25B/GS/S

The Society

Malta

July 1973

NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SURVEY

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SURVEY PUBLICATIONS

The basic unit of the NIS is the *General Survey*, which is now published in a bound-by-chapter format so that topics of greater perishability can be updated on an individual basis. These chapters—Country Profile, The Society, Government and Politics, The Economy, Military Geography, Transportation and Telecommunications, Armed Forces, Science, and Intelligence and Security, provide the primary NIS coverage. Some chapters, particularly Science and Intelligence and Security, that are not pertinent to all countries, are produced selectively. For small countries requiring only minimal NIS treatment, the *General Survey* coverage may be bound into one volume.

Supplementing the *General Survey* is the NIS *Basic Intelligence Factbook*, a ready reference publication that semiannually updates key statistical data found in the Survey. An unclassified edition of the factbook omits some details on the economy, the defense forces, and the intelligence and security organizations

Although detailed sections on many topics were part of the NIS Program, production of these sections has been phased out. Those previously produced will continue to be available as long as the major portion of the study is considered valid.

A quarterly listing of all active NIS units is published in the *Inventory of Available NIS Publications*, which is also bound into the concurrent classified Factbook. The Inventory lists all NIS units by area name and number and includes classification and date of issue; it thus facilitates the ordering of NIS units as well as their filing, cataloging, and utilization.

Initial dissemination, additional copies of NIS units, or separate chapters of the *General Surveys* can be obtained directly or through liaison channels from the Central Intelligence Agency.

The *General Survey* is prepared for the NIS by the Central Intelligence Agency and the Defense Intelligence Agency under the general direction of the NIS Committee. It is coordinated, edited, published, and disseminated by the Central Intelligence Agency.

WARNING

The NIS is National Intelligence and may not be released or shown to representatives of any foreign government or international body except by specific authorization of the Director of Central Intelligence in accordance with the provisions of National Security Council Intelligence Directive No. 1.

For NIS containing unclassified material, however, the portions so marked may be made available for official purposes to foreign nationals and nongovernment personnel provided no attribution is made to National Intelligence or the National Intelligence Survey.

Subsections and graphics are individually classified according to content. Classification/control designations are:

(U/OU) . . Unclassified/For Official Use Only
(C) . . . . . Confidential
(S) . . . . . Secret

APPROVED FOR RELEASE: 2009/06/16: CIA-RDP01-00707R000200080035-9

This chapter was prepared for the NIS by the Central Intelligence Agency. Research was substantially completed by April 1973.

CONTENTS

This chapter supersedes the sociological coverage in the General Survey dated May 1967.

FIGURES

A. Introduction

In 1972, a year after the election which brought him to power, Maltese Prime Minister Dominic Mintoff successfully concluded negotiations with the British which significantly increased the amount paid to Malta for the military use of its facilities. Yet, as the Maltese and the British well knew, the real significance of the event was not the increased assistance but the new relationship with the West which Mintoff succeeded in establishing. By these agreements Malta gained recognition of its right and intention to order its own affairs and thus brought to fulfillment the formal independence achieved from the United Kingdom in 1964 (Figure 1). If in one sense it is correct to speak of Malta in terms of a new beginning in 1972, however, it is scarcely sufficient to do so. In the character of its life no less than in the activities of its people, Malta reflects the influence of the several foreign rulers who controlled its affairs for centuries before independence. Thus, a proper understanding of Malta begins not with its independence, but with its long history of rule by others, and proceeds from an account of the external forces which shaped its development.

Malta has long been an object of European interest because of its strategic location midway between Gibraltar and Alexandria, at opposite ends of the Mediterranean. The earliest inhabitants of the islands appear to have come from Sicily, which possibly was once joined to Malta, and remnants of early Maltese life reflect substantial if infrequent commerce with the communities of the eastern Mediterranean generally. Prominent relics of these early times—and of the Mediterranean influence—are the Maltese burial tombs, shallow oval pits carved out of the limestone surface. In Malta, these tombs were put to novel use as temples (Figure 2), a development which suggests that life on the islands was in some measure independent of surrounding influences. Generally, however, there was no continuous development of a single tradition even in this early period. Rather, the islands suffered a series of separate colonizations by various Mediterranean peoples. The location of settlements on inaccessible and defensible hilltops, a pattern which still exists, suggests an unsettled state of affairs which apparently lasted for centuries.

Colonization by the Phoenicians about 800 B.C. marks both the arrival of the first of Malta's Semitic colonists and the appearance of the first written historical reference to the islands. It was the former Phoenician colony Carthage, however, which brought Malta new glory and transformed it from an object of colonization to an outpost of strategic importance. Malta became part of the vast Carthaginian project of consolidating Sicily and the islands of the Gulf of Syrte to withstand the Greek advance in the western Mediterranean. Carthage ruled Malta as part of the Punic Empire for almost three centuries, until the developing rivalry with Rome in the Mediterranean brought unrest and, ultimately, the conquest of Malta by the Romans at the beginning of the Second Punic War. Under the Romans, Malta was made a part of Sicily, which had shared the archipelago's fate. During this period, about A.D. 60., St. Paul is said to have converted the islands to Christianity, when he was en route to Rome as a prisoner, and his ship went down close to the archipelago.

Malta, with Sicily, fell under the dominion of Byzantium in the aftermath of the breakup of the empire. But in A.D. 870 the islands were overrun by

NOTE—The entire content of this chapter is UNCLASSIFIED but is FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY.

FIGURE 1. Prime Minister Dr. Giorgio Borg Olivier, with Prince Philip, as Malta became independent, 21 September 1964

FIGURE 2. Ruins of prehistoric Hagar Qim Temple, interior walls

the Muslims in the course of their expansion across the Mediterranean. The Abbasid Caliphs eventually became masters of Spain, southern France, Italy, and Sicily. The conquerors brought to the islands cotton and citrus fruits and fixed the predominantly Semitic character of the Maltese language. They also established many customs and gave names to a number of significant landmarks. The European counterattack reached the archipelago in 1091 under Count Roger the Norman. His success restored the authority of the Roman Catholic Church in Malta and reestablished the religious hierarchy.

For several hundred years thereafter control passed among a variety of Sicilian rulers, most of whom exercised authority over Malta as a part of the Sicilian domains in the name of the Holy Roman Empire. In 1530, however, against the background of the continuing Christian campaign against the Muslim Turks, Emperor Charles V ceded authority over Malta to the Order of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem (Figure 3). The Knights were then in retreat from Rhodes, where the forces of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent had decimated their numbers. The order did not concern itself initially with governing the resident Sicilian element; indeed, for some years its only concern was unity against the Turks. This preoccupation was clearly justified, for in 1565 Suleiman the Magnificent rallied all the Turkish dominions against the Knights. With the help of the Maltese, the Knights withstood a ferocious seige at Grand Harbour, which is still celebrated in Malta. For many years thereafter, the order directed its resources to the construction of a series of forts and coastal lookouts for use against possible further depredations by the Turks. These structures were later incorporated into the 19th century British defense system and so survive today.

The Turkish threat never again reached serious proportions, and, as it declined, the Knights turned to trade. In the process, their increasing wealth

FIGURE 3. Procession in Valletta of a few of the current members of the once-powerful Order of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem

transformed Malta from a poor military base into a flourishing civil state. But, as their comfort increased, the Knights grew less and less monastic and more and more disposed to licentiousness and disorder—prompting Gibbon's remark that the Knights were prepared to die but not to live in the service of Christ. Their corruption led to an increasing neglect of their political responsibilities and ultimately to a series of Maltese revolts beginning in 1722. The decline of the order was paralleled in Europe by the diminution of the political power of the Pope, a condition which revived interest in the strategic worth of Malta in various foreign chancelleries. The French Revolution deprived the Knights of their profitable European estates, long the source of their strength and Malta's prosperity, leaving them in financial straits and so vulnerable to attack that in 1798 Napoleon was able to take control of Malta without a struggle.

The Knights had ruled Malta for 258 years; Napoleon's dominion was much shorter and far more disruptive. The Roman Christian beliefs of the Maltese inspired by St. Paul had remained strong under Byzantine and Arab rule and had been strengthened by the long period of rule by the Knights. Napoleon's republicanism thus came as something of a shock, and, when he began to despoil churches and invade the ecclesiastical and spiritual jurisdiction in its name, he inspired a determined resistance. Napoleon's defeat by Nelson at the Nile provided the opportunity for rebellion. Aided by the threat of a blockade by the British, the Maltese formed a provisional government and an assembly and asked the British to assist them. A 2-year seige of the French position by the Maltese, the British, and their Portuguese and Neapolitan allies led to the French surrender. By the resulting treaty between the British and the French, authority over the islands was restored to the Knights. The Maltese stubbornly opposed the reinstitution of clerical rule, and in 1813 they took advantage of the renewed fighting between the British and the French to petition the British to assume authority over the islands. The British accepted the offer, and the Maltese became British subjects. This arrangement was ratified by the Treaty of Paris in 1814.

The British ruled Malta until its independence in 1964. Early in the 19th century, Malta served as a center for British trade with countries in the Near East and along the Adriatic. This provided some stimulus to agriculture and to the development of diversified economic activity. The introduction of larger merchant ships later in the century, however, made the commercial function superfluous. The gap was bridged by British naval expenditures, which made the islands once again—as they had been under the Knights of St. John—dependent upon foreign sources for their existence. For a long time Malta was in effect ruled directly by the British, but late in the 19th century the British introduced a dyarchical system of joint authority with the Maltese that permitted the development of limited self-government. Almost immediately the Italian and English elements in Malta, reflecting also the differences between church and state, split into two parties. For many years Malta was divided over which tradition would give form to the institutions and practices of political life.

The Maltese gave concrete logistic and garrison support to the United Kingdom in both world wars and won for the islands the George Cross in 1942 for having heroically withstood a seige and aerial bombardment by the Germans and Italians. A likeness of this award appears on the national flag. By virtue of this close identification with the British in wartime and the defeat of the Italians with their Fascist identification, the Italian presence in Malta lost its influence. Consistent with the further development of constitutional government, a new political alignment emerged and turned upon the issue of the place of the Catholic Church in Maltese life. In the 1950's, coincident with the British decision to retrench militarily around the world, Malta agonized briefly over whether to seek independence and assume the responsibility massively to reorder an economy dependent upon foreign support or to incorporate with the United Kingdom. The latter course was briefly attempted, but the two sides could not agree upon the terms of Maltese incorporation. Malta then decided to seek its independence as a member of the Commonwealth and to provide as best it could for the economic and political self-sufficiency it had never before been able to achieve.

B. Structure and characteristics of the society

1. General characteristics

In light of their history the Maltese are quite a homogeneous people. Their own kind of devotion to Roman Catholicism and their distinctive language can be credited with the preservation of a sense of national identity throughout so many foreign dominations—credit shared, of course, with the exclusive tendencies of the dominators. The basic heredity probably still is Phoenician, mixed over the years with that of a series of conquerors. There are no marked ethnic divisions among the population, but regional feelings are quite strong for such a small country.

Generally, the Maltese comprise several distinct communities which correspond geographically to areas where various rulers concentrated their settlements or sought to establish their influence. Only since independence, and under the impact of recent attempts to industrialize, has Malta advanced significantly toward a common life.

The long history of the Maltese as political subordinates in their own islands has inhibited the development of initiative, self-discipline, and the ability to organize, and also has fostered a cultural interiority complex. Urban dwellers have tended to adopt the manners, customs, and language of the foreign community, much to the scorn of country dwellers. There is a tendency in some circles to place special emphasis on the older African and Arabic heritage to offset European cultural influences.

Geographical divisions are unusually important in the class structure of so small an area as Malta. The virtually unspoiled medieval and Renaissance city of Mdina (Figure 4) was the capital before the Knights came in the 16th century and still is the home of most of its older native aristocracy. The annual mass for the soul of Roger the Norman conveys the spirit of this medieval enclave. The aristocratic families of Mdina consider themselves Italian in heritage, if not in heredity. Some of the families still are great landowners and contributors to church charities but otherwise take little part in the life of the country.

Like Mdina, Valletta, the present capital, grew up out of military necessity. During the Great Seige by the Turks in 1565, the area served as a Muslim stronghold. The Knights thereafter settled and fortified the area to preserve it from such use in the future. Later when the British began to exercise control over the islands, they retained Valletta as the seat of their administration. The resident British community, consisting mainly of retired British military personnel and of families identified with recent British rule, is centered in the Valletta metropolitan area, where it lives a fairly sophisticated, cosmopolitan life. This community lives among the Maltese on terms of friendship and respect and continues to enjoy considerable social prestige. The members of this community seldom see themselves as Maltese, however, even those who were born in Malta and have spent their lives there. Like the aristocratic community in Mdina, they are bound by sentiment and opinion to a foreign tradition.

Living parallel with this community and in many ways duplicating its manners and customs are the government officials, professionals, wealthy businessmen, and landlords, who comprise the upper strata of the Maltese population in Valletta. Both societies place great emphasis on precedence and protocol, and both move appropriately against the backdrop provided by the palaces, fortifications, and churches of the 17th century Knights; however, the two have traditionally had little daily contact with each other.

Affinity with the British, buttressed by the established practice of sending aspiring young Maltese to British universities and further enhanced by shared participation in the two world wars, has, however, been quite apparent. In the 1950's, for example, when Malta came to regard its colonial status as an anachronism, its leaders initially favored incorporation with the United Kingdom over the alternative of independence.

Government activity and employment have long played a major role in Valletta, but industrial life is increasing, since most of the new industries are locating near the port area. On the whole, workers and their families in Valletta have lived better than those in other cities on the Mediterranean. Now that British employment is declining, they may be the best qualified Maltese to seek employment in the new industries the government is trying to attract. They have long been used to dealing with and working for foreigners, and many have relatives and friends who have emigrated or have themselves served with the British Army abroad. Industrial workers are Malta's most mobile, least traditionalist group, comparatively willing to move with opportunity. Their exposure to upper class Maltese life and to the outside world has made them the leaders in the demand for higher wages, better living conditions, and wider oppor-

FIGURE 4. The medieval fortress of Mdina, the capital until 1570, dominates the countryside from its rocky site about 3 miles inland from Malta's southwest coast

tunities for their children. They still, however, have the habit of expecting the government to be responsible for providing employment.

Generally, the urban dwellers have adopted the characteristics of their former rulers. They speak English more often than not, and when they do use their own language, their English-accented Maltese is easily distinguished from the heavy consonants and broad vowels of countrymen. The vocabulary and inflection of the urban resident differ as well, showing more of the Italian and British influences. While devoutly Roman Catholic, they regard the church as only one aspect of their lives. Families are close but less dependent on one another than in the country, and the mother's influence is somewhat less predominant.

In contrast to the urban and relatively prosperous Valletta metropolitan area, life in villages and on farms is in many ways medieval or even Biblical. Villages are compact settlements of tall, flat-roofed, stone houses, whose substantial baroque facades are broken only by Turkish-style balconies facing the narrow, winding streets. These solid constructions center around a village square, appropriately dominated by a baroque parish church. The square is the center of social life for men, the locale of their societies, wine-shops, and cafes, while the women make shopping in the neighborhoods the major social event of their day.

Many of the villagers till or own land, but a substantial number of farmers live apart from the village. They extract a hard living from soil which is thin and poor for agriculture, often relying upon primitive implements to farm tented land (figure 5). When the Knights of St. John ruled Malta, they accepted tonnages of new soil from visiting commercial ships as harbor dues, and there is still a law requiring any builder to deliver displaced soil to the government.

FIGURE 5. Farming with primitive plow. Parish church is in the background.

In contrast to the relative mobility of his urban counterpart, the rural Maltese is intensely loyal to his birthplace. Even if he moves to a new village, he may never become a real part of it, but ordinarily continues to participate in the religious societies and other activities of his native village. The people of the smaller islands of Gozo and Kemmuna are even more inward looking. The Gozitans are regarded on the main island somewhat as the Scots are in London—thrifty, dour, hardheaded folk, who, when they reach the city, frequently work their way into the best jobs.

The Maltese, especially in rural areas, are by necessity hard working and frugal. While intensely loyal to their complex system of family relationships, they generally are more open to strangers and foreigners than are most other island people. On the whole a hearty, healthy, extroverted people, they share the Mediterranean love of metaphor and of bargaining. Feuds are maintained with intensity from one generation to another, especially in villages, but without the physical violence characteristic of some other Mediterranean countries.

Both rural and urban workers are fiercely egalitarian. Nevertheless, education, occupation, and wealth carry some elements of social prestige, and special importance is attached to offices of the various religious societies or of the village band clubs. Education is recognized by the poorest Maltese as the key to advancement, and many seek to rise from the working class through the teaching profession or through competitive examination for the civil service. But ties to home and family and to the village church are exceedingly strong and act as a restraining influence upon ambitions that might otherwise lead more Maltese to leave the villages.

Factors operating in Malta today tend to moderate social disparities and further break down the differences between urban and rural life. The first steps were taken early in this century with the displacement of Italian and the substitution of Maltese as one of the two official languages. The complement to this was the encouragement given to the enhancement of Malta's Punic, or non-European, heritage and to the development of independent modes of artistic and cultural expression. Moreover, despite the differences in the incidence and degree of illiteracy between town and country, the introduction of compulsory education in 1946 has sharply reduced these gaps and has exposed Maltese youth to a common body of material about themselves and their past.

World War II contributed substantially to the breakdown of social distinctions and the growth of a

sense of common purpose. The bombing of the islands both united the Maltese and motivated a dispersal of the urban population into the countryside and into contact with people there.

The foreign community around Valletta has bought land in and has spread out to other parts of the island, which may in time lead to their assimilation into Maltese life. Since World War II younger sons of the aristocratic Mdina families have begun to participate in the business and professional life of Valletta before inheriting the family homes. This is gradually producing a more cosmopolitan attitude in Mdina itself.

In addition, after the war Malta initiated a policy of encouraging industrial development to relieve its almost exclusive dependence upon local agriculture and foreign imports. The increase in urban employment opportunities that has accompanied this process, the increase in areas of governmental responsibility, and the deliberate improvement of public transportation have encouraged large numbers of villagers to commute daily to the cities.

The effect of this has been to facilitate the flow of opinion and custom between town and country and to foster the growth of a new industrial working class which reflects the impact of both influences. The rural residents of Gozo have participated in this growing intercourse with the cities as well. Gozo is only a one-half hour ferry ride from Malta, and many Gozitans spend the week in Malta and return home to their families on the weekend.

2. Religion

The Roman Catholic Church continues to dominate Maltese society to a degree possibly no longer found in any other country save the Vatican itself, despite the growing influence of the secular and cosmopolitan in Maltese life. The central place of the church is sanctioned by the Maltese Constitution, which recognizes the Roman Catholic Apostolic Religion as the official religion of the islands and guarantees its right to "freely express its proper spiritual and ecclesiastical functions and duties and to manage its own affairs." The Archbishop of Malta and the Bishop of Gozo are exempt from criminal law, and canon law is still the law of the land in such matters as marriage, divorce, and burial. The influence of the church in the educational system remains strong. Religious instruction is mandatory even in the public schools, and much of the overall instruction comes from teachers trained in Catholic colleges. Freedom of worship is protected by the Constitution. The Churches of England (Anglican) and of Scotland (Presbyterian) and the Greek Orthodox Church are represented in Malta, but they serve the foreign community almost exclusively, being forbidden by law to proselytize.

The prominent place given to the Catholic Church under the Maltese Constitution is not an attempt to establish its influences but is a recognition of its real authority. St. Paul brought Christianity to Malta, and the line of bishops that he founded, though interrupted during the Arab invasions, began anew with the Norman Conquest in 1091. The present position of the church was fixed during the long period of rule by the Order of the Knights of St. John. It has remained strong because of its early identification with the respected Italian aristocracy, long the dominant element in the islands, and because later the British chose to concentrate their activities in the cities, leaving the church and the clergy preeminent outside them. Despite some effort by the Maltese Government to extend and expand its influence, social life in the villages still revolves around the parish church.

The village, in fact, has almost no life apart from the church. As a secular community it has neither leader nor common property, and its inhabitants are rarely called upon to work for a common end. Only as a congregation within the traditional parish framework does the village manifest these characteristics, and its most cherished property is commonly the richly decorated church (Figure 6). Religious feasts and holidays and the succession of daily masses order the lives of the residents and mark the divisions of the year (Figure 7). The annual festival of the patron saint is a notable symbol of the religious grounding of life, for the festival honors the saint as patron of both the village and the parish.

The appointed leader of the parish—and thus of the village generally—is the priest. To the villagers he is also an adviser, and the government has routinely recognized him as the de facto head of the village. Thus, in addition to his religious duties, it is customary for him to be called upon to divide inheritances, argue claims against the government, and to intervene with employers. The importance of his secular role was for many years enhanced by the fact that he was commonly the only literate person in the village and the traditional dispenser of charity. The institution of compulsory education, however, and the increased government role in providing for social needs since the war have reduced the need to depend solely upon the priest and the church for these services.

The church permeates the social life of the villagers as well. As an institution, it still runs welfare

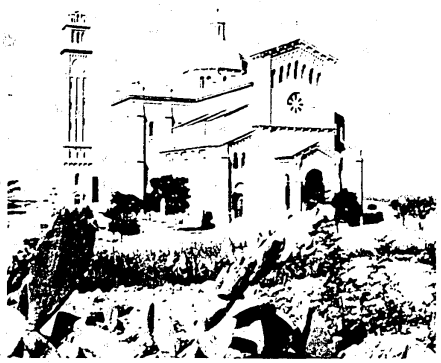

FIGURE 6. Ta'Pinu church near Gharb, northwestern Gozo

FIGURE 7. Carnival parade along the Kingsway in Valletta opens the 4-day pre-Lenten festival

organizations staffed with doctors, nurses, lawyers, social workers, and teachers, and it provides social outlets through a profusion of strictly ranked religious societies. The so-called secular clubs—primarily the very important village bands and the football clubs—have chaplains and maintain close links with the priests. Religious festivals provide the main entertainment for the villagers, and the intense but nonviolent feuds between local adherents (*partiti*) of rival saints and their festivals absorb the activities, energies, and emotions reserved in other societies for local politics.

While the church remains strong, contemporary trends are slowly reducing its influence. The increasing literacy rate and the number of people who now work in and travel between their villages and the cities have accelerated the spread of urban attitudes to rural life, not all of them compatible with the continued maintenance of religious faith. What is more, these factors have helped to weaken the authority of village customs and tradition and thus the attachment to the religious community out of which they originated. Finally, the government generally provides many of the services once available only through the church, and there are local secular alternatives to the clubs and social functions conducted under church auspices.

3. Language

Maltese and English are the official languages. Maltese is an original combination of contributions from two otherwise distinct linguistic families, with the addition of latter-day loanwords adopted from English. Its basic structure is Semitic, but, like English, it incorporates some features of the Romance languages. The only Semitic tongue officially written in Latin, it bears a close relation to the western Arab dialects.

The genesis of Maltese is sometimes dated from the conquest of the Islands about 700 B.C. by the Carthaginians, who spoke a Semitic tongue akin to Phoenician and Hebrew. This date is controversial, however, since the Arabs, who conquered Malta in A.D. 870 in the course of their conquest of Spain and Sicily, so affected the native tongue that they obliterated virtually all trace of the native language. Thus, the Arabs are generally given credit for having established the Semitic base of the language. With the Norman conquest of Malta and under the authority of subsequent dynasties and the Knights of St. John, a flow of words borrowed from Sicilian and Italian began.

The morphology of the Romance loanwords has been adapted to suit the pattern of the more basic

Semitic element. The distribution of the vocabulary between the two corresponds to the timing and character of the period when the speakers of these two languages occupied the islands. Thus, Maltese includes loanwords from Italian, Sicilian, and, to some extent, English, to denote ideas and objects which belong to the post-Arabic civilization of the islands. The vocabulary of religion, drawn from Italian, is an example. Maltese uses native Semitic words to denote objects and ideas that belong to the period before the Norman conquest. With some exceptions, the Semitic words comprise the vocabulary which refers to the physical world and its elements.

The use of Maltese was not always encouraged in the islands. Indeed, its present official status can be attributed to the political struggle which occurred early in this century between the British and Italian elements in the archipelago. As a device to undermine the stronger Italian position and to rally nationalist sentiment against the Italians, the British fostered the use of Maltese. The institution of Malte as an official language in 1934, displacing Italian, also led to its improvement. Until that time, Maltese had been largely a colloquial language used only by the common people. One consequence of this upgrading was the development of a standard orthography, thereby encouraging the belated development of a Maltese literary movement, which today boasts a modest number of distinguished names.

A knowledge of English still is a prerequisite for social or professional advancement, and English is compulsory in all the schools. Some English is understood by about 70% of the population, and the percentage is higher in urban areas. Italian still is widely spoken. Although no longer an official language, knowledge of it is considered by many an aristocratic attribute. It is compulsory in some of the church schools patronized by the upper classes.

C. Population

Malta is one of the world's most densely populated countries, second only to Singapore among the members of the United Nations. According to an official Maltese Government estimate, on 1 January 1972 there were 322,000 residents crowded onto the islands of Gozo, Malta, and Kemmuna—a composite area of only 121 square miles. The average population density, thus, was 2,661 persons per square mile, compared with a density of approximately 458 in Italy and an overall figure of 251 for southern Europe generally. The greatest number of residents—in late 1970 an estimated 297,000 or roughly 92%—live on the island of Malta, the largest of the three islands and the commercial and political center (Figure 8). In 1970 Gozo had about 25,000 persons, and tiny Kemmuna had 18.

Malta is a unitary state without local legally established administrative units except for a civic council for Gozo and Kemmuna. Therefore, most populated places—villages, towns, cities—do not have

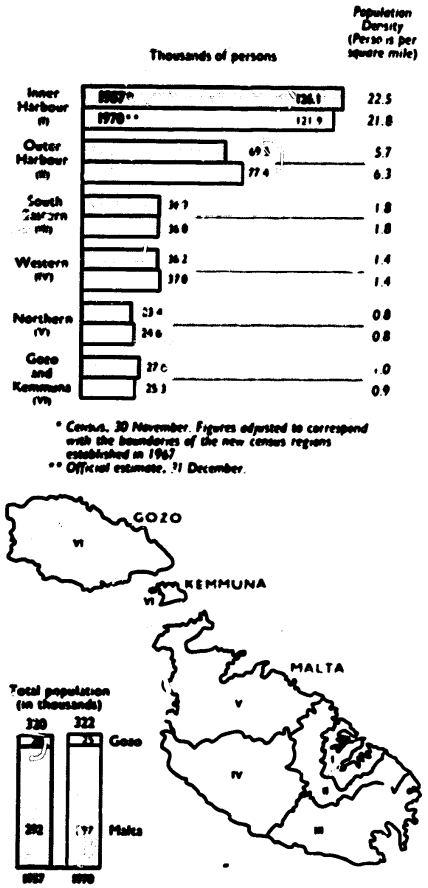

FIGURE 8. Population distribution

however, the size of the populace is certain to remain a critical problem for the government for some time to come.

The pattern of emigration has had some unfortunate consequences for Maltese society, the long term effects of which may prove even more troublesome than the growth emigration has been intended to control. Not only have the emigrants been young—87% of those in 1969 were under 35 years of age—but there has been a disproportionate number of males; nearly two-thirds of the 1969 emigrants in the critical 15 to 34 years of age bracket were males. Emigration, therefore, has resulted not only in a larger proportion of elderly people in the population, but also in a surplus of females (Figure 12).

The population, though still relatively young in 1957, has aged steadily since then, largely because of the falling birth rate and pattern of emigration. At the time of the 1957 census the proportion of the population under age 15 was 37.4%. The 1967 census recorded 29.7% under age 15, and the Malta Central Office of Statistics has projected a further drop to 25.4% by the end of 1973. During the same period the proportion 60 years of age and over rose from 10.8% in 1957 to 12.8% in 1967 and is projected to reach 14.4% by the end of 1973.

The 1967 census showed a sex ratio of 92.2 males for every 100 females, a small increase from the ratio at the time of the 1957 census (91.9 males per 100 females), reflecting a slight increase in the proportion of females emigrating in the early 1960's. The deficit of males reflects in part their lower survival rates—in 1969 life expectancy at birth was about 68.5 for males and 72.2 for females—but the pattern of emigration described above has played by far the greater role. For example, in 1969 each of the first four 5-year age brackets (covering the years 0 through 19) show an excess of males, the determining factor being the universal excess of male over female births. In the overall 0 to 19 age bracket there were 104 males per 100 females. The 20 to 29 age bracket, however, shows a sharp reversal, with only 85 males per 100 females, reflecting the disproportionate number of young males in the emigration population.

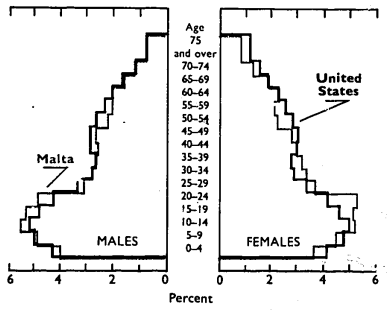

FIGURE 12. Age-sex distribution, Malta and the United States, 1970

D. Societal aspects of labor

1. Employment

Malta, largely because of its position in the Mediterranean, became involved at an early stage in entrepot trade and extensive port activity, including the bunkering of ships. The arrival of the British in 1800, the Napoleonic wars, the industrial revolution in northern Europe, and the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 all helped Malta to achieve some degree of economic well-being. The tie with the United Kingdom paid continuous dividends, and only in recent years have the extent and dangers of economic dependence on London become apparent.

Although the British helped the Maltese achieve a higher standard of living than many of their Mediterranean neighbors, prosperity was precarious because of this dependency. Port facilities were designed to meet the needs of the British fleet and proved to be inadequate to handle larger civil vessels. Entrepot trade declined, as Europe turned to the New World for many of its raw materials, and it was given a near-death blow by the closing of the Suez Canal in 1967. The British have reduced their presence considerably, with a consequent rise in unemployment, and other countries have not taken up the slack.

The Maltese labor force, numbering roughly 111,000 derives most of its income from manufacturing—primarily ship repairs, textiles, and food processing—and government services. About one-third of the labor force is employed in the service sector, with trade the largest employer. Unlike most of the less developed countries, where agriculture is a traditional occupation, fewer than 6% of the working population earn a living from the land.

Malta suffers from a lack of skilled workers, largely because of the British failure to encourage technical training and because past emigration policies facilitated the exodus of large numbers of workers. Despite the oversupply of general labor, the shortage of skilled workers has been serious enough to

discourage some foreign firms from establishing branches on the islands. Women make up only about one-fifth of the total labor force.

Despite government efforts to improve agricultural production, the soil, climate, and small size of most farms militate against agriculture as a lucrative means of employment. Thus, agriculture, traditionally a haven during hard times, provides full-time work for fewer persons each year, while part-time farmers are increasing slightly in number. Young men clearly see the folly of going into farming, with the result that the number choosing agriculture as an occupation declines each year. More than half the full-time farmers are over the age of 50.

The government is by far the largest employer, with more than 22,000 employees in 1972, representing a considerable increase in recent years, as the government has undertaken a wide range of new responsibilities. In particular, officials have concentrated on reducing unemployment brought on by the reduction in British activities and by the lack of industrial development. The government has hired so many persons that it is unable to employ them rationally: many are underemployed. Charges have been made that highly educated people are assigned to clerical duties, and that skilled workers are doing menial labor. Roughly 80% of government employees are male. Females are employed in such traditional occupations as teaching and health services.

Until recently both the construction and tourist industries employed an increasing number of workers each year. Now, both industries are in a state of decline, largely because of the departure of the British, and there is little chance of a recovery to previous levels in the near future. Employment in the construction industry, which had spurted from about 6,800 in 1966 to 11,800 in 1969, began to decline in 1971; by the end of that year, employment was down 17% over the previous year. Employment opportunities in this field are poor, with most construction companies working well under capacity, and many small contractors totally idle. Early in 1972 tourism began to slump, with some hotels filled to only about 25% of capacity. The industry is not expected to recover until 1973, if then. The key question is whether the British, who made up the great bulk of tourists, will return to their old haunts.

Employment in the industrial sector increased 17% in 1971 over the year before. Job opportunities in this sector depend on the ability of the present Maltese Government to attract new investment. The impressive rise noted in 1971 stemmed in large part from investment generated under the investment incentive program of the previous Nationalist Party government. There has been little or no new investment promised since Prime Minister Mintoff took office in mid-1971. Mintoff, however, can look to some countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and possibly the European Communities as well as to the Chinese to provide some light industry, thereby creating new opportunities.

Women generally turn to the textile and wearing apparel industries and increasingly to electronics for employment. As in other countries, in general wages tend to be lower for women than for men. Wages paid to inexperienced or unskilled workers are about the same for men and women, but once longevity and skill are factors women's wages tend to be considerably lower.

The government-owned Malta Drydocks Corporation, which is managed jointly by the government and the General Workers Union, employs about 5% of the labor force. When the British controlled the dockyards, underemployment was the general rule—a situation the present operators are unwilling or unable to change. Reduction of the work force to rational levels would only contribute to the sizable unemployment problem. The government is studying ways to make the dockyards a paying proposition, but progress has been slow.

Unemployment reached a peak of more than 8,000 in early 1972 or about 7% of the labor force; it rose to 8.5% in early 1972, the highest rate since mid-1966. The further reduction in the British presence is expected to create even more unemployment, unless the government intervenes. Layoffs among supervisory personnel and skilled construction workers were largely responsible for the high rate, with the decline in the tourist industry contributing to the rise. In earlier years emigration was the typical solution to unemployment, with the government providing assistance to those willing to leave. The result was that many persons left Malta annually (Figure 11). Realizing that most of the emigrants were men between the ages of 20 and 40—the cream of the labor force—Prime Minister Mintoff has attempted to discourage current emigration by establishing the Emergency Labor Corps and subsequently the Pioneer Corps, and he is seeking new investment to create job opportunities.

2. Organization of labor and management

The Trade Disputes Ordinance of 1945, supplemented by the Trade Union Regulations of 1956, provides for the organization and operation of trade unions of

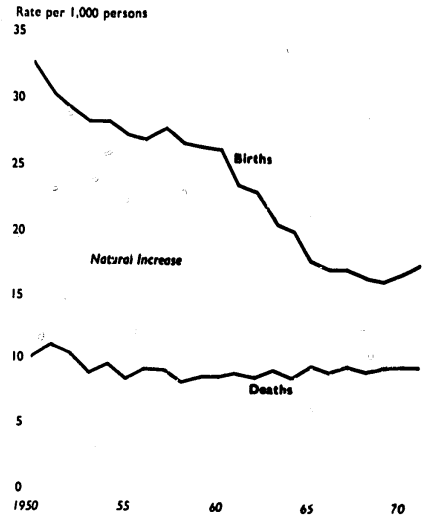

FIGURE 9. Vital rates

precise boundaries. The government utilizes the boundaries of ecclesiastical parishes in defining localities for census purposes, but since parishes usually encompass both urban and rural areas and often more than one populated place, the population of even the principal villages or towns can be only roughly approximated from statistics. For the 1967 census the islands were divided into 60 localities grouped into the 6 regions shown in Figure 8. All but four of these localities were coterminus with ecclesiastical parishes; each of the four, all highly urban, embraced two or more parishes.

Recently, as the government has expanded, and the economy has become more diversified, the population has tended to shift from farm to town. Approximately 200,000 people, 62% of the total population, are concentrated in the metropolitan area surrounding Valetta--an area of about 18 square miles comprising the Inner Harbour and Outer Harbour census regions. Other population centers are small—only five or six outside the harbor metropolitan area have populations in excess of 5,000—and they are widely separated by farms and open space. Because no locality on the main island is more than an hour's bus ride from Valetta, many workers commute from their villages or farms to jobs in the harbor area. Urbanization, therefore, is less apparent than in most countries.

The crude birth rate declined sharply during the 1950's and 1960's to an all-time low in 1969. Over the same period, the crude death rate changed little (Figure 9). The death rate is about the same as for the United States but is lower than most of the Mediterranean area. Because Malta lacks the resources to support even its present population, the decline in the birth rate is welcomed. Nonetheless, this decline is curious, given the strong forces to the contrary. For example, the Catholic hierarchy encourages large families, and there is no birth control program other than instruction in the rhythm method provided for married couples by the church-affiliated

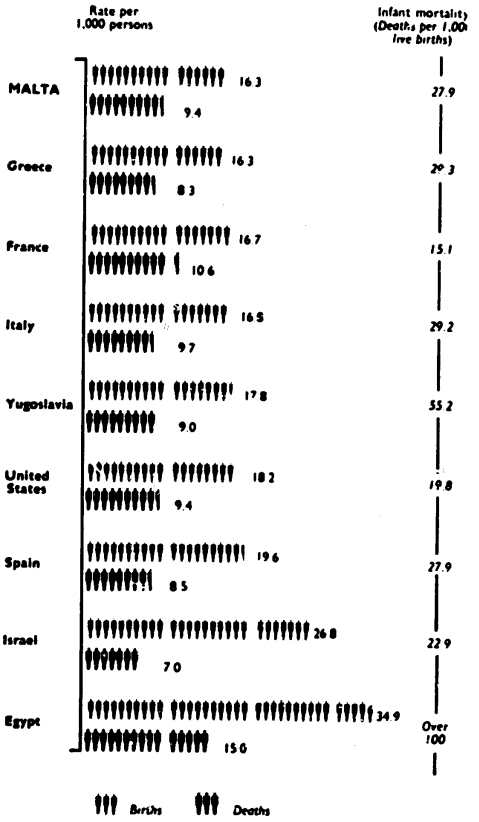

FIGURE 10. Vital rates, Malta and selected countries, 1970

Cana movement. Furthermore, divorce is not permitted. The infant mortality rate, which dropped from 88.5 per 1,000 live births in 1950 to a low of 23.7 per 1,000 in 1969, is comparable to the rate of the West European countries bordering the Mediterranean but is substantially lower than that of Malta's North African neighbors. Since 1969 the crude birth rate has shown a small annual increase, while the crude death rate has remained constant despite an increase in the infant mortality rate registered in 1970. As a consequence, the rate of natural increase has gone up slightly. Figure 10 compares vital rates in Malta, some other Mediterranean countries, and the United States.

The substantial decline in the birth rate is largely explained by the high rate of emigration, mostly people in the reproductive ages, which Malta has experienced since World War II. In particular, the lack of employment opportunities for skilled workers after the war led to heavy emigration. Although this has traditionally provided an outlet for population in excess of what the country's meager resources could maintain, the need to provide jobs for workers released as a consequence of British force cutbacks placed special strains on the economy. Since 1963 the number leaving to establish permanent residence in other countries has actually exceeded the natural increase of the population. However, the number of immigrants establishing permanent residence in Malta, the number of short term migrants, and the number of tourists still in the country at the end of the year have had a generally countervailing effect since 1965, with the end-of-year population again increasing—to 322,000 in 1969-71 (Figure 11). The most popular countries for emigrants have been Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States, in that order.

The 2,798 persons who emigrated in 1971 represent a dramatic decline from the number leaving in the mid-1960's. The decline is due largely to increased employment opportunities made available by the development of new industries and the expansion of government services, but partly also to the sharp reduction in natural increase of the population, both factors acting to reduce the pressures for emigration. Because Malta continues to lack the resources to provide for the needs of its present population,

FIGURE 11. Population changes, 1950–71

YEAR	TOTAL POPULATION (31 DECEMBER)	NET CHANGE	COMPONENTS OF NET CHANGE		
			Natural increase	Long term emigration	Other population movements* (net)
1950	312,447	*na*	7,057	8,503	*na*
1951	312,646	199	6,035	7,692	1,856
1952	316,764	4,118	5,861	5,345	3,602
1953	320,613	3,849	6,129	4,532	2,252
1954	315,952	−4,661	5,920	11,447	866
1955	313,955	−1,997	5,877	9,007	1,133
1956	316,239	2,284	5,500	4,492	1,276
1957	319,957	3,718	5,840	3,285	1,163
1958	323,667	3,710	5,871	3,152	991
1959	327,218	3,551	5,663	3,265	1,153
1960	328,038	1,720	5,746	3,841	−185
1961	329,763	825	4,737	3,580	−332
1962	329,326	−437	4,673	3,641	−1,469
1963	326,130	−3,196	3,691	6,579	−308
1964	320,620	−5,510	3,638	8,987	−161
1965	316,440	−4,180	2,627	8,090	−1,283
1966	318,109	1,669	2,475	4,340	3,534
1967	317,026	−1,083	2,324	3,971	564
1968	318,158	1,132	2,262	2,992	1,862
1969	322,353	4,195	2,072	2,648	4,771
1970	322,187	−166	2,244	2,696	286
1971	322,053	−134	2,455	2,798	209

na Data not available.

*Includes long term immigration, short term migration, and end-of-year balance of tourists still in the country.

employees and employers. Unions must file with the Registrar of Trade Unions and meet certain standards of fiscal integrity set by the 1945 ordinance. The ordinance also provides the guarantees concerning trade union activity common in most Western countries: the right to conduct peaceful picketing, freedom from intimidation or persecution of trade union actions (including freedom from prosecution for conspiracy), and immunity from actions of tort for interfering with another's business in furtherance of a union dispute.

In 1971 there were 57 registered trade unions: 32 made up of employees, 17 of employers, and eight mixed associations. The theoretical aim of the employers' associations is to present a united front to organized labor and to speak with one voice to the government concerning legislation affecting the commercial interests of the association. In fact, these organizations are little more than discussion groups. The largest is the General Retailers and Traders Union, with a membership of 1,403. The eight mixed associations consist of employers and employees who share a common trade interest. In practice self-employed persons and their one or two employees—usually close relatives—comprise the bulk of this group. They are not an important factor in economic or political life.

The 39,696 members of employee unions represent less than half of the wage-earning workers, and 70% of them belong to the powerful General Workers' Union (GWU). The union is administered by its general council of 36 members; Joe Borg is president and George Agius is general secretary. Sections of the union and membership are as follows:

Metal Workers	5,754
Civil Government	5,226
United Kingdom Government	3,653
Textiles	2,737
Petroleum and Chemicals	2,701
Hotel and Food	2,537
Port and Transport	1,596
Construction and Woodworking	1,232
National Association of Clerical and Supervisor Staffs	3,008

Each section has full executive power in its sector, including recruitment of members, organization, and negotiations. The GWU is affiliated with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and has close relations with the Italian Union of Labor and the Italian Confederation of Labor Unions. The GWU publishes four newspapers.

The 31 affiliates of the Confederation of Malta Trade Unions (CMTU), with more than 11,000 total membership, cater largely to clerical and professional civil servants. The largest union in the confederation and Malta's second largest union, the Malta Union of Teachers, has 3,379 members. The CMTU is not particularly active, nor is it a power in labor affairs. It is a member of the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions.

As a counterpoise to the secular unions, the church is represented by two unions sponsored by the Roman Catholic Social Action Movement: the Workers and Family Union and the Women Employees Union, with 1970 memberships of 2,324 and 667 respectively.

The membership distribution in the GWU and CMTU gives further evidence of continuing dependence on the British and Maltese Governments for employment. Approximately a third of the GWU members are in its United Kingdom Government Section and the Maltese Civil Government Section. In the CMTU over half the membership belongs to the various associations of government workers.

The GWU created the Malta Labor Party in the 1920's, and the party still receives the bulk of its support from union members. While the GWU theoretically is an independent trade union, the party has exercised almost complete control over it since 1967, when a group of Mintoff supporters took over its general council. The Metal Workers Section is the most influential unit of the GWU because of its control of labor activity at the drydocks.

3. Labor-management relations

Labor-management relations are on the whole good, although they vary, depending on existing personal relationships between the heads of the various sections of the GWU and the management concerned. The drydocks have posed the most critical labor problem in recent years; periodic strikes have been costly in terms of wage raises and missed deadlines on repairs. The Mintoff government took office in the midst of one of these disputes. The workers were operating under an overtime ban begun in late 1970. A management proposal was rejected in February of the following year, and not until June, just after Prime Minister Mintoff took office, did the drydocks open for business again. Since then the government and the GWU have maintained an uneasy peace, with the workers voting in mid-1972 to suspend all wage claims.

The Arbitration Tribunal judges disputes between workers and employers and may also decide on jurisdictional disputes between unions or between individual workers and a union. Presided over by one of the eight justices, the tribunal is part of the legal

system. Arbitration of a labor dispute becomes compulsory on the request of either party, and decisions are binding. In addition to the presiding justice, the Arbitration Tribunal consists of an equal number of members who are nominated by the two parties to the dispute question.

E. Living conditions and social problems

1. Levels of living

Although crowded together on a rocky group of islands lacking rivers, lakes, woods, and raw materials, the congenial Maltese live relatively well. Signs of well-being abound: television sets, cars, new hotels, modern furniture, powerboats. The mechanical and industrial age has come to the islands, and most Maltese have accepted, even welcomed, the change. The shops are full of the latest Italian and English gadgets, and many houses are an odd blend of the old and the new. Most shops sell more than one item or commodity and might more properly be called a bazaar. Open markets dispensing a variety of goods still line the side streets in Valletta, with hawkers vending their wares in their native Maltese. In villages the shops serve as a combination public bar, grocery store, and gathering place. Fruit, fish, and fresh vegetables abound, and food is still reasonably cheap. Life is made still more comfortable for many Maltese by the mild Mediterranean climate, by the good measure of social services available, and by an efficient transportation system that links all parts of the islands together.

Hours and wages are generally good for the Mediterranean area. The monthly income of a skilled laborer in private industry averages US$90-$100, while a male clerk could make as much as $125 per month and an accountant $375. Average hourly wage rates in 1970 (in U.S. dollars) for males in a few selected industries are as follows:

Food	.45
Tobacco	.66
Textiles	.52
Furniture	.46
Printing	.54
Machinery	.53
Transportation equipment	.70

In most private firms employees work a 6-day week of 48 hours, with overtime paid at time-and-one-half for ordinary working days and double time for Sundays and religious holidays. Civil servants, who comprise more than 20% of the labor force, generally have a 40-hour week. The following tabulation shows the gradual decrease in hours worked in the nonagricultural sector since 1961:

1961	46.8
1962	46.8
1963	46.8
1964	46.8
1965	46.5
1966	45.8
1967	46.0
1968	45.4
1969	44.4
1970	43.2

By comparison with neighboring Mediterranean areas, the standard of living in the Maltese Islands is high. Considering the overcrowding, municipal services, such as street cleaning, garbage disposal, and street lighting, are relatively good. Except in the very poor districts, houses are well kept, solidly built, and in good repair. There is a housing shortage, although it is somewhat less severe than in neighboring southern and eastern Europe. The shortage leads many Maltese to delay and even forego marriage, and this has been a factor in the relatively low marriage rate.

Public health has improved markedly since the first quarter of the 20th century and is better than in the neighboring countries of southern and eastern Europe. Diet, although somewhat monotonous and including less meat than is customary in Western societies, is more than satisfactory in terms of nutritional requirements. Clothing is adequate, consisting of both cottons and woolens, and is in sufficient quantity to permit the changes customary in the area.

2. Social problems

Because of the special roles of the church and family in Malta, there are few public welfare and social problems. Several generations live together in the same house or close by, helping to minimize abject poverty and the problems of dealing with the elderly that arise in other cultures. Moreover, the church provides some facilities for the elderly, and its influence in daily life helps to reduce the incidence of social problems. Poverty indeed exists, but fewer beggars are in sight than in other Mediterrean countries. There are slums, particularly in Valletta, but because of the relatively mild climate, people can exist in this substandard housing. The government has no welfare program as such, but its National Insurance Act provides benefits in the event of sickness, unemployment, and injury, and pensions for widows, invalids, and the aged. The social security program is paid for equally by employer and employee. There are a few public housing

projects, but the Mintoff government has plans to construct low-cost housing primarily outside of Valletta.

Because many Maltese prefer to invest abroad, and the influx of foreign capital has not been adequate to provide sufficient jobs for the labor force, unemployment is a continuing problem. Moreover, the exodus of the British exacerbated an already difficult situation. As an alternative to emigration to cope with this problem, the government set up the Emergency Labor Corps to keep manpower in Malta until employment opportunities are available. Enrollment by the end of 1972 was expected to be 1,500, between the age limits 18 to 30. The only requirement for entry is physical fitness, which apparently is quite liberally interpreted. Each recruit is given 1 month of military and physical training, followed by aptitude tests to determine his appropriate field of training. The military training is minimal, consisting primarily of nonfiring rifle drills and close order drills to instill a sense of discipline among the ranks. Some instruction in basic skills, such as reading and arithmetic, is provided, along with some vocational training.

Little planning has gone into choosing projects for the recruits to work on or in defining the sort of jobs they may aspire to at the completion of their training. One specific proposal made thus far is the extension of the runway at Luqa Airport. Other projects mentioned include building roads and foundations for government housing, as well as working on slum clearance and various other clean-up jobs. The Pioneer Corps set up in 1973 is to incorporate many of the features of the Emergency Labor Corps, and by absorbing the corps it will also have some paramilitary functions.

Docility and a tradition of obedience among the Maltese have inhibited the growth of any significant crime problem. Moreover, the small size of the population and its cohesiveness mean that people know one another and are less likely to commit crimes against acquaintances. There is little major and no organized crime. Malta has had only one bank robbery in the past 15 years. Petty crime, particularly breaking and entering and pilfering, however, is on the rise. The black market is active, primarily in smuggled Italian goods.

The influence of the church and strict family customs have curbed the growth of juvenile delinquency. Some teenage boys roam the streets, but girls' activities, even those over the age of 21, are strictly regulated. Drugs have not become a problem, although the government shows concern about the possibility of a growth in addiction. There are fewer than 100 heroin users on the islands, and in 1971 only eight drug cases were reported.

There is almost a complete absence of drunkenness except during religious festivals, when overimbibing is customary for men. Prostitution is on the wane, especially since fewer naval ships call at Valletta. Licensed brothels were abolished in 1930, but the government takes no action against prostitutes. Strict medical supervision is exercised for control of venereal diseases.

F. Health

Reflecting habits acquired during their years of tutelage by the British, the Maltese have established levels of health and sanitation which are generally good and compare favorably with those prevailing in northern Italy and France. Malta is thus somewhat ahead of other Mediterranean countries but behind northern Europe and the United States. Health conditions have improved notably since World War II, as reflected in the dramatic decline in the rate of infant mortality. From a high of 345.2 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1942, the rate has decreased to 27.8 per 1,000 in 1970. Malta has also made significant progress in the average life expectancy of the population. In 1969 a male or female born in Malta could anticipate a life span of 68.5 and 72.2 years, respectively. Both figures compare very favorably with those for the United States.

The islands are relatively free of disease. General overcrowding, however, as indicated by a population density of over 21,800 persons per square mile in the Inner Harbour region, where over one-third of the total population resides, and a prevailing high rate of humidity contribute to the spread of communicable diseases, such as influenza, pulmonary tuberculosis, and upper respiratory infections. The incidence of gastrointestinal diseases, the only other category of contemporary significance, is low, largely because of an active food inspection program. Indeed, the only significant problem of this kind in recent years—a rise in the number of typhoid fever cases in the summer of 1965—was directly attributable to a lapse of preventive health measures in the processing of raw foods. Other diseases once common to the islands include undulant fever, leprosy, typhus, malaria, and the plague. Although now under stringent control or no longer present, they could easily become prevalent, given the present overcrowded conditions, if preventive measures were to break down. Failure to

use house screens, which the Maltese consider unhealthful, aids and abets the rapid spread of any communicable disease.

The healthful environment is facilitated by a rodent control program and frequent, regular, and hygienic collection and disposal of wastes. The urban population is serviced by waterborne sewerage systems, which discharge untreated sewage into the sea. These systems are gradually being extended into some rural regions; other areas are provided with cesspits, which are systematically emptied through a government subsidized disposal arrangement to control leakage and spillage. Garbage and trash are collected regularly countrywide, pulverized, and used as fertilizer. Streets are cleaned frequently and systematically.

Malta produces about 10% of the foodstuffs necessary for the subsistence of its people. No evidence of dietary deficiencies or imbalances exists, although the normal Maltese diet does not contain as much meat as a typical U.S. diet. Only a few beef cattle and sheep are raised locally, and imported meat is expensive. Locally produced fruits and vegetables form an important part of the Maltese diet; butter and pasteurized milk are also in good supply. Rabbits and chickens, often raised by individual families, are great treats on religious and other holidays. Fish is available and is the major source of protein, although it, too, is relatively expensive because of uneconomical fishing techniques. The cuisine is basically Italian, with cheese often used as a substitute for meat. Stringent standards set by law govern the preparation and storage of foodstuffs in the islands. In general, these laws are vigorously and effectively enforced, although observance of them is sometimes lax in rural areas.

The water is safe but is in seriously short supply. Lacking rivers or lakes, Malta has historically relied primarily on ground water sources for human and industrial purposes. People in the rural areas have depended upon springs or wells. Rainfall, however, is irregular, evaporates quickly, and is subject to loss through runoff because of lack of vegetation. When the fresh water table falls, ground water becomes so saline that it is unpalatable. In the past Malta has been forced to ration water and to import it from Sicily. A desalinization project is not finished. The first stage, a combined power/waste distillation plant, was completed in 1966. Three other desalinization plants have since been finished. Work on the final phase of the project has been suspended, however, largely because financial pressures have forced the government to seek less costly means of increasing the water supply. Water consumption in 1965 was 3,500 million gallons and has been rising at a rate of about 4% annually. Ground water sources provide an estimated 4,000 million to 4,300 million gallons each year. When and if completed, the desalinization project is expected to produce 6 million gallons of fresh water daily.

Medical care facilities are adequate in number and distribution to meet the needs of the population. The larger and more nearly complete treatment facilities are concentrated in urban areas, but this maldistribution is partially offset by the existence of 57 dispensaries located in the smaller towns. Malta has six public hospitals and Gozo has five. There is one hospital bed for every 97 persons in the islands—about average for the mid-Mediterranean area. Because of the compactness of the islands, hospital care is more immediately available to all residents than it is in neighboring Greece, Yugoslavia, or Italy. Medical care is generally adequate, and surgical techniques are modern. The medical faculty at the Royal Malta University is first rate and trains an adequate number of doctors each year to maintain a favorable physician-to-population ratio. Indeed, this ratio improved from 1:1,200 in 1963 to 1:684 by 1969—a figure which compares favorably with physician-population ratios elsewhere in the area and in Europe in general. A number of Maltese doctors have had postgraduate training in the United Kingdom or in Italy. There are, however, other deficiencies. Malta has a limited capability to perform medical research of significance, the Royal University of Malta being the only facility adequate to the task. There is a paucity of well-trained psychiatric nurses. Moreover, pharmaceuticals must be imported and are therefore expensive, because the islands lack the raw materials, technical personnel, and equipment to produce them locally. Finally, there are no organized blood banks or blood transfusion systems.

The Ministry of Health has organized and staffed a workable public health system at all levels and is capable of containing and controlling epidemics without outside assistance. Malta is not a signatory to the International Sanitary Regulations of the World Health Organization but conforms in all respects to the International Health Conference of 1946.

G. Education

The educational system has expanded steadily since 1946, when schooling became compulsory for children between 6 and 14 years of age. Standards are comparable to those prevailing elsewhere in southern Europe since the 19th century, but still are somewhat

lower than in Europe as a whole. The immediate need to reduce the illiteracy rate has probably produced a concentration on numbers of students and subjects covered rather than quality of scholarship. More money has gone to technical training for jobs than to more academic studies, but the technical teachers themselves often have been inadequately trained. All schools give instruction in Catholicism, and the church so far has successfully resisted efforts by some parents to withdraw their children from religious training.

The national illiteracy rate dropped from 37% in 1946 to 17% in 1965. Since there is about 94% school attendance between 6 and 14 years, this figure should continue to drop. Education is regarded as the best, if not the only, way out of the working class. In early 1972 education through university level became free. Nevertheless, many farmers, traditionally the most backward and conservative group, must still make real sacrifices to give their children an education. The idea of university education for girls is rarely entertained even by the elite families. English is taught along with Maltese and is essential for professional standing. At the university level Arabic, Oriental, and modern European languages also are offered. Italian was taught from the mid-19th century to 1933 on a par with English and was the principal language for culture, the professions, and even government. In 1933 Maltese and English were designated as the mandatory languages in schools, although some of the private church schools still insist on Italian as well.

The government supports 108 primary and 10 secondary schools (36 grammar and four technical). In the 1968/69 school year, 31.7% of the secondary school age population (11 to 18 years) was enrolled in grammar or technical schools (33.7% of the males and 29.7% of the females). In that year the teacher-student ratio in the grammar schools was approximately 8:100 and in the technical schools was approximately 9:100. Government spending in 1967/68 averaged US$95 for each primary student, $129 for each grammar school student, and $195 for each technical school student. Some 16,000 pupils, or about 26% of the school population, are in the primary and secondary schools run by the Roman Catholic Church. These schools are staffed mainly by members of religious orders.

In mid-1972 Prime Minister Mintoff appointed the Advisory Board on Education, composed of educators, members of the workers unions, industrialists, and professionals to draw up a new 5-year educational plan. The plan will codify guidelines on universality of education, degree of minimum education, choice of curriculum, extent of testing, and aims of secondary and higher institutions. Its recommendations were scheduled to be presented to the Prime Minister in autumn 1972.

The Royal University of Malta was founded as a Jesuit College in 1592 to teach philosophy and theology, added medicine and anatomy in 1674, and attained full university status in 1769. It has seven faculties—Theology, Law, Medicine and Surgery, Dental Surgery, Engineering and Architecture, Arts, and Sciences. It operates under a block grant from the government, negotiated through the Royal University of Malta Commission. The commission, an advisory body to the government, is comprised of professors from Warwick and Oxford (United Kingdom), Hamburg (West Germany), Stockholm (Sweden) and Bologna (Italy). Day-to-day activities of the university are governed by a council and a senate, a supervisory body responible for teaching and discipline.

The university is more notable for its antiquity than its quality. In 1965 its vice chancellor and rector estimated that of its 550 students, only about 250 were receiving what would be considered university level education in western or northern Europe. He complained of the inadequate supply of professors, despite help from teachers on loan from British and Commonwealth universities, and of the narrow scope of many Maltese teachers. Since the medicine and law faculties are far superior to the others, most students want to enter those two. Although enrollment reached 1,065 in 1971, only a small proportion of the appropriate age group in Malta pursues university level education.

In mid-1972 the Prime Minister appointed a new international commission charged with advising the government on changes in the university's status and regulations in the context of the 5-year education plan. Mintoff intends to bring the university more directly under governmental control to insure that it better serves the needs of society as interpreted by the Malta Labor Party. He also wishes to diversify its British orientation as part of his broad goal to make Malta genuinely, and not merely formally, free of its colonial past.

The government also operates the College of Arts, Sciences, and Technology, also called the Polytechnic Institute. The college theoretically concentrates on engineering but also has schools of art, sciences, mathematics, and liberal studies, as well as courses in commerce and business, tourism, catering, and food technology. The college awards Ordinary and Higher Certificates, and in cooperation with the university, a Bachelor of Science in Engineering. In 1970 enrollment reached 1,430.

The Roman Catholic Church operates teacher training colleges for men and women, with 95 and 210 students, respectively, in 1971. The men's college especially maintains extremely high standards, and admittance to it is difficult.

H. Artistic and cultural expression

Artistic and cultural expression in Malta has for centuries reflected the interests and tastes of two distinct worlds. On the one hand, Malta's most distinguished works of art and the character of its intellectual life generally reflect both its proximity to Europe and the tastes of its foreign rulers. On the other hand, an independent, popular culture is centered around religious festivals and sports events, the province that is distinctively Maltese. These divisions remain but are no longer so rigid as in times past. British encouragement of Maltese nationalism during the colonial period and the eventual grant of independence stimulated an interest in the development of a local tradition that gives a new direction to cultural and intellectual life.

Nonetheless, Malta's most distinguished buildings and most acclaimed works of art are legacies of the long periods of French and Sicilian rule. The French Knights of St. John, for example, contributed many valuable tapestries, paintings, and some singular examples of Renaissance architecture in their churches, inns, and palaces (Figure 13). The works of Preti, a prolific Sicilian painter of the 17th century who settled permanently in Malta, are strewn all over the islands—even in the most remote parts—and lend an impressive and unmistakable character to Malta. Indeed, the vast province of Italian painting is generally well represented, largely because of the patronage of the Italian and Sicilian noblemen who settled or had relations in the islands and who sought to create a suitable environment for their residence.

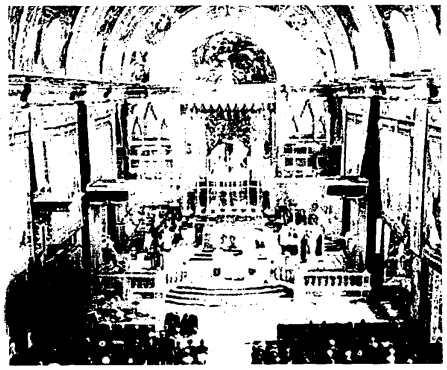

FIGURE 13. St. John's Co-Cathedral, in Valletta, formerly the Conventual Church of the Knights of St. John, is the masterpiece of the 16th century Maltese architect Gerolamo Cassar. In the crypt of the church are the remains of the French Knight Jean de la Valette, Grand Master of the Order of St. John and defender of Malta against the Great Siege by the Turks in 1565.

The Italian influence is still especially strong. There is an enthusiastic interest in opera; Italian companies regularly visit the islands to perform, and Italian television programs are very popular. English tastes are also represented in the amateur dramatic groups which draw their members from the resident British service population. But Maltese sculptors and painters are becoming increasingly popular and prominent because of the current emphasis on things uniquely Maltese. These artists are still active largely in the service of the church, which retains its role of chief patron of the arts. The Italian influence, therefore, is still strongly felt. Unlike the situation in centuries past, however, when distinguished Maltese artists trained, worked, and lived in Italy under the exclusive patronage of the church, other and more contemporary schools of artistic expression are represented, and their works are prominently displayed.

A greater degree of independence is reflected in the slow development of a Maltese literary tradition and in the increasing public interest in local history. Maltese literature as such has existed for only 40 years. Until 1934, when a standard Maltese orthography was developed, and Maltese was substituted for Italian in the law courts, the island literature existed only in oral form. Today, however, there are several distinguished names in literature, among them Dun Karm, the national poet who died in 1961; M.A. Vasalli (1764-1829), the great lexicographer; Msgr. P.P. Saydon, Biblical scholar and translator of the Old and New Testaments into Maltese; and Dr. A. Cremona, grammarian and poet.

The growing public interest in national history is increasingly manifested in an active concern for the preservation of antiquities, most particularly the remains of the unique temples and elaborately decorated burial places which date from the Neolithic Age. A number of museums reflect the islands' rich past. The most important are actively staffed and substantially supported by the government.

Religious festivals and sporting events continue to play a larger part in the lives of most Maltese than do the arts. Between May and October, there are numerous religious celebrations, important occasions

for renewing old friendships and developing new rivalries. The festivals, characterized by elaborate and costly parades, band playing, fireworks displays, and religious processions, are major social events regularly compared to one another and ranked according to their magnificence. The chief national festival honors Saints Peter and Paul on 28-29 June. This celebration begins with an all-night folk singing and dancing session in Malta's only wood, the Buskett, followed by street races of horses and donkeys ridden bareback and, of course, by religious processions and ceremonies. Other important national celebrations are for St. John, also in June, St. Gregory, in April, and St. Paul's shipwreck in February.

Individual village festivals to honor patron saints are in several respects equally significant. Fierce competition develops among the various religious societies or supporters of rival saints. Preparation for the festivals is the focus of several weeks of social activity by the villagers, and requires a large part of their spare cash. Baptisms and first communions also are great family days.

Soccer is the most popular sport and is played by clubs representing almost every village. Water polo to some extent fills the gap in the summer months, and horse racing is popular the year round. Few Maltese outside the professional classes, however, participate in the more costly water games and races available to foreigners.

I. Public information media

1. Press

Malta has a prolific, vigorous, and highly partisan press, consisting of approximately 15 newspapers, 6 of which are printed in English, as well as numerous bulletins and other publications. There is, however, little objective presentation or serious discussion of public issues. Literate Maltese apparently delight in muckraking and sensationalism. Many of the publications are sponsored by a political party or by the church, and several others are little more than sheets to propagate the views of their owners.

The leading daily is *L'Orrizont*, published by the General Workers Union. Although it generally supports the Malta Labor Party, its handling of foreign news is usually objective. The second-ranking daily in Maltese is *El Haddiem*, a strongly pro-West, church-supported paper. The most important English-language publications are the *Malta News*, *Times*, and *Bulletin*, and the biweekly *Observer*. These English-language papers give some foreign coverage—the last three with a staunchly pro-Western slant—but there is little continuity in any of them. The *Malta News* is a tabloid with a fast-growing circulation. Both it and the *Times* subscribe to foreign wire services. The General Workers Union also sponsors the leading Sunday paper, *El Torca*. Other important Sunday papers are the *Sunday Times* in English and its Maltese version, *El Berca*. Of these three, *El Berca* runs a poor third in circulation. Religious organizations sponsor approximately 22 publications aimed at every segment of the population, after deciding in late 1966 to eliminate some minor publications and to concentrate on improving the quality of the others.

Of the political parties the ruling Malta Labor Party has the best organized and most vocal information program. In 1967 the party and the General Workers Union together produced six newspapers and bulletins. The Malta Labor Party is the only party which has a daily newspaper directly under its control. The circulation of this paper, *Il Helsien*, is probably confined to members. The party also sponsors a much more widely read weekly humor magazine, *The Thorne*, aimed at student and youth groups, and by Maltese standards the extremely high quality monthly magazine, the *Voice of Malta*. The party has tried to increase circulation of the *Voice of Malta*, especially among socialist parties outside Malta. In contrast with this highly organized and vocal program, the propaganda voice of the opposition Nationalist Party is indistinct and uncertain, an imbalance especially noticeable in an election year.

The Soviet news agency TASS opened an office in Malta in May 1972. TASS is the first foreign news service to station a full-time correspondent on the islands. Other foreign wire services and newspapers are represented by local journalists employed as stringers.

2. Broadcasting

Radio and television are as important in shaping opinion as the press is. The Maltese Broadcasting Authority, established in 1961, regulates and supervises the production by commercial contractors of 17 hours of radiobroadcasting daily in both Maltese and English over a wired network with two channels. They carry locally produced programs and items relayed from the British Broadcasting Corporation. In mid-1972 there were approximately 80,000 receiving sets in Malta.

There were about 65,000 television sets in Malta in mid-1972. In common with continental European systems, they employ 625-line definition. Malta once was dependent on Italian television from Sicily, but

since 1962 the Maltese Broadcasting Authority has operated a television service which carries approximately 5 hours each evening in both English and Maltese. An estimated 75% of the total population watched television every day in 1971. As in the case of radiobroadcasting, the programs are produced by commercial contractors. The Maltese Broadcasting Authority claims to have taken about 72% to 96% of the televiewing public away from the Italian programs, but, because of the generally higher quality of the Italian programs and the influence they exert on culture, this may not be entirely accurate.

3. Censorship

Joint efforts of the government and the church hierarchy produce a fairly strict censorship program. A three-member censorship board under the Post Office includes representatives of both the government and the church. This board passes on all books, periodicals, newspapers, and films coming into Malta from foreign countries and removes all "pornographic, seditious, or immoral" material. The board wields a heavy hand. For example, cuts have been made of vital sections from medical books on gynecology. Mass circulation U.S. magazines often reach Maltese booksellers minus pictures, paragraphs, or entire articles. There is no review before publication of Maltese journals, but there is a press ordinance against "pornographic, seditious, or immoral" matters. Strict libel laws further restrict political polemics. Before publication controversial newspaper articles are frequently submitted voluntarily to a lawyer specializing in the libel laws.

From 1961 to June 1966 the Roman Catholic Church in Malta made it a mortal sin for its members to publish, write in, advertise in, sell, buy, distribute or read the three leading newspapers of the Malta Labor Party. The newspapers, however, only benefited from this "martyrdom," and one of them estimated that it had committed some 32 million mortal sins (aside from those committed by its readers) before the interdict was lifted. In some villages the very act of purchasing a Labor paper remains a defiance of the church, and some free copies in party clubs are used mostly after dark, when villagers slip in, hopefully unobserved. For most Maltese, however, the general reconciliation between the church and the party in 1969 signalled the end of the church's "political" censorship.

The government controls broadcasting more tightly than the local press. The Maltese Broadcasting Authority is appointed by the Prime Minister, after consultation with the Leader of the Opposition, and is responsible to the government for enforcing the legal ban against broadcast of anything which might "offend against religious sentiment." Prerecorded programs of a political nature usually are reviewed by a representative of the Maltese Broadcasting Authority before they are aired.

J. Selected bibliography

Accurate, up-to-date reference works on Malta are rare. *A Short History of Malta* (1967) by Brian Blouet is a good historical survey from prehistoric times to 1966, emphasizing the development of society. Dennis Austin's *Malta and the End of Empire* (1971) is an excellent short introduction to politics of the 1950's and 1960's and contains sound analyses of British and Maltese attitudes. Other reference works include Jeremy Boissevain's *Saints and Fireworks—Religion and Politics in Rural Malta* (1969), which gives a detailed account of rural life, and Charles Owen's *The Maltese Islands* (1969), which concentrates on sociological issues. Edith Dobie's *Malta's Road to Independence* (1967) ends its narrative in 1964 and is based on very limited sources for the period after 1921. All of the above include additional bibliographies. *National Geographic* (June 1969) gives a short, personalized account of life on Malta, including some history, and is well illustrated. Robin Bryan's *Malta and Gozo* (1966) is an anecdotal survey of the islands' sights. Howard Bowen-Jones' *Malta: Background for Development* (1961) gives detailed coverage of geographical, agricultural, and political topics, a short history, and extensive bibliography. Other data are available in the *Annual Abstract of Statistics* and the *Malta Census* produced by the Maltese Central Office of Statistics, as well as in the *Malta Yearbook*, published by St. Michael's College Publications, Malta.

Places and features referred to in this chapter

	COORDINATES			
	°	'N.	°	'E.
Buskett (*park*)	35	52	14	24
Gharb	36	04	14	13
Gozo (*isl*)	36	03	14	15
Grand Harbour (*hbr*)	35	54	14	31
Kemmuna (*isl*)	36	01	14	20
Luqa Airport (*airport*)	35	51	14	28
Marsamxett Harbour (*hbr*)	35	54	14	30
Mdina	35	53	14	24
Valletta	35	54	14	31