that it is necessary to 'destroy the superstition of luck from the people's minds'. For an account of similar calls by M. Dimech, see G. Frendo, *Birth Pangs of a Nation - Manuel Dimech's Malta* (Malta, Mediterranean Publications Ltd., 1972), Ch. VII. The above names have been given by way of an indication, and others - like G. Ellul Mercer, F. Mizzi, N. Mizzi, S. Savona and P. Boffa - could also be cited to similar effect.

¹⁴ W. Woods, *Report on the Finances of the Government of Malta* (London, Colonial No. 196, 1946), par. 6a.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, par. 8.

¹⁶ See an excellent analysis of the integration issue by D. Austin, *Malta and the End of the Empire* (London, Frank Cass, 1971). The extent to which the British persistently thought of Malta mainly as a fortress is typically brought out in a retort by Lord Kimberley, Secretary of State for the colonies in 1880 that 'while Her Majesty's Government were willing to pay the utmost possible consideration to the views and votes of the elected members in all matters, especially in purely local matters, it was inevitable that in a fortress the ultimate decision in most cases must remain with the Government'. C.O. 158/257.

¹⁷ Dr. E. Mizzi is reported to have claimed Dominion Status rights for Malta when commenting on the 1921 semi-responsible constitution: 'For the Maltese to satisfy themselves in their most intimate and profound aspirations, they would have to be conceded the status of a Dominion within

the Imperial community (the Commonwealth, i.e.) similar to that of Canada, Australia, and South Africa'. Anon, *L-Istorja tal-Partit Nazzjonalista* (Malta, Lux Press, 1972), pp. 12-13.

¹⁸ For the relevant documents related to this period, see D. Mintoff (ed.), *Malta Demands Independence* (Malta, MLP, 1959), especially pp. 22-24 for the Statement by the Secretary of State on the Future of the Dockyard and pp. 44-47 for the Colonial Office's assessment of Malta's economic position and outlook at the same time. The book concludes (pp. 99-102) with Mintoff's own assessment, and his arguments in favour of independence and non-alignment.

¹⁹ See Table I, Appendix I, p. 24.

²⁰ See Table 2, Appendix II, p. 25.

²¹ Besides its own TV network (beaming programmes on one channel, but with a second channel in its late stages of development), Malta can receive both RAI-Italian programmes very clearly.

²² S. Busuttill, (ed.) *Tourism in Malta: Socio Economic Aspects* (RUM, Department of Economics - AIESEC-MALTA, 1971), p. 6.

²³ The territorial dimension is so basic to the 1917 Codex that Canon 216 specifically states: 'non possunt sine speciale apostolico indulto constitui paroeciae pro diversitate sermonis seu nationis fidelium in eadem civitate vel territorio digentium, nec paroeciae mere familiares aut personales; ad constitutas autem quod attinet, nihil innovandum, inconsulta Apostolica Sede'.

Later on in Canon 241, section 2, an explicit exception is made for military chaplains: 'circa militum cappellanos sive maiores sive minores, standum peculiaribus Sanctae Sedis praescriptis ...'.

Some of these provisions of the Codex have now been superseded recently by *Pastorale Munus* (1963), *Episcoporum Munuibus* (1966), and *Mignatorum Cura* (1969).

²⁴ It is worth noting that before the coming of industry and tourism to Malta, mobility from one's place of residence to another settlement or parish was restricted to urgent needs, and only special occasions like the festa provided opportunities for people to leave their homes and attend the celebrations of other nearby parishes. The growth of population around Valletta already referred to, had allowed the services and the dockyard to draw their labour supply from the new suburbs, thus consolidating a 'village' ethos even in these specialised areas of Malta's economy.

²⁵ The debate was conducted in the columns of *The Daily Malta Chronicle and Imperial Services Gazette* in December 1938 and January 1939. On 9 January 1939, Mintoff wrote that he believed 'workers should have the same economic rights as the peers and the judges ... and anything that will help to put that ideal in practice, whether it comes from the Pope or from any other source, is welcome to us ...' He later commented on how he understood Malta's social structure since 1500 AD, and divided it into three social strata: (a) the Knights, (b) the 'professionists', and (c) the workers and peasants. He commented: 'The "professionists" licked the Knights' boots whilst the workers and peasants licked the boots of their

fellow citizens, the "professionists". Captain Ball occupied Malta by request of these "professionists" who had worked up the workers and the peasants to a red-hot religious fanaticism. Thus the Knights left the island and in their stead ruled the British who, being interested in the island from a strategic point of view, gave all the desired privileges to the "professionists" who later on developed into ultra-patriots, and became pro-Italian ...'

²⁶ A committee formed by representatives of the leading associations for the lay apostolate.

²⁷ For details on the issues that resulted in Mintoff's rise to power in the Malta Labour Party see D. Mintoff, *Malta's Struggle for Survival* (Malta, Lux, 1949);

Mintoff, *Malta u l-Gvern Ingliz* (Malta, Muscat, 1950);

Mintoff, *Malta u l-Patt ta' l-Atlantiku* (Malta, Muscat, 1950);

Malta u l-United Nations (Malta, Muscat, 1950).

See too, editorial in *Is-Sebb* (M.L.P. organ) of 13 July 1950.

²⁸ These trends were noted in the results obtained from a yet unpublished survey conducted in 1976 among students of the Theology Faculty, RUM, and among prospective candidates to the priesthood.

²⁹ Perhaps the most typical example of this is Carnival. This feast of popular extravagance is no longer linked to the liturgical calendar, but is now held in May, precisely in order that it may fall during a period when more tourists are visiting Malta.

³⁰ Perhaps the area in which Malta's voice was most effective is in relation to the law of the sea. Malta's proposals to the United Nations on the need for consensus on how to exploit the riches of the oceans for the good of mankind opened a debate that indicates the potential small countries have in such international institutions. See: *Proceedings of Pacem in Maribus Conventions I-IV* (10 volumes) (Malta, International Ocean Institute, 1970-1972).

and

A. Pardo *The Common Heritage - Selected Papers on Oceans and World Order 1957-1974* (Malta, MUP - Int. Ocean Institute, 1975).

³¹ The idea of pastoral planning was first talked about in Malta in 1965. In spite of several attempts by various Diocesan Commissions, no concrete plan was produced until 1975. In March 1976 a definitive proposal was announced, with 'permanent education' and 'evangelization' as its two core concepts.

See B. Tonna (ed.) *Evangelizzazzjoni* (Malta, Segreteria Pastorali - Dok. I, 1970).

³² See M. Vassallo 'Religion and Social Change in Malta' (Oxford University D.Phil. thesis, 1974), VI, pp. 266-335.

³³ For a discussion on emerging patterns of religiosity among Malta's young generation, see M. Vassallo 'Youth and the Future of the Faith in Malta', a paper read at an International Symposium held for delegate of Bishops' conferences on 'Youth and the Future of Faith in Europe' by the Vatican Secretariate for non-Believers, Rome 18-20 November 1975. Four

patterns of belief are to be distinguished (a) the *traditional* (b) the *dialogic* (c) the *liberated* and (d) the *ideologically atheistic*. The first two still relate belief to religious structures, the third belies a privatization of religious symbolism. The extent of pluralism is accentuated by the wide generation gap, especially in the villages where the incidence of social change has been highest.

³⁴ For an excellent account of *rural* politics in the 1960s see J.F. Boissevain, *Saints and Fireworks – Religion and Politics in Rural Malta* (London, Athlone Press, 1965); and J.F. Boissevain, *Hal Farrug – A Village in Malta* (USA, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1969). In his work Boissevain tries to relate the structures of political dissent to those of religious dissent, as crystallised around a Church-legitimized institution in some Maltese parishes: the secondary patron saint and the secondary *partit*. Such a view has very limited validity when extended beyond the specific areas in which Boissevain's research was located. Direct connections between the social roots of religious and political extremism have been observed in a number of countries, S.M. Lipset, *Political Man* (London, Mercury, 1960), pp. 107-108, refers to the success of young Trotsky in Czarist Russia as dependent on the support he got from religious sects; to the extent to which Communists in Holland and Sweden are more numerous in centres which once were the basis of fundamentalist religious revivalism; and to how, in Finland, Communism and revivalist Christianity are often strong in the same areas. The Maltese case is however very different from the instances mentioned by Lipset: in Malta the opposition between the patron saint and the secondary saint as it existed in some villages (and as it still does even if with diminishing relevance) is best understood as a form of institutional opposition within the same broad framework of belief; and so as opposition mostly of a formal kind. In the cases mentioned by Lipset, the opposition between the beliefs of the people of different groups are real, and differ fundamentally in their content.

³⁵ For a discussion of this shift among Maltese diocesan clergy, see 'Developments in Disharmony' in M. Vassallo 'Religion and Social Change in Malta', pp. 3'8-335.

³⁶ Like the Cana Movement, the Emigrants' Commission and the Social Action Movement.

³⁷ L. Shiner 'The Concept of Secularization in Empirical Research' *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 67, (1967), pp. 212-214.

³⁸ See T. Parsons 'Christianity and Modern Industrial Society' in E.A. Tiryakian (ed.), *Sociological Theory, Values and Socio-cultural Change* (Glencoe, Free Press, 1963) pp. 33-70; and T. Parsons 'Religion in post-industrial America: the problem of secularization', *Social Research*, 41-2, (1974), pp. 193-225.

³⁹ A typical example was Mintoff's speech at a public meeting prior to the important amendments to the Constitution in 1974. On October 27, 1974 Dom Mintoff publicly made reference to religious values to legitimize the proposed changes by referring to one of the basic tenets of Christianity,

equality of all men before God. During that meeting he distinguished at length between two types of Christians: 'stamped Christians (tal-bolla), and 'real Christians', and insisted that only those in the second category are true Christians. See *l-Orizzont*, 28 October 1974.

⁴⁰P.A. Sorokin 'The Western Religion and Morality of Today', *Inter. Year Book for the Soc. of Religion*, II (1966) pp. 9-43.

⁴¹Such a definition of secularization would be the one suggested by C.Y. Glock and R. Stark in *Religion and Society in Tension* (Chicago, Rand McNally & Co., 1965) p. 116: the replacement of 'the mystical and supernatural elements of traditional Christianity' by 'a demythologized, ethical rather than theological, religion'.

⁴²J.F. Boissevain 'When the Saints go Marching Out! Reflections on the Decline of Patronage in Malta' to be published in the *Proceedings of the Seminar on Changing Forms of Patronage in Mediterranean Society* (Rome, Amer. Univ. Fieldstaff, Centre for Med. Studies, Nov. 28-30, 1974).

APPENDIX I WORKING POPULATION OF THE MALTESE ISLANDS 1951-1974

EMPLOYMENT SECTOR	1951	1953	1955	1957	1959	1961	1963	1965	1967	1969	1971	1973	1975
Agriculture & Fishing	12940	8700	8980	8410	8070	7880	7960	7150	6950	5280	6160	6751	7066
Construction & Quarrying	6140	7120	4540	5420	7230	8980	6660	7400	10320	12380	11010	4364 ³	5022 ³
Manufacturing Industries	8750	9120	8080	8670	14920	15130	16550	18130	19660	22790	25480	30800	31287
Electricity & Gas	70	70	100	100	100	130	650	700	790	920	960	864	807
Commerce	11450	11710	10150	11120	12210	12040	12450	12970	12790	13740	14220	13486	13665
Transport, Storage & Communication	4170	3980	3430	3780	4060	4080	4340	4060	4030	4460	4560	4427	5858
Business, Personal & Recreational Services	7380	7130	5910	7560	8040	8480	8380	8980	10420	12690	13470	12639 ⁴	12664 ⁴
Total Private Industry	50900	47830	41010	45060	54630	56720	56990	59390	64960	72250	75860	73331	76369
Government Services	13320	14290	15550	16970	17190	16790	16440	17570	18580	19430	20510	19784	18841
Defence Depts. (Civil)	18390	18600	19580	19560	12260	12140	10260	8410	7350	5750	4390	4132	4166
(H.M. Forces)	3090	3600	3390	3550	3680	2940	2410	2530	2420	2030	1110	760	
Total Gainfully Employed	85700	84320	79530	85140	87730	89220	86500	88120	93310	100460	100408 ⁵	102981 ²	107814 ⁵
Unemployed	1073	977	5695	3284	3219	4367	7015	7859	5387	3831	5925	4823	4895
Labour Force	86773	85397	85225	88424	90949	93587	93515	95979	98697	104273	109005	107840	112708
Index of the Labour Force (1951 = 100)	100.	98.02	98.22	101.9	104.8	107.8	107.7	110.6	113.7	120.0	122.2	124.2	129.38

PERCENTAGE COMPOSITION OF WORKING POPULATION

Agriculture & Fishing	14.91	10.20	10.54	9.49	8.88	8.42	8.51	7.11	7.04	6.03	5.65	6.26	6.27
Construction & Quarrying	7.08	8.35	5.33	6.13	7.95	9.59	7.12	7.71	10.46	11.87	10.10	4.05	4.46
Manufacturing Industries	10.08	10.69	9.48	9.80	16.42	16.17	17.70	18.04	19.92	21.87	23.38	28.57	27.76
Electricity & Gas	0.08	0.08	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.14	0.69	0.73	0.80	0.88	0.88	0.80	0.72
Commerce	13.20	13.73	11.70	12.57	13.43	12.86	13.31	13.48	12.94	13.21	13.05	12.51	12.12
Transport, Storage & Communications	4.80	4.67	4.03	4.28	4.47	4.36	4.64	4.23	4.08	4.28	4.18	4.11	5.20
Business, Recreational & Personal Services	8.51	8.36	6.94	8.55	8.85	9.06	8.96	9.36	10.55	12.18	12.36	11.72	11.24
Government Services	15.35	16.76	18.21	19.14	18.91	17.98	17.58	18.30	18.44	18.65	18.82	18.35	16.72
Defence Depts. (Civil)	21.19	21.81	22.97	22.84	13.49	12.97	10.86	8.76	7.44	5.52	4.03	3.83	3.70
(H.M. Forces)	2.83	4.22	3.99	3.19	4.02	3.82	2.94	3.61	2.45	1.95	1.02	0.70	
Unemployed	1.24	1.38	1.57	3.71	3.54	4.67	7.50	8.19	5.46	3.65	5.44	4.47	4.34

Notes: ¹including 590 in Malta Land Force in 1970;

²including 670 in the Malta Armed Services in 1971;

³including 46 engaged in oil Drilling in 1972; 105 in 1973;

⁴including 93 employed with Diplomatic Missions of other countries in Malta;

⁵including 667 in the Malta Armed Services and of 1495 members in the Emergency Labour Corps in 1972; and of 652 in the Malta Armed Services and of 4322 in the Pioneer Corps (which replaced the Emergency Labour Corps) in 1973. of 636 and 630 in the Armed Forces in 1974, 1975 respectively, and of 3648 and 7810 in the Pioneer Corp, *Dirghajn il-Maltin* and Auxiliary workers in 1974 and 1975 respectively.

Figures for 1951-1971 are arrived at from estimates made by Labour Officers in the course of their inspection during the year. Figures for 1972-73 are based on specific manpower surveys.

Source: Department of Labour

APPENDIX II DEVELOPMENTS IN TOURISM IN MALTA (1959-1975)

YEAR	NO. OF HOTELS	NO. OF BEDS	NO. OF ROOMS	NO. OF EMPLOYEES	VISITOR ARRIVALS	LENGTH OF STAY	TOTAL GUEST-NIGHTS (000)	GROSS INCOME £M000 ⁴
1959	25	1,218	—	—	12,583	—	176	765
1960	26	1,388	—	438	19,689	—	275	966
1961	26	1,422	—	428	22,611	—	316	1,094
1962	30	1,744	896	516	23,334	—	326	1,167
1963	32	1,815	934	540	32,299	—	452	1,402
1964	36	2,360	1,225	766	38,380	—	537	1,533
1965	38	2,380	1,236	819	47,804	—	669	1,890
1966	54	3,112	1,625	1,082	72,889	13.04 ³	950	3,220
1967	71	4,710	2,396	1,910 ²	97,519	15.88	1,548	5,062
1968	89	6,101	3,142	2,473	136,995	12.87	1,763	7,998
1969	101	7,562	3,885	2,778	186,084	12.63	2,350	10,836
1970	110	7,935	3,942	2,723	170,853	14.23	2,431	9,820
1971	113	8,512	4,277	3,315	178,704	13.31	2,379	10,601
1972	80 ¹	7,971 ¹	4,103 ¹	2,695	149,913	12.49	1,873	8,500
1973	79 ¹	7,919 ¹	4,049	2,880	211,196	13.28	2,790	16,151
1974	83 ¹	8,390 ¹	4,271 ¹	3,382	272,516	13.40	3,635	22,300
1975	91 ¹	9,424 ¹	4,816 ¹	3,833	334,519	13.93	4,633	27,700

¹ As classified by H.C.E.B. on March 1, '973

² Source: Dept. of Labour

³ Malta Govt. Tourist Board Sample Surveys

⁴ Central Office of Statistics

Source: Malta Government Tourist Board