

Famous Portraits Series

Sir Gerald Strickland

Prime Minister of Malta (1927-1932)

Born: 24 May 1861 - Died: 22 August 1940 (Aged 79)

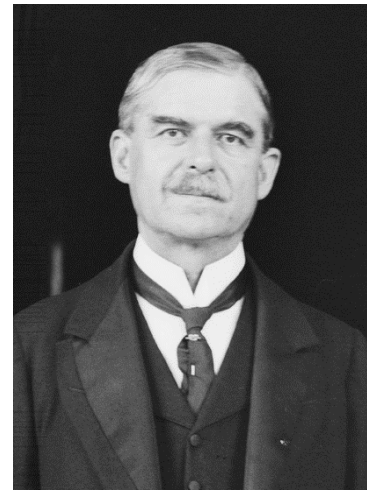
Issue 8



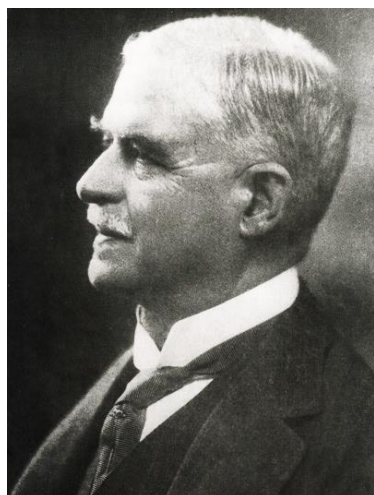
1. Strickland in 1889 when he was appointed Chief Secretary to the Imperial Government. (Aged 28)



2. Strickland in 1902 when he was appointed Governor of Leeward Islands. (Aged 43)



3. Strickland around 1921 when he returned to Malta as Leader of the Constitutional Party. (Aged 60)



4. Strickland around 1927 when he served as Prime Minister of Malta (1927-1932) (Aged 66)



5. Strickland during the election campaign of 1932. (Aged 71)



6. Strickland in 1939 as one of the elected members to the Council of Government. (Aged 78)

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Image credits:

1. *The Malta Language Question - A Case Study in Cultural Imperialism*, Geoffrey Hull, Malta, 1993.
2. <https://govhouse.wa.gov.au/sir-gerald-strickland-kcmg/>
3. https://nswanzaccentenary.records.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/NRS4481_MS5182Pa.jpg
4. <https://www.gov.mt/en/Government/Government%20of%20Malta/Prime%20Ministers%20of%20Malta/Pages/Sir-Gerald-Strickland.aspx>
5. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerald_Strickland,_1st_Baron_Strickland
6. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerald_Strickland,_1st_Baron_Strickland

Sir Gerald Strickland was born in Valletta, the son of Royal Navy Officer Commander Walter Strickland and Maria Aloysia Bonici-Mompalao, the niece of Sir Nicholas Sceberras Bologna, Count della Catena, whom Gerald succeeded in 1875. He was educated in England and graduated as a Barrister-at-Law from the University of Cambridge.

In 1886 he was elected for the first time to the Malta Council of Government. In 1887, he accompanied Fortunato Mizzi, founder of the *Partito Nazionale*, to a conference in London to submit a draft for a legislative assembly for Malta. The new Constitution of 1887 was largely based on the Strickland-Mizzi proposals. In 1889, he was appointed Chief Secretary of Malta, the second most important post after that of Governor. In 1897, he was made a Knight Grand Cross of the Order of St Michael and St George (GCMG) which earned him the title of 'Sir'.

In 1902, to avert more trouble due to his support for a greater use of English during the Language Question controversy, Strickland was appointed Governor of the Leeward Islands in the Caribbean. He also served as Governor of Tasmania (1904-1909), Governor of Western Australia (1909-1913) and Governor of New South Wales (1913-1917).

In 1917, Strickland returned to Malta and set up the Anglo-Maltese Party. After the grant of self-government in 1921, his party merged with the Constitutional Party under his leadership. Strickland was the Leader of the Opposition twice: between 1921 and 1927 and between 1932 and 1933. In 1924, he won the seat of Lancaster for the British Conservative Party in the House of Commons and in 1928 he was made a Peer of the House of Lords with the title of 'Baron'. From then on he was called Lord Strickland.

Strickland's coalition parties won the 1927 elections and he became Head of the Ministry (*i.e.* Prime Minister of Malta). Amongst the most important events of his government were the building of St. Luke's Hospital, the clash with the Senate and a bitter politico-religious dispute between his party and the ecclesiastical authorities. On 1 May 1930 the Bishops of Malta and Gozo issued a pastoral letter in which they declared that whoever voted for the Constitutional Party or read the newspapers (*The Daily Malta Chronicle* and *Ix-Xemx*) printed by Strickland's Progress Press, would commit mortal sin.

The clash between the Bishops led to the suspension of the Constitution of 1930. However, the election of 1932 was won by the Nationalist Party and Strickland became Leader of the Opposition for the second time. His last prominence in politics was in 1940 when as the leader of the elected majority in the Council of Government, he strongly advocated the internment of the pro-Italian Nationalist Party leaders to the British colony of Uganda in Africa for the duration of the Second World War.

Further reading:

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerald_Strickland,_1st_Baron_Strickland
- *Lord Strickland Servant of the Crown, Vol.3*, Harrison-Smith & Adrianus Koster, Progress Press, Malta, 1986.

Questions

1. From the first paragraph, what can you say about Gerald Strickland's family background?
2. List FOUR official positions which he held in Malta and abroad between 1886 and 1932?
3. What was his contribution to Malta's constitutional development in 1886?
4. How did his position as Chief Secretary increase his political influence in Malta?
5. How was Strickland involved in Maltese party politics in the 1920s and 1930s?
6. Find instances from the above text which manifest Strickland's pro-British sympathies?
7. Briefly describe Strickland's main issue when he was Prime Minister of Malta.
8. Give THREE adjectives that best describe Strickland's character and personality and give reasons for your answer.