

THE PROBLEM OF MALTA.

Do you remember this? Do you remember the years when the little island of Malta stood alone in the Mediterranean, one of the smallest but one most essential links in the chain of Allied defence and attack?

Often her guns were down to the last few rounds, her handful of fighter planes were draining their last gallon of petrol, her people tightening their belts to the last notch and beyond. But still the George Cross island stood firm.

Still the convoys battled their way through to Malta's Grand Harbour. Had Malta fallen, there might have been no Mediterranean convoys at all. And what that would have meant, no one dares to think.

The war is over - but Malta's problems are not. And to England to plead her cause come the Maltese cabinet, led by 38-year old Prime Minister Don Mintoff. They bring a novel request - that Malta should become part of Great Britain, represented in her Parliament and sharing her social services.

Malta's contribution to British strength in war and peace, her leaders claim, as well as her ancient civilisation and practical experience of government, would entitle her to Dominion status if she were larger. In fact she held a similar status under the Roman Empire. So Mr. Mintoff presents his plan to Downing Street.

Seated with his Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Cels, Mr. Don Mintoff sums up his plan:

Mr. Mintoff's plan is new and strange, but accepted or not, we should do something for the island which did so much for us?