

Famous Portraits Series

George Borg Olivier

Prime Minister of Malta (1950-1954; 1962-1971)

Born: 5 July 1911 - Died: 25 October 1980 (Aged 69)



1. Borg Olivier at his first Holy Communion in 1917 (Aged 6)



2. Borg Olivier when he graduated as a notary in 1938 (Aged 27)



3. Borg Olivier as Deputy Leader of the PN in 1947 (Aged 36)



4. Borg Olivier in 1952 when he was Prime Minister for the first time (Aged 41)



5. Borg Olivier in 1962 when he was Prime Minister for the second time (Aged 50)



6. Borg Olivier during his last general elections campaign of 1976 (Aged 65)

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Image credits:

1. *Patrijott Liberali Malti – Bijografija ta' Ġorġ Borg Olivier (1911-1980)*, Henry Frendo, PIN, 2005, p. 18.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
3. *Ibid.* p. 82.
4. <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/348958671099315425/>
5. <https://www.pressreader.com/malta/malta-independent/20140921/281775627371646>
6. <http://arkivji.org.mt/atom2/index.php/borg-olivier-giorgio>

George Borg Olivier was a Maltese statesman and leading politician. He was Prime Minister of Malta (1950–1954 and 1962–1971) as the Leader of the Nationalist Party (1950-1977) and Leader of the Opposition (1955–1958 and 1971-1977).

Borg Olivier was born in Valletta, the son of Olivier Borg Olivier de Puget and Rosa (née Amato). He grew up in a family which was active in politics on the side of the Nationalist Party. His uncle Salvatore was Speaker of the House of Representatives and then a Senator who led the opposition to the Government of Lord Strickland's Constitutional Party. In his career Borg Olivier followed in this uncle's footsteps by becoming a notary public.

He entered active politics when he was elected as a Nationalist member of the Council of Government in 1939. After the war Borg Olivier advocated the need for economic and social development if Malta was to become a sustainable independent state. During his premiership, he strove to develop the tourism and the construction industries as the engine of economic growth. Under his leadership, average living standards rose steadily as Malta began to diversify from a fortress economy dependent on the British military establishment to a mixed economy.

Borg Olivier's shrewdness as a politician enabled him to use the ongoing religious conflict between the Malta Labour Party and the local Catholic Church, headed by Archbishop Mikiel Gonzi, to his advantage. Winning the 1962 general elections, he formally demanded Malta's independence from the United Kingdom. His lifetime political aspiration was achieved when Malta became an independent state within the British Commonwealth on 21st September 1964.

The 1971 general elections were won by Dom Mintoff and the Malta Labour Party. As Leader of the Opposition Borg Olivier started losing grip within his own party. After a second electoral defeat in 1976, he resigned from Leader of the Nationalist Party, but retained his parliamentary seat until his death in 1980. During his later years he lived in almost semi-retirement, becoming a lonely friendless recluse and detached from the local political scene.

Further reading and research:

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Borg_Olivier
- *Patrijott Liberali Malti – Bijografija ta' Gorg Borg Olivier (1911-1980)*, Henry Frendo, PIN, 2005.
- Memories of Dr George Borg Olivier with Dr and Mrs Alexander Borg Olivier and Dr Ugo Mifsud Bonnici - YouTube

Questions

1. Briefly trace Borg Olivier's early career until 1950.
2. Which events led him becoming Leader of the Nationalist Party and Prime Minister in 1950?
3. Briefly explain TWO arguments put forward by Borg Oliver for Malta's Dominion Status within the British Commonwealth.
4. Identify TWO domestic issues which Borg Olivier had to deal with when he was Prime Minister between 1962 and 1971.
5. Compare and contrast the aspirations of Borg Olivier and Mintoff for Malta's foreign policy after independence.
6. Briefly assess his later years in politics as Leader of the Opposition between 1971 and 1977?
7. Identify FOUR adjectives which best describe Borg Olivier's character and personality and give reasons for your answer.
8. In your opinion what was his greatest achievement and his greatest failure?