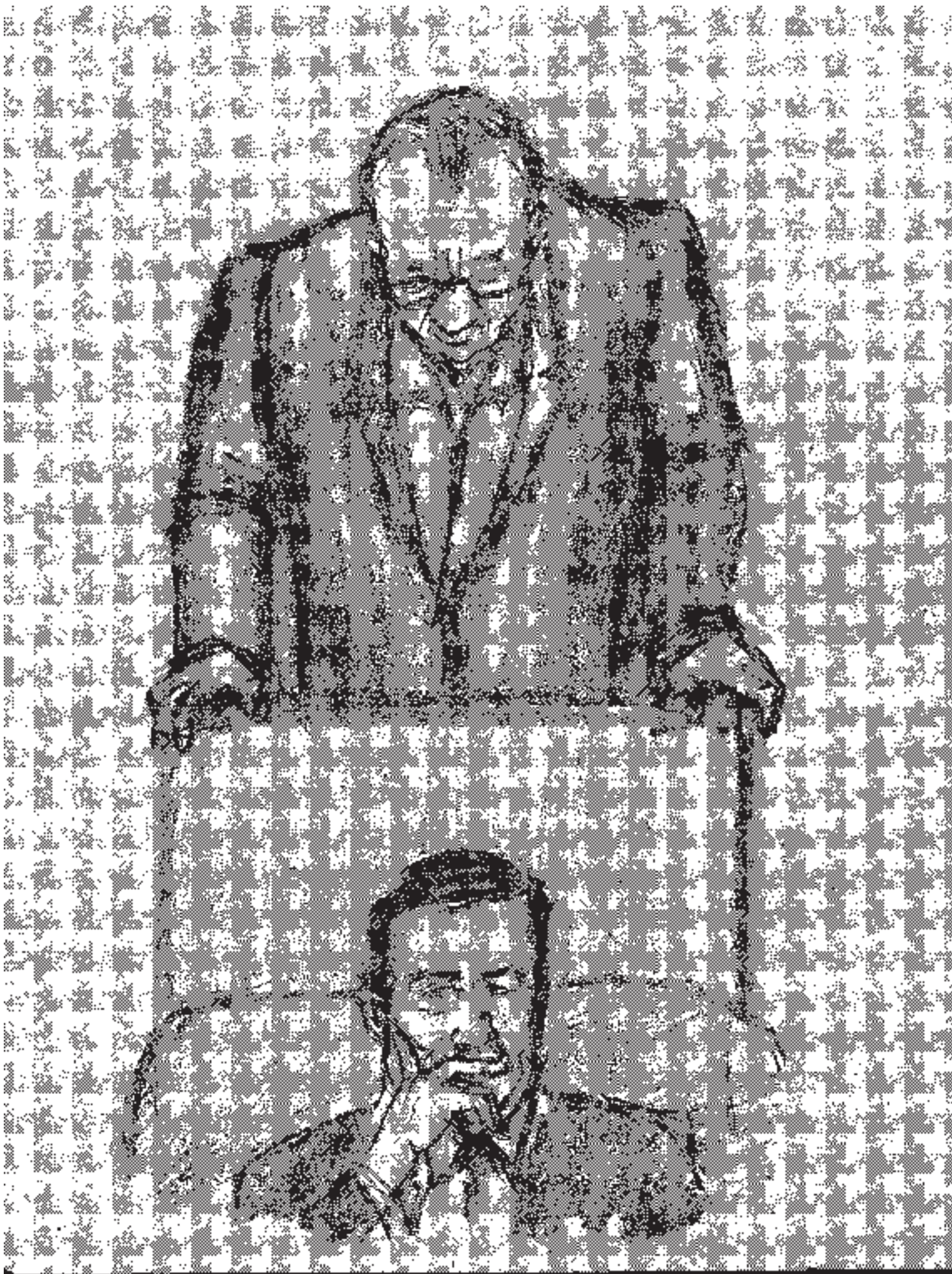


malta **today special report**
30/06/02



Burning bridges

In the fourth episode of the chronicles that record how a government was sent spiralling out of power, we witness

how Mintoff defends his policy towards the Libyans. The antipathy between Mintoff and Sant becomes more evi-

dent and less restrained. We also see the gulf between Mintoff and the rest of his colleagues beginning to widen.

The first person to publicly disagree and counter-attack Mintoff in self-defence is the Whip, Joe Mizzi.

I did not agree with his electoral

Not only did I hear that they got offended – I can't vouch how true this is because everything is fixed; so much for the question of transparency, but I'm saying this from now so that tomorrow he won't blame me and say that I told them to do this – because they were ready to sign for 5% of the Maltacom shares and then changed their minds. I reiterate, I don't know if this is true and I don't know if they've signed up to now. I'm only saying what I heard but I hope to God that it's not so. I would have been ridiculous had I gone to the Libyans and told them not to invest in Maltacom when I have already filled in the form myself. I am saying this to show the madness that is going on and to show also how there is no seriousness.

Regarding my resignation, I am not going to talk about it today but after I get to know

what you are planning to do regarding the motion. But I can say right now that you have to be mad to think that because you come to my district and say a lot of lies I'm going to get scared and resign. If on that day I had resigned, rather than vote against, the motion would not have passed and you Madam Speaker, would not have had the right to vote in favour of the government if I had resigned because of the fact that I did not agree. So over what do you want me to resign? Do you want me to lie? Do I say that I am ill? Do I say that I am afraid of Alfred Sant? Do you want me to lie? So when he said that I ought to resign and at the same time said that this project should be implemented quickly ... but how can you say simultaneously that I should resign and that the project should be implemented

quickly? Which one do you want? Because if I resign you'll have to elect somebody else instead of me. And you wouldn't know what that person might do, and not only that. You don't even know what those who you yourself said - although I don't really know what you know, since first you first throw the stone then stand back to see the effects – are gnawing from underneath and not telling you about it. How are you going to know what these are going to do if you go on like this? Why don't you see why they are gnawing from underneath if they really are gnawing from underneath? But I say again; you are saying this; I don't know of anybody gnawing from underneath. On the contrary, I can say to any of them that come to tell me: "Why are you carrying the responsibility on your own? I will say "Because I

don't need you. I can carry this alone in Parliament." And I came here and I will continue to fight it and had I told anybody else he would have accused us that we want to break up both parties. And let him not think that that there aren't those who are not fed up. I am not fed up. What do you want me to be fed up of? I told him that if he does things badly he will come here and I will demolish them. That's what I told him – I'm annoyed. I get annoyed when I become sick, but it's like that for everyone because nobody enjoys getting sick. I am saying this so that we will all know where we stand. I did not go whispering in people's ears; I did what I did openly, in front of everyone. If I was against the decision he took regarding the local councils – the strangest and most useless decision ever taken in the world – everybody knew. All Cottonera knows that I did not agree with his electoral programme because I was elected on a different electoral programme and he had accepted that I got elected that way. So who is betraying whom? But instead of doing his duty and seeing with me how things could be resolved, he made it very clear from the beginning that he had no intention of letting me get involved; as if I did not exist. I am not saying this because I want something. I can tell him here and now that I never wanted anything from anybody, least of all him. I never asked him for anything; not to become minister nor to be made president. And if I am lying, let him stand up and call me a liar. But then I would call him a liar because I never asked him for anything. Neither did I tell anyone that I wanted to be Prime Minister again. I am not mad! To help yes, because that is my strength, but not to become Prime Minister again. Everybody knows this, but he still might be thinking that I might want to take his place.

Let us continue, Madam Speaker. Now what happened? We came here in the evening – this is worst part – and I began to say: But why is the opposition dragging the session so much when we're due to vote so soon? I had not noticed that the honourable John Dalli was not here. Our side was resting on the fact that he was not coming, so the opposition could not call division and that I would call it on my own. So they wanted to hurry as much as possible, but John Dalli arrived. This is the modern administrations that the party has! That day they had accepted that we go on talking another day! But how was I to know that they were banking on

the fact that a merger was going to come and pass through parliament? If someone had told me that was going to happen I would have tried to find a way to fix things but not do anything and so I did it on my own. I was not with them and neither you. I was not gathering anyone and I am pleased with this and happy to be as I still am. But I will wait with time you from also join me.

Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Chair reserves the right to examine this case. Minister Mizzi.

JOE MIZZI: I will make a personal statement to Madam Speaker. I honourable Mintof did not inform him after the sitting the to be a meeting of a elementary group. own responsibility. I had informed the this side that there be a meeting; I stayed side and kept on other side (Interrupted) told everyone! (Interrupted)

MADAM SPEAKER: please, Mr Mintof. Everybody has the his own version.

JOE MIZZI: Let me with my personal statement to Madam Speaker. (Interrupted) Yes, I am saying that I told him that on Friday going to have Parliament that it was going session, he told me had an appointment had been booked for and that it was not he cancel it, but to inform me if he arrange things so to come. I told him to have the session not do otherwise. session or another, either keep the appointment know what, but I know that the Monday of the following week appointment and to go abroad and to know if he would And he informed me – that he had told I told him that to go to have the that we were going some laws which would be voted for. He cannot make it." Ar not to discuss it to be voted for but not need a vote. (Interrupted)



al programme - Mintoff

ember was not
and this would
parliament? If
me that that
open, I would
a way how to
body told me
had to act on
ot in collusion
her was I with
nging up with
leased to say
be on my own
am sure that
this side will
I thank you

MADAM SPEAKER: The
the right to
se later on.

would like to
explanation,
First of all the
f said that I
that that day
ere was going
of the parlia-
I say on my
that that day
everybody on
was going to
rted from that
going to the
ptions) Yes, I
nterruptions)

MADAM SPEAKER: If you
ff, sit down.
e right to give

et me get on
explanation,
(Interruptions)
e truth. When
riday we were
parliament and
to be a long
e that that he
nt and that it
or a long time
ossible that
that he would
managed to
that he would
that we had to
as we could

For one rea-
ner he did not
ent or I don't
was informed
or Tuesday of
k he had an
that he had to
at he did not
be coming.
e - not asked
to go abroad.
that we were
meeting and
ng to discuss
ould need to
old me: "But I
nd he told me
ns which had
items that did
(Interruptions)



MADAM SPEAKER: Mr
Mintoff, if you please, there will
be no more interruptions.

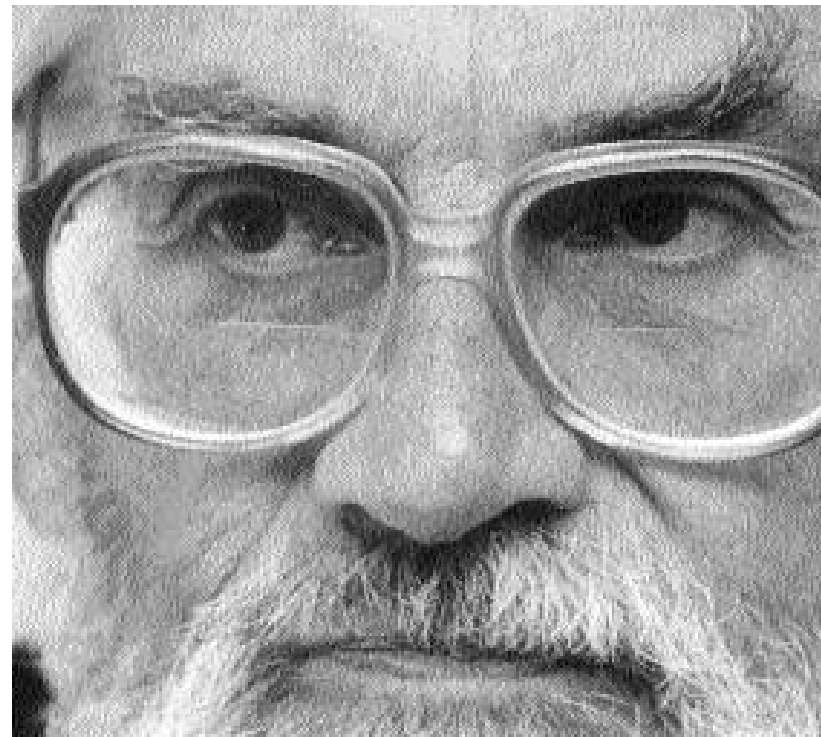
JOE MIZZI: I told him that
we could not do otherwise
because we were committed.
This is the truth, and I am say-
ing this with the greatest
responsibility and we should
not play with words! I repeat,
he told me: I am going but I
hope that in the paper they
won't say that I did not come
because of a vote or some-
thing! I told him again: I am
going to have to hold a meeting
because we need to discuss
these items because I cannot
avoid them. And I told him as
well that there was going to be

a vote. This is the situation, and
when I was asked by a paper of
the opposition if Mintoff had told
me that he was going to be
abroad, I said: Yes, he told me.
In fact he informed me but I did
not approve and I did not tell
him to leave. But he told me
that he had an appointment and
that he could not do otherwise.
This is the situation. (Interruptions)

DOM MINTOFF: So is it my
fault that I was not here?

MADAM SPEAKER: That
was a personal explanation
(Interruptions) Mr Mintoff, if you
please, sit down. Honourable
Fenech Adami.

Talking to Jeremy Boissevain



Professor Jeremy Boissevain was inter-
viewed by **MaltaToday** in April 2001. This
cultured Dutch man has been studying
Malta's social life for the past 40 years, and is
no newcomer to these islands. Hereunder is
an excerpt from the interview, which refers to
Prof. Boissevain's first encounter with Dom
Mintoff in the seventies and the Dutchman's
reaction to the events that unfolded in the
summer of 1998.

"I was assigned to Malta as
Chief of Mission for the American
relief organisation CARE (Co-
operative for American Relief
Everywhere). The non-political
group was distributing food in
Malta and word reached the
organisation's head office that
the Labour Party was campaign-
ing under the slogan 'Vote for
Mintoff and get CARE food'."

Prof. Boissevain's work in Malta
at first did not put him in Mintoff's
good books. He was given the
brief to ensure that the relief pro-
gramme became non-political.
However, as time passed, the
Dutchman came to admire
Mintoff. Prof. Boissevain once
even ended up being a consul-
tant to the Labour Prime Minister.
"Mintoff's first term in office in
the 1970's was brilliant," "He
made people proud to be Mal-
tese. He put this island on the
map. Mintoff was a hard bar-
gainer and clever negotiator."

Did Mintoff's clash with the
Labour government of 1996-
1998 surprise Prof. Boissevain?

"Mintoff is a man of strong opi-
ions and a shrewd tactician. The
clash did not come as a surprise
to me because he believed in
what he was doing, Mintoff is not
new to controversy. In 1987 he
had pushed for the Constitution-
al changes on majority rule, even
though he was effectively cam-
paigning against his party's inter-
est."

Nonetheless, Prof. Boissevain
is baffled by the late Mintoff
years in the 1970's and the
1980's, which were charac-
terised by political violence.

"Many ministers had become
little sultans surrounded by
thugs. I believe Mintoff had the
power do something about it, but
he did not. This is an enigma,
which I hope he will explain one
day. Was he held to ransom by
these thugs?"