

# STORJA 78



L-ARCISQOF GONZI JITKELLEM

## 'STORJA': A COMMITMENT TO HISTORICAL LEARNING

**STORJA** is an annual digest serving the function of a journal of Maltese history and providing also a "workshop" section, for readers to focus attention on historical events, personalities, publications and problems. Viewing history as essentially the attempt to understand and interpret man in time, **STORJA** aims to encourage history-writing that is as inter-disciplinary and problem-oriented as possible. In this way, **STORJA** should help to promote the gradual evolution of a "Maltese" school of historiography, according to which the appreciation and indeed the value of history will depend on the methodical attempt to reconstruct and to judge past human experiences fairly and imaginatively, bringing unknown truths or aspects of truth to life by extracting meaning from the documents and so evoking not merely an exotic interest, a nostalgic curiosity or a self-centred knowledge, but concern, dialogue and commitment. **STORJA** therefore will avoid publishing chronicles or records of "dead" happenings, unless such useful evidence as these may contain is immediately intelligible in a comparative or contemporary sense, or is particularly useful as source material for a future historian's talents.

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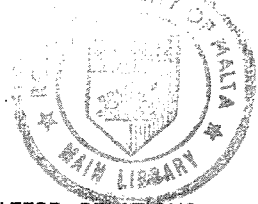
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DOMINIC V. SCERRI

## ASPECTS OF ANGLO-MALTESE RELATIONS UNDER THE LATER STUARTS

*In this article indicating an evolution in Anglo-Maltese relations in the second half of the seventeenth century, DOMINIC V. SCERRI\* throws light on a hitherto unexplored page in British naval history and invites further research on this topic. ...*

The English merchant's interest in central Mediterranean Malta owed its mark to various interrelated factors.<sup>1</sup> Equidistant from Gibraltar and Alexandria and midway between Sicily and North Africa, the island offered the Mediterranean merchant and sailor a favourable port-of-call. Intimately related to this attraction were the services available on entering the harbour: quarantine, comparatively low customs-tariffs, facilities for ship repairs and maintenance, warehouses, the presence of ruffians eager to be engaged on merchantmen or on the *corso*, and consular assistance.<sup>2</sup> The island's potentiality as a purchase market in view of its dependence on all sorts of foreign sources of supply could not have passed unnoticed by the ever vigilant northern trader.

The general movement of the English in the Mediterranean, which can be traced back to the 1570s, was part of an overall shift in the European economic system.<sup>3</sup> This made the Mediterranean a highway of commerce for traders, particularly those proceeding from the North Sea, resulting in the economic development of Western ports. The extent of

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English commercial expansion in this movement is shown by the establishment of English consulates at Malaga, Alicante, Marseilles, Genoa, Leghorn, Pisa, Gallipoli, Zante, Venice, Tunis and Malta in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century. <sup>4</sup> The maintenance of English ships in the Mediterranean was efficiently helped by the co-operation of English consuls and factories, especially at Leghorn — the great 'Magazine of the Streights' — and at Tunis. <sup>5</sup> In the case of Malta the fact that the necessity for a residential English consul — John Watts — was felt as early as the 1580s, presupposed the presence of a number of English merchants who had commercial links with the island or were actually resident there. <sup>6</sup> Interest in Malta at the court of Elisabeth Tudor was, in fact, expressed by official as well as private commercial concerns. Some Englishmen in the Queen's service sought information on the island's resources and defence facilities with a view to correspond with other English agents in the Levant. Has it not been alleged that Elizabeth I had secretly conspired with the Porte to capture Malta? <sup>7</sup>

Perhaps the greatest attraction of Malta to the English Government was the strategic significance of the island's situation in view of the English navy, its potentiality and how best it could be exploited to the advantage of English trade with the Levant and North Africa. It was Charles II's intention to pursue a policy of cordiality towards Malta and the Order of St. John. This policy was followed even perhaps when circumstances demanded otherwise. On April 6, 1668 Roger Fowke, the English consul in Cyprus, complained that the Maltese corsairs had inflicted "damage and losses on the coast of Cyprus to the value of four thousands and five hundred Dollars Ryalls of eight principal money besides other expenses and interests". <sup>8</sup> Grandmaster Nicholas Cotoner had admitted in his correspondence to Charles II "that Fowke has had manifest wrong and injustice by the Court of Malta and judgement there given against him". Sir Robert Wyseman, Knight Advocate of the King, explained that the Grandmaster's reply was "so far from being in any measure satisfactory... It is plainly perceivable he (Cotoner) intends not any satisfaction for the damage susteyned by the said Roger Fowke". <sup>9</sup> There were, therefore, "just and fair grounds for reprizalls". <sup>10</sup> Charles II refused to act accordingly, as

appears from the letter sent to the Gandmaster:

"But withall, that His Majestie taking into consideration the present state of affairs in Christendome and the increasing power of a common Enemy thereof against whom Maltha is so considerable a Bulwarke, His Majestic is unwilling to grant letters of Reprizall, or proceeds otherwise for Reparation until he finds all other amicable waies and means to fayle, and therefore desiring, that just and speedy satisfaction may be made unto the petitioner."<sup>11</sup>

It was not until March 1674 that the Grandmaster acceded to the King's petition.<sup>12</sup> Peaceful negotiation had led to a better mutual understanding between the two countries. "My will," Nicholes Cotoner had professed to Charles II in 1668, "has always been inclined towards the unconquerable Monarchs of Great Briain...", and that nothing had been "of greater importance than to please Your Majesty. I lived in such a way as to serve well."<sup>13</sup>

Another example of the same tendency was Charles II's preoccupation with Algerian pirates. These were undermining the otherwise healthy trade relations with the Regencies. On January 17, 1668 Charles II informed the Grandmaster of his intention to send Thomas Allen, an able naval commander, to the Mediterranean to check such pirates from inflicting more damage to traders. The King asked the Grandmaster to accord Allen with all facilities and other requirements on his arrival in Malta.<sup>14</sup>

It was also Charles II's policy to keep a definite number of vessels in the Mediterranean with a view to safeguarding trade in the area. An expert "tradesman" would be despatched, among other ports, to Malta to provide the vessels with equipment and other material necessary for their construction.

"Since it seems to us that it is in the interest not only to ourselves, but even to the Christian world as a whole, if we ourselves were to keep a definite number of triremes in the Mediterranean Sea, always ready as a prompt protection of all our neighbours and allies against the frequent Barbary and Turkish attacks, we have consequently ordered two triremes to be built: one at Genoa and another at Leghorn; hence we have ordered a tradesman, skilled in such concerns, to be sent to several places, as well as to the Island of Malta which is under the jurisdiction of Your Highness, in order to make the necessary purchases and to make the preparations for the work, so that they may be well-furnished—".<sup>15</sup>

When, in 1674, a naval expedition under the command of Sir John Narbrough was despatched against Tripoli, Charles II recommended the Admiral and his squadron to the "good will of the Most Eminent Prince and Lord Nicholas Cotoner Grandmaster of the Order of Malta" and asked that they be "treated as friends and allies" and be supplied with anything they required "at a fair price".<sup>16</sup> On October 17, 1675 Sir John returned to Malta from Tripoli on the **Henrietta**, accompanied by Captain W. Holden on the **Assistance**, and another six vessels.<sup>17</sup> On this occasion the naval chaplain, the Reverend Henry Teonge, paid tribute to Malta's hospitality. "This City is compassed almost cleane round with sea, which makes severall safe harbours for hundreds of shippes. The people are extreemly courteouse, but especially to the English." He explained that wine could be obtained at 3d a quart, mellons at 1d a piece, cotton socks at 9d a pair, and radishes, cabbages, and cauliflowers for 1d a piece.<sup>18</sup>

Bernardo Ravagero, the **Proveditore** of Zante, informed the Venetian Senate on November 13, 1675 that three English frigates of war, the **Henrietta**, **Diamond**, and **Swallow** arrived at Zante, commanded by Sir John Narbrough and that they had to proceed shortly to Malta for food stores and warlike provisions.<sup>19</sup> Previously, Paolo Sarotti, the Venetian Resident in England, had written to the Doge and Senate, admitting his persistent efforts to find out what the English plans were regarding their differences with Tripoli. He had inquired where they proposed to send their fleet, and where this should get its overhauling and maintenance. Sarotti explained that the English had opted for Malta although Samuel Pepys had written to Sir Thomas Clutterbuck and left him to choose between the use of Malta or Little Cephalonia as a base.<sup>20</sup> Pepys stated that Malta would be the base for ships of war scattered about the Mediterranean, ready to aid convoys of merchantmen in various ports. They were to unite and go against the Tripolitans and force them to an agreement with England.<sup>21</sup> Before blockading Tripoli, Sir John Narbrough had instructed that Malta would act as the fleet's rendezvous.<sup>22</sup> In the event of a captain being taken sick, he was to send his lieutenant or the next officer to the **Henrietta**; in case of separation, or in the case of vessels "unable to keep the

sea". Malta would be the port-of-call and the meeting place for the re-organization of such vessels.<sup>23</sup> When peace was concluded with Tripoli, Narbrough did not forget the gratitude he had received in Malta. He insisted with the Bey that all slaves — both English and Maltese — were to be immediately released.<sup>24</sup>

The Marquis de Fleury episode of 1686 provides further evidence of the Grandmaster's readiness to co-operate with the English in matters of controlling the Mediterranean from excessive piratical incursions. Sailing on the **St. John**, some 100 miles off Alexandria, the Marquis encountered the English vessels **Jerusalem**, **John** and **Francis** and **Anne** on their way to Leghorn. The **Anne** was searched and as everything was in order, she was allowed to sail on. Captain Gilson of the **John** and **Francis** was forced to change direction and follow Fleury's route. The **Jerusalem** attempted flight but was fired on by the **St. John**, and compelled to surrender. The French pirate's men boarded her and she was soon towed to Malta, "the capital of Christian piracy". The Bassà of Tripoli, who was on the English vessel, his retinue, the cargo and the **Jerusalem** had to undergo quarantine. A detailed inventory was drawn up by M. Cassano Melino, a Maltese notary. Thomas Daniel, the captain of the English vessels was allowed to proceed on his voyage.<sup>25</sup> On April 1, 1687 the Grandmaster wrote to Charles II on the question of de Fleury. As a sign of cordiality, the Sacred Council had decided that henceforth Fleury would "not be admitted to the port of Malta", that none of his booty would be returned to him, and that this would be kept in Malta until other English vessels arrived.<sup>26</sup> Soon after, the booty was delivered to Captain Killegren.<sup>27</sup>

In 1688 Henry Fitz-James, the natural son of James II, paid a courtesy call on Grandmaster Caraffa who donated the Prince a cross valued 5,000 scudi. Caraffa hoped that James would re-establish the English Tongue.<sup>28</sup> On February 24, 1689 James II wrote to the Grandmaster asking him to accept his son Henry in the Order of St John. This was acceded to shortly afterwards.<sup>29</sup>

There is no doubt that the English Government and the Royal Navy had been following a clear line of policy with regards to the use of Malta as a base of operations and a centre of communications in the Mediterranean. On August

15, 1693, for example, Nathaniel Lodington had supplied Lord Nottingham, the Secretary of State, with secret intelligence about the state of affairs in Tripoli. He advised the renewal of peace with the Agency and expressed his intention to remain in Malta for further instructions from London.<sup>30</sup> In December of the same year, Sir Francis Wheler had departed from the Mediterranean as Commander-in-Chief of a considerable fleet. He was instructed to provide the security of convoys, and to proceed as far as Malta with such merchantmen chartered for that island and others for the Levant.<sup>31</sup> Malta would serve, he was told, as a base for communications with Whitehall whenever treaties with Tunis, Algiers and Tripoli were to be concluded.<sup>32</sup>

By the late seventeenth century, contacts between England and Malta, originally initiated in the 1580s by the English pirate-merchant, had reached a more mature stage of development, to the point of attracting official recognition from London. The English Government had started to appreciate the value and significance of Malta's strategic position and its potentiality as a base for English naval operations in the central Mediterranean.

#### NOTES:

The following abbreviations have been used:

ADD. MSS.	Additional Manuscripts: British Museum
A.I.M.	Archives of the Inquisition of Malta
A.O.M.	Archives of the Order of Malta
C.S.P.	Calender of State Papers
P.R.O.	Public Record Office, London
S.P.	State Papers, Public Record Office, London

- 1 For a history of Anglo-Maltese relations during the Order of St John's stay in Malta see my forthcoming paper "Anglo-Maltese Commercial Relations 1650-1700", read at the History Symposium **The British in the Mediterranean** at the Greenwich National Maritime Museum, December 1974 (in the press); A Mifsud, **Knights Hospitallers of the Venerable Tongue of England in Malta** (Malta 1916); M.S. Anderson, "Great Britain and Malta before 1798", **Mariner's Mirror** XL (1954); A.P. Vella, **An Elizabethan-Ottoman Conspiracy** (Malta 1972); *id.*, "A Sixteenth Century Elizabethan Merchant in Malta", **Melita Historica** V, 3 (1970), pp. 197-238; V. Mallia-Milanes, "English Merchants' Initial Contacts with Malta: A Reconsideration", **Melita Historica** VI, 4 (1975), pp. 342-61.
- 2 E. Brockman, **Last Bastion** (London 1961), 165-6. By 1540 an arsenal was erected at Birgu. This was enlarged about 1600 and again some 36 years later. An auxiliary yard was developed in the Grand Harbour during the same time. The Order's ship-building facilities were kept until its expulsion from Malta in 1798. B. Blouet. **The Story**

- of Malta (London 1967), pp. 127-9. In 1753 an act was passed in England prohibiting any goods from the Levant to be landed in England without a clean bill-of-health from the port where they had been laded, unless they had been aired in one of the mentioned lazarettos: Venice, Ancona, Messina, Leghorn, Genoa, Marseilles and Malta. **ADD.MMS.** 38348, f.110. In the Mediterranean lazarettos, the period of quarantine ranged from 95 days to 7 months. **Ibid.** 38349, f.345.
- 3 See F. Braudel, **La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II** (Paris 1949).
- 4 C.S.P. **Domestic 1649-1650**, pp. 11-12; **ibid.**, 1650, pp. 71-2; **ibid.**, 1657-1658, pp. 95-6.
- 5 **Ibid.**
- 6 A.O.M. **Quarantine Registers 1650 et seq., passim.** English consuls, like all others, exercised their influence in court cases when Englishmen were involved. Such was the case when consul John Jacob Watts asked for the release of two women belonging to the sect of the Quakers, who were held in Maltese prisons, and who offered the necessary safeguards to conduct them to England. A.I.M. **Corrispondenza** August 20, 1661. See also A.P. Vella, **The Tribunal of the Inquisition in Malta** (R.U.M., 1964), pp. 31-7.
- 7 See A.P. Vella **An Elizabethan-Ottoman Conspiracy** (R.U.M., 1972).
- 8 S.P. 86/1, f. 16 ff.
- 9 **Ibid.**
- 10 A.O.M. 57, fl. 17-20; **ibid.** 261, fl. 124-5. S.P. 86/1, f 99.
- 11 **Ibid.**
- 12 C.S.P. **Domestic, Charles II, Addenda, 1660-1685**, p. 446.
- 13 A.O.M. 261, fl.127v-129. S.P. 86/1, f.20.
- 14 **Ibid.**, f.65.
- 15 A. Mifsud, **op.cit.**, p. 252, n. 1.
- 16 A.O.M. 57, ff. 24-5. W. Porter, **A History of the Knights of Malta** (London 1858), II, pp. 369-79.
- 17 A.O.M. 57, ff. 29-32.
- 18 H. Luke, **Malta** (London 1949), p. 68. W. Porter, **op.cit.**, pp. 373-5.
- 19 C.S.P. **Venetian 1673-75**, pp. 479-80.
- 20 **Ibid.**, p. 368.
- 21 **Ibid.**, pp. 440-41.
- 22 G.A. Vassallo, **Storia di Malta** (Malta 1890), p. 571. E. Rossi, **Storia della Marina dell'Ordine di S. Giovanni di Gerusalemme, di Rodi e di Malta** (Roma 1926), p. 75.
- 23 S.P. 86/1, f.65.
- 24 G.A. Vassallo, **op.cit.**, pp. 571-2. G.N. Letard, **Brevi Nozioni Storiche riguardanti l'Isola di Malta** (Malta 1888), p. 156. Grandmaster Cottoner eventually wrote to Charles II expressing his pleasure and gratitude for the releasing of the Maltese slaves by Narbrough. Charles replied to acknowledge the Grandmaster's letter. W. Porter, **op.cit.**, pp. 376-7.
- 25 S.P. 86/2, f.5 ff. November 16, 1686.
- 26 S.P. 86/7, f.73v.
- 27 S.P. 86/2, f.5 ff.
- 28 B. Dal Pozzo, **Historia della sacra religione militare di S. Gioavvni Gerosolimitano, detta di Malta** (Verona 1703), II, p. 673.
- 29 A.O.M. 57, ff.35-41. **Ibid.** 263, f.64.
- 30 S.P. 86/1, f.91.
- 31 **Ibid.**, f.89.
- 32 **Ibid.**, f.91.

JOSEPH A. GRIMA

## THE ORDER OF ST. JOHN'S GALLERY SQUADRON AT SEA

*In a scrupulously factual description of various aspects of life at sea on an Order's galley in the seventeenth century Mediterranean, JOSEPH F. GRIMA\* details the ship's movements in and out of harbour as well as in action, procedures relating to protocol and discipline, and also conditions of the crew on board, such as food provisions and medical services.*

The galley-squadron of the Order of St John was "the outward and visible sign of the Order's obligation to engage in constant warfare against the Infidel".<sup>1</sup> Year after year, the squadron left the shelter of the Maltese harbours to cruise and search for Turkish and Barbary shipping, and particularly for vessels belonging to the Barbary corsairs. In addition to this, the squadron also used to form part of combined Christian maritime forces sent against the Muslims.<sup>2</sup> The galley-squadron was also extensively used to convoy to Malta the island's vital supplies of grain and provisions together with other occasional mundane activities of providing escorts to princes and ambassadors.<sup>3</sup> Yet in all these naval activities, the hands of the Order's naval commanders were, so to say, tied down by the precise instructions and orders handed to them. Their routes and spheres of activity, together with the line of conduct to be undertaken were all exactly given and, where these were lacking or to make up for any inadvertent lacunae, instructions were usually ended by recommending to the officer concerned to

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behave according to the statutes and ordinations governing the squadron. <sup>4</sup> Naval ordinations and statutes governed everything that happened at sea including navigation, saluting, spoils of war, discipline and even the food which was to be cooked and distributed to all on board.

### Departure from Harbour

The departure of the galleys from Maltese harbours was to be carried out by day except in cases of necessity. From the **Capitana** a single cannon shot was to be fired signifying departure at midday, and within half-an-hour all shipmen and Knights on caravan duty with all their arms were to be on board. The roll was then called and skiffs and boats were taken aboard to facilitate the departure. In the meantime arms were prepared, fighting posts and sleeping quarters were allotted, and the necessary munitions were distributed. <sup>5</sup> When the skiffs and boats were taken aboard, no other boats were allowed to approach the galleys. <sup>6</sup> From the time the signal was given to the actual weighing of anchor, two hours elapsed. Halfway in between, that is, one hour after the cannon signal shot had been fired, the **Capitana** hoisted the fore yard, and then trumpets sounded, directing the squadron to weigh anchor immediately in strict order of seniority. No galley was to do anything before these signals. The **Capitana** then hoisted a yellow flag over the helm, thus ordering the galleys into line ahead, astern of the flag-ship in order of seniority. If departure took place at night, the signal to weigh anchor was given by trumpets and a lantern hung from the helm ordered the galleys to move ahead in line. <sup>7</sup> After clearing the harbour under oars, the galleys took up their cruising stations with the **Capitana** leading in the centre of a crescent formation, the **Padrona** on its right or starboard and the next senior galley to the left or port side. The other galleys took up similar positions according to the seniority of their captains, all taking care not to steal each other's wind. <sup>8</sup>

During the departure, other details had also to be taken care of by the Captain-General, the Captains and other ships' officers. The roll-call was very important. It was imperative that the lists of men aboard were properly drawn up so that punishment would be meted out to those Knights



or shipmen who had missed the cruise.<sup>9</sup> No one was allowed to take on board any trunks but just a canvas valise. Space was certainly not plentiful on a galley and so, to prevent abuses, anyone who broke this ordinance had his trunk and its contents confiscated in favour of the Common Treasury whilst the Captain of the galley concerned was fined six gold *scudi* for every case of transgression.<sup>10</sup> In fact, at the time of departure, the galleys were all checked to ensure that no 'contraband' private merchandise of any sort was on board. The same applied if galleys were coming to the island, and the only goods which could be embarked on board were those belonging to the Treasury.<sup>11</sup> Nor could anyone embark foodstuffs with him, except moderate quantities for which permission had first to be obtained from the galley Captain.<sup>12</sup> Neither was a galley Captain allowed to embark what he wanted. Captains who embarked prohibited goods were not allowed the privilege of *benservito* at the end of their tenure of office;<sup>13</sup> the testimony of two or three witnesses who were themselves above suspicion was enough to convict a Captain of such an offence.<sup>14</sup>

### Navigation

When cruising, strict formation was kept and no galley was allowed to move up to windward of the *Capitana* except in cases of necessity such as when chasing prizes. For such an offence a guilty boatswain could be deprived of his office, or be punished by at least three rope lashes; the Captain-General could also fine him by depriving him of so many months' salary in favour of the Common Treasury. If the Captain was to blame for the offence, he could even be deprived of his captaincy.<sup>15</sup> In 1640, the Captain of the galley *Santa Ubaldesca*, Fra Massimiliano d'Ampont, was deprived of his office because his galley was somehow separated from the rest of the squadron without sufficient reason. The same condemnation was passed on the *Padrone* whilst the pilot was remanded for trial at the court of the Castellanía.<sup>16</sup> The galley ordinations of the Chapters-General stressed that strict seniority, based on the seniority of the Captains, was to be maintained<sup>17</sup> including when anchoring in port and when taking up cruising position. The only exception was when the galleys were at uninhabited places.<sup>18</sup>

When at sea, the galleys had to maintain contact which was carried out by means of signals by using flags, pennants, standards and burgees, together with trumpets, drums, lanterns, smoke, cannon and musket shot, and rockets. Over eighty different signals could be given in this way<sup>19</sup> and here one must admit the difficulty involved to find enough different positions for flags and pennants in the two-masted seventeenth century galley which, being lateen-rigged, also presented limited sail movements. On most occasions galleys are depicted smothered in bunting and one might think that this was the artist's imagination at work but actually signals had to be given hoisting flags and pennants in the most eccentric-looking places mainly because of lack of space. The attention to detail is amply brought out by the signals given by the galleys, demonstrating the good seamanship which resulted in the vessels of the Religion having a favourable balance of victories. Yet, here one may point out that, with all this thoroughness, there does not seem to have been someone responsible for signalling. At least there is never any mention of a 'signals officer', unlike the Venetians, who delegated this responsibility to the **Ammiraglio** serving on flagship.<sup>20</sup>

After the galleys took up their cruising stations, a blue flag over the helm signalled the setting of mainsails. If the flag was dipped twice, thrice or four times it meant the setting-up of the fore, mizzen and the lower mizzen sails respectively. If the wind freshened, a white flag over the fighting platform — or rambades — ordered a reef in the mainsail whilst storm sails were ordered by hoisting a blue flag instead of the white one.<sup>21</sup> If a galley fell out of station a Genoese pennant was hoisted at the ensign staff of the **Capitana**. Any Captain prevented from keeping station because of shallow waters compelling him to keep to a channel had to report with a red pennant at the foremost and by brailing up any sail he was carrying.<sup>22</sup>

If a galley discovered strange sails, she signalled accordingly. If the ships were square-rigged, a red pennant was raised on the mast-head of the main mast, but a red and white pennant was hoisted to indicate lateen-rigged vessels. These flags were dipped and re-hoisted as many times as the number of ships sighted. The galleys then gave chase under oars and the **Capitana** signalled the other galleys to follow.<sup>23</sup>

For the chase to be abandoned, a Maltese pennant was hoisted on the main yard and the fore yard was dipped. If the galleys were out of sight, a single cannon shot would be fired.<sup>24</sup> When the separated galleys returned, those who constituted the majority gave recognition signals by showing white and red pennants at the main yard and by dipping their fore yards, the others answering with a red pennant in the same position and at the same time brailing up their foresails. If the galleys were solely under oars, only the pennants were used.<sup>25</sup> If a galley was separated from the remainder of the squadron for an appreciable length of time by adverse winds or storms, the Captain was duty bound to rejoin the squadron at the first opportunity and explain what had happened to the Captain-General.<sup>26</sup> Special care was to be taken regarding the oars and sails of a galley if caught in a storm.<sup>27</sup>

In a cruise, especially a longish one, stocks of firewood and supplies of water had to be replenished according to need. So a quiet convenient inlet from where such supplies were known to be obtained would be chosen and the squadron sailed thither. For replenishment of water supplies, a signal was given by hoisting a white flag over the helm whilst a green flag signalled replenishment of firewood. For both together, a signal white and green horizontal flag was raised. Other signals were given if an armed reconnaissance of the place was to be made. A hurried departure could occur if such actions took place in enemy country. Thus a reconnaissance party was recalled if the **Capitana** displayed a chequered red and white banner at the foremast, whilst if the Grand Master's banner was unfurled, everyone was to embark as quickly as possible and drop whatever they might have been doing.<sup>28</sup>

The look-out aloft on the **Padrona** gave a signal with a white and red flag if he sighted enemy sails. The flag was waved up and down as many times as the number of ships sighted. If a general chase was ordered and the anchors were holding too well to allow a quick departure, a standard hoisted over the helm signalled the cutting of cables and buoying of anchors for the future recovery.<sup>29</sup>

If a galley found itself in difficulties while cruising, a standard was unfurled on its masthead and immediately one or two cannon shots were fired; immediately the two nearest

galleys went to the stricken galley's aid. A storm could cause a galley to be separated from the squadron and find refuge near land. In such a case, when the squadron was again sighted, two smoke signals were made from the highest ground possible as a countersign prior to the galley's reunion with the squadron.<sup>31</sup> Encounters in fog were envisaged. In such cases, every galley posted a drummer forward, fired blank musket shots at intervals and kept its bell ringing. If an enemy sail was discovered, a cannot shot was fired and the enemy was chased. If no answer was forthcoming from the *Capitana*, the chase was to be abandonde and the galley was to return to its station. If a galley discovered land, two cannot shots were fired.<sup>31</sup>

The Captain-General was bound to call Councils at sea when the occasion demanded. Such a summons to his Captains was made by flying a blue pennant on the *Capitana's* ensign staff; if he also wanted the pilots or masters the *Capitana* would fly the blue and red pennant. Moreover the masters alone could be summoned but by hoisting a red and white pennant. The feluca was to be put to sea and sent to the *Capitana* if a Genoese pennant was flown at the fore mast-head.<sup>32</sup>

No provision for night action was envisaged but night recognition signals were passed among the galleys. Signals for setting sails were given by hoisting and dipping lanterns, each for a specific reason. Moreover, the flagship showed double stern lights whilst the other galleys showed only one. To bring the squadron to anchor, the *Capitana* hoisted and repeatedly dipped a lantern on her main halyards repeating this signal as she anchored. If an anchor dragged, rockets were fired. If a hurried departure was necessary at night, cables were cut and anchors buoyed after a signal from the *Capitana* comprising the firing of a rocket and the hoisting of a banner over the fighting platform.<sup>33</sup>

A galley in difficulties fired a cannon burnt a long smoke signal in the prow and hoisted two lanterns in the main shrouds, one on either side. Then the nearest two galleys went to her assistance. Weather sometimes separated the squadron at night; so, on rejoining, the galleys to windward fired two rockets, while the leeward galleys answered with one rocket. Then followed the agreed password or code name.<sup>34</sup> The night the Captain-General could ascertain if a

galley was missing because of a storm or fog by making a great smoke signal to which the galleys replied in a similar manner together with the firing of rockets; the **Padrona** fired one rocket, the second senior galley fired two, and so on. The smoke signal was replaced by two cannon shots by the **Capitana**, to which the galleys replied with one shot, if visibility was not good enough.<sup>35</sup> Signals could also be given by lanterns hoisted and dipped to call officers to the **Capitana** and to order the feluca or caiques to be launched.<sup>36</sup>

The sighting of strange vessels at night was signalled by a masked lantern from the galley stern, the number of flashes corresponding to the number of vessels seen. Chase could only be undertaken after first obtaining permission from the **Capitana**. Her course was then indicated by firing a cannon shot and a series of blank musketry.<sup>37</sup>

### **In Action**

When vessels were sighted far away, a galley or galleys were detached from the squadron and went to identify the strangers. If these vessels were found to be enemy ships, two cannon shots were fired. The **Capitana** would then either fire one single cannon shot to signal these galleys to attack the enemy, or fire two shots signifying an instruction for the galleys to await further orders.<sup>38</sup> For no reason whatsoever were Captains allowed to go after prizes or to attack without prior orders from the Captain-General.<sup>39</sup>

The galley squadron was not always allowed to attack a superior enemy naval force. The naval ordinations evolved in the Chapters-General vaguely stated that if a superior enemy force was encountered, the Captain-General was to take the advice of the Captains and decide what was to be done, always bearing in mind that the honour of the Order was to be upheld and that the squadron was not to be destroyed needlessly.<sup>40</sup> These orders were clarified by the Council of State in 1642. Bearing in mind that the squadron consisted of only six galleys, the vessels of the Order were not to engage the enemy if the latter's force consisted of eight vessels or more. If the enemy force consisted of seven ships, the Order's squadron was to take evasive action, failing which, they were to uphold the honour of the Order by fighting. If, in an enemy force of seven ships, one was a

privately-owned galley, the Order's squadron was obliged to look for and fight such a force.<sup>41</sup> This reluctance to engage superior enemy forces was not peculiar to the Order's squadron only for "Venetian commanders almost invariably restrained... from joining battle unless they were certain of their superiority to the enemy".<sup>42</sup>

Once the decision to attack enemy ships had been taken, strict formation in attack was to be upheld. A line was formed, the **Capitana** and the **Padrona** taking over the two extremities with the other galleys in between according to their seniority. The pilots and boatswains of the galleys were charged, under penalty of the loss of their lives, to hold on to their allotted position and refrain from getting in each other's way, thus causing confusion.<sup>43</sup> Signals to prepare for battle were given. The galley's artillery was alerted by hoisting a flag of St. Barbara on the lateen yard of the foremast whilst if the same flag was raised on the fore masthead, ammunition was handed out. A blue flag over the goaler's quarters signalled the chaining of the rowers but if trusted **buonavoglie** were to be left unshackled, a red flag was run up instead. Buckets of water were distributed around the deck and bales of wet canvas placed to protect the gunners and the rowers. A number of seamen were detailed to remain aboard if and when the enemy vessels were boarded, whilst the boats were put over the side and towed astern with supplies of oakum and timber to carry out necessary repairs. Moreover, men falling overboard could also be picked up.<sup>44</sup>

If the enemy fought back, care was to be taken to prevent the Order's galleys themselves from being boarded and the slaves from rebelling. If boarding was carried out, the Captain-General and the Captains chose the men, Knights or otherwise, who would board the enemy vessel. The rest were to remain on their own ship. Because of bonuses given to whoever first boarded an enemy ship, there was a tendency for seamen to jump into the sea in order to arrive first. However, punishment was to be meted out on such offenders and on those who left swords, daggers, firearms or gunpowder lying around or slow-matches alight as these could be used by the galley slaves to cause disorders.<sup>45</sup> Offenders were liable to four rope lashes and condemnation to row on the galleys for three years without pay.<sup>46</sup>

The galleys advanced simultaneously. Pennant signals on

the forestays deployed the squadron to port or to starboard, with the signal for prepare for boarding being given by the hoisting of a Genoese pennant which joined the battle standard of the Order at the main top of the **Capitana**. The raising of the Grand Master's flag to starboard of the fighting platform ordered the rambades to be raised, whilst the subsequent hoisting of a Maltese pennant on the foreyard gave the order to board the enemy.<sup>47</sup>

If an enemy vessel surrendered without offering resistance, no one was to board or attack it. Disobedience on the part of a Captain made him liable to pay two years' income from his commandery or, failing this, a fine of five hundred scudi in favour of the Treasury was imposed. If anyone swam over to such a vessel heavy penalties were inflicted; he loss of his habit for a Knight and a condemnation to row for ten years on the galleys if the offender was a secular person. The Captain-General was to send his Captain, or another reliable Knight to deputize for him, together with the **Riveditore** of the galleys to make out an inventory of all the goods on board the captured prize. They were to be accompanied by the purser of the **Capitana** and the **Riveditore's** clerk.<sup>48</sup> In 1638, the Venerable Council of the Order decided that, in addition to the above penalties, an offender would have to pay interests on the accruing losses of the Treasury resulting from his action.<sup>49</sup> The naval ordinations stressed that the only Knights allowed on board a prize taken without fighting were those ordered thither to help the **Riveditore**. Transgressors were liable to lose four years' income from commanderies or pensions of the Order, or to the loss of four years' seniority depending on the decision of the Venerable Council which acted on the reports given by the Captain-General.<sup>50</sup>

After a prize had been taken, the seamen had the right to keep the arms and personal things which they personally had taken over from the enemy. They had no right over money and cargo and no one was allowed to break or open boxes or chests nor to enter the holds. Transgressors incurred a penalty of four rope lashes and a year rowing on the galleys without pay, together with the loss of their loot, which was awarded to the informants concerned.<sup>51</sup> The men were encouraged to inform the authorities on gold, silver, money, pearls and other jewels found in a prize. If the informant

was a Knight, he was allowed twenty per cent of the goods recovered, whilst a layman was given fifteen per cent. Bonuses were also paid to those who were first on the prize and, to avoid confusion in the ensuing claims, boarding parties were only as large as deemed necessary, depending on the size and strength of the opposing vessel.<sup>52</sup> The bonuses paid out when a prize was taken were as follows: fifty scudi for the first man to climb sword in hand on the enemy vessel, thirty scudi for the second, twenty scudi for the third and fifteen scudi was allowed to the fourth man to perform this deed. Furthermore, ten scudi were given to whoever lowered the enemy colours whilst whoever sighted the enemy was given five scudi, the latter bonus being doubled if the sighting took place at night. If one of the above deeds was accomplished by a Knight or a gentleman, the relevant bonus was doubled. Bonuses were only paid if the encounter ended with a victory for the Order.<sup>53</sup> An example of confusion arising when taking a prize occurred in 1620 when the galleys captured a small galleon and everyone seems to have taken his share of the pie. All were ordered to give up their gains within a day or pay the penalty if caught. Knights would be treated as disobedient whilst seculars would be sentenced to four years in the galleys.<sup>54</sup> In 1617, in fact, it had been found necessary to appoint a commission to inquire into similar disorders, chief among which were bad seamanship, the mishandling and mislaying of cargo transferred from the prizes to the galleys and especially the damage done to a captured galleot of 24 oars.<sup>55</sup>

Rich cargoes were to be transferred on to the galleys. If a prize happened to be a ship of quality, the galleys were to escort it to home waters but if the prize was of an inferior kind, a trustworthy prize crew was to be put aboard and ordered to sail to Malta without touching land.<sup>56</sup>

### Arrival in Base

When the galleys returned to base, they entered harbour under oars. If they were returning from a cruise in the **Levant or the Barbary coast, irrespective of whether they brought back prizes or not**, the galleys were required to enter Marsamuscetto Harbour at the Quarantine anchorage of Manoel Island without as much as putting a skiff to sea or



allowing a boat to come alongside. There the squadron was to await further orders from the Grand Master and the Venerable Council.<sup>57</sup> Quarantine regulations then had to be observed by all on board to prevent any contagion from being brought to Malta through the galleys' contact with possible carriers.<sup>58</sup> Such rules were observed after a commission first boarded the galleys for the purpose of inspecting and then deciding whether permission to land could be given. This permission, known as the **Pratica**, could be withheld for a number of days until the Commissioners were satisfied that the galleys were free of disease.<sup>59</sup> Great importance was attached to quarantine and when it was not carried out according to the orders given by the Commission of Public Health a commission was set up to inquire and report on such omissions.<sup>60</sup> Sometimes, exceptions were made. In 1639, the galleys returned to port carrying a very sick Captain-General, Fra Giacomo Puliege Charrault who, in fact, died three days later. **Pratica** was given immediately to the sick Captain-General and to the squadron's physician who attended him.<sup>61</sup>

On entering harbour triumphantly, musket salutes were fired by the galley musketers, who loaded, aimed and fired together according to signals given by one, two and three drumbeats respectively. The galleys then came to anchor in strict order of seniority.<sup>62</sup> A commission then boarded the galleys to inspect and register the prizes taken and to see that everything was in order. Moreover, these commissioners were also charged with searching for any booty which might have been stolen by the seamen.<sup>63</sup> Only after this general search was over and after obtaining the **Pratica** were the men on board the galleys allowed to land. First the Captain-General's caique was lowered into the water followed by the boats of the other galleys. Then the Maltese pennant was hoisted on the forestay to signal permission for the Knights to land. Afterwards shore leave for those Maltese officers who were entitled to it was signalled by raising a blue pennant, also on the forestay.<sup>64</sup>

### Saluting

At sea, in the seventeenth century, as now, when ships sailing under different flags encountered one another, recog-

dition was given by saluting. Such compliments could be paid by firing guns, or by manipulating colours and sails. The number of equal or unequal rounds fired by each side depended on the measure of respect, submission or honour which was deemed suitable. Distinctions in salutes were made between sovereigns, princes and republics. Saluting was, however, not only complimentary but, more usually, a clear-cut question of precedence particularly among the smaller, weaker Mediterranean princes. In the Order's squadron, gun salutes could only be fired on the express orders of the Captain-General and a disobedient galley Captain was liable to be fined one hundred *scudi* for each offence.<sup>65</sup>

The naval ordinations of the Chapters-General held by the Order point out the salutes to be accorded by the galley squadron. When entering harbours or cities which were fortified, the *Capitana* was to fire a four gun salvo, but in places where there was a viceroy or prince present, all the galleys were to fire a similar four gun salute. If the galleys were saluted by a ship, the *Capitana* was to answer with a single shot by way of reply.<sup>66</sup> When entering Maltese harbours, only the *Capitana* was to salute, by firing three shots.<sup>67</sup>

Of course, sometimes disputes developed which resulted in suspending the saluting of the cities or squadrons involved. Such an occurrence happened in 1634 when the galleys of the Order were forbidden to salute the city of Messina.<sup>68</sup> This dispute endured till 1638 when, after the differences in question were settled, the Order revoked its earlier decision.<sup>69</sup>

In Malta itself, or in foreign ports, Grand Crosses were not to be saluted by artillery.<sup>70</sup> After 1625, this prohibition applied also to the Admiral when he was conferring the possession of the squadron or a galley. However, it was left to the prudence of the Captain-General or Captains regarding saluting when aboard.<sup>41</sup> However if Grand Crosses chosen as ambassadors to Rome or Spain and were ferried thither by the galleys, they were to be saluted by artillery in Messina and Naples only twice in each city, that is, when they left the ship for the first time and at the time of their last embarkation. This was intended as an economy measure to curb unnecessary wastage of powder.<sup>72</sup>

Salutes were sometimes accorded in other ways. In 1570, Captain-General Fra Pietro Giustiniani was instructed that

if the Order's galleys met those of the Pope, the standard of the Church was to be saluted by dipping the Order's standard three times and then hoisting it to its former place.<sup>73</sup>

It seems that, for saluting, the same amount of powder was used as when firing regular shots in action because in 1652, the Venerable-Council decreed that this practice was to be discontinued and that hitherto only one half of the powder formerly expended was to be used for saluting purposes.<sup>74</sup>

## Discipline

The basis of all fighting arms was, and will always remain, discipline: without which no control can be exercised over the different components of military echelons. Naturally, the Order also sought to maintain discipline among its galley crews, including the members of the Order itself. All the men knew what was expected of them and all knew what was prohibited or not. It follows that all knew the penalties for disobedience, penalties which were harsh in order to force recalcitrant men to toe the line. Of course, punishments sometimes differed depending on whether the offender was a secular or not.

No member of the Order, whether Knight or Novice, could verbally injure or prejudice the honour of any other Religious. Such an offender could be deprived of his habit, or be declared unsuitable for profession in the case of a Novice; if the accused had resorted to arms he could be handed over to the secular courts for punishment even if no blood had been drawn in the ensuing fight. Punishment could even be death. On the other hand, if the insulted parties took advantage of the situation and made capital of such opportunities (i.e. by resorting to arms needlessly) they could incur the same penalties.<sup>75</sup>

If a secular seaman, or galley soldier, committed such offences he could be sentenced to row for two years on the galley, chained, and with his head shaved. If he had struck blows, the sentence was of three years' duration whilst a life sentence was passed if the offender has resorted to arms.<sup>76</sup>

The Captains of the galleys had to inform the Captain-General of such offences in writing. Failure to do so meant that the Captain concerned incurred the loss of three years'

seniority and a fine of three hundred ducats. Until the fine was paid, the Captain was not considered for further promotions. If the offender had been a member of the Order, the Captain-General had to order his imprisonment and carry out an inquiry, the result of which was sent, sealed, to the Grand Master and the Venerable Council for their deliberation. Failure to comply with this procedure implied a fine of five hundred ducats for the Captain-General. Secular offenders were tried immediately.<sup>77</sup>

In the Chapter-General of 1598, it was enacted that a suitable secular person assisted by a clerk was to be chosen to judge criminal cases brought against secular maldopers on the galleys.<sup>78</sup> Ration allowances and fixed salaries were at first given to these officials in 1598,<sup>79</sup> but these were abrogated the following year and they were paid through the fines imposed.<sup>80</sup> This office was abolished by the Chapter-General of 1604, a decision confirmed by the Chapter-General of 1631.<sup>81</sup> Henceforth, the powers of this official, known as the **Auditore**, were passed on to the Captain-General or his deputy, to the senior galley Captain, or to a particular galley's Captain if the galley was cruising alone. If the case was of a grave nature and a quick decisive trial was deemed necessary and essential, a literate secular was chosen to act as **Auditore**. This temporary **Auditore** was paid out of the delinquent's pay if it was confiscated. If this could not be done, expenses were included in the accounts of whoever had delegated him.<sup>82</sup> This office was then re-introduced in 1663.<sup>83</sup>

The Statutes also contemplated other misdemeanours. Thus whoever caused even slight trouble on his galley or whoever blasphemed against the name of God, the Blessed Virgin or the Saints lost all the benefits of the current caravan without prejudice to the penalties stated above. Moreover, members of the Order were forbidden to play prohibited games and it was up to the Captain-General and the Captains not to tolerate their doings and to make out the relevant reports to the Venerable Council.<sup>84</sup> Prohibited games included those depending on luck, such as cards and dice, because it was considered indecent for religious to stake money on luck and also because the Knights had the vow of poverty. Playing for moderate sums of money was, however, allowed as were also games to while away the time.<sup>85</sup> Nor were Captains allowed to do what they liked but were sub-

ject to the will and command of the Captain-General,<sup>86</sup> who was himself bound to account for his own actions.<sup>87</sup>

Duelling was strictly forbidden and harsh penalties were invoked against transgressors. The Statutes expressly forbade any challenges to duels, either by word of mouth or by written notes or through a middleman; on his part the challenged man had to refuse such an invitation to fight. The penalty was deprivation of their habits for both litigants, without hopes of a reprieve. If the duel actually took place, even if no blood was shed, the litigants were handed over to the secular arm whilst whoever was party to the duel also lost his habit. These orders applied to members of the Order wherever they happened to be.<sup>88</sup> In fact, in 1602, the Chevalier Fra Aloysio Bonin dit Rognosa was deprived of his habit for wounding a soldier, Vincentio Barbara, under the poop of the galley **San Giorgio** at Syracuse even though his sentence was then commuted to four years' imprisonment.<sup>89</sup> In 1609, the Italian Knight Fra Pompeo Rospiglioso and the Novice Antonio Mignanello were both sentenced to two years in the tower for fighting on the poop of the galley **San Stefano**.<sup>90</sup> The penalty of the deprivation of their habit was also inflicted in 1602 on six members of the Order who, at Naples, had left the galleys to which they had been assigned while on caravan.<sup>91</sup> In 1634, the Riveditore Fra Gio Batta Calderario was reported for showing disrespect to the Captain-General whilst in 1642, another Riveditore, Chevalier Montsavasse, was deprived of the habit after being found guilty of defrauding the Treasury from prizes taken from the enemy.<sup>92</sup> In May 1602, Chevalier Fra Don Cristophoro de Albarca was sentenced to forty days detention for disobedience and showing disrespect to the Captain-General.<sup>93</sup>

If a seaman was arrested on a criminal charge and brought to trial, his pay was withheld from the day of his arrest. If he was found innocent, his pay and allowances were all restored to him but if he was convicted, he lost all payments due to him for all the period starting from his arrest to his last day of imprisonment. The same applied to seamen who were imprisoned for debts.<sup>94</sup>

Everyone was expected to know what was prohibited and the penalties for disobedience. Ignorance was no excuse and to ensure that no one could plead ignorance, it was enacted that, whenever the galleys left harbour, after a flourish of

trumpets, the naval ordinations were to be publicly read so that they would be observed. <sup>95</sup>

### Provisions

The problem of outbreaks of scurvy in the Order's galley-squadron was conspicuous by its absence. This was due to the fact that the two main conditions responsible for its occurrence, namely, long voyages and the lack of fresh provisions on board the galleys, were not forthcoming. The voyages pursued in the Mediterranean were either usually short or else various stoppages were made in case of long journeys. Moreover, fresh provisions had to be embarked on each galley and great attention was paid to the wholesomeness of the food distributed to Knights, seamen and rowers.

Each galley, when cruising down the Barbary coast or voyaging to the Levant, had to leave port carrying a maximum of two head of cattle, twenty mutton and fifty hens; the hens were to be kept in a coop taken on board for the purpose. At the beginning of the journey the meat of a dead bull had to be taken aboard to suffice for the first week at sea. The other two head of cattle were expected to tide the galley over for the following fortnight, excluding the mutton and the hens. No meat or other animals such as cocks, calves or other hens in excess of those already mentioned were to be allowed aboard and, whenever possible, it was the Captain's duty to provide other fresh provisions by the time this fresh food ran out. <sup>96</sup>

The Captain's table was placed within the poop, together with a supplementary one if one table did not suffice. Officers, technical officers, and councillors alone could eat at table; the others ate in groups of fours or sixes. <sup>97</sup> The provisions needed were either taken on board from Maltese harbours or else the galleys were sent to re-victual in Sicily. <sup>98</sup>

Apparently the type of food being served on the Captains' tables by 1625 was too rich and costly when relating it to a Christian military Order and so the Venerable Council pleaded for moderation in this respect. <sup>99</sup> In the same year it was decided that a day's food included helpings of roasted and boiled meat, thick soup and dessert of herbs and fruit according to the season. Food was to be served in the morning and evening but Knights were exhorted to be moderate

at breakfast. Fowl was forbidden except at Eastertide.<sup>100</sup> Abuses continued, however, and in 1627 the Venerable Council authorised the drawing up of ordinations to cut down needless expenses.<sup>101</sup>

In 1632 details about distribution of food were emanated for the future, details which the Captain-General and the Captains were to uphold or else they would not be reimbursed the money expended on the 'tavola' of members of the Order on board their particular galley. At the end of the voyage the Captain-General and the Riveditore had to report to the Commission of the Galleys how food matters had progressed and also any transgressors for eventual punishment. Menus differed according to whether it was a fast day or not. On fast days, Knights were twice served with thick soup and a dish of salted food or fish; supper consisted of salad, thick soup, salted food and dessert. On the other days, Knights were served with either roast and boiled meat or stew or meat balls or else something similar together with thick soup and helpings of ham or similarly-cured meat, rounded off by dessert of cheese, olives and herbs. Only three of the above items were to be served for the morning meal. In the evening there were servings of salad, salami, fresh meat, thick soup, and the same dessert as the mornings. Under no circumstances were there to be servings of fresh or pickled chicken or game, pastry, pies or any alimentary paste. In fact, the Captain-General and the Captains were forbidden to take on board either ovens or pie-dishes.<sup>102</sup>

Rations for the 'Gente di Capo' were not so rich. On fast days the seamen's food consisted of pickled tunny or sardines or a thick soup. On the other days they were allowed salted meat, thick soup and cheese. When it was possible, cooking was carried out in the morning and the distribution of rations for the whole day was carried out once daily.<sup>103</sup> These rations were calculated to cost the Order one **carlino** daily for each person making up a total of over fifteen **scudi** yearly expended on each man's cooked rations, excluding ship's biscuit and bread.<sup>104</sup>

The Order recognised the fact that the **curma** (or rowing element of the galley) was important for the fighting efficiency of the galleys and so wholesome food had to be given to the rowers, especially when the galleys were out on voyages pertaining to the **Corso**. Their rations included oil,

vinegar, refreshments of wine, cheese and a thick soup, called 'Caccavo' made up of ground grain.<sup>105</sup> These rations were reckoned at one *grano* daily for each rower, including the cost of fresh vegetables which amounted to almost 12½ *scudi* monthly, but excluding the cost of bread and ship's biscuit.<sup>106</sup>

Knights, seamen and rowers were also given their rations of bread when in port, or ship's biscuit when at sea. Each crew-member was allowed half a *rotolo* of ship's biscuit twice daily, at midday and in the evening. In 1604, these orders about ship's biscuit became applicable also to fresh bread distributed on the galleys. When in foreign harbours, any consignment of fresh bread for the galleys had to be signed by the Order's Receiver in that particular place. Each shipman was allowed four loaves, each weighing eight ounces.<sup>107</sup> In 1629 it was decided that fresh bread was to be distributed as follows: six loaves each for Knights and officers, five loaves each for artificers, technical officers, trumpeters and muskettiers, four loaves each for the remainder of the crew, including servants, soldiers and marines. Moreover, each galley Captain was allowed fifty loaves daily to be distributed to deserving soldiers and sailors.<sup>108</sup> Each loaf was to weight ten ounces.<sup>109</sup> The rowers were each allowed three loaves having a total weight of forty ounces.<sup>110</sup> In 1639, a new arrangement in bread distribution was made by which the galleys' complements were given an additional loaf on average.<sup>111</sup>

Moreover, no good seaman neglects his machinery and so, when the opportune moment came, to put heart into the men, the Captain General would order the hoisting of a red pennant on the ensign staff, thus signalling an extra issue of wine to crew and rowers alike.<sup>112</sup>

The Riveditore (or, in his absence, the most senior among the Knights on Caravan,) was charged with seeing that the rowers' rations were actually given out. If they were withheld, a note of the days and the amounts in question was taken by the purser who had to present them to the Accounts Office on the return of the galleys to port. The amounts were then debited on the guilty Captain in favour of the rowers themselves.<sup>113</sup>



## Religious Welfare

Like all other Christian navies, including the French, Spanish, Venetian and Papal vessels,<sup>114</sup> each galley had its own chaplain, oddly enough called Prior, whose duty it was to look after and attend to the religious ministrations of the particular galley to which he was assigned, his term of duty also being termed a "caravan", as was the case with his brother Knights.<sup>115</sup> He was to be regarded, in fact, as the Parish Priest of all on board, including the Christian element of the *ciurma*, wherever the galley happened to be, at sea or in harbour.<sup>116</sup> Various ordinances in the Chapters-General of the Order testify to the importance attached to the religious welfare of the galley-crews. All the galleys had to observe the usual devotions of the so-called *messa seccha*, that is, a mass in which no consecration took place, salutations to the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. John the Baptist and all the other Saints, whilst Knights had to recite their obligatory prayers. Especially important was the observance of the ordinance imposing the obligation of confession and communion for Knights at the beginning of a caravan or a voyage.<sup>117</sup>

On all Sundays and principal feast days, when the galleys were at Malta or in a Christian harbour, the Chaplains celebrated mass on land between the poop of the *Capitana* and the other galleys in conformity with a Brief of Pope Sixtus V of 1588.<sup>118</sup> These feast days amounted to 29, of which only one did not have a fixed date in the religious calendar.<sup>119</sup> The Captain-General had to decorate the altar which was to be covered by a canopy and made secure against bad weather. Moreover, the Blessed Sacrament had to be saluted either by acclamation or by sounding trumpets, whichever seemed better.<sup>120</sup> This ordinance was amended in 1631 in a way that when the galleys were in a foreign port, mass was to be said every day by one Prior, according to seniority and by turn. When the galleys were at Malta, mass was to be celebrated only on Sundays and the principal feast days.<sup>121</sup>

In the exercise of their duties, the Chaplains were charged with the confession of all the crew, including the seculars, the sick and the wounded. They had to communicate to the crew the principal feast days and prepare them

for the reception of Holy Communion and, in particular, they were to see that the Knights carried out their religious obligations. If their duties were not properly carried out, they had to answer to the Conventual Prior<sup>122</sup> who was responsible for delegating to them the faculty of administering the sacraments and the power to hear confessions.<sup>123</sup> Knights and novices were duty bound to confess and receive Holy Communion at least seven times a year, including Easter Sunday, Pentecost, Christmas Day and the Nativity of St. John the Baptist.<sup>124</sup>

According to the Brief of Pope Sixtus V of 1588, the Chaplains of the galleys were allowed to celebrate mass up to two hours before the day began if early sailing was deemed necessary. Every Chaplain could absolve all those who sailed on his galley, which had to carry a portable altar for the celebration of mass under shelter on the seashore and which was to be heard from the galleys. Moreover, on fast days, those on board were allowed to have their main meal in the evening and breakfast in the morning.<sup>125</sup>

Throughout the day, the Prior was expected to carry out his religious duties. He was to start the day by the recitation of lauds, followed by the *Messa Seccha*. At daybreak, midday and evening he was to recite the *Ave Maria* and had to impart benediction at table. An important part of his duties was to take care of the sick, especially those who were very ill and in danger of death and to whom he had to impart the last rites and the viaticum. Moreover, the Chaplain was also enjoined to help dying men to draw up their last wills.<sup>126</sup> This care of the sick was also one of the duties of Chaplains on board Venetian galleys, where they were expected to give food and medicines to sick persons and to report to their Captains any irregularities and the deaths which occurred. Of course, this was in addition to their pastoral work.<sup>127</sup> When a sick or wounded man died, the Prior had to give him a Christian burial. If the galleys were in port, burial was to be effected in a consecrated place, or in a grave dug for the purpose if the squadron was in an uninhabited place. When at sea, burial was effected in the sea but the Prior had to recite the prayers and perform the rites prescribed by the Roman Ritual at all burials, irrespective of where these were taking place. Another important duty was the instruction in the Catholic faith of all Muslims aboard who wanted to

apostasize, and the comforting and assisting of all dying infidels.<sup>128</sup>

When the galleys encountered the enemy, it was the Prior's duty to encourage the men who were now facing death. If there was no time to confess everyone in need, the Prior would walk the whole length of the galley from stern to prow with his cross in hand and exhort everyone to have faith in Divine help, enjoin all to make the act of contrition and then impart a general absolution. At the beginning of the conflict, he gave a blessing and then retired below to give the necessary spiritual and temporal help to the wounded.<sup>129</sup>

Perhaps, the part religion played on board the Order's galleys is best reflected in the votive offerings to various Maltese Churches, particularly to the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Graces at Zabbar. Quite a number of these offerings have now disappeared but they are described in inventories still preserved in the Zabbar Parish Archives. Moreover, enough offerings still exist to amply show the religious fervour of the time. These offerings were made by seamen and Knights to show gratitude to Providence for victories obtained or, as in the case of the 1606 Cimbalo incident, for safely extricating themselves from what could easily have been a disaster of the first magnitude.<sup>130</sup>

### **Medical Services**

The galleys carried on board a great mass of men,<sup>131</sup> making it imperative that medical orderlies should be present to look after their health. Yet the construction of the galleys did not provide good sanitary conditions. Accommodation was cramped and although elementary hygienic measures were carried out, there still remained the grave problem of adequate living and sleeping space, a problem which was aggravated when the galleys took on board booty and prisoners.<sup>132</sup>

Great attention was paid to the food distributed on board the galleys as has already been explained. This care about the wholesomeness of food is seen in a court case brought by Aloysio Farrugia of Qormi in 1643 who claimed that his family was still owed 13 scudi on the price of salted beef supplied to the Order's galleys in 1630. It was proved in court

however, that the meat in question was rotten, not fit for eating and had to be disposed of. Farrugia lost his case as the practice was not to pay anything if it was proved that supplies were uneatable. If anything, this case indicates the care taken with regard to the food bought and served in the squadron. <sup>133</sup>

Other naval powers, such as Venice and Spain, used hospital ships. <sup>134</sup> The Order did not conform to this practice but had medical officers in all the galleys, which were all furnished with a sick bay. Naturally, this was the medical officers' posting during action, to tend the wounded. <sup>135</sup>

The Order engaged one physician for the whole galley squadron, though the number was increased to two in 1686. <sup>136</sup> The physician's work started when the galleys were still in harbour. He had to report and visit all sick men, including those in the Holy Infirmary and in their own private homes. He naturally weeded out the malingerers and then, for the genuinely sick men, he issued certificates countersigned by the Captain concerned and the **Riveditore**. This was important or else these men were not paid their due allowances. Moreover, sick personnel in their homes had to be transferred to the Infirmary or else they also lost their allowances, even though they had already been certified unfit for duty. <sup>137</sup>

At sea, the physician had to be transferred from the flagship to the other galleys to carry out his duties. His orders were carried out by the **barbiere**, <sup>138</sup> who was a medical orderly found on board each galley and who, therefore, had charge of the sick bay and was responsible for his galley's medicine chest. Incidentally, each orderly was also the barber of his own particular galley. Expenses connected with illnesses and wounds were usually borne by the Order. The procedure was that the **Re** of the galley countersigned all medical expenses so that these would be refunded to the Captain by the Treasury. <sup>139</sup>

The extent of the responsibilities of the **Barbiere** is shown by a case in 1616 when Francesco Giannello, the **barbiere** of the galley **San Lorenzo**, was found guilty of having caused the death of two slaves because he had accepted them on board his galley when they were not fit for work; he was ordered to pay the Treasury the price of the two slaves but was allowed to take the **Barbiere** of the slave prison to court

for redress, if he so wished.<sup>140</sup> This case seems to indicate that these so-called 'barber-surgeons' had, at least, some rudimentary medical knowledge and were superior in this respect to their counterparts on Venetian galleys who are reported to have had "no other ability except how to cut hair and beards".<sup>141</sup> Perhaps it was to attract more suitable persons that such medical orderlies on Spanish galleys started to be termed **Cirjuano** after 1587 in preference to the former appellation of **barbero**.<sup>142</sup> The Order's barber-surgeons were obliged to hand over weekly reports concerning the names and numbers of the sick together with an account of goods and medicinals expended.<sup>143</sup> Barber-surgeons were not available on ships only but also 'practised' medicine ashore. It seems that "it was customary in Malta to call in the village barber to cure certain ailments, set broken bones and carry out dentistry services".<sup>144</sup>

At the request of the Captain-General the physician had to furnish reports on the health conditions of the squadron; these reports were then submitted to the Venerable Council. One such example was the 1646 report on the sanitary conditions of the galley squadron of the Order on its voyage to Candia made out by the physician, **Giuseppe del Cosso**.<sup>145</sup>

### **Naval Precedence**

Perhaps as the result of the influx of Spanish customs especially in Italy, the fifteenth and the following centuries witnessed an excessive desire of pomp and pageantry, with various states and courts all trying to out-do each other. This rivalry was also reflected in the way naval squadrons of different states claimed pre-eminence and precedence over the others sparing no arguments (however trivial these may appear by our 20th century standards) to substantiate their claims. The Order of St. John was no exception to this line of thought: great attention was always paid to the way the Order's representatives were treated. In naval matters, this attention was usually confined to the position the Order's **Capitana** was assigned when the galley-squadron joined galleys of other states on joint campaigns against the Islamic States.

The Order of St. John always maintained that it was superior to Genoa, Tuscany, and Savoy, including also the

ships of the Order of Saint Stephen. The reasons for the Order's stand were many and included the fact that the squadron represented a Religious Republic — '**Religiosa Republica**' — which existed for the exaltation of the name of Christ and to defend the Faith and not for mundane interests. Moreover, it was contended that the members of the Order represented not simply one city, or kingdom, or republic but "the noblest and most illustrious families of the world".<sup>146</sup> Other reasons given included the fact that the Order had been instituted for hundreds of years and enjoyed ecclesiastical privileges. Moreover, the position of Grand Master was considered equal to the Cardinalate, which was second to the Pope. In their eyes, therefore, this fact placed the Grand Master in a more exalted position than a Duke, who was regarded as only fifth in precedence.<sup>147</sup>

To substantiate these theoretical claims, the Order then looked for concrete precedents of which, it seems, there was a great number. Giacomo Bosio continually lists and emphasises the honourable position given to the Order's **Capitana** at Coron in 1532, at Tunis in 1535, and at Algiers in 1541<sup>148</sup> in which the flagship was always placed on the exact left of the Commander-in-chief's vessel, the right being reserved for the **Capitana** of the Papal squadron. At Prevesa in 1538, at the '**Citta d'Africa**' in 1550, and at the attack on the **Penon** in 1563, the Order's **Capitana** was accorded the right flank of the commander's **Reale**.<sup>149</sup> In 1563, the squadrons of Malta, Savoy and Genoa combined to cruise in the Levant, and it was decided to give overall command to the Captain-General of the Order in his **Capitana**.<sup>150</sup> In a further attack on the **Penon**, the Order's galley was placed on the left, ceding the more honorific right to the **Capitana** of the king of Portugal.<sup>151</sup> At Lepanto in 1571, the Order's galley was accorded the extreme right but the Commander-in-chief, Don John of Austria, declared that this was not to be taken as a precedent, a declaration echoed by a Papal Brief of Pius V.<sup>152</sup> In 1574, when the Order's squadron went to Palermo to join forces with other squadrons under Don John of Austria, the **Capitana** of Genoa was berthed on the right of Don John's **Reale**. The Genoese were obliged to relinquish their berth in favour of the Religion's **Capitana**.<sup>153</sup>

If one even ignores the claims on which precedence was based, the fact that the number of precedents favouring the

Order in the 16th century are many stands out clearly. There was never any question of claiming precedence over kings, the Pope and even Venice but the Knights seem to have been successful in the main in being declared pre-eminent to the Italian dukedoms. In 1538, they were accorded a better placing than the Viceroy of Sicily in his *Capitana* <sup>154</sup> and in 1563, it was the Savoyards and Genoese themselves who placed the command of the combined three Squadrons under the Religion's Captain-General. <sup>155</sup> The not too exalted placing accepted at Lepanto may be interpreted as one of need in order to preserve the unity of the Christian fleet which, on other occasions, was actually rent asunder because of squabbles on precedence. No wonder that, basing on the previous century, the Order continued on the same lines in the seventeenth century. Such a mentality may be regarded as the fruit of "ridiculous ambitions" <sup>156</sup> but the fact remains that such ambitions were considered important enough to justify the breaking-up of various naval coalitions. In 1606, a concentration of galleys at Messina achieved nothing because the Order's galleys returned to Malta after being denied precedence over the Genoese who, in their turn, stayed away because they wanted precedence over the Papal squadron which was only commanded by its Lieutenant Commander. <sup>157</sup> These disputes, especially between Malta and Genoa, continued and in 1620, Prince Filiberto of Savoy, in order to carry out an attack on Susa, was obliged to get rid of the Genoese from Messina because their leader, Gian Francesco Imperiali, had declared that they would not fight unless Genoa was granted precedence over the galleys of Malta. <sup>158</sup> This dispute was finally decided in 1622 when the King of Spain decided in favour of the Order, <sup>159</sup> a step perhaps influenced by the part played by the Order's galleon in the attack on Huguenot La Rochelle. <sup>160</sup> Pope Gregory XV agreed with and endorsed this line of action. <sup>161</sup>

In 1634, the *Capitana* of the Order was given the right flank in preference to the Sicilian and Genoese flagships by the Marquis of Santa Cruz, an action which the Order transformed into a public record and registered in the Chancery records. <sup>162</sup> One can here end by noting that, on the outbreak of the War of Candia (Crete) in 1645, in the first campaign, the Papal flagship was assigned the middle placing, flanked on the right and left by the Venetian *Reale* and

Order's Capitana respectively, while the Tuscans were assigned the extreme right wing of the battle plan.<sup>163</sup>

What has been written above is concerned primarily about the way a normal cruise was undertaken including aspects of life aboard the galleys. The period under consideration was 1596-1645, a time devoid of large-scale campaigns. So such a cruise is supposedly taken by the Order's squadron on its own, though the Order's seniority in Christian ranks is also placed on record.

At sea, the Order's galley squadron carried out its functions like any other Mediterranean Christian squadron. Galley warefare was formal and everyone knew what to expect, though the squabbles about seniority in Christian ranks helped no one except, perhaps, the Muslims against whom such joint expeditions were organised.

Since the Order was military, religious, and hospitaller, care was taken to ensure that 'efficiency' in these three branches of duty was maintained. Military efficiency at sea was secured through officials whose work was supervision of stores, war material and the like. Councils-at-sea helped to check imprudent Captains whilst naval ordinations made sure that all knew what was expected of them. The religious aspect was never neglected either at sea or on land. Each galley was provided with a Chaplain who was expected to help and encourage the living, comfort the dying, bury the dead, and help convert the infidel. Medical treatment also had its share: care was taken to ensure against contagious diseases, not least by ensuring that the food rations provided militated against such outbreaks. Treatment was provided for the wounded and the sick, and for this purpose medical orderlies were present on all galleys. When the galleys returned to base, precautions were taken to ensure that quarantine regulations were properly carried out.

One fact stands out clearly, namely, that the organisation of the Order's galley squadron reflected current practice and organisation in the Western Mediterranean. Points of similarity are many whilst differences are negligible, and these occur mainly when the Knights' vessels are compared with the Venetian navy rather than with Spanish or Papal squad-



rons. It was the organisation of their squadron which enabled the Knights to fit out their vessels year after year to engage in the 'Holy War' against the Crescent. With their limited resources, the Knights were hard pressed even to defend their base properly and to ensure regular food supplies for the Maltese islands, and it is to the credit of their squadron and its land-based organisation that a certain amount of limited law and order could be imposed in the narrows between the Eastern and Western basins of the Mediterranean.

#### NOTES:

- 1 Earle P., *Corsars of Malta and Barbary*, (London, 1970), p. 104.
- 2 A[rchives of the] O[rder in] M[alta] 449-465, *Libri Bullarum*, passim, wherein are contained the orders issued to the Captains-General under the section entitled *Salveconductus et altres scripturas*. See also Anderson R. C., *Naval Wars in the Levant 1559-1853* (Liverpool, 1952), which contains a useful account of these wars.
- 3 AOM 449-465 *Libri Bullarum*, passim.
- 4 An example of instructions given to Captain-General Fra Ferdinando Ruyz de Corral for a scouting cruise to Barbary waters is found in AOM 452, f.235 r, dated 5th June 1599.
- 5 AOM 293, Ch(apter) G(eneral) 1598, f.104 r, Ord(inatione) 11 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.118 r, Ord. 22 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.141 r, Ord. 33 Galere; AOM 108, f.112 r, dated 2nd August, 1625.
- 6 AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.104 r, Ord. 12 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.118 r, Ord. 23 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.141 r, Ord. 34 Galere.
- 7 N[ational] L[ibrary of] M[alta] 110, ff.3 r-v and 11 r. This manuscript is a signals book entitled *Ordini e Segni Navali delle Galere* copied in 1719 by Chev. Carlo Maria Olgiati from an earlier document by his kinsman Camillo Antonio Olgiati who had been received in the Order in 1691. cf. AOM 2166, p. 264. An English translation by Captain Eric Broskman CBE, RN, is now available and has been published in *Annales de l'Ordre S(ouverain Militaire de) M(alte)*, July-December 1973, Nos. 3/4, pp. 66-79, entitled "The Signal Code of the Galleys of Malta". The main lines of the preamble preceding the translation had first appeared entitled "Two Signal Books of the Order", *S(unday) T(imes) O(f) M(alta)*, dated 1st April 1973. That signals were also used by other nations is shown by Nani Mocenigo M., *Storia della Marina Veneziana da Lepanto alla Caduta della Repubblica*, (Rome, 1935), pp. 56-7, who says that flags, burgees, smoke signals etc were used both as day and night signals. Bamford P. W., *Fighting Ships and Prisons*, (Minnesota, 1973), p. 106, states that by the early 1690's, in the French galley corps, "special maneuvers were prescribed for combat situations, others for bad weather, and so on." In fact, Guilmartin Jnr. J. F., *Gunpowder and Galleys*, (Cambridge, 1974), pp. 202-3, asserts that as early as "the beginning of the sixteenth century Mediterranean naval commanders could exercise a considerable degree of control over galley fleets through a comprehensive set of standing operating instruction supplemented by a system of sail, flag, cannon, trumpet and lantern signals." Guilmartin also mentions two sets of sailing instructions which are dated 1430 and 1564.

- 8 AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.106 v, Ord. 35, 36 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.120r, Ord. 47, 48 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.143 v-r, Ord. 57, 58 Galere. Similarly, in the French galley corps, "the position of each galley was determined by the seniority of its commanding officer." Cf. Bamford P.W., *op.cit.*, p. 106.
- 9 AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.106 v, Ord 35, 36 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.120 r, Ord. 47, 48 Galere, AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, ff.143 r-v, Ord. 57, 58 Galere.
- 10 AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.105 r, Ord. 20 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.118 v, Ord. 30 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, 142 r, Ord. 41 Galere.
- 11 AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.108 v, Ord. 65, 66, 67, Galere; AOM 294 Ch.G. 1604, f. 122 v, Ord. 80, 81, 82 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, ff. 145 v-146 r. Ord. 90, 91, 92 Galere
- 12 AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.105 r, Ord. 21 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.118 v, Ord. 30 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. f.142 r, Ord. 41 Galere.
- 13 AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631. f.138 v, Ord. 10 Galere.
- 14 AOM 1759, f.370v; AOM 1760. f.319 v; dated 30th November, 1631. f.120 r, Ord. 47 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.143 r-v, Ord. 57
- 15 AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.106 v, Ord. 36 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604 Galere.
- 16 AOM 257, f.48v, dated 9th April 1640; AOM 221, f.38 r. dated 10th April 1640.
- 17 AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.106 v, Ord. 37 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.120r, Ord. 48 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.143 v, Ord. 58 Galere.
- 18 *Ibid.*, Ord. 38, 49, 59 Galere respectively.
- 19 NLM 110, *passim*.
- 20 Nani Mocenigo M., *op. cit.*, p. 56.
- 21 NLM 110, ff.3 v- 4 r. By helm one means, of course, the tiller since "the wheel did not become general after the first decade of the 18th century". Cf. Brockman E., *The Signal Code etc. . . .*, *op cit.*, p. 73.
- 22 *Ibid.*, f.6 r. A Genoese pennant consisted of a red cross on a white field.
- 23 *Ibid.*, f.4 r- 5r. A blue pennant on the fore masthead detached the *Padrona* and the next in line, a red and white pennant ordered the next senior galley and her next in line whilst a white pennant on the main yard signalled the third senior galley and her next in line.
- 24 *Ibid.*, f. r-v. A Maltese pennant consisted of a white cross on a red field.
- 25 *Ibid.*, f.5 v.
- 26 AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.106 v, Ord. 39 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.120 v, Ord. 51 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.143 v, Ord. 61 Galere.
- 27 *Ibid.* Ord. 40, 52, and 62 Galere respectively
- 28 NLM 110, ff.6 r-7 v. The standard of the Grand Master was yellow superimposed with the emblems of the arms of the Grand Master then reigning.
- 29 *Ibid.*, ff.8 v-9 r.
- 30 *Ibid.*, f.9 v.
- 31 *Ibid.*, ff.9 v-10 r.
- 32 *Ibid.*, ff. 7 v-8 r.
- 33 *Ibid.*, ff.11 r, 12 v and 13 v.
- 34 *Ibid.*, ff.12 v-13 r.
- 35 *Ibid.*, f.15 r.
- 36 *Ibid.*, ff.14 r-v.
- 37 *Ibid.*, ff.12 r-v.
- 38 *Ibid.*, f.15 v.
- 39 AOM 112, ff.131 r-v; AOM 1759, f.220r; AOM 1760. f.206 r; all dated 17th June, 1638.

- 40 AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, ff.103 r-v, Ord. 8 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.117 v, Ord. 19 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.140 v, Ord. 30 Galere.
- 41 AOM 257, f.119 r; AOM 1759, f.233 v; AOM 1760, f.209 v; all dated 12th July, 1642.
- 42 Tenenti A., **Piracy and the Decline of Venice**, (London, 1967), English Translation by J. and B. Pullan, p. 128.
- 43 AOM 221, f.154 r; AOM 223, f.14 r; AOM 224, f.311 v; AOM 226, f.155 r; AOM 257, f.78v; AOM 1759, f.233 r; AOM 1760, f.209 r; all dated 14th May, 1641.
- 44 NLM 110, ff.15 v-16 v.
- 45 AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, ff.103 r-v, Ord. 7 Galere AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.117 v, Ord. 19 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f. 140v, Ord. 30 Galere.
- 46 AOM 1759, f.406 r; AOM 1760, f.350 r; section entitled **Bandi e Pragmatiche**.
- 47 NLM 110, ff.17 r-18 r.
- 48 AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, ff.103 r-v, Ord. 7 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.117 v, Ord. 19 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.140 v, Ord. 30 Galere.
- 49 AOM 112, f.130 v; AOM 224, f.311 r; both dated 16th June, 1634. AOM 223, f.14 r; AOM 226, f.5 r; both dated 16th June 1638.
- 50 AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.104 r, Ord. 9 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.117 v, Ord. 20 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, ff.140 r-141 v, Ord. 31 Galere.
- 51 AOM 1759, f.405 v; AOM 1760, f.349 v; section entitled **Bandi e Pragmatiche**.
- 52 AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.104 r, Ord. 7, Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.117v, Ord. 19 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.140 v, Ord. 30 Galere.
- 53 AOM 1759, f.406 v; AOM 1760, f.349 v; sections entitled **Bandi e Pragmatiche**.
- 54 AOM 106, ff.217 r-v, dated 11th June, 1620.
- 55 AOM 106, f. 56 v, dated 13th October, 1617.
- 56 AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.104 r, Ord. 10 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.C. 1604, f.117 v, Ord. 20 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.141 r, Ord. 32 Galere.
- 57 AOM 112, f.131 r; dated 16th June 1638. AOM 224, f.311 r; AOM 226, f.47 r; both dated 16th June 1634.
- 58 AOM 257, f.138 r, dated 27th May 1643, On the galleys' return from the Levant, there were fears that they might be possible carriers of disease. These fears were unfounded.
- 59 AOM 256, f.107 r, dated 1st October 1632, wherein is an example of such a commission.
- 60 AOM 116, f.27 r, dated 16th June 1647.
- 61 AOM 257, f.37 v, dated 23rd October 1639.
- 62 NLM 110, ff.17 v and 20 r.
- 63 AOM 103, f.82 r, dated 25th June 1609.
- 64 NLM 110, f.19 r.
- 65 AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.120 r, Ord. 50 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.143 v, Ord. 60 Galere.
- 66 AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.107 r, Ord. 45 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, ff. 120 v-121 r, Ord. 57 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f. 144 r, Ord. 67 Galere; AOM 226, f.23 r and AOM 434, f.271 v, both dated 23rd March 1574, AOM 444, f.277 v, **Liber Bullarum 1588-9**, section entitled **Sopra il buon governo delle Galere**.
- 67 AOM 93, f.164 v, dated 8th October 1573.
- 68 AOM 256, f.114 v, dated 9th January 1634; AOM 226, f.26 r and AOM 256, f.115, r, both dated 1st February 1634.
- 69 AOM 256, f.179 r, dated 19th July 1638.
- 70 AOM 97, f.26 v; AOM 1759, f.137 r-v; AOM 1760, f.113 r; all dated

- 9th May 1586. AOM 96, f.48 v; AOM 1759, f.143 v; both dated 18th May 1582.
- 71 AOM 108, f.112 v; AOM 223, f.12 r; AOM 224, f. 311 r; AOM 226, f.26 r; all dated 2nd August 1625.
- 72 AOM 226, f.26 r; AOM 257, f.49 r; both dated 12th April 1640. AOM 257, f.193 v, dated 7th January 1645.
- 73 AOM 226, f.23 r; AOM 433, f.251 r; both dated 6th September 1570.
- 74 AOM 117, f.165 r; AOM 220, f.199 r; both dated 30th January 1652.
- 75 AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.88 v, Ord. 7 and 8 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, ff.116 r-v, Ord. 9 and 10 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.139 v, Ord. 19 and 20 Galere.
- 76 *Ibid.*, Ord. 9, 11 and 11 respectively.
- 77 *Ibid.*, Ord. 10, 12 and 12 respectively.
- 78 AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.89 r. Ord. 11 Galere.
- 79 AOM 1759, f.381 r; AOM 1760, f.329 r; both dated 17th April 1598.
- 80 *Ibid.*, AOM 100, f. 111 v; all dated 29th March 1599.
- 81 AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604 f. 121 v, Ord. 67 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.144 v, Ord. 71 Galere.
- 82 *Ibid.*
- 83 AOM 1759, f.381 v; AOM 1760, f.392 v; both dated 8th November 1663.
- 84 AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f. 109 r, Ord. 71 and 72 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.123 r, Ord. 86 and 87 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.146 r, Ord. 96 and 97 Galere.
- 85 NLM 1463, Vol. 1, ff.17. v-18 v.
- 86 AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.106 r, Ord. 33, 34 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, ff.119 v-120 r, Ord. 43, 44 Galere AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, ff.42 v-143 r, Ord. 53, 54 Galere.
- 87 AOM 96, f.153 v; AOM 256, f32 r sqq.; AOM 1760, f.181 v; Dal Pozzo B., *Historia della Sacra Religione Militare di San Giovanni Gerosolimitano*, (Verona, 1703), Vol. I, pp 248 and 739; Rossi E., *Storia della Marina dell'Ordine di S. Giovanni di Gerusalemme di Rodi e di Malta*, (Rome, 1926), pp 52-3 and 65; Ubaldini U.M., *La Marina del Sovrano Militare Ordine di San Giovanni di Gerusalemme di Rodi e di Malta*, (Rome, 1971), pp. 294-5 and 359-363; in which two cases are described which occurred in 1582 and 1625.
- 88 Stat(uti) S(acra) R(eligione) G(erosolimitano) (Borgo Novo, 1676), p. 226, Stat(uto) 38 Delle Proibitione e delle Pene, entitled "Delle Pene che sono proposte a coloro che provocano e accettano i Duelli", passed under Grand Master La Cassiere (1572-81). The same penalties were confirmed in subsequent Chapters-General. Cf. AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.132 r, Ord. 5 De Prohibitionibus et Paenis. Periodically, further confirmation emanated from the Venerable Council. Cf. AOM 109, f.232 v dated 31st October 1629; AOM 222, f.163 r; AOM 224, f. 63 r; AOM 110, f. 262 r-v; all dated 9th August 1633.
- 89 AOM 100, f.225 r-226 r; AOM 1759, f.188 v; AOM 1760, f.183 r-v; dated 2nd and 7th May 1602.
- 90 AOM 103, f.84 v, dated 7th July 1609.
- 91 AOM 100, f.225 r-226 r; AOM 1759, f.188 v; AOM 1760, f. 183 r-v; the men in question were three Knights and three servants-at-arms:— Maiolinus Georginus, Bernardus Vechetti, Alphonus de Dura, Joannes de Paola, Paulus Raimus, and Alexander de Jacovone. This penalty was imposed by Ordinances passed by the Chapter-General. Cf. AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.84 v, Ord. 1; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.111 v, Ord. 11; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631 f.133 v, Ord. 13; all under: "De Prohibitionibus et Paenis."

- 92 AOM 1759, ff.192 r-v; AOM 1760, ff. 186 r-187 r; dated 23rd October 1634, 23rd October 1641 and 21st February 1642. It is significant to note that on 25th October 1634, Calerario was replaced as Riveditore by Fra Don Nicolo Ximenes. Cf. AOM 6430, f145 r.
- 93 AOM 100, f.225 r, dated 2nd May 1602.
- 94 AOM 101, f.73 r; AOM 224, f.312 r; dated 2nd September 1604.
- 95 AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, ff.88 v-89 r, Ord. 12 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.118 r, Ord. 23 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f. 139 v, Ord. 23 Galere.
- 96 AOM 110, ff.150 r-151 r, dated 11th March 1632. French galleys usually embarked a two-month supply of victuals, weighing about fifty tons in all. Cf. Bamford P. W., *op. cit.*, p. 35.
- 97 AOM 110, f.150 r, dated 11th March 1632.
- 98 AOM 255-258, 449-465, 467, 469, 470, *passim*.
- 99 AOM 108, f.107 r, dated 16th July 1625.
- 100 AOM 108, f.111 v, dated 2nd August 1625.
- 101 AOM 256, ff.70v-71 r, dated 30th July 1627.
- 102 AOM 110, ff.150 v-151 r, dated 11th March 1632.
- 103 *Ibid.*
- 104 AOM 737, f.88 r, dated 20th July 1637; AOM 738, f.2 v, dated 27th July 1644.
- 105 AOM 110, ff.150 r-v, dated 11th March 1632. On French galleys, the rowers' "official allowance consisted of two pounds of bread or sea biscuit a day with bean soup, oil (or lard), salt, and sometimes a little wine. Cf. Bamford P. W., *op. cit.*, p. 203.
- 106 AOM 737, f.87 r, dated 20th July 1637; AOM 738, f.3 r, dated 27th July 1644.
- 107 AOM 101, ff.72 r-75 r, dated 2nd September 1604. AOM 108, ff. 111 v-113 r, dated 2nd August 1625.
- 108 AOM 664, ff.161 r-162 r, dated 21st April 1629. AOM 109, ff. 188 r-189 r, dated 30th April 1629.
- 109 AOM 1759, f.173 v; AOM 1760, ff.168 v-169 r; both dated 30th November 1631.
- 110 AOM 110, ff.182 r-v; AOM 222, ff.188 r; AOM 225, f.20 v; all dated 28th June 1632.
- 111 AOM 257, ff.37 r-37 v, dated 14th September 1639.
- 112 NLM 110, f.8 v.
- 113 AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.145 r, Ord. 84 Galere.
- 114 Bamford P. W., *op. cit.*, p. 116 sqq.; Guilmartin J. F., *op. cit.*, p. 293; Nani Mocenigo M., *op. cit.*, p. 31; Guglielmotti A., *op. cit.*, Vol 7, pp. 252-3.
- 115 AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.103 r. Ord. 3 & 4 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.117 r, Ord. 15 & 16 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, ff.140 r-v, Ord. 26 & 27 Galere.
- 116 NLM 211, pp. 1-3.
- 117 AOM 293, Ch. G. 1598, ff.102 v-103 r, Ord. 1 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.116 v, Ord. 3 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, ff.139 v-140 r, Ord. 24 Galere.
- 118 *Ibid.*, Ord. 2, 4, and 25 respectively.
- 119 NLM 211, pp. 282-3.
- 120 *Ibid.*
- 121 AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.139 r. Ord. 12 Galere.
- 122 NLM 211, p 350.
- 123 NLM 271, Cap. XX, p. 238, No. C. NLM 211, p. 48.
- 124 NLM 211, pp. 252-3. The other feast days were First Sunday of Quaresima, the Assumption of the B. Virgin, All Saints' Day and, after 1676, the Conception of the B. Virgin.

- 125 AOM 97, ff.155 v-156 r; AOM 220, f.211 r; AOM 225, f. 195 v; AOM 1759, ff.86 r-v; AOM 1760, f.74 r; all dated 17th December 1588. NLM 211, pp. 407-8. The Papal Brief is dated 15th October 1588.
- 126 NLM 211, pp. 225, 237, 262-3, 355, 357-365.
- 127 Nani Mocenigo M., *op. cit.* p. 31.
- 128 NLM 211, pp. 357, 367-374.
- 129 *Ibid.*, pp. 393-5.
- 130 Zarb J., **Zabbar Sanctuary and the Knights of St. John**, (Malta, 1969), *passim*, especially pp. 37-57. The votive paintings and other offerings still in existence can still be viewed at the Zabbar Sanctuary Museum.
- 131 Refer to **Libro dei Contratti del Tesoro**, AOM 737, f.87 r, dated 20th July 1637. The **Capitana** and each private galley carried 564 and 443 men respectively, these figures comprising solely the 'huomini di capo' and the rowers. The numbers increase greatly if one were to add the Knights, officers, servants, etc.
- 132 Cassar P., **Medical History of Malta**, (London, 1964), p. 120.
- 133 A(rchives of the) S(uperior) C(ourts of Justice, M(agna) C(uria) C(astellaniae), O(fficium) V(enerandae) S(eniscalliae), Vol. 2, case dated 10th July 1643/6th October 1643, Don Aloysio Farrugia vs. Thomaso Scattaretici, designated as 'Mastro Sala in Galera'.
- 134 Nani Mocenigo M., *op. cit.*, p. 16; Cassar P., *op. cit.*, p. 124; Mattingly g., **The Defeat of the Spanish Armada**, (London, 1970) p. 244.
- 135 Cassar P., *op. cit.*, p. 128.
- 136 AOM 1759, f.386 r; AOM 1760, f.341 r; dated 9th January 1686; Cassar P., *op. cit.*, pp. 125-6.
- 137 AOM 664, ff.161 r-162 r, dated 21st April 1629; AOM 109, ff.188 r-189 r; both dated 30th April 1629. Cassar P., *op. cit.*, pp. 125-6.
- 138 AOM 101, fff.72-75 r, dated 2nd September 1604; AOM 109, ff.95 v-96 v, dated 10th March 1628. In the lists of offices of men serving on board the galleys, the only medical officers mentioned are the 'barbieri' and the 'barberotti' who helped the former. Cf. Cassar P., *op. cit.*, p. 126.
- 139 AOM 293, Ch.G. 1598, f.107 v, Ord. 53 Galere; AOM 294, Ch.G. 1604, f.121 v, Ord. 66 Galere; AOM 296, Ch.G. 1631, f.144 v, Ord. 76 Galere; AOM 737, f.93 v, dated 20th July 1637. The **Re** was the senior caravanist on board.
- 140 AOM 663, f.282 v, dated 10th June 1616.
- 141 Nani Mocenigo M., *op. cit.*, p. 31, footnote no. 3: "non havevano altra abilità che quella di saper radere i capelli e la barba."
- 142 Guilmartin J. F., *op. cit.*, p. 293.
- 143 NLM 676, ff.31 r-32 r.
- 144 Micallef Rev. G., **Hal Luqa; Niesha u Grajjietha**, (Malta, 1975), p. 77.
- 145 AOM 1769, ff.186 r-187 r, dated 13th October 1646.
- 146 Bosio G., **Dell'istoria della Sacra Religione et Ill.ma Militia di San Giovanni Gerosolimitano**, Napoli, 1684), Vol. III, p. 152.
- 147 NLM 118, **Miscellanea Gerosolimitana**, p. 179 sqq.
- 148 Bosio G., *op. cit.* III pp. 115, 152, 203 respectively.
- 149 *Ibid.*, pp. 177-8, 267, 464 respectively.
- 150 *Ibid.*, p. 467.
- 151 *Ibid.*, p. 482.
- 152 Dal Pozzo B., *op. cit.*, I, pp. 15-17. Don John of Austria's declaration is dated 17th September 1571 and the Papal Brief bears the date of 22nd September 1571, that is, before the actual battle took place.
- 153 Dal Pozzo B., *op. cit.*, I, p. 79.
- 154 Bosio G., *op. cit.*, III, pp. 177-8.
- 155 *Ibid.*, p. 467.

- 156 Nani Mocenigo M., *op. cit.*, p. 79.  
 157 *Ibid.*, pp. 80-81. Anderson R.C., *op. cit.*, p. 72.  
 158 Nani Mocenigo M., *op. cit.*, p. 81.  
 159 Anderson R. C., *op. cit.*, p. 80.  
 160 NLM 1463, Vol. II, f.476 v.  
 161 *Ibid.*, ff477 v-478 r.  
 162 AOM 465, ff.281 v-284 r.  
 163 Dal Pozzo B., *op. cit.*, p. 110.

#### LANGUAGE BARRIER

In his memoirs on the war in Burma, Lord Mountbatten recalled the trick used by Major-General Frank Messervy to exchange radio-telephone messages without having them intercepted by the enemy.

Messervy chose two British officers who had learnt French by the methods which are traditional in British schools. They understood each other reasonably well in French, but, declares Mountbatten, "they really spoke it so badly that they could not have been understood by the French let alone the Japanese! They were entirely successful."

*Paris Match.*

PETER FAVA

## A REIGN OF AUSTERITY: ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES DURING THE RULE OF GRAND MASTER XIMENES (1773-1775)

*In this article, which is part of his B.A.(Hons.) thesis, PETER FAVA\* looks at some of the grave problems faced by Grand Master Ximenes in the mid-1770s, an administration that was not exactly the embodiment of good government in any sense.*

Signs of the decadence that for many years had been eroding the moral political and economic foundations of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem became more pronounced by mid-seventeenth century. In the following century Grand Master Pinto's misgovernment, if anything, helped accelerate the rate of decline. Parallel to this one must also consider another important factor — one which seriously questioned the Order's very existence in the centre of the Mediterranean: the growing international indifference towards the Order's role as the bulwark of Christendom in direct proportion to the ever increasing interest and appreciation (especially European) of the absolute strategic importance of the Maltese Archipelago. This problem must have preoccupied the Order, more so, as there was little or nothing it could do about it. Indeed, late in Pinto's reign, many were the affronts to the Order's flag at sea and violations of the Order's privileges on land: clear indications to the fact that the Order had lost much in power and prestige.<sup>1</sup>

Economically Pinto had been making both ends meet

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by raising loans, and the Treasury was barely managing to avoid deficits. Nevertheless, a debt of 400,000 **scudi** against the Maltese Commune<sup>2</sup> was honoured. Deficits from 1770 to 1773 amounted to about a quarter million **scudi**,<sup>3</sup> while the Maltese Commune was bankrupt. Pinto's successor faced a formidable task to re-establish the Order's finances and the **Massa Frumentaria** on a sound footing. The Commune required a new financial set-up and a commission of four Maltese deputies<sup>4</sup> was appointed immediately on Ximenes' election to draw up an advisory report. The commissioners discovered that Pinto had appropriated 293,000 **scudi**; that the Commune's officials and clients had overdrawn 234,000 **scudi**; and that 66,000 **scudi**, and perhaps much more, were unaccounted for.<sup>5</sup> The **Massa Frumentaria**, however, began running into difficulties before Pinto's meddling. In 1728, Grand Master de Vilhena had appropriated its funds to finance the building of his palace at Mdina and the repairs to the old city's fortifications. Successive Grand Masters had followed suit, and by 1741 the sum thus appropriated had reached almost half a million **scudi**.<sup>6</sup> During Pinto's rule the debts incurred were astronomical: public officials, who were aware of the Commune's position, would not divulge it. Consequently, the **Massa Frumentaria** rarely had any cash in hand to make the usual wheat purchases from Sicily. The reason was that loans were unsecured and could not be recovered at will. Out-of-season purchases had to be made at prohibitive prices or not made at all and the annual sizeable *tratte* (the special reduced tariff quota of grain conceded to the Maltese Commune and the Order from Sicily) of 20,000 *salms* were at times forfeited.<sup>7</sup>

On 28th January 1773, the rich Grand Prior of Navarre, Francesco Ximenes de Texada, succeeded Pinto. Ximenes had been one of the Order's financial administrators; he had occupied the post of Seneschal or president of the Maltese Commune. Ximenes had also been a commissioner investigating magisterial debts. Consequently on his election, Ximenes must have been fully aware that the Order faced economic, financial and moral collapse.<sup>8</sup> An extensive reform plan was required to offset the danger.

One of Ximenes' election promises was that he would supply the market-squares with foodstuffs.<sup>9</sup> There was an acute grain shortage during Pinto's last year, mainly because

he had arbitrarily borrowed the **Massa Frumentaria's** funds earmarked for wheat purchases.<sup>10</sup> In fact the food shortage had become so acute that the Commune had to resort to buying wheat from grainships which happened to be in port. As its money was tied up with the commission agents in Sicily, the Commune incurred large debts against the Order's Treasury in order to pay for these extraordinary purchases.<sup>11</sup>

Ximenes could have wound up the **Massa Frumentaria**, but the Maltese commercial community would have been adversely affected, and many concerns would have collapsed. Yet some observers believed that Ximenes' attempt to save the Maltese Commune was ulteriorly motivated in that the **Massa Frumentaria** would then honour its debts towards the Order's Treasury.<sup>12</sup>

Ximenes' immediate problem was to import wheat. Within two days of his election he sanctioned the importation of the essential commodity aboard foreign vessels, thereby removing the legal obstacle to merchants in their having to charter Maltese vessels.<sup>13</sup> The Grand Master also commissioned the Order's agents in Sicily to purchase food-stuffs from state granaries. The Sicilian authorities seemed, however, reluctant to abide by their contractual obligations,<sup>14</sup> for Sicily had little grain to export due to crop failures in 1772 and others forecasted for the 1773 season. Yet somehow some merchants still received preferential treatment.<sup>15</sup> Under the circumstances, the Commune sought grain markets elsewhere and importations were quickly effected from Puglia, the Marches and other distant places to avert the impending famine.<sup>16</sup>

These efforts offered only a short respite for the provisioning of the Island required long-term planning, which had been notoriously lacking. This problem was to plague Ximenes throughout his short reign. Moreover the people had assumed that as soon as Ximenes was in government, he would also lower the price of grain.<sup>17</sup> Ximenes, however, soon realised that election promises could not be implemented overnight. In fact, he drew up a list of priorities: primarily, that of stocking the Floriana and Valetta granaries, without creating an artificial shortage<sup>18</sup>; and secondly, that of imposing a minimum sale-price of grain, allowing the **Massa Frumentaria** a substantial profit margin so that the Commune would obtain cash flow and start repaying its

debts.<sup>19</sup> If these measures were successful, the price of grain could be reduced. Ximenes began to implement his new policies by decreeing an increase in the price of grain.<sup>20</sup>

As the Order itself faced grave economic problems Ximenes thought of reducing state expenditure. Carnival festivities were curtailed and free refreshments were limited.<sup>21</sup> Treasury and palace officials were no longer exempted from payment of postage dues because the postal service ran a loss of 13,800 scudi.<sup>22</sup> The customary Embassy of Obedience to the Pope made by a special envoy of the newly-elected Grand Master was to be made in a non-pompous manner by the Order's resident ambassador to Rome.<sup>23</sup> Yet, notwithstanding ambassador de Breteuil's frugality, he failed to stay within Ximenes' 1,000 scudi allowance and he demanded the reimbursement of 600 scudi.<sup>24</sup> Ximenes also withheld from de Breteuil an annual 500 scudi grant<sup>25</sup> which de Breteuil used to spend on gifts addressed to the Vatican Secretary of State and other influential officials, who lobbied with the Pope to consider favourably the Order's grievances. The ambassador was, however, prepared to pay for the gifts himself rather than alienate the goodwill of these friends.<sup>26</sup> When Pope Clement XIV wanted to present the Grand Master with the Estoch and Pilier<sup>27</sup>, Ximenes asked for a postponement to avoid further ceremonial expenses.<sup>28</sup>

As is often the case the unhealthy economic situation soon triggered a crime wave. The authorities were understandably quite concerned and the *Notabile Università* appointed a mayor, a jurat and a catapan to bring criminals to book. Malta was divided into nine districts and the three officials were appointed in each. These officials were also authorised to inspect public houses, inns, the prices of foodstuffs, of wine and of cotton, to check whether these were in line with the Commune's regulations. Retailers could be arrested for presenting bad quality goods on the market.<sup>29</sup> Notwithstanding such measures the people were generally dissatisfied. To make matters worse, a rumour was gaining ground that the government intended to raise the price of grain again, when for several months now the populace had expected a reverse measure.<sup>30</sup> The prohibition of hare-snaring, decreed on 14th February 1773, had created great resentment among peasants, who feared that hares would destroy their crops.<sup>31</sup> This prohibition, moreover, instigated a bitter

church-state controversy. The clergy had expected to be exempted from the prohibition,<sup>32</sup> by virtue of the privilege they enjoyed of exemption from secular jurisdiction. After several incidents involving priests and the Grand Master's game-wardens, Ximenes succumbed to pressure and the clergy had their way, as long as they did not trespass the demarcated reserved areas.<sup>33</sup> The Bishop, Mgr. Pellerano, had maintained all along that priests had as much right to go hunting as knights.<sup>34</sup> Yet estrangement and mutual mistrust among the ecclesiastical and civil bodies set in. The peasants had to do without hare-meat until August 1773, when the government intended to withdraw he sanctions. But, resentment against the law, however temporary its nature, was augmented by the fact that agricultural products were inexplicably selling at a higher price in the villages than in the towns.<sup>35</sup>

In the meantime Ximenes' economic policies with regards to the Maltese Commune and the Order's Treasury did not have the desired effect during the first six months of his reign. He, therefore, decided to tighten the belt further. When the Commune's overdraft with the Order's **Conservatoria** and the **Camera di Pagamento** reached 200,000 **scudi**, Ximenes halted more advances.<sup>36</sup> He also appointed a commission to look into the Commune's finance and to suggest economies. This Commission reported that administrative and charitable expenses could be cut down and salaries reduced.<sup>37</sup> As regards the Order, certain administrative posts had to be abolished, while salaries and the hospital's budget had to be reduced.<sup>38</sup> The **Università degli studi** had to forfeit its government grant of 2,000 **scudi**, which entailed the dismissal of expatriate professors with effect from 1st October 1773<sup>39</sup> and the retention of the lesser qualified Maltese teaching staff members with an annual salary of 180 **scudi** each.

Still the Maltese Commune showed no signs of recovery and to make matters worse wheat was again scarce. A food riot seemed imminent and the Order immediately took steps to deter rebellion. Sentries for the night-watch at the Valletta gates were doubled, the Grand Master's palace guards were increased and the city-streets were patrolled at night.<sup>40</sup> Soon, when mysterious night-time fire signals were attributed to the insurgents<sup>41</sup>, a detachment of guards was posted at **Portes-des-Bombes** to arrest suspicious looking persons pass-

ing through. Peasants were prohibited from entering Valletta before 6 a.m. and their weapons were sequestrated. When Ximenes insisted on raising the price of grain to eighteen **tari per tumolo** members of the Order's council opposed this provocation and the Grand Master withdrew the edict.<sup>42</sup>

Events in Sicily forced Ximenes to moderate his austere policies.<sup>43</sup> The Palermitans had rioted because of grain shortages and the Viceroy chose to flee to loyal Messina.<sup>44</sup> Grain exports to Malta were withheld, notwithstanding the Sicilian contractual obligations towards the Island and that these were already paid for.<sup>45</sup> Ferment in the Maltese countryside continued to spread as a result and Ximenes had to be more sensitive to popular discontent.<sup>46</sup> He soon abolished for a two-year period the state monopoly on the importation of foodstuffs, but the goods would still have to be sold to the Commune at negotiated prices.<sup>47</sup> Further, he declared Malta a free-port zone with the exception of commerce in grain and wine.<sup>48</sup> Although these measures were intended to free the island from its endemic shortages of foodstuffs, in fact, no solution to this problem had been found and Ximenes resorted to the repeal of the hare-hunting law from the 3rd November to the 12th December 1773<sup>49</sup>, yet simultaneously forbidding the presentation to him of the people's grievances for November.<sup>50</sup> The hunting season was extended to the end of December for the food supply had not improved, but as from 3rd January 1774, harsher penalties were enacted in the new game-law. Popular discontent was quite obvious and the authorities imposed a general disarmament<sup>51</sup>, thereby eliminating the threat of an armed uprising. Nevertheless, anonymous satirical pamphlets, circulated clandestinely, criticised Ximenes' policy regarding the problem of shortages.<sup>52</sup>

Beside grain, wine also became scarce and costly, especially when the sale of wine from the Auberges for outside consumption was prohibited.<sup>53</sup> No step were, however, taken to import the essential commodity. The shortage persisted for four months when in February 1774 large consignments were bought from vessels which chanced to call at Malta.<sup>54</sup>

By the first year since Ximenes became Grand Master, the situation had deteriorated rather than improved. Inflation was rife and prices kept rising unchecked, especially those

of meat, oil, wine and bread.<sup>55</sup> A meat shortage was solved but only temporarily and in a most highhanded fashion, when Ximenes ordered the slaughter of oxen, belonging to peasants, who naturally protested vociferously yet without success.<sup>56</sup>

The Maltese Commune on the other hand was still vexed with impending bankruptcy and the financial administrators now had to set a deadline for the settlement of overdrafts with interests.<sup>57</sup> The *Milizia Urbana* was disbanded thus saving the Commune 60,000 *scudi* annually.<sup>58</sup> Ximenes donated the Commune 30,000 *scudi* to mark his first anniversary as Grand Master although no festivities commemorated this occasion.<sup>59</sup> The Order also made some savings: repair work on Valletta streets was halted<sup>60</sup>, and the free distribution of medicines was discontinued.<sup>61</sup> The Order, however, increased its monthly contribution to the House of Poor Women for this could no longer meet the heavy demand for assistance.<sup>62</sup> Notwithstanding these well-intentioned measures ferment was still spreading, mainly because Ximenes had failed to implement his election pledges.<sup>63</sup> Stop-gap measures contradicted the government's declarations that it envisaged a long-term policy. A short respite in the grain-shortage problem was obtained in December 1773, but the overall position had not improved. Four months after Malta had become a free-port zone, foodstuffs had remained scarce. In fact, merchants had no more success than the Order when seeking wheat purchases from Sicily. As the situation deteriorated, Ximenes gambled on cultivating direct trade relations via French and vessels of other nationalities with North African ports, which were prepared to sell oil, wheat, foodstuffs and livestock in return for wood, nails and iron. Papal sanction to waive the Order's statutes was sought merely as a matter of courtesy.<sup>64</sup>

The price of wheat could not, however, remain the same when the local grain stocks had dwindled. The Commune's officials and the Grand Master conferred three times before deciding to raise the price from 20 to 25 *scudi* per *salma*.<sup>65</sup> Ximenes obviously intended to safeguard the Commune's interests rather than those of the people on whom its effect was devastating:

"Questo improve a forte aumento di prezzo sembrò tuttavia, e fù in realtà esorbitante alle forze di questi popoli, che stanchi già

da gran tempo d'avere pelcorso di ben più anni, comprato sempre a tari quidici il tummino il Frumento, ed a caro costo ogn'altro commestibile, null'altro desideravano dall' amato Sovrano cotanto da esse applaudito nella di lui elezione se nonche un qualche sollievo alle loro miserie." <sup>66</sup>

This price increase did not solve the shortage problem, which became critical when a total ban on Sicilian grain exports came into effect <sup>67</sup> and famine was only averted when Ximenes made purchases from grainships which "Divine Providence chanced to be in port" <sup>68</sup>, irrespective of cost. Soon Ximenes' free-trade policy began to pay dividends: three vessels laden with oil arrived from Messina <sup>69</sup>; three grainships came from Ancona <sup>70</sup>; five from France <sup>71</sup> and three from Tunis <sup>72</sup>. These new supplies were, however, not regular and a definite regular supply had still to be secured. In fact, these stocks were quickly exhausted <sup>73</sup> while the debt-ridden *Massa Frumentaria* had its cash money tied up in Sicily for eventual purchases, which could not be made because of the export ban on state-owned grain. <sup>74</sup> Until the political situation in Sicily was stabilised and royal authority was enforced, no definite arrangement regarding the Maltese grain-rights could be re-established. Under the circumstances, Ximenes advised the Order's agents in Sicily to exchange these rights for the costlier privately-owned grain so that quick shipments could be effected. <sup>75</sup> But grain for export was difficult to come by in Sicily and the little found was exorbitantly priced. <sup>76</sup> Yet a Maltese agent obtained an export licence for 1000 *salme* of state-owned grain from Girgenti. Notwithstanding the Maltese rights, the agent was forced to pay the export tax when other foreign merchants had obtained theirs duty-free. This injustice was greater because the Maltese Commune had been deprived of availing itself of its preferential tariffs throughout 1773. <sup>77</sup> To add insult to injury, the Girgenti authorities reclaimed 600 *salme* as Girgenti had run short on grain. <sup>78</sup>

Ximenes felt that these obstacles could only be surmounted through diplomatic pressure at the Neapolitan court. Though previous protests had been upheld in Naples <sup>79</sup> and the Order had been authorised to obtain 3000 *salme* of state-owned grain and 3000 *salme* of privately-owned grain, the Sicilians were reluctant to fulfill their obligations with regard to the state-owned grain. <sup>80</sup> The Order's Minister

Plenipotentiary in Naples was asked to insist with King Ferdinand III that the Sicilian authorities would not prevent the Maltese Commune from exercising its rights to preferential tariffs on exports from the Sicilian state-owned granaries. The King had to be made aware that the Order could not accept this unilateral abrogation of the Maltese rights and threatened to take steps to prevent famine in Malta. Talks between the Maltese envoy Pignatelli and the Neapolitan chief minister Tanucci would have to be short and conclusive, for Ximenes suspected that Tanucci was playing a double role. To counter Tanucci's argument that the Sicilians could not honour fully Malta's annual right to 26,000 *salme* of grain at preferential export tariffs, Pignatelli would have to quote from the 1749 tariff agreement between the King of Spain and the Order granting Malta at least 20,000 *salme*.<sup>81</sup>

This diplomatic haggling was not going to feed the Maltese and grain purchases were sought from Ancona. Some 541 *rubbia* of Austrian grain were shipped to Malta<sup>82</sup>, but these were of a bad quality.<sup>83</sup> The Pope was willing to sell the Order 2,000 *rubbia* from the papal granaries. Ambassador de Breteuil promised Grand Master Ximenes that the Roman grain would be better and cheaper than that from the Marches.<sup>84</sup> Meanwhile, the Sicilian ban was lifted.<sup>85</sup>

The grain flow into Malta improved considerably in the later half of 1774. Substantial quantities were imported from Sicily.<sup>86</sup> Grain was also bought quite cheaply from Algiers.<sup>87</sup> The impasse with the Sicilian authorities was overcome when Ferdinand III upheld and reaffirmed the 1749 agreement.<sup>88</sup> After further representations from Pignatelli, "His Majesty had graciously deigned to issue an order in Sicily so that the Order's galleys be given any provisions they would require when Malta would face a shortage of foodstuffs."<sup>89</sup>

The improvement in the grain supply raised hopes among the people that the price would be reduced to an acceptable level. The people were, however, deluded and discontent at Ximenes' intransigence was obvious in a graffiti daubed on the Grand Master's palace walls. The slogan read: "Poveri Maltesi, in che miserie vi ha portato questo Gran Maestro."<sup>90</sup> More rebellious feelings were expressed on a loose leaf of paper left in a Valletta street with an open threat that Ximenes would soon face a "Sicilian Vespers."<sup>91</sup>

Political stability on the Island was again being threat-



ened with the resurgence of the politico-religious conflict. The January 1774 ban on hunting was at the root of the problem, because the Bishop had permitted, without prior authority from the Grand Master, his master-mason and some priests to go hare-hunting. The Bishops contended that the hares were causing extensive damage to the fields of his tenants.<sup>92</sup> These hares had been purposely let loose by Ximenes in order of let them breed to the extent of becoming a cheap supply of meat to the peasants. The problem could not be solved easily for both personalities remained steadfast and they even exchanged gestures of disrespect in public.<sup>93</sup>

Incidents involving the game-wardens, priests and the Bishop's exemptees were on the increase.<sup>94</sup> It was the Inquisitor's opinion that the disorders were mainly due to a few hot-headed ecclesiastics, who, with episcopal backing, took sport in causing disturbances.<sup>95</sup> Several other petty incidents widened the division between the secular and ecclesiastical bodies.<sup>96</sup> The arrest and beating on board an Order's galley of a Bishop's manservant,<sup>97</sup> the arrest by the Bishop's police of the Order's soldiers who had beaten the manservant,<sup>98</sup> the breaking down of the Bishop's prison gates by knights who freed these soldiers,<sup>99</sup> the rumour that some knights intended to assault the Bishop's palace<sup>100</sup> and the fleeing of the Bishop incognito from Valletta to Mdina,<sup>101</sup> brought matters to a head.

The Maltese clergy were so alarmed at the gross disrespect shown towards the Bishop and ecclesiastical immunity that they made a public demonstration en masse in support of the Bishop at the Cathedral Square in Mdina, where they solicited in a **Pro Memoria** the immediate convocation of the Chapter General to discuss the situation.<sup>102</sup>

The Grand Master, the Inquisitor and the Bishop reported the case to Rome and the Pope reproached the Bishop's handling of the affair and his provocative stance taken on the hunting laws. The Bishop was suspended and called to Rome to answer for his actions.<sup>103</sup>

Before the Bishop's trip to Rome, however, another grave incident helped to create further animosity among the people. The Bishop had decided to intone the **Te Deum** on 19th February 1775 as a sign of thanksgiving on the occasion of the birth of an heir to the throne of Naples. Ximenes, however,

refused to attend for the Order had not yet taken steps to celebrate the occasion. The **Capitano della Verga** (the Mdina municipal mayor) and the Commune's officials were forbidden from attending. Still the Bishop went ahead with the Cathedral services against Ximenes' wishes. The next day graffiti in red paint were smeared on the bastions near the Senglea, Cospicua and Vittoriosa gates with the slogan: **Viva il Vescovo ed il Re di Napoli, nostro Sovrano.**"<sup>104</sup> .....

The politico-religious conflict, coupled with the government's austere policies were causing political instability. On the other hand there was a good supply of foodstuffs, though, sometimes, the Sicilian authorities tried to flout royal assurances to the Order.<sup>105</sup> The meat shortage was also solved with the importation of 300 head of livestock from Sicily.<sup>106</sup> Oil and charcoal could still be bought from Sicily, though there was an export ban on the commodities.<sup>107</sup> Nevertheless the people were depressed for the cost-of-living had spiralled and Ximenes' economy measures were causing massive unemployment. They still hoped that the least the government could do was to reduce the prices of grain. Rumours were, however, officially disclaimed. Ximenes had no intention of sanctioning a price reduction until all the debts of the **Massa Frumentaria** had been repaid. Ximenes' economic advisors maintained that the Commune could never reduce the price, because this had remained high in foreign markets. The people, however, had no confidence in the Commune's financial administrators<sup>108</sup> because they feared that the profit reaped from the excessive selling price of grain was not being used to pay off these debts. The people's hopes received a severe jolt at the end of May 1775.<sup>109</sup> Although the grain price was fixed, it rose by five scudi per *salma* to thirty scudi, which left the **Massa Frumentaria** a profit margin of nineteen scudi per *salma*, because the grain had been bought at such a low price due to its poor quality. This artificial measure to keep the price high was quite unjust and it provoked bitter protests.<sup>110</sup> The Inquisitor commented to the Vatican Secretary of State that the little food the **basso popolo** were eating, rendered them so weak that an infectious disease soon assumed epidemic proportions.<sup>111</sup> The Grand Master was implored several times by the Jurats of the Maltese Commune, by the Governor of Notabile and by Grand Cross knights to reduce the price. These pleas

were all rejected because the Grand Master still believed that it was the only way of saving the **Massa Frumentaria**. At the same time, Ximenes promised that soon he would reduce the price.<sup>112</sup> The Inquisitor also tried to mollify Ximenes, but the latter attributed his austere measures to the grain shortage prevailing at his election. These measures were to be withdrawn, when the granaries were replenished and the people's misery thus alleviated.<sup>113</sup>

Once again a wave of crime swept over the Island during the first months of 1775. House-breaking, highway robbery, assault and murder became an everyday occurrence and the authorities were quite alarmed. Appropriate harsh laws<sup>114</sup> were enacted coming into effect on 22nd June 1775.

Ferment among the populace become more explicit, especially when the Bishop, who had been postponing his departure from Malta since September 1774<sup>115</sup>, departed to Rome in April 1775. Many other cases of disrespect towards ecclesiastical immunity from the Order's side helped to foment further agitation.<sup>116</sup>

Meanwhile, seditious rumours clamouring for a grain-price reduction were spreading. On 16th July 1775, Ximenes spontaneously reduced the price of Sicilian pears from twelve **grani** per **rotolo** to two **grani**. The famished people promptly bought all the pears. Yet the populace demanded a similar measure as regards grain<sup>117</sup>, but the Grand Master did not oblige. The summer months were almost over when the people expected their exhortations to be upheld. But again the rumour proved false.<sup>118</sup> This state of affairs could no longer be tolerated by a few hot-headed priests and ecclesiastics, who under the leadership of Don Gaetano Mannarino and together with some three hundred supporters made an abortive insurrection on 9th September 1775. The rebels believed that they would have immediate popular support, which however was dismally lacking. One of the demands from the insurgents, who had occupied St. James Cavalier and Fort St. Elmo in Valletta, in return for their submission, was a reduction in the grain-price.<sup>119</sup> Ximenes had only promised that he would study their request. A rumour quickly gained ground that the price would be reduced on the Grand Master's birthday, 4th October 1775.<sup>120</sup> A contemporary diarist, Abbè Boyer, summed up the situation quite concisely when he commented that "every day the people

were hoping that the grain-price reduction would be sanctioned on the next; but the people's hopes were always disappointed".<sup>121</sup> The 4th October arrived and passed and the people's expectation was once more dashed.<sup>122</sup> Ten days later, the price was surprisingly reduced to twenty **scudi**. The people were, however, not wholly grateful, for they had expected the price to be fixed at sixteen **scudi**.<sup>123</sup> Ximenes must have realised that the people needed to be appeased for, in fact, the **Massa Frumentaria** was now selling the grain at a small loss.<sup>124</sup> Ximenes' successor went one better for in December, (a few weeks after this price reduction that is) De Rohan lowered the price to an acceptable level, personally assuming liability for all the losses the **Massa Trumentaria** might incur.<sup>125</sup> But then, Ximenes lacked both the imagination and the courage to take such a step which, incidentally would have given his popularity, which by then was at its very low, a much needed boost.

During his Grandmastership, Ximenes failed to solve any of the most pressing problems. He proved to be a bad economist and a worse administrator. It is true that the Maltese Commune made a notable improvement in that it managed to pay off a 600,000 **scudi** debt against the Order's Treasury.<sup>126</sup> This gave it a new lease of life, but at the expense of demoralising the whole Island and making its people suffer inhuman deprivations so that Grand Master de Rohan found much to put right after Ximenes' death. The Maltese Commune still needed the sound financial foundations which would put it back on its feet permanently. The Island still had to be replenished with foodstuffs.<sup>127</sup> On his election, Grand Master de Rohan appointed a commission to look into these two crucial problems, and especially to advise him on the feasibility of his primary intention to reduce the price of grain. The commissioners soon pointed out, however, that Ximenes' economy measures in the Commune's administration had been faulty in many respects, making it definitely uneconomical to effect any reduction in the price. The **Massa Frumentaria** could ill-afford a lowering of the price. De Rohan, however, did, as stated above, reduce the price and made a personal surety for the loss. The commissioners also revealed that there were shortages of rice, oil and other foodstuffs. They showed concern about the **Massa Frumentaria's** lack of liquid cash, which was needed to pay

for a six-month supply of grain to be bought from Sicily at the preferential tariff prices.<sup>128</sup>

In fact, the situation seemed to have reverted to the time of Pinto's death. Yet in this short span of time two extra ordinary events took place: the Bishop was forced to leave the Island and the priests led an abortive insurrection against the Order, demanding the observance of the Maltese rights and the reduction of the price of grain. At the end of Ximenes' reign the political and economic atmosphere was oppressive; a contemporary wrote:

"Grande era l'orrore col quali si viveva in quest'Isola, e massime nella città Valletta grande il silenzio, et grandi il conceputo timore d'ulteriori sconcerti... Non più si univano alla solita conversazione famiglie e gl'amici perche sparse per ogni via le spie. Vivevasi, insomma, con una gran noia a con somma consternazione."<sup>129</sup>

a terrible but true condemnation of a short and sad administration.

#### NOTES:

- 1 R. Cavaliero, *The last of the Crusaders* (London 1960) pp. 150-151; F. Panzavecchia, *L'Ultimo Periodo della Storia di Malta sotto il Governo dell'Ordine Gerosolimitano, Ovvero Frammento dell'Istoria di Malta* (Malta 1835) p. 43; F.W. Ryan, *The House of the Temple* (London 1930) p. 78.
- 2 For a comprehensive study of the Maltese Commune and its public bank, the *Massa Frumentaria* see A(rchives of the) C(athedral,) M(dina) 58, Not(itiae) Misc(ellaneae, Ser(ie) B.T. V, ff. 314 r-v; N[ational] L[ibrary of] M[alta] Univ[ersità] 190, ff.150 v. 52 r-53 r; A. Mifsud, *L'Approvvigionamento dell'Università di Malta nelle passate dominazioni*, in *Archivum Melitense*, III, v; A. Schembri, *Sul debito della Massa Frumentaria e progetto economico per estinguerlo* (Malta 1851) p. 5.
- 3 A(rchives of the) O(rder of St. John of) M(alta) 272, ff.15 v-18 r, 200 v, 234 r, 250 v and 252 v.
- 4 NLM 1146, *Gior(nale di) Not(izie)*, II, p. 234, 21.4.1773; ACM 59, *Not. Misc.*, Ser. B.T. VI, f.3 r.
- 5 NLM 1146, *Gior. Not.*, II, pp. 215, 234, 236, 240 and 242.
- 6 A(rchives of the) I(nquisitor,) M(dina) *Gior(nale) Ist(orica)*, f.14 v.
- 7 *Ibid.*, ff.15 r, 16 r-v and 17 r; NLM 167, ff. 178 r-v.
- 8 NLM 1146, *Gior. Not.*, II, p. 112, 8.4.1771; P. Cassar, *Medical History of Malta* (London 1964) pp. 226-227; C. E. Engel, *L'Ordre de Malte en Mediterranee, 1530-1798* (Monaco 1957) p. 112; A.P. Vella, *Malta and the Czars* (Malta 1965) p. 9; M.A. Sant, *Coinage problems facing the Order of St. John in Malta* (M.A. thesis presented to the University of Malta, May 1967, unpublished) pp. 278-279.
- 9 NLM 167, f.178 r.

- 10 AIM *Gior. Ist.*, f.17 r; M. Miège, *Histoire de Malte* (Paris 1840, 3 vols.) II, p. 270.
- 11 AOM 272, f.75 v; AIM *Gior. Ist.*, f.2 v.
- 12 *Ibid.* ff.3 r, 17 v-18 r.
- 13 NLM 1146, *Gior. Not.*, II, p. 214, 30.1.1773.
- 14 AIM *Gior. Ist.*, ff.17 v-18 r.
- 15 D.M. Smith, *Modern Sicily after 1713* (London 1968) p. 276.
- 16 AIM *Gior. Ist.*, f.3 r.
- 17 *Ibid.*
- 18 ACM 59, *Not. Misc.*, Ser. B.T. VI, f.3 r; NLM 167, ff.178 r-v.
- 19 A(rchivio) S(creto del) V(aticano), *Lettere dell' Inquisitore in Malta*, a 1775-1776, N. 137, quoted after F. Laferla, *Una Giustizia Storica. Don Gaetano Mannarino nella luce dei documenti* (Roma 1926) p. 28.
- 20 *Ibid.* "... (Ximenes) mi ha risposto che la penuria nella quali si ritrovò a principio del Magistero lo ha obbligato a crescere il prezzo..."
- 21 NLM 1146, *Gior. Not.*, II, p. 219, 21.2.1773
- 22 AOM 273, ff.20 r-21 v; NLM 1146, *Gior. Not.*, II, p. 230, 3.4.1773.
- 23 AIM *Alla Segreteria di Stato*, Tomo IV, ff. 425 v-426 r, 22.3.1773; AOM 1364, f.11 v, 13.4.1773.
- 24 *Ibid.*, f.44 v, 7.7.1773.
- 25 *Ibid.*, f.18 r, 20.4.1773; f.20 v, 27.4.1773; f.22 r, 27.4.1773.
- 26 *Ibid.*, f.18 r, 20.4.1773.
- 27 E. Schermerhorn, *Malta of the Knights* (London 1929) p. 256.
- 28 AOM 1364, f.24 r, 11.5.1773; f.26 r. 18.5.1773.
- 29 NLM Univ. 33, *Registra degli Atti*, ff.4 r, 5 v, 28.8.1773; NLM Univ. 190, *Chirografi*, a. 1770-1782, ff.26 r-27 v.
- 30 Panzavecchia, *op. cit.*, p. 45.
- 31 NLM 429, *Bandi* a. 1772-1779, ff.16 r-17 r; NLM 1146, *Gior. Not.* II, p. 217; Panzavecchia, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
- 32 Miegè, *op. cit.*, p. 29.
- 33 NLM 1146, *Gior. Not.*, II, pp. 230-231.
- 34 *Ibid.*
- 35 NLM Univ. 190, *Chirografi* a 1770.1782. ff.23 r-v.
- 36 NLM 1146, *Gior. Not.*, II, p. 240, 8.6.1773.
- 37 *Ibid.* 21.4.1773; ACM 59, *Not. Misc.*, Ser. B.T. VI, f.3 r. The preacher of the Advent and Lenton sermons of the Church of St Lawrence in Vittoriosa had his allowance reduced from eighty to thirty *scudi*.
- 38 Laferla, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-27; Panzavecchia, *op. cit.*, pp. 45 and 49-50.
- 39 AIM *Alla Segreteria di Stato*, Tomo IV, f. 431 v, 20.9.1773; AOM 273, ff.21 v-22 v; NLM 1146, *Gior. Not.*, II, pp. 256-257; NLM 167, f.178 r. A. Vella, *The University of Malta* (Malta 1969) pp. 48-52.
- 40 NLM 1146, *Gior. Not.*, II, p. 255, 12.9.1773.
- 41 *Ibid.*, p. 256, 15.9.1773. An anonymous author, writing in ACM 58, *Not. Misc.*, Ser. B. T. V, f.241 r, claims that members of the faction of Bailiff d'Oz, who had contested the election for the Grandmastership against Ximenes, were the offenders.
- 42 NLM 1146, *Gior. Not.*, II, p. 256, 15.9.1773.
- 43 *Ibid.*, p. 257, 28.9.1773; NLM 167, ff.178 r-v; Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 308-311; Panzavecchia, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-51.
- 44 G.E. di Blasi, *Storia Cronologica dei Vicerè, Luogotenenti e presidenti* (Palermo 1842) pp. 639-640.
- 45 NLM 167, ff.178 r-v.
- 46 Panzavecchia, *op. cit.*, p. 51.
- 47 NLM 429, *Bandi* a. 1772-1779, f.55 r; NLM 1146, *Gior. Not.*, II, pp. 248-259; Panzavecchia, *op. cit.*, p. 51.
- 48 NLM 429, *Bandi* a. 1772-1779, f.56 r; NLM 1146, *Gior. Not.*, II, p. 259;

- p. 259; Panzavecchia, *op. cit.*, p. 51; G.A. Vassallo, *Storia di Malta* (Malta 1954) p. 709.
- 49 NLM 429, *Bandi a. 1772-1779*, f.61 r.
- 50 NLM 1146, *Gior. Not.*, II, p. 262, 7.11.1773.
- 51 NLM 429, *Gior. a. 1772-1779*, f.67 r; NLM 1146, *Gior. Not.*, II, p. 273, 3.1.1774; Panzavecchia, *op. cit.*, p. 51.
- 52 NLM 1146, *Gior. Not.*, II, p. 262, 7.11.1773.
- 53 NLM 1146, *Gior. Not.*, II, p. 262, 7.11.1773.
- 54 AOM 1529, f.18 v, 3.1.1774.
- 55 NLM 1146, *Gior. Not.*, II, p. 276, 18.1.1774.
- 56 *Ibid.*,
- 57 NLM 429, *Bandi a. 1772-1779*, f.68 r; NLM 1146, *Gior. Not.*, II, p. 273; AOM 1529, ff.21 r-v, 17.1.1774, Ximenes to de Breteuil: "... We have been informed that the noble Luigi Gianni has been indebted by 1,000 Maltese *scudi* towards this poor Commune since 1752... We are very keen to see this debt recovered."
- 58 NLM 1146, *Gior. Not.*, II, pp. 276-277, 20.1.1774; Panzavecchia, *op. cit.*, p. 52.
- 59 NLM 1146, *Gior. Not.*, II, p. 278, 28.1.1774.
- 60 *Ibid.*, p. 267, 12.12.1773. But in AIM *Gior. Ist.*, f.17 v it is recorded that the very costly works on the Valletta streets were paid from the Commune's funds.
- 61 NLM 1146, *Gior. Not.*, II, p. 277, 20.1.1774; Panzavecchia, *op. cit.*, p. 52.
- 62 AOM 273, ff.22 v-23 r, 14.1.1773. The House or Hospital of Poor Women in Valletta was founded in 1646 by Catherine Scoppi, who, bequeathed all her possessions for the maintenance of this charitable institute. See V. Azupardi, *Raccolta di Varie Cose Antiche e moderni, utile ed interessanti riguardanti Malta e Gozo* (Malta 1843) p. 128.
- 63 Panzavecchia, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-46; A. Ferris, *Storia Ecclesiastica di Malta* (Malta 1877) p. 277; Vassallo, *op. cit.*, p. 708.
- 64 AOM 1529, ff.28 v-29 r, 79 r; AOM 1346, ff.183 r-v, 189 v.
- 65 NLM 1146, *Gior. ot.*, II, p. 279, 3.1.1774. However according to AIM *Gior. Ist.*, ff.3 r-v and Mifsud, *op. cit.*, p. 197, the increase was effected on 12th February 1774, and not 3rd February 1774. The later date is unacceptable because Ximenes, writing to Paternò Castello in Palermo mentions in two letters ... both 7th February 1774 — that he was forced to sanction an increase in the grain-price. See AOM 1529, ff.30 r-32 v.
- 66 AIM *Gior. Ist.*, ff.3 r-v. *Tari quindici il tummino* is equivalent to *scudi venti per salma*.
- 67 AOM 1529, ff.11 r-v, 3.1.1774; ff. 30 r-32 v, 7.2.1774; f.41 v, 21.2.1774; f.49 v, 21.2.1774; ff.67 v-68 v, 21.3.1774. Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 276, 311; di Blasi, *op. cit.*, pp. 639-641.
- 68 AOM 1529, f.49 v, 21.2.1774.
- 69 *Ibid.*, f.50 r, 21.2.1774.
- 70 NLM 1146, *Gior. Not.*, II, p. 287, 4.3.1774; AOM 1529, ff. 56 v-57 v, 7.3.1774.
- 71 NLM 1146, *Gior. Not.*, II, p. 287, 4.3.1774; AOM 1238, f.196 r.
- 72 NLM 1146, *Gior. Not.*, II, p. 287, 4.3.1774.
- 73 AOM 273, ff.29 r-v, 4.7.1774.
- 74 Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 276.
- 75 AOM 1529, f.49 v.
- 76 *Ibid.*, f.95 v.
- 77 *Ibid.*, ff.67 v-68 v, 21.3.1774. The Grand Master reiterated to Paternò Castello on this injustice: "— mostrosità di tal sorte non l'aspettamo da codesto Mons. Arcivescovo, e Ministri, alli quali farate noto il nostro rammarico, e la sorpresa di un così crudo tratto."

- 78 *Ibid.*, f.51 v, 2.3.1774.  
 79 *Ibid.*, ff.67 v-68 v, 21.3.1774.  
 80 *Ibid.*, ff.81 v-82 r, 11.4.1774.  
 81 *Ibid.*, ff.93 r-94 r, 25-4-1774.  
 82 AOM 1529, f.146 r.  
 83 *Ibid.*, f.164 r, 1.8.1774.  
 84 AOM 1364, ff.251 r-v, 28.6.1774.  
 85 *Ibid.*, ff.120 v-121 r, 23.5.1774.  
 86 *Ibid.*, ff.119 r-v, 120 v-121 r, 23.5.1774; ff.123 r-v, 6.6.1774; f.159 r, 10.8.1774.  
 87 *Ibid.*, f.147 r, 18.7.1774.  
 88 *Ibid.*, ff.119 r-120 v, 23.5.1774.  
 89 *Ibid.*, f.137 v, 4.7.1774.  
 90 NLM 1146, *Gior. Not.*, II, p. 318.  
 91 *Ibid.*, p. 314.  
 92 AOM 1529, f.181r.  
 93 NLM 1146, *Gior. Not.*, II, p. 237.  
 94 AOM 1529, ff. 173 v, 185; P. Callus, *The Rising of the Priests, its implications and repercussions on Ecclesiastical Immunity* (Malta 1961) p. 18.  
 95 ASV *Lettere dell'Inquisitore in Malta a. 1773-74*, N. 136 quoted after Laferla, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-24.  
 96 AOM 1529, ff.178 r-v; NLM 1146, *Gior. Not.*, II, pp. 330, 334-335.  
 97 AIM *Alla Segreteria di Stato*, Tomo IV, ff.440, r-v; NLM 1146, *Gior. Not.*, 11, p. 336.  
 98 AIM *Alla Segreteria di Stato*, Tomo IV, ff.440 v, 441 r.  
 99 *Ibid.* ff.440 r-441 r; AIM *Gior. Ist.*, f.4 v; NLM 1146 *Gior. Not.*, II, p. 338; NLM 167, ff.182 v-183 r; AOM 273, ff. 45 r-v; AOM 1529, f.198 r.  
 100 AIM *Alla Segreteria di Stato*, Tomo IV, f. 440 v; AOM 1529, f.199 r.  
 101 AIM *Alla Segreteria di Stato*, Tomo IV, ff. 440 v-441 r; NLM 167, ff.183 r-v.  
 102 AOM 1529, ff.212 v-213 v; AIM *Dal Sant'Ufficio all' Inquisitore a. 1771-1777*, f.150 r; AIM *Alla Segreteria di Stato*, Tomo IV, f.441 v, 3.9.1774; AIM *Gior. Ist.*, ff.5 r-v; NLM 137, ff.183 v-184 r.  
 103 AIM *Alla Segreteria di Stato*, Tomo IV, f.442 r; AOM 1529, ff.234 r-v.  
 104 NLM 1146, *Gior. Not.*, II, pp. 346-347; NLM 137, ff.33 v, 35 r.  
 105 AOM 1529, f.204 r  
 106 *Ibid.*, f.166 r.  
 107 *Ibid.*, f.249 v.  
 108 NLM 137, f. 57 r.  
 109 *Ibid.*, f.63 r.  
 110 *Ibid.*, f.60 r.  
 111 AIM *Gior. Ist.* f.4 v; AIM *Alla Segreteria di Stato*, Tomo IV, f.445 v.  
 112 AIM *Gior. Ist.*, f.4 v.  
 113 ASV *Lettere dell'Inquisitore in Malta a. 1775-1776*, N. 137, quoted after Laferla, *op. cit.*, p. 28.  
 114 NLM 429, *Band a. 1772-1779*, f.112 r; NLM 137, f.71 r; AIM *Gior. Ist.*, f.4 r; AIM *Alla Segreteria di Stato*, Tomo IV, f. 450 v, wherein the Inquisitor informs the Vatican Secretary of State that Malta was infested with thieves.  
 115 AOM 273, f.46 r; AIM *Dalla Segreteria di Stato a. 1774*, ff.101 r-v.  
 116 P. Fava, *Francesco Saverio Ximenes d eTexada, problems facing the Order of St. John during his Grandmastership, 1773-1775* (Bachelor of Arts thesis presented to the History Department, University of Malta in May 1970, unpublished) pp. 79-177.  
 117 NLM 137, f.84 r.



- 118 *Ibid.*, f.102 r.  
 119 AIM Gior. 1st., ff.7 v-10 r.  
 120 NLM 137, f.102 r.  
 121 *Ibid.*, f.128 r.  
 122 *Ibid.*, f.128 v.  
 123 *Ibid.*, f.133 v; AIM Gior. 1st., f.35 v.  
 124 *Ibid.*, f.45 r.  
 125 *Ibid.*, f.45 v.  
 126 *Ibid.*, f.36 r; NLM 794, p. 5.  
 127 AIM Gior. 1st., f.44 v.  
 128 *Ibid.*, f.45 r.  
 129 *Ibid.*, f.31 v.

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## ON MALADMINISTRATION . . . AND AUSTERITY

Soon after the tragic invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, the country's prisons were soon crowded with political prisoners. In one prison in Prague prisoners were trying to know more about each other. "I have been here for a little while now because I was against Dubcek," said one to a newcomer: "That's funny", replied the latter, "I have just been rounded up because I was for Dubcek!" "Beat this", came a quiet voice from a corner of the darkened damp cell: "I am Dubcek!"

FRANCIS CIAPPARA

## LAY HEALERS AND SORCERERS IN MALTA (1770-1798)

*What is the power of the mind over the body? What is the degree of psychological or psychic manipulation that may be exercised over any person? Selecting numerous cases indicating popular beliefs in the supernatural, and methods of folk medicine — from confessions before the Inquisition Tribunal — FRANCIS CIAPPARA\* here throws some light on the dubious faith of the simple man in moments of anguish as well as his ingenuity in moments of pain, including some most weird superstitious practices caused partly by medical insufficiency and partly by an exotic, if not actually magical, disposition to life. We may laugh, but these extreme cases are recorded as having actually happened throughout the Maltese Islands not so many generations ago; nor are beliefs relating to such things as the evil eye and “natural doctors” alien to contemporary Maltese society: and indeed there appears to be no ultimate explanation of the phenomenon other than, possibly, the simplistic disdain for “ignorance.” A more profound analysis of such a variety of anecdotes in the near future would certainly make a worthwhile contribution to our understanding of social history.*

Late 18th. century Malta was a bizarre world. A whole crowd of lay healers treated patients for various diseases — swollen feet, ringworm, pterygium, warts, jaundice. Even

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people under the effect of the evil-eye and the maghmul resorted to these charlatans; while sorcery was also indulged in to win some lady's hand, to bring a husband back, to find some treasure, to win at gambling. The examples mentioned in the article are taken from the lawsuits of the Inquisition; and hence, as they are based upon statements made under oath, they are a reliable source of information. Nor are they extreme cases either: similar instances could be repeated **ad nauseam**.

Doctors rendered their services both at the hospitals and in the towns and villages of Malta. But their expertise was frequently supplemented, if not substituted, by popular types of treatment. Pasquale Calafato, nicknamed "Ciausat", of Casai Attard counselled baths of sea water for swollen feet; while little children "who felt pain in their ribs owing to coagulated milk" were to have a hedgehog cut open and applied (while it was still warm) on the part which hurt them.<sup>1</sup> Giuseppe Falzon, a baptised slave who lived in the prison of Senglea, treated children for ringworm. He first shaved their heads, which he then smeared with gunpowder, lemon juice, crushed date stone, burnt bones of dogs' heads, and tarred hempen threads all mixed together. Angelo Bonello, a Gozitan who lived in Gudia in 1788, had his three children treated by Falzon. The treatment started a week after the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, and continued intermittently for about two months. The slave's services were asked for in other villages as well — Casal Zurric, Citta' Pinto, and Casal Zeitun; but according to Catarina Barbara no child was ever cured by him. Falzon even tried to cure Lorenza, an old woman from Gudia, who had been paralysed in bed for a very long time. He bled her hand, changed her clothes, and gave her a bath in which he put boiled orange-leaves, lemon-leaves, rosemary, wild thyme, and **grasso di bovemarino**. He even fumigated the room with benzoin to remove the offensive smell there was. Lorenza gave him, on different occasions, 16 tari, 8 tari, 1 scudo, and a bed-sheet. But he did not keep all the money to himself since he purchased for the old woman, amongst other things, some beef and a candle, which she was to light before the crucifix she kept in her room.<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, it was natural for a credulous and backward population to resort to the supernatural in their hour of need.

This is, in fact, the psychological basis of religion and the sense of hope and of the 'Big Brother' which it instils. Religion still held sway over the people, who with fervent faith prayed to God and the Saints to have mercy on them. When Elena Xerri of Birchircara was ill she put on her chest a 'small cross of Jerusalem' her confessor had given her.<sup>3</sup> Maria Agius "ta' Suffeira" lived in the vicinity of the churches of the Saviour and the Annunciation at Casal Attard. In 1788, she treated an 18-year-old young man, nephew of Fr. Antonio Gristi, of the same village, for pterygium or — as it was called in the village jargon — "octopus". She passed a ring, which he himself had brought, over his eye, while reciting the following charm she had learnt when still a young girl:<sup>4</sup>

Salip InDeu,  
 Santu Luca, San Matteu,  
 handi Hainea tugiahni.  
 Mur fdach il Ginien  
 imscleitu brigleia  
 saccheitu bi Iddimuh ta' haineia.  
 Acta bisbiesa hilia  
 u Imsah biha hainech  
 u mur fl sciat il Bahar  
 issip il carnit istaham,  
 hafen seba hafniet ma seba meugiet,  
 hasel haineich biesc isiru phal uardiet.  
 Santa Maria Margarita  
 tnahi lehbara mil carnita.

Angeluzza treated Catarina, both of Casal Zeitun, for the same eye-disease. She rubbed her eyes with the ring while they recited together the following singsong:<sup>5</sup>

I treat your eye, and I treat it again,  
 and I will remove your octopus.  
 Santa Lucia, Santa Margarita,  
 remove the octopus  
 and throw it into the sea,  
 and don't let it appear again.  
 Jesus Christ met his mother, Mary,  
 and asked her, "Tell me, what ails thee?"  
 "My eye hurts me", she answered.

"Go by the seaside  
and find a herb watered with my sweat."  
St. George on horse-back,  
cure this young lady.

Maria Chetcuti, also of Zeitun, had warts on her face. She was advised to seek the services of Antonio, but she decided to be her own doctor. She rubbed the warts with three straws while reciting three creeds in honour of the birth of Our Lord, believing she would be cured by the merit of the straw on which He was born. Then she rubbed them with three small stones, and said three Hail Marys "in honour of those three stones on which David wrote the names of Jesus and Mary, and with which he killed Goliath". Next, she put the straws in a water-basin, and a month later the warts dropped off. Maria treated in like manner five other women, and, on her own testimony, they were all cured.<sup>6</sup> When Maria Agius of Nasciar suffered from tooth-ache, her husband, Michele "ta' Ilhmar chibir", not only went to see the doctor, but he even asked the services of several priests who read the gospel over her head.<sup>7</sup> Fr. Giuseppe Camilleri "tallacham" of Casal Zebbug, who lived near St. Roque's church, was in the habit of reading to people of all ages who suffered from jaundice. He charged 4 onze a time, besides receiving gifts of various sorts.<sup>8</sup>

Jaundice was, in fact, a common malady. The above-mentioned Pasquale had his own way of curing it, and his fame spread throughout the Island. He skimmed the patient's bare chest with a flint, which if its movement was obstructed, indicated he had contracted the disease. The two, then, made the sign of the cross, recited five times a Hail Mary, an Our Father, and the Glory Be in honour of the Holy Trinity; a Hail Mary and an Our Father in honour of St. Francis Xavier, St. Joseph, and all the Saints; and a "Salve Regina" in honour of Our Lady. In the meantime, he applied a piece of candle blessed on Candlemas Day (*xemgha tal-Kandlora*) and another piece of candle used in church on Maundy Thursday (*xemgha tat-tniebri*) to the patient's forehead, which he removed only at the end of the prayers. He fumigated the patient once every morning with blessed olive-branches, incense, and candles. Then with the ashes, he made three crosses on the forearm, the knees, and the shin-bone, saying each time: "Jesus fili Maria San

Giuseppe". The treatment went on for four, fifteen, or twenty days according to the gravity of the illness. By passing again the flint over the chest he knew whether the disease had been lifted or not. The testing-stone was bought by Giuseppe Agius for 100 scudi; but it was worth the price since he took up jaundice-treatment as a profession and brought up a family of eight.<sup>9</sup>

When ten years of age Valenza Agius "ta' Scueiha" — who lived between the parish church of Zebbug and the Church of Our Lady of Sorrows — had been taken by her mother to "Ciausat". Though she was cured, she was taken ill again nine years later, and notwithstanding the doctor's treatment she was confined to bed for a whole year. As her face changed colour her friends assured her she had jaundice and she resolved to cure herself the way Pasquale had done. After five days she was able to sit up in bed; and at the end of a fortnight she was cured. Several people started to seek her services, and she showed them not only how to conduct the treatment, but also that they should have faith and recite the prayers with devotion. She also continued to treat people herself: Grazia "tal Uersiech", Maria "ta' Cinquina", and Grazia "ta' Bergili" all died in hospital, while Rosa "ta' Tuila" and Grazia "ta' Dora" were both cured.<sup>10</sup>

Anna Gatt, Valenza's sister, was another lay-doctor. Her first experiment was made on two girls whose parents had brought them back from hospital and having succeeded, she was often called upon to cure jaundice. She treated not only people from Citta' Rohan, but wherever her services were called for, being paid 2 tari by each patient. The Vicar General had warned her to desist, but moved by pity, she continued with the treatment.<sup>11</sup> Catarina "ta' Catusi", of the same town, fumigated Rosa "ta' Succhett" with olive branches, and as these turned blackish she verified she had contracted the illness. Then, while praying undertone, she blessed her with the twigs' ashes and with a piece of candle. The treatment was repeated four times, but after a few days, Rosa was taken to hospital where she died after eleven days. Catarina also treated Ignazio Camilleri "tal Kajn" and his wife, Anna, and Giuseppe Cascun's wife, Rosa — all of Siggewi.<sup>12</sup> Giovanni Maria Mallia, also from Siggewi, used a lengthy and curious type of treatment. He started by fumigat-

ing the patient three times with blessed olive-branches; then he read from a book he had used at school the "Veni Creatur Spiritus", the creed in honour of the Heart of Jesus, the "Salve Regina" in honour of the Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the psalm "Nunc Dimittis Servum Tuum" in honour of Holy Jesus. With the ashes of the burnt olive-branches he made five signs of the cross on the forehead, on the hands, and on the knees. Next, he recited the first chapter of St. John's gospel, and the psalm "Qui Habitat in Adjuutorium". This ritual was repeated five times in honour of the five wounds of Jesus. <sup>13</sup>

A man who lived in Valletta at the back of the monastery of St. Mary Magdalene had his own peculiar way of curing people from jaundice. He diagnosed the disease by looking fixedly into their eyes. Then he measured with a piece of string the length and breadth of their bodies keeping their arms outstretched. The remaining part of the string he cut into pieces which he threw on the head, the chest, and on the feet, while looking now at the picture of St. Elia and now at the patient's eyes, and muttering "Beato Sant Elia, ed in mezzo di Maria." Maria, wife of Giovanni "ta' Mastru Bertu", Francesca "ta' Caccia", Catarina, wife of Angelo Muscat "ta Scariu", and Angela, wife of Agostino "tal Paia", all of Città Pinto went to be treated by him. He demanded 3 tarl from each as stipends for masses to be said at the altar of St. Elia; but they even gave him a dozen eggs, and all except Catarina were cured after visiting him more than once. <sup>14</sup>

When no remedy could be found the Maltese attributed many of their infirmities to witchcraft rather than to natural causes. They firmly believed, as some still do, in the evil-eye. The Inquisitor, Mgr. Zondadari, tried to understand this belief of the people "tenaciously attached to their various customs". It was — so was he assured — the effect of poison which passed from people's eyes into what they looked at. <sup>15</sup>

Salvatore Calleja "ta' Chnanet" of Città Rohan recognised people under the effect of this spell. He put some water and some salt in a white clay plate, blessed it and recited thrice a Holy Father, a Hail Mary, and a Glory Be in honour of the Holy Trinity. Then he put two or three drops of oil into the plate. If these scattered, it was a sign the patient was bewitched, and the same experiment was repeated twice

more, each time using fresh water, salt and oil. This secret was taught to him by his father, to whom in turn it had been revealed by a Capuchin friar, a relative of his. His daughter, Grazia Vassallo "ta' Prans", who lived in the vicinity of the church of Our Lady of Light, treated Anna's child; Grazia's five-year-old daughter, Teresa, Teresa wife of Francesco "ta' Cantonieri"; and the mare of Giuseppe "ta' Mas", which would neither eat nor rise from the ground, but which later regained its health. Grazia's sister, Lorenza, wife of Francesco "ta' Zeit", treated a child of Domenico "il Gerrei".<sup>16</sup>

Maria Teresa of Senglea fumigated patients with blessed olive branches, palm-branches, and incense while reciting the following charm she had been taught by Catarina Coppola:<sup>17</sup>

Occiatura, Scantatura,  
 Sana sia chista creatura  
 due l'anni innociatu  
 tri l'anni Sanctu  
 il Padre, il figlio, lo Spirito Sancto.  
 Santissima Trinita,  
 Giusu' Christu colla catina,  
 questo male si ritira.  
 Giusu' Christu culla colonna,  
 questo male mai non torna.  
 Giusu' Christu culla crucl,  
 chiestu mali si riduci.

These evil-eye healers, generally women, were to be found in most villages of Malta. At Rabat: Teresa, widow of Tomaso "ta' Rasu", who lived in the region of **dar hanzira**; Maddalena "ta' Ciacias"; Anna "ta' bsara" from **hariescem**, and Teresa "ta' Temp" were known to practice this type of healing.<sup>18</sup> While at Nasciar practiced Anna "ta' Cintiu"<sup>19</sup> and Paolica Galea "ta' Randun" who resided in the area **Ta' Bir il Hut**. The latter not only recited a Hail Mary and a "Salve Regina", but she even told the infirm:<sup>20</sup>

May God set you free from the evil eye.  
 May God liberate you from the wicked eye.  
 May the sea come with velocity and go like a wave.



May the eye as black as mulberry  
come out like the ringworm.

At Casal Lia, the inhabitants resorted to the help of Anna "ta' Chetra" and to Anna "ta' Coggia", widow of Andrea Fenech. In 1789, the latter treated Maria, wife of Aloisio Mifsud "ta' Pulitu" whom she fumigated three times, while reciting the "Salve Regina" and a popular saying: <sup>21</sup>

iech il hain hi cahla tmur phal nahla  
u iech il hain hi zercha tmur phal berca.

The evil-eye, however, was not the only fear under which the Maltese lived. The maghmul was another kind of spell brought about on a lock of hair, nail-parings, a piece of cloth. It afforded an easy explanation when medicine could bring no relief. Maria Grech "il Pamplona" of Birchircara was in such pain that she threw herself on the ground, screaming. Dr. Perdon and the surgeon Michele Grillet assured her it was calculus; but as they could not cure her, nothing could convince her and her neighbours that it was not the result of witchcraft. She had lived in concubinage with Battista Zarb for fourteen years before settling down with Giovanni "ta' Mincuzza"; and he must surely have cast a spell on her to avenge himself. She started to be treated by Hammuda, the Turk, even though her confessor, the Capuchin friar Anselmo, forbade her betake herself to him. Such was her faith in him that she did not mind regaining her health even from the devil "now that I would soon be cured", and when she had already spend 50 scudi. <sup>22</sup>

Anna Maria "ta' Corom" of Burmola threatened to avenge herself on Margarita Schembri and on her sister, Maria, when they turned her friend out of a house they owned. They found a lock of hair hanging from a nail, which Fr. Giovanni removed with a cane and threw into the fire, while he read the Gospel over their head, and encouraged them to fear nothing. But then a series of misfortunes started which made them believe they were really under the effect of a spell. After four months their brother, Angelo Farrugia, drowned after his boat had sunk. Then it was Maria's turn, followed by her two daughters', Margarita, aged 16, and 23-year-old Giovanna. Their mattresses were thought to be

infected, and were burnt. The spell had worked.<sup>23</sup> Giuseppe "ta' Seppu l'ahmar" of Città Rohan wished to see his sister, Maria, who lived near the church of Uletchirda, dead. He placed on her door's threshold three nails, a little salt, a piece of fried meat, and a lock of hair, which he then assured her was only a sham, the hair being violin chords. But in 1787, an old woman from Floriana went to visit her and assured her a death spell had been cast on her. She gave her some water of St. Feliciano to drink; but as she refused, the old woman blessed her arms and told her to hang the bottle behind the door.<sup>24</sup> Giuseppe Callus "tal Hut" of Casal Saffi had illicit relations with Francesca Bonel "il Haucia" of Casal Gudia. After a while he left her to return to his wife. Francesca made it publicly known she would exterminate both him and his wife. Giuseppe believed her since she went on board the galleys to talk to the convicts and to the Turks, who were wont to cast such spells. Thus, on 15 May 1793, he appeared before the Tribunal of the Inquisition and asked Mgr. Carpegna to protect him.<sup>25</sup> Elisabetta Dorel of Vittoriosa cast a spell *ad mortem* on her husband, through the services of Palma, a Neapolitan woman.<sup>26</sup>

To break these spells all kinds of incomprehensible methods were resorted to, which were, in fact, nothing more than easy means to earn good money. In 1786, Pietro Pace of Casal Lia was assured by a doctor at the **Sacra Infermeria** there was no remedy for his eye disease. For 24 tarl a Turk gave him some ointment to apply to his eyes, which he was also to fumigate with eight pieces of paper.<sup>27</sup> When in 1775 Felice Schembri "ta' Breita" of Casal Musta felt unwell, two Turks gave him a flint with many signs on it. He drank the water into which he had put the stone, but it was all in vain.<sup>28</sup> In 1777, Giovanna Borg of Burmola gave a biscuit to Rosa Stivala. That same night she had a bad stomach ache, which the doctors Seichel, Cerdon, Creni, and Consoli could not diagnose; and, thus, Giuseppe, her husband, suspected it was some piece of witchcraft. Her mother ordered Giovanna leave her daughter in peace; but she kissed the ground, and thanked God that Rosa would never rise up from bed, and would soon die. The Church believed in the power of such spells, and the poor woman was exorcised by the Dominican Fr. Vincenzo Aquilina, and by Fr. Fulgentio, a Franciscan friar.

Maria Mangion, also of Burmola, had been insane for twenty years, and she could regain her health neither by spiritual nor by medicinal means. Her sister, Catarina, widow of Pasquale Carciella, sought the services of a Turk, who fumigated her with benzoin and "cosbor" and passed a sheet of paper over the fire. The outline of a face and some letters soon could be made out on the paper, which drawings had been made by the Spirits who would cure Maria and whom the slave tied to a tree in the outskirts of Zabbar. To pay the Turk for this worthless service, Catarina gave him a hen and 10 scudi after she had pawned her clothes.<sup>30</sup> Rosaria's husband, Paolo Gambin of Valletta, was in chains at the mental hospital. His father-in-law, Saverio Savona, took pity on him, and procured for him all medical remedies available, and had readings made over him by many priests. As a last resort, he summoned the help of Gaetano Schembri, a baptised slave, who wrote some letters on a "lampuca", cut off its head, roasted it and gave it to Paolo, who also drank the wine with which Gaetano had washed the plate.<sup>31</sup> When in 1784, Giuseppe Bonello's wife, Rosa, of Siggeui was sick with dropsy, Francesco "il Barbir" gave her a jar of honey and spices, and three pieces of paper written with the blood of a chicken Rosa had given him to fumigate herself with.<sup>32</sup>

It seems incredible that the people did not see through the Turks' machinations, and let themselves be made fun of and robbed time and time again. But desperate as they were they had nobody to turn to except these charlatans, who were their last hope, and in whom they so firmly believed. Lorenzo, son of Catarina Aquilina of Siggeui, was paralysed in the legs. His mother believed this was the sinister work of Maria Anna, her former servant who had given him two "ravioli" to eat. Her brother, Giovanni Maria Balzan, a soldier on the Order's galleys, asked the help of a Turk, who gave him three pieces of paper with which to fumigate Lorenzo's legs, while three other sheets of paper were to be put in water and vinegar which the boy was to drink. It was all in vain, though the experiments had cost 9 tari. He even got worse; and Giuseppe, a neophyte, gave him some ointment to use on his joints, and some blessed olive-leaves to fumigate him while invoking the name of God. Catarina now paid 2 onze, but again without result. Lastly, Agata "Cinclejna" took pity on her, and won the services of another

baptised slave, who gave her some lentils with which to fumigate Lorenzo's legs. He was likewise paid 2 onze.<sup>33</sup> Feliciano Brincat of Valletta was impotent and let himself be fooled several times. The slave Giuseppe "ta' Karrup" gave him a little piece of lead to put into the water which he had to drink during three days. Another slave gave him seven boiled eggs to eat, and eight written pieces of paper to swallow one at a time. Hibraim gave him some fried dog's meat to throw into a canal; Harabi, two eggs, written on the outside, to eat; Hali, some ground pepper mixed with honey to swallow. The last slave, even gave him some grass roots and a few written pieces of paper to boil and drink, and a heart drawn on a paper to pierce with pins.<sup>34</sup>

In cases when the illness took its natural course, people believed they had been cured by the Turk's power. A slave of Valletta was so sure of his type of treatment that he would be paid only if it succeeded. In 1776, he gave two written pieces of paper and some powder to Clemento Zarb of Gargur, whose son, Luca, was mentally ill. The boy was to be sprinkled with the powder and to drink the hot water in which the writing was dissolved. Luca made some improvement and his chains were removed.<sup>35</sup> Maria Bezzina of Naxar, however, returned to the slave and reprimanded him for having robbed her of 5 scudi. But he knew how to get out of tight corners. The small bottle of red liquid which he had given her to treat her son's eyes with was a good prescription, but another spell had been cast on him, which it was beyond his powers to cure.<sup>36</sup>

These treatments could lead the patients into trouble. Giuseppe Vassallo of Burmola had been married to Rosa "ta' Hasra" for 35 years; but when he went blind in 1771, she turned him out of the house, and took as her lover Antonio Sultana who lived near St. Paul's church, Michammet, a slave at the "bagno" of Vittoriosa, promised to cure him. He burned a piece of paper, put the ashes into some wine which he gave him to drink, made him swallow a pill, and washed his eyes with water. At once, Giuseppe felt a stomach ache, and his tongue got swollen. He was taken to the **Sacra Infermeria** where he was treated; but as it was in vain, he made his way to "that Friar Minor who reads the Holy Gospel over people's heads". He put some oil of St. Anthony on his tongue, pressed it, and at once there issued a stream of blood. Giuseppe felt

relieved. "You need not go to hospital", the friar told him "go to the Holy Office".<sup>37</sup>

Late 18th century Malta was a strange world. Sorcery was used not only to cure diseases, but for various other purposes. Maria Sayd of Burmola lived near the church of St. John "ta' Huscia". Her daughter, Concetta, was badly treated by her husband, Saverio, who abandoned her. Hibraim promised to bring him back and make him give up gambling. He demanded a piece of his clothes and some salt, and put a paper on the fire in which yellow letters appeared.<sup>38</sup> Maria Pavia, of Valletta, was equally disturbed when her husband, Giovanni Battista, left her and their six children for another. In 1788, she asked the help of a Turkish shoe-repairer, who gave her a piece of paper to sew inside her husband's dress. Of the 30 tari he demanded, she gave him only five; but as it was to no avail, she asked the services of another slave who tried to violate her as payment.<sup>39</sup> Francesca "Tscellughia" of Gudia was badly treated by her parents and by her sister, Maria, who bit her arm and her shoulder. She asked Francesca Bonello, who lived near the Annunciation Church, to make them consent to her marrying a young man who then (in 1788) was away from the Island, and to give her as dowry the piece of land called "ta' Borriso". She dissolved some starch in water which she gave them to drink, while she kept some of her own hair in her blouse's sleeve.<sup>40</sup> Salvatore Saliba of Casal Chercop returned home drunk almost every day and made love to his wife in front of their six daughters and four sons. She always consented since he threatened to kill her; but at last a Turk promised to make him impotent. The slave let her sit down on his knees, whispered something in her ears which she did not understand, and then assured her that she would have the required wish. But it availed her nothing.<sup>41</sup> Fortunato Sacchet of Senglea not only could not maintain his family, he even beat his wife, Vincenza, with a stick. His wife had no one to turn to, being an orphan; but one day, as she was in tears at her door's entrance, a slave passed by. He gave her a scrap of paper with some words written on it to put inside her husband's pillow. But when Fortunato found it, he beat her badly!<sup>42</sup>

Even husbands resorted to the Turks' help. Giuseppe Moraghes of Valletta was abandoned by his wife when he

went blind. For 20 tari a slave gave him a heart of stone to throw into the sea. <sup>43</sup> Lucio Micallef, who lived in the outskirts of Birchircara, led a desperate life on account of his wife's infidelity. A slave, who was blind in one eye, succeeded in defrauding him of 15 tari on each of the first two occasions he tried to help Micallef, and a dozen eggs, half a loaf of bread and 13 tari on the third. <sup>44</sup> The cleric, Lorenzo Bugeia, of Rabat, was in love with a married woman, Maria "ruch ittaiba" of Mdina. When his wife came to know of the affair, he sought the help of a Turk who gave him a cane filled with salt to throw into the house-well. He was also to fumigate himself with some odoriferous matter, and to burn three pieces of his lover's blouse. <sup>45</sup>

Both Lorenzo Muscat "haten berchucin" who lived at Musta near "ta' Cumbo" tower <sup>46</sup> and Francesco Demartino of Valletta <sup>47</sup> asked the help of slaves to win the hand of the lady they loved. Giuseppe Chercop "il Cenacolo" of Casal Chercop tried his own experiment. He put some of his own sperm in a piece of bread just out of the oven, and gave it to his love to eat! A Turk gave Simone Xicluna "ta' Tombu" of Casal Tarxen an egg, and some wine to pour on the ground over which his lady passed. <sup>48</sup> In 1789, Michele Xerri "ta' Tantailo" of St. Roque Street, Valletta, quarrelled with his lover. To make her come back, he held across his face a red handkerchief which a corsair had sprinkled with some powder while he held it over the fire. <sup>49</sup>

Sorcery was resorted to for various purposes. Antonio Dimech of Valletta wanted the mare of Baron Pietro Paolo Testaferrata take first prize in the races held annually on the feast of St. John the Baptist. A Turk gave him two pieces of paper to put on its forehead; a second slave went round the animal several times holding a plate with some water; while a third put a paper on the mare's forehead and another on its back. <sup>50</sup> Antonia Magri of Senglea, in order to get rid of the misery she was in, sprinkled a soft-toy with anisette, and beat it with a stick for five consecutive days. <sup>51</sup> Nicola Borg "ta' Hleila" of Siggeui <sup>52</sup> and Francesco Camilleri of Naxar <sup>53</sup> sought the services of a Turk to win at gambling; while Antonio Mallia of Senglea asked the help of Ibrahim when his ten-year-old daughter, Felicita, lost her golden necklace in church. <sup>54</sup>

Palmistry was not unknown. In 1787, on the feast of

Our Lady of Carmel, Teresa, wife of Ignazio Camenzuli, of Rabat, took her children to the house of Maria Vassallo at Mdina, where an unknown woman of Vittoriosa interpreted their hands. Maria who had contracted jaundice twice, looked well after the house and her parents, had suffered three terrible frights, was devoted to Our Lady, had had many suitors, and she would inherit a great sum of money. Anna, who easily lost her patience, had three children and she would give birth to another four. Rosa could earn good money by practising a skill she had. Teresa had brought a fat dowry; and she would give birth to nine boys. Maria Vassallo had been on the point of death, and had extreme unction administered to her. Vincenza, of Casal Chercop, would have a devoted husband, but her newly-born child would die soon after baptism, and even she would be severely ill.<sup>55</sup> Another palmist was Manena of Strait Street. She looked at the hand of Vittoria Ellul and assured her that her son would not be imprisoned. She even had a magic magnet which she had borrowed from Giuseppe, a baptised slave, for 18 tari a month. Vittoria kept it for a night so that her lover would return to her. She placed the magnet under the pillow he used to sleep on.<sup>56</sup>

Treasure-hunting was a common pastime. In 1774, Giovanni Maria Bonello of Casal Naxar was assured by Mahruf, the barber, there was a treasure hidden at *hain targia*. He was swindled of 60 scudi before he realized that he was being fooled.<sup>57</sup> As proof of her power at treasure-finding, Anna Delicata of Città Pinto prophesied to Rosalia and her husband, Giuseppe Borg, they would hear knocking on their bed chamber door. As all this happened they believed her, but they were defrauded of 5 scudi and a black cockerel. Anna also tricked Grazia, wife of Angelo "ta' Mascu", Elisabetta, wife of Giovanni "ta' Gaitu", Francesco Gristi and his children, Michele and his wife, Maria Ciangura, and Anna.<sup>58</sup> Both Giovanni Vassallo of Valletta,<sup>59</sup> and Giuseppe Barbara "ta' Sebha irgiel" of Casal Gudia<sup>60</sup> were likewise taken in, but not Paolo Caruana, the cab-driver of Bailiff Frisani.<sup>61</sup> Antonio Spinella of Augusta, Giuseppe Bugeia "ta' l'auditur" of Città Pinto, and the latter's uncle, Fr. Giorgio Tanti of Valletta, went treasure-hunting in an underground cave at *hain chajet*, limits of Rabat.<sup>62</sup>

It is no wonder that the mass of the people believed in

witchcraft when even priests did. When Fr. Orazio Xicluna's mother, of Casal Luca, died, his father started an affaire and turned him out of the house. Giovanni Muscat of Casal Tarken advised him seek the help of some slave, who gave him a written piece of paper to tie round his arm with some green ribbon.<sup>63</sup> In 1788, Fr. Nicola Magri of Città Rohan was falsely charged by his sisters of having robbed them. On that account he even lost the friendship of Fr. Salvatore Tabone, and of Eugenia Moneta. He, thus, commissioned Giovanni Camilleri "ta' Tajar", who lived near the church of Our Lady of Light, to find him a slave to prove his innocence. He burned a piece of paper and mixed its ashes with a pinch of snuff which he gave to Fr. Tabone; and he put some powder on the door's threshold through which Eugenia passed.<sup>64</sup> When in 1780, the Conventual Chaplain Fr. Stefano Caroana wanted to regain the love of a woman, he resorted to the galley-convict, Antonio Vollero, a Neapolitan, to cast a spell upon her.<sup>65</sup> Fr. Michele sought the services of the "forzato" Bernardino Cerfella of Aquila, to make him invisible and avenge himself on the Conventual Prior. The sorcerer smeared the soles of his feet with oil, put the head of a black cat on the floor between two candles while the priest read the divine office, and, as a last resort, he put a genie inside a ring which was to answer all Fra Michele's wishes.<sup>66</sup>

These experiments were only a means to deceive the common folk, who led a "hand to mouth" existence, Gaetano Schembri cast a spell on Catarina's lover, but, he said, "I knew very well that was impossible. I did it only to earn 16 tari, being very much in need that day".<sup>67</sup> Giuseppe Maria was equally frank. He dabbled in palmistry, but only because he was dismally poor: especially in winter when work was so scarce.<sup>68</sup> Giuseppe de Durino assured Nicola Vassallo of Siggeui that there was a treasure hidden in his garden; and he only needed a hen for the experiment which would allegedly lead to its discovery; he ate the hen but failed to find the treasure. This charlatan used a simple device to deceive the Maltese: he made drawings with lemon-juice, which were recognised only when passed over the fire. He delineated the figure of Maria "il Ahchieca" and made Anna Delicata "tal Cubrit" of Casal Curmi believe it had been she who had cast a spell on her. It had been manufactured out of some hair twisted round a comb, which Giuseppe himself hid in the



garden wall. "I did all this to have free access to Anna's house with whom I had illicit relations, while deceiving her husband with vain promises". Moreover, he was supplied with all the vegetables he needed.<sup>69</sup>

Although they were often blatantly deceived, the people still regarded these weird experiment as their last hope. The case of Nicola Ciantar of Rabat amply summarises this attitude. He was swindled 1 French oz. by a Turk, but he confessed: "if he had asked me for a higher price, I would have paid it all the same".<sup>70</sup> Superstition, in fact, held the inhabitants firmly in its grip. In 1769, the Capitular Vicar, Fr. Pietro Francesco Gristi, had exhorted all parish priests and confessors to extirpate this "pestiferous venom". At least twice a year, they were to preach to their parishioners about the grave harm which such errors brought to their souls as well as to the Divine cult.<sup>71</sup> But the church's injunction to refrain from such practices carried no weight when the people's misery could end simply by reciting a prayer or by burning a piece of paper. Not that Malta was backward medically: foreigners — Greeks and Sicilians, among others — came here to study.<sup>72</sup> But when medicine proved to no avail, some inhabitants sought the helping hand of lay-healers, generally women, who were invariably, to be found in the towns and villages of the Island.

- 1 Archives of the Inquisition, Malta, **Processi**, Gallarati-Scotti, Lawsuit 99. As this study is based on material taken from the proceedings of the Inquisition, only the name of the Inquisitor and the number of the lawsuit are given.
- 2 Scotti, 186.
- 3 Scotti, 85.
- 4 Scotti, 99. Cf., A.C., "Folklore Malti". **Il-Malti**, (March, 1931), pp. 17-18; M.A., "Folklore Malti". **Il-Malti**, (June, 1931), p. 68; J. Cassar-Pullicino, **An Introduction to Maltese Folklore**, (Malta, 1947), pp. 15-16.
- 5 Zondadari, 224.
- 6 Zondadari, 68.
- 7 Carpegna, 1.
- 8 Lante, 168.
- 9 Lante, 106.
- 10 Scotti, 246.
- 11 Scotti, 99.
- 12 Scotti, 99.
- 13 Zondadari, 292.
- 14 Scotti, 117.
- 15 A.I.M., **Corrispondenza**, 96, ff.275 v-276 r. Cf., A. Cremona, "Race, Language, and Myth", **Melita**, Vol. 1 (1921), pp. 400-402; V. Busuttill, **Holiday Customs in Malta**, (Malta, 1922) pp. 138-139.
- 16 Scotti, 236.

- 17 Zondadari, 242.
- 18 Zondadari, 23.
- 19 Scotti, 190.
- 20 Carpegna, 8.
- 21 Scotti, 251.
- 22 Lante, 1.
- 23 Lante, 113.
- 24 Scotti, 148.
- 25 Carpegna, 35.
- 26 Scotti, 74.
- 27 Scotti, 49.
- 28 Zondadari, 22.
- 29 Zondadari, 65.
- 30 Scotti, 111.
- 31 Carpegna, 179.
- 32 Zondadari, 365.
- 33 Scotti, 106.
- 34 Scotti, 163.
- 35 Lante, 165.
- 36 Carpegna, 28.
- 37 Lante, 94.
- 38 Scotti, 126.
- 39 Scotti, 191.
- 40 Scotti, 105.
- 41 Carpegna, 22.
- 42 Zondadari, 52.
- 43 Zondadari, 246.
- 44 Scotti, 51.
- 45 Lante, 101.
- 46 Scotti, 80.
- 47 Scotti, 78.
- 48 Scotti, 121.
- 49 Scotti, 129.
- 50 Scotti, 13.
- 51 Lante, 171.
- 52 Scotti, 98.
- 53 Carpegna, 169.
- 54 Scotti, 128.
- 55 Scotti, 113.
- 56 Scotti, 230.
- 57 Lante, 119.
- 58 Scotti, 117.
- 59 Scotti, 203.
- 60 Scotti, 257.
- 61 Scotti, 265.
- 62 Scotti, 34.
- 63 Zondadari, 259.
- 64 Scotti, 161.
- 65 Scotti, 94.
- 66 Scotti, 79A.
- 67 Carpegna, 179.
- 68 Lante, 34.
- 69 Lante, 39.
- 70 Scotti, 178.
- 71 Archives of the Archbishop, Malta, **Secretariat, Corrispondenza**, Vol. XVL f.7 v.
- 72 Lante, 187.

PAUL BARTOLO

## IL-HOBŻ TAL-MALTIN . . . U L-KUMMERĊ HIELES LI RIEDU L-INGLIŻI (1812-38)

*Il-hobs ilu għal żmien twil id-dieta principali tal-massa ta' Maltin; hekk ukoll għadu illum kif wera biżżejjed l-istranj tal-furnara ftit xhur ilu. F'dan l-istudju meħud mit-teżi tiegħu dwar British Colonial Fiscal Policy in Malta, 1812-1838, PAUL BARTOLO\* jifha dawl importanti fuq il-problema tal-qamħ u tal-għajxien f'Malta sew minħabba l-iskarsezza lokali tal-qamħ kif ukoll minħabba r-relazzjonijiet bejn il-bdiewa, in-negozjanti u l-gvern, speċjalment f'dak li għandu x'jaqsam ma' politika fiskali u kummerċjali.*

Il-hobż Malti ilu żmien twil jintgħagen fil-biċċa l-kbira tiegħu minn qamħ barrani. Sa minn qabel ġew il-Kavallieri ta' San Ġwann fl-1530 meta Malta ma kenitx iffullata bin-nies bħal-lum (kien hawn mal-20,000 ruħ), il-Maltin ma kenux ikabbru qamħ biżżejjed biex jitimghu lil kulhadd. U billi l-hobż minn dejjem kien essenzjali għall-għajxien tal-Maltin, il-gvern lokali ta' dak iż-żmien, magħruf bħala l-Università, kien ha f'idejha għal kollox l-importazzjoni tal-qamħ: hekk il-poplu kien żgurat li f'Malta ma jkunx hawn nuqqas ta' dqig, u li dan jinbiegħ bi prezz moderat.<sup>1</sup>

Il-Kavallieri għoġbithom dis-sistema: biss il-monopolju tal-qamħ tawh f'idejn l-Università ġdida, immexxija minn bord ta' erba' Maltin fil-Belt Valletta, minflok dik ta' l-Imdina. Għad li legalment din kienet kumpannija independenti mill-gvern, il-Granmastru kellu kontroll fuq it-tmexxija tagħha.<sup>2</sup> Il-Granmastru Pintu (1741-72), ngħidu aħna, darba

\* PAUL BARTOLO, li għadu kif spicċa l-kors tal-għalliema gradwati, fl-1975 kiseb First Class fil-B.A. (Hons); huwa għamel sena jgħalliem l-Istorja u l-Ekonomija f'De La Salle College u bħalissa qiegħed ihejji teżi għall-M.A. dwar il-finanzi tal-gvern fil-bidu ta' dan is-seklu.

kien ordna l-Università tbiegh il-qamh b'telf ta' 70% biex il-poplu ma jgerrix. <sup>3</sup> Il-prinċipju ta' dis-sistema kien li prezz tal-hobż jinżamm bejn wiehed u ieħor dejjem l-istess: meta l-prezzijiet tal-qamh barra joghlew, l-Università kienet tbiegh bit-telf, imma kienet tpatti ghalih meta dawn jinżlu. Dan sar wiehed mill-iktar servizzi importanti li l-gvern kien jaghti lill-poplu. <sup>4</sup>

L-Università kienet ukoll tikkontrolla l-prezzijiet billi toħroġ il-mieta (jew *mèta*) — prezz f'iss għal kull oġġett. Il-Granmastru De Rohan fl-1779 kien neħħa l-mieta minn fuq l-oġġetti importati, barra l-qamh u t-tabakk, biex forsi n-neguzjanti jġibu kwantità ikbar. Imma l-mieta fuq l-oġġetti kollha ta' l-ikel, ta' barra u ta' Malta, reġa' dahhalha Granmastru Hompesch, inqas minn għoxrin sena wara. <sup>5</sup>

### ***Konflitti ta' opinjoni w interessi bejn il-Maltin u l-Ingliżi:***

Meta Malta giet f'idejn l-Ingliżi fl-1800, dis-sistema ta' kontroll m'għoġbithomx għal żewġ raġunijiet. L-ewwelnett għax f'dak iż-żmien l-Ingliżi kienu influwenzati hafna mill-kitba ta' Adam Smith (*Wealth of Nations*, 1776) dwar il-benefiċċji tal-kummerċ ħieles u tal-kompetizzjoni. Infatti wiehed jista' jinnota kif il-prinċipji ta' Smith huma espressi fl-introduzzjoni tal-proklamazzjoni tal-25 ta' Frar, 1828, li biha l-Ingliżi neħhew minn Malta l-mieta tal-hobż:

"His Excellency being persuaded that no measure is better calculated to ensure an abundant supply of provisions of superior quality and at cheap rates, than the removal of all restrictive regulations having the least tendency to the discouragement of competition in the market... all persons may lawfully buy or sell bread at such price as may be agreed upon between the Buyer and Seller..."

Għalhekk il-kwestjoni tat-tneħħija tal-kontroll minn fuq l-importazzjoni tal-qamh, kif se naraw, hija biss parti mill-konflitt soċjali-ekonomiku bejn il-Maltin u l-Ingliżi. Fit-tradizzjoni 'paternalista' tal-Maltin, il-gvern kien mistenni jindaħal f'kull haġa li tmiss il-poplu: il-kwalità u l-prezz tal-hobż, provediment tal-ilma, xogħlijiet publiċi, sptarijiet, karità, edukazzjoni u l-bqija kienu kollha kkontrollati mill-Kavallieri. L-Ingliżi lmentaw li "the people have come to depend on government for all their wants." <sup>6</sup>

Min-naħa l-oħra, l-Ingliżi riedu jimponu f'Malta s-siste-



ma tagħhom ta' *laissez-faire* — li mhux il-gvern imma persuni ohra għal rashom jaħsbu għall-bżonnijiet ta-ikel, industriji, edukazzjoni u l-bqija.<sup>7</sup> Per eżempju, Sir Thomas Maitland, l-ewwel Governatur Inġliż ta' Malta (1813-24), kiteb Londra li Malta kien hawn nies iktar milli tiflaħ il-gżira għax il-gvern kien jissussidja l-qamħ.<sup>6\*</sup> Din kienet ideja żbaljata, għax il-Maltin kienu jaqilghu hobżhom billi jiddefendu l-Ewropa jew l-imperu Inġliż u billi jesportaw il-qoton li sa l-1800 kien jagħtihom iżjed qliegħ milli kieku jkabbru l-qamħ. Imma l-attitudni ta' Maitland turi bič-čar kif il-Gvern Kolonjali ma setax iħares bl-istess nuččali tal-Maltin lejn il-problemi ekonomiči u sočjali tal-gżira tagħna.

L-istess Maitland ikkundanna l-monopolju tal-qamħ per prinčipju:

"The first argument, and certainly a very strong one against this [corn] monopoly is first the general argument against all monopolies..."<sup>6</sup>

Għalhekk, kif spjega it-Teżor Inġliż fl-1838, Londra xtaqe li f'Malta:

"the inhabitants should be induced to rely, like those of other British Colonial Possessions, entirely on their own resources and foresight, and on the operations of trade for that supply."<sup>8</sup>

Ma' dal-konflitt ta' opinjoni bejn il-Maltin u l-Inġliži kien hemm ukoll konflitt aktar importanti ta' **interessi**. Il-Gvern Kolonjali ma riedx jidhol għar-responsabilità li jżomm il-prezz tal-hobż baxx u li jolhoq xogħol għal kulhadd kif xtaq l-Maltin għax dan seta' jnissel dejn publiku konsiderevoli.<sup>5</sup> Barra dan fil-każ partikolari tal-qamħ jidher konflitt čar, li rawh ukoll l-Inġliži, bejn l-interessi tal-poplu Malti u ta' dawh il-čtit' neguzjanti Inġliži li riedu jispekulaw fil-kummerč f'Malta u fil-Mediterran biex jagħmlu qliegħ kbir ħafna.<sup>9</sup>

F'dan l-artiklu se naraw kif u għaliex f'inqas minn erbgħin sena, sa l-1836 in-neguzjanti Inġliži rnexxiehom jeqirdu minn Malta kull kontroll tal-gvern fuq l-importazzjoni tal-qamħ.

### ***Il-qagħda tal-Maltin rigward il-qamħ:***

Tajjeb naraw l-ewwel x'kienet is-sitwazzjoni eżatta tal-Maltin rigward il-qamħ. Skond ka'koli mogħtija minn osservaturi Inġliži u oħrajn, fid-dhul tas-seklu dsatax, madwar żewg terzi ta' l-ikel tal-Maltin — li kienu jgħoddu minn

\* Innota li meta r-riferenza tkun diğa għet ikkwotata issibha indikata taħt l-istess numru.

100,000 sa 120,000 ruh — kien jiġi minn barra.<sup>10</sup>  
 L-iktar stima tajba dwar il-konsum ta' qamħ f'Malta bejn 1-1828 u 1-1835 jagħtihielna G. Ward, li kien Supretendent tal-amministrazzjoni tal-qamħ tal-gvern, kif tidher f'Tabella 1.

**Tabella 1**

**MEDJA TAL-KONSUM ANNWALI TA' QAMĦ F'MALTA  
 BEJN L-1828 U L-1835 <sup>11</sup>**

(Bis-salma = mal-470 libbra)

	Importat	Ta' Malta*	Total
Qamħ	62,857†	13,421	76,278
Xghir u qmuh ohra nferjuri	11,245	13,599	24,844
Mahlut (xghir u qamħ)	—	22,223	22,223
Total	74,102	49,243	123,345

\* Bejn wiehed u iehor.

† Jinkludu xi 5,000 salma għas-Servizzj Ingliżi.

Din turi li 82% tal-qamħ użat f'Malta kien impurtat waqt li jekk tqis kull xorta ta' qamħ u xhir użat mill-Maltin 60% kien barrani f'dan iż-żmien.

Mnejn kien jingieb dal-qamħ? Taħt il-Kavallieri l-aktar minn Sqallija.<sup>12</sup> Fi żmien l-Ingliżi mbagħad l-bieċa l-kbira kien jingieb min-nofs in-nhar tar-Russja (madwar il-Baħar l-Iswed) kif ukoll mill-Eġittu u xi ftit mill-Afrika ta' Fuq.<sup>13</sup> Bejn 1-1822 u 1-1832 il-qamħ Eġizzjan kien jammonta għal kważi 30% tal-qamħ barrani mikul f'Malta.<sup>14</sup> Imma dan kien l-iktar qamħ irħis għax kien l-agħar kwalità tal-Mediterran: infatti Maitland ried ibiegħu 'l f'qar fl-1820 bħala:

"a cheap and wholesome food... to the poorer classes... who have hitherto been accustomed to eat barley and other inferior kinds of grain"<sup>15</sup>

Billi Malta kienet toqgħod tant fuq l-importazzjoni għall-ikel ewlieni tal-poplu, il-gvern ried joqgħod attent li l-importazzjoni qatt ma tonqos (niftakru li qabel 1-1830 kien għad anqas hawn vapuri jaħdmu bl-isteam) u li n-negozjanti — li kienu ftit — ma jingħaqdux flimkien biex jgħollu l-prezz iktar milli jkun hemm bżonn.<sup>16</sup>

Għalhekk gara li l-osservaturi u amministraturi Ingliżi, fil-waqt li kkundannaw **fil-prinċiplu** l-monopolji tal-gvern

fuq l-importazzjoni tal-qamh, fil-prattika kollha kienu jaqblu li din is-sistema kienet qed taħdem tajjeb hawn Malta. Il-kummissarji tal-1812, ngħidu aħna, fil-waqt li qalu li s-sistema kienet

“designated by the odious name of monopoly”

ammettaw li

“here for a considerable number of years it [the corn monopoly] appears to have answered the two great political needs of bettering the conditions of the poor, and of procuring an increase of revenue.”<sup>17</sup>

Il-kummissarji hawnhekk qiesu żewġ vantaġġi tal-monopolju:

(a) li l-prezz tal-qamh seta' jinżamm moderat dejjem b'għid kbir għall-fqar li kienu hafna

(b) li bil-monopolju, meta l-prezz tal-qamh barrani kien jorhos hafna, il-gvern seta' jagħmel profitti kbar biex ikun jista' jlaħhaq ma' l-ispejjeż tal-amministrazzjoni — vantaġġ li bdew jagħmlu użu regolari minnu l-Ingliżi u li meta tneħħa l-monopolju fl-1822, żviluppa fit-taxxa fuq il-qamh.

Barra dan, il-poplu Malti kien dara b'din is-sistema ta' prezz stabbli għall-ikel ewlieni tiegħu. Maitland qal li l-Maltin kienu “highly alive” għal dak li kien jigri dwar i-qamh, u kien jibża' li jekk jitneħħa l-monopolju “an alarm would be general among the people”.<sup>18</sup>

Għalhekk il-gvernaturi Maitland, Hastings (1824-26) u Ponsonby (1827-35), u Hankey is-Segretarju prinċipali (1821-38) kollha qiesu li jehtieg jinżamm xi kontroll fuq l-importazzjoni tal-qamh. Imma dawn, kif se naraw, kellhom jikkumbattu mal-Colonial Office f'Londra għax, barra li dan kien favur il-kummeré hieles, Londra kienu dejjem jaslu l-ilmenti tan-neguzjanti Ingliżi f'Malta.

### **Il-Monopolju Jitneħħa fl-1822:**

Maitland, mill-esperjenza ta' l-Ingliżi bejn l-1800 u l-1812, kien iqis li, mhabba l-monopolju, il-qamh kien jingieb Malta bi prezz aktar għoli mill-ikieku kien kompetittiv. Għalhekk kien lest li jneħħi l-monopolju, basta n-neguzjanti jassiguraw li qamh igħibu dejjem u bi prezz moderat. Imma l-ebda neguzjant ma kien lest għal dan. Darba biss, fl-aħhar xhur tal-1815, kien ingħata kuntratt biex tingieb kunsinna

ta' qamh bi prezz iffissat — u hawn in-neguzjant kien ghamel qliegħ esagerat u l-gvern xejn ma swielu. Għalhekk Maitland kien iddeċieda li la l-gvern kellu jibqa' responsabbli biex il-poplu jkun fornut bl-ikel kontinwament u bi prezz moderat, il-gvern ukoll messu jibqa' jgawdi l-profitti li setghu jinkisbu mill-monopolju.<sup>19</sup> Infatti Maitland stess stqarr f'Jannar, 1816, li mhux biss kien ser ikompli bil-monopolju, imma kien ukoll hađu minn taht idejn l-Università biex jikkontrollah direttament, għax ma kienx jafda l-Maltin:

"I have in substance taken the whole of this concern [the corn monopoly] entirely out of the hands of the Maltese and placed it, in its principal parts, directly under government..."<sup>20</sup>

Fil-1818, imbagħad, Maitland illegalizza dawn il-miżuri billi qiegħed il-monopolju f'idejn dipartiment tal-gvern imsejjaħ il-'Board of Supply'.

Imma dal-monopolju tnehha fi żmien qasir imħabba l-pressjoni tal-qagħda mwiegħra tal-kummerċ f'Malta. Maitland, li għalih l-aktar importanti kien il-bilanċ tal-budget tal-gvern, fl-1819 kien qajjem hafna tgergir fost in-neguzjanti b'dazji godda fuq ix-xgħir u qmugh ohra ta' kwalità inferjuri li ma kenux maħkuma mill-monopolju.<sup>21</sup> U mbagħad, kif ikkummenta Hankey, "came the Greek Revolution of 1821, which completed the destruction of the trade of Malta".<sup>22</sup>

In-neguzjanti Ingliżi, li kienu ilhom jipprotestaw għal xejn kontra l-miżuri skabrużi ta' Maitland, fl-1821 ifformulaw petizzjoni għall-Parlament Ingliż. Skond Mitrovich<sup>23</sup> din iffirmawha n-negozjanti Ingliżi u Maltin kollha, kif ukoll nies ohra Maltin ta' min jorbot fuqhom, imma l-istil tagħha huwa kollu Ingliż. Dawn talbu fost l-ohrajn it-tnehhija tal-monopolju għax qalu li

"this Board [of Supply] is not only unnecessary, but, as now constituted [as a government department], highly prejudicial to commerce, and destructive to the welfare of the Island."

Fil-fatt din il-petizzjoni ntbagħtet lis-Segretarju tal-Kolonji, Lord Bathurst, li ddiskutieha ma' Maitland billi dak ż-żmien kien Londra; u n-neguzjanti aċċettaw li jirtirawha bil-kundizzjoni li jittieħdu xi miżuri favur il-kummerċ.<sup>24</sup>

Maitland haddem rasu: l-ewwel habbar il-ħsieb tiegħu li jnehħi l-monopolju tal-qamh (Government Minute, 22 September 1821) u xahrejn wara stieden suġġeriment dwar x'kellu jsir, bil-miktub jew bil-kelma, minn għand kull sezzjoni



ta' nies (Government Minute, 7 December). B'hekk heles mill-possibiltà ta' xi storbuju kontra l-miżuri godda.

Intlahaq kompromess bejn l-interessi fiskali tal-gvern u s-sigurtà dwar l-ikel għall-Maltin, ix-xewqat tan-neguzjanti, u dawk tal-produtturi tal-qamh f'Malta. Dan gie proklamati fl-24 ta' Jannar, 1822: il-kummerç tal-qamh kellu jkun miftuh għal kulhadd minn Lulju 1822 'l quddiem.

Il-proklamazzjoni tidher li kienet studjata tajjeb biex tkun milquha mill-poplu. L-ewwelnett it-tnehhija tal-monopolju antik gie pprezentat bħala esperiment biss:

"His Excellency the Governor having most maturely and deliberately considered the question how far the corn monopoly which has existed for centuries in these possessions should be done away with, and having called to his aid the opinions of all such persons in these islnads who thought themselves competent to give any opinion on the subject, he feels himself disposed, though with considerable doubt and difficulty on his part, to try the experiment of throwing open the commerce in this most important article of necessity. His Excellency does it with doubt and difficulty because he is convinced, generally speaking, that the wisest system of Government is to adhere to what has been practically ascertained to be beneficial to the people in lieu of setting up novel theoretical speculation."

Imbagħad Maitland semma x'benefiççi kienu mistennija:

"Anxious, however, ... to give a fair trial to what is thought may prove ultimately beneficial to these islands, and equally alive to the necessity of stretching any point at the present moment that even bears the appearance of increasing the commerce, or of giving employment to the lower classes of the people, he is pleased to proclaim..."

U fl-ahharnett assigura lill-Maltin li l-Gvern kien se jkompli jiprotegihom minn xi nuqqas ta' qamh jew prezzijiet esagerati:

"... It is not his intention that government should interfere... with the commerce in grain so long as the poorer classes of the inhabitants be supplied with bread at a fair and moderate rate. But as the Government must keep a stock in hand to prevent any scarcity, or any sudden, or excessive rise in the price of corn, and as it must continue its assistance in providing for the inhabitants should such scarcity or high prices be of any duration, he deems it necessary, with a view to secure the interests of Government on the one hand, and to protect the agricultural interests of these island on the other, to adopt the following regulations and restrictions on this head..."

Maitland hekk stabilixxa taxxa fuq il-qamh ta' madwar 25%.

Din baqgħet tghakkes il-fqar Maltin sal-1939 u fiha storja interessanti hafna. <sup>25</sup> Hawnhekk se naraw biss kif in-neguzjanti Ingliżi rnexxielhom jeqirdu l-ftit kontroll li l-proklamazzjoni halliet f'idejn il-gvern billi waqqfet 'Riserva Qamħ tal-Gvern' u tat il-gvern id-dritt li jipprojbixxi ir-re-esportazzjoni ta' qamħ minn Malta jekk l-hażna tan-neguzjanti tkun inqas minn 15,000 salma.

### **Ir-Riserva Qamħ tal-Gvern:**

Ir-Riserva Qamħ tal-Gvern kellha tkun ta' madwar 30,000 salma li setghu jaqdu l-bżonnijiet ta' Malta għal xi 5 xhur. L-ewwel htieġa tar-Riserva kienet biex Malta qatt ma jkun jonqosha qamħ għall-gharrieda. Dan il-periklu iktar kien jolqot il-Maltin meta kienu fi gwerra kontinwa kontra t-Torok. L-Ingliżi kellhom qawwa kbira fuq il-baħar ta' min jorbot fuqha. Imma ta' min isemmi li fil-kriżi internazzjonali tal-qamħ tal-1899, reġa' ssemma "the risk of not being able to buy at all" il-qamħ meħtieġ. <sup>26</sup>

Imma l-biża ta' skarsezza totali naqset u nfatti d-dritt tal-gvern li jwaqqaf ir-riesportazzjoni qatt ma ntuża. <sup>22</sup> Fl-1824, meta n-neguzjanti ma baqgħux jimportaw qamħ bħal qabel, l-Aġent tal-Qamħ tal-gvern qal li ma kien hemm,

"no real cause of alarm in case of actual want for then shipments from various parts of the Mediterranean will be brought". <sup>27</sup>

Kellu raġun għalhekk is-Segretarju tal-Kolonji, Lord Glenelg, jgħid fl-1836 li f'Malta ma kienx hawn iktar riskju ta' skarsezza totali ta' qamħ:

"when trade is daily expanding its multifarious channels... Malta, as a constituent portion of the British Empire, can have nothing to dread from sudden attack or overwhelming emergency." <sup>28</sup>

Imma r-Riserva Qamħ kella skop iehor iktar importanti. Kien intenzjonat li l-gvern ma jhallix skarsezza artifiċjali li setghu johlqu n-neguzjanti, l-aktar billi jiftiehm, biex imbagħad ibiegħu bl-gholi żżejjed. Skarsezza artifiċjali f'Malta setgħet tinholq faċilment l-aktar għax kien hemm ftit incertezza dwar l-importazzjoni: fl-Eġittu, il-Pasha seta' jagħmel li jrid u ġie li għolla l-prezzijiet iżżejjed — u fil-fatt fl-aħħar tas-snin 1820 l-Eġizzjani kienu qed ikabbru l-qoton flok il-qamħ; Sqallija kienet qed timporta daqs kemm tesporta fis-seklu dsatax; u madwar il-Baħar l-Iswed fl-xitwa l-maltemp kien ifixkel il-kummerċ, u malajr seta' jinqala xi

nkwiet politiku li jwaqqaf il-kummerċ jew jgħolli l-prezzijiet. Għalhekk Calvert, l-Agent tal-Gvern, sostna li r-Reserva kien messa tikber għal bejn 50,000 jew 60,000 salma (forsi għax kellu kummissjoni ta' 1% fuq ix-xiri u l-bejgħ).<sup>29</sup>

Min-naħa l-oħra n-neguzjanti kienu mdejqa għax bil-bejgħ tal-qamħ tar-Riserva l-gvern seta' jikkontrolla l-prezzijiet u ma jagħtix ċans għall-ispekulazzjoni. F'ilmenti li bagħtu lill-Gvern, it-tliet kumpaniji Ingliżi ta' M. Fletcher, J. Hunter u J. Ranking, sostnew li fi żmien ta' paċi ma kienx hemm għalfejn il-gvern jindahal fil-kummerċ tal-qamħ għax skond il-prinċipji tal-kummerċ nieles,

"any combination of merchants can have no other permanent effect than to ensure a larger and cheaper supply."<sup>30</sup>

Hankey wegibhom li kienet propju "this very fluctuation that would be insupportable to the population," u li l-gvern kien wiegħed li ma jhallix li tigri.<sup>31</sup> Ponsonby wkoll qal li l-gvern kellu juża r-Riserva biex ma jhallix il-prezzijiet joghew għal dak l-"unknown interval of time" qabel ma l-kompetizzjoni terġa' tniżżilhom għan-normal.<sup>32</sup>

Il-gvern kien iqis serjament il-possibiltà ta' ftehim bejn in-neguzjanti li setghu jgħibu l-gvern dahru mal-hajt. Maitland kien ġa qies dan fl-1816.<sup>18</sup> U fl-1899, għad li kien hemm kompetizzjoni oħra bejn n-neguzjanti tal-qamħ u tad-dqiq, meta l-prezzijiet tal-qamħ kienu joghlew, kemm n-neguzjanti tad-dqiq kif ukoll tat-tħin setghu jagħmlu qliegħ esagerat — "and they naturally do so without hesitation," irrapporta kumitat mwaqqaf t'apposta.<sup>26</sup>

Hankey irrefjuta l-argument tan-neguzjanti li l-pożizzjoni ta' Malta f'nofs il-linji tal-kummerċ ma kenitx tħalli ċans għal ftehim bejniethom. Kien hemm l-eżempju ċar tal-gżira ta' Corfù: meta Maitland neħħa l-monopolju tal-gvern fuq il-qamħ fl-1816, in-neguzjanti ftiehmu bejniethom u għollew il-prezzijiet tant li l-gvern kellu jerga' johloq il-monopolju. U din l-istorja irrepriet ruhha fl-1833 taht Lord Nugent.<sup>33</sup>

### ***In-neguzjanti tal-qamħ u l-indħil tal-gvern fil-kummerċ fi żmien ir-Riserva — 1822-36:***

X'gara fl-fatt meta tneħħa l-monopolju f'Lulju, 1822? Għal bidu n-neguzjanti għabu qamħ biżżejjed biex jinqeda l-poplu, il-prezzijiet mal-Mediterran kienu baxxi, u l-gvern

ma ndaħalx fil-kummerċ.<sup>27</sup> Imma fil-ħarifa ta' l-1824, min-flok ziedu l-ħażna tagħhom għax-xitwa kif kien mistenni, in-neguzjanti kienu baqgħalhom biss 1,000 salma li kienet is-servi għal ġingħa.<sup>34</sup> Ir-raġunġ ta' dan mhix ċara.

Il-gvern kellu bilfors jaqdi lill-poplu mir-Riserva tiegħu u jixtri l-qamħ mill-ġdid biex dejjem jibqgħalu Riserva tajba.<sup>34</sup> Billi l-ebda neguzjant ma ha l-offerta għall-importazzjoni li hareġ il-gvern f'Ottubru, 1824, dan irnexxielu jixtri 20,000 salma direttament mill-Eġittu u Sqallija eżatt qabel ma l-prezzijiet irduppjaw.<sup>35</sup> Kieku m'għamilx hekk il-Gvern kien jidhol fi spejjeż akbar. Bil-prezzijiet telgħin u r-Riserva bi prezz baxx li kellu l-Gvern, in-neguzjanti ma għabux iżjed qamħ fl-1825 u hekk il-gvern qisu reġa' ha l-monopolju tal-qamħ kif ilmentaw in-neguzjanti Inġliżi.<sup>36</sup>

Ma tistax toqgħod tagħti t-tort lin-neguzjanti jew lill-gvern. Biss in-neguzjanti Inġliżi donnhom riedu jsibu f'hiex jaqdbu biex jehilsu mir-Riserva tal-gvern halli jkunu jistgħu jispekulaw u jagħmlu qliegħ kbir. Infatti G. Ward, is-Supretendent tar-Riserva, innota li, għad li n-neguzjanti barranin kellhom iħallsu 1s. 8d. iżjed dazju fuq kull salma minn dak li kienu jħallsu l-Inġliżi (xi 10s.), u għad li dawn kienu jingħataw tant attenzjoni mill-gvern, in-neguzjanti Inġliżi kienu importaw biss 4,886 salma matul is-sena 1825, fl-waqt li l-barranin għabu 3,000 iżjed minn hekk.<sup>37</sup>

Billi raw li kien diffiċli li jeqerdu għal kollox ir-Riserva tal-gvern, fl-1825 in-neguzjanti talbu li l-gvern ma jibqax jixtri u jbiegħ il-qamħ f'kompetizzjoni magħhom. Minflok il-gvern kellu jixtri l-qamħ għar-Riserva ta' mhux iktar minn 35,000 salma (daqs konsum għal sitt xhur) bl-offerta, u mbagħad ibiegħu biss meta jkun se jithassar jew meta l-prezz tal-qamħ joghla aktar minn 40 skud (66s.) is-salma.<sup>36</sup>

Is-Segretarju tal-Kolonji għalhekk ordna lill-gvern ta' Malta biex fil-waqt li jieħu hsieb l-interessi ta' l-amministrazzjoni, jara wkoll li r-Riserva Qamħ tiegħu tkun amministrata b'mod li kemm jista' jkun ma tfixkilx il-kummerċ tan-neguzjanti.<sup>22</sup>

Imma billi l-gvern hassu fl-bżonn li jkompli jbiegħ u jixtri ftit jew wisq għal rasu, in-neguzjanti rnexxielhom jiperswadu lil Kummissarji ta' l-1830 (li għamlu rapport dwar il-finanzi tal-gvern mingħajr ma ġew hawn Malta), li l-gvern ma messux jibqa' "acting as a merchant" fl-amministrazzjoni tar-Riserva tal-Qamħ.<sup>38</sup> Din id-darba l-Uffiċċju tal-Kolonji

ordna lil Ponsonby biex ma jixtrix iżjed qamh permezz ta' agenti tal-gvern barra minn Malta.<sup>39</sup>

Biex inkunu nafu sew kemm kien jindahal il-gvern fil-kummerċ tal-qamh, tajjeb inharsu lejn Tabella 2, li tkopri ż-żmien kollu meta s-sistema tar-Riserva kienet qed taħdem — bejn 1-1825 u 1-1836 (meta ddeċidew li din tispicċa). Hawn għandna l-ammont ta' **qamh importat kull sena min-neguzjanti u mill-gvern**, l-ammont li dan xtara minn għand in-neguzjanti u l-ammont li dawn **it-tnejn** u l-**biedja Maltija** kienu ta' kull sena jbieghu għall-**konsum** tal-Maltin. Fit-tabella għandna wkoll il-livell tal-prezzijiet tal-qamh bl-ingross f'Malta minghajr id-dazju (C.I.F.) għax dawn kienu influwenzati mill-eżistenza u x-xiri u l-bejgħ tar-Riserva tal-gvern.

Mit-tabella jidher li minn total ta' 722,488 salma ta' qamh barrani kunsmat f'Malta bejn 1-1825 u 1-1836, kwart minnhom (180,694 salma) kienu fornuti mir-Riserva tal-gvern. Billi 83,507 salma minn dawn il-gvern kien xtrahom minghand in-neguzjanti f'Malta, il-gvern kien importa biss 13% tat-total ta' qamh barrani. B'kuntrast ma' dan, fl-aħħar 7½ snin tal-monopolju (1815-June 1822) il-gvern kien importa xi 83% tal-qamh li tqiegħed fil-fosos u xtart biss 16% minn għand in-neguzjanti.<sup>41</sup>

Jidher ċar ukoll kif bejn 1-1825 u 1-1830 il-gvern indaħal sewwa fil-kummerċ għax il-bejgħ ta' qamh mir-Riserva — li kienet il-biċċa l-kbira mixtrija direttament minn barra — kien jammonta għal 31% tal-qamh barrani kunsmat f'Malta. Imma wara 1-1830, imhabba l-insistenza minn Londra kif semmejna, il-gvern kien iforni inqas minn 20% — u hafna minn dan kienu importawh in-neguzjanti.

Diffiċli tifhem għala in-neguzjanti ma kinux iġibu kwantità ikbar ta' qamh. Tassew li l-eżistenza ta' Riserva kbira tal-gvern li kienet intenzjonata li żżomm il-prezzijiet baxxi ma kenitx thalli lok għall-ispekulazzjoni. Infatti r-Riserva massima ta' 1-1829 gabet magħha wkoll bejgħ massimu annwali li qatt għamel il-gvern minnha. U l-istess meta r-riserva tal-gvern kienet waslet biex tinbiegħ fl-1824 qabel il-qamh jitħassar, in-neguzjanti ma baqgħux jimportaw bħal qabel. Imma kif tispjega l-fatt li fl-1826 ebda neguzjant ma ħa l-offerta biex iforni qamh għan-navy, meta ngħataw erba' xhur żmien għal offerta u tmien xhur oħra biex jingieb il-qamh?<sup>42</sup>

In-neguzjanti Ingliżi donnhom kienu determinati li jaraw

Tabella 2

MIN KIEN IFORNI L-QAMH GHALL -MALTIN BEJN L-1825 U L-1836 40

(Bis-salma = mal-470 libbra)

Data	Importazzjoni				Prezz salma qamh, C.I.F. Malta (c)	Konsum			
	Min-N. ghall-konsum lokali. (a)	Min-N. ghall-G. (b)	Mill-G. ghar-Riserva (b)	Total		Bejgh mill-G. (d)	Bejgh min-N. (a)	Mill-hsad lokali (e)	Total
1825	37,626	8,516	23,007	69,149	s. d.	37,626	22,228	mhux	—
1826	44,586	—	8,949	53,535	28- 8 $\frac{1}{2}$	44,586	16,057	maghruf	—
1827	51,261	5,777	18,661	75,699	30- 4	51,261	16,496	—	—
1828	32,871	21,316	10,652	64,839	36- 1 $\frac{3}{4}$	32,871	16,876	25,977	75,977
1829	31,667	776	—	32,443	35-10 $\frac{1}{4}$	31,667	23,293	22,206	77,166
1830	34,248	8,685	—	42,933	29- 2 $\frac{1}{2}$	34,248	15,657	23,317	73,222
1831	48,597	13,572	—	62,169	32- 5 $\frac{3}{4}$	48,597	16,863	10,857	78,317
1832	45,935	6,844	—	62,779	32- 3	45,935	7,676	18,827	72,438
1833	44,354	9,311	—	53,665	29- 1 $\frac{3}{4}$	44,354	15,237	13,880	73,471
1834	43,096	481	20,187	63,764	29-10 $\frac{1}{4}$	43,096	12,114	23,884	78,094
1835	48,188	5,215	7,000	60,403	30- 9 $\frac{3}{4}$	48,188	8,710	20,404	79,302
1836	51,786	3,014	—	54,800	27- 1 $\frac{3}{4}$	51,786	8,500	21,088	81,374

Ir-Riserva Qamh tal-Gvern, fit-tmiem ta' kull 3 xhur, kienet tammonta għall-medja ta' 27,955 salma; kellha massimu ta' 51,098 salma fl-1828, u minimu ta' 9,506 salma fl-1833.

Tifsir: N. = Neguzjanti; G. = Gvern; C.I.F. = Cash-Insurance-Freight.

is-sistema tfalli biex ma titkompliex. Dan jidher mill-fatt li meta rnexxielhom jiksbu t-tneħħija tar-Riserva tal-gvern fl-1837, kif se naraw, riedu konferma uffiċċjali biex donnu jidhlu b'ruħhom u ġisimhom f'dan-negozju.

Min-naħa tal-gvern ma jidhirx li kien hemm indħil bla bżonn fil-kummerċ. Hastings u Ponsonby, it-tnejn favur il-kummerċ hieles fil-prinċipju u taħt pressjoni minn Londra, għamlu li setghu biex ma jfixklux in-neguzjanti. Fl-ahħar mill-ahħar it-tnejn kienu jqisu li l-espansjoni tal-kummerċ kien wieħed mill-mezzi biex jinstab ix-xogħol għall-eluf ta' Maltin qiegħda. <sup>43</sup> Kemm Hastings fl-1825 kif ukoll Ponsonby fl-1827, <sup>42</sup> tilfu opportunitajiet ta' profitt għad-dipartiment tar-Riserva Qamħ billi ma xtrawx jew bieghu fi żmien ta' qliegħ biex ma jfixklux lin-neguzjanti. U wara l-1830 infatti, biex igawdu n-neguzjanti, ir-Riserva saret piz finanzjarju għall-gvern. <sup>45</sup>

Sadattant, fil-waqt li għamlet possibbli ftit jew wisq il-helsien tal-kummerċ tal-qamħ, is-sistema ta' Riserva kienet ħarset lill-poplu minn tibdil kbir fil-prezzijiet. Fil-bidu ta' l-1831, nġhidu ahna, billi l-prezzijiet fl-Ingilterra għolew hafna, in-neguzjanti bagħtu l-qamħ tagħhom kollu 'l hemm, u kieku mhux għax kien hawn ir-Riserva, il-Maltin kien ikollom ihallsu prezz għoli wisq għall-hobż ta' kuljum. <sup>32</sup>

### ***Il-kontroll fuq il-qamħ importat jispicċa għal kollox fl-1837:***

Il-mod kif tneħħa l-ftit kontroll li kien baqagħlu l-gvern fuq in-neguzjanti tal-qamħ huwa interessanti ferm għax jikxef il-verità: il-kontroll tneħħa għal 'ftit' neguzjanti kontra r-rieda tal-Maltin u tal-amministrazzjoni Ingliża f'Malta.

Meta l-Kummissarji tal-1830, minn Londra qalu li l-gvern ma messux ikompli jindaħal fil-kummerċ tal-qamħ, Ponsonby u l-uffiċċjali tiegħu haduħa maġghom qattgħa bla habel. Hankey infatti tela' Londra biex jiddiskuti sewwa dan is-sugġett — 'the most important branch of the administration'. <sup>46</sup> Kif wera l-awditur Thornton, ma kienx veru dak li qalu l-Kummissarji li r-Riserva kienet qed tinżamm bit-telf. <sup>47</sup> Is-sugġeriment tagħhom li jekk kien hemm bżonn ta' Riserva,

"this can be most conveniently and fitly done by directing the Commissariat to make the purchase in the usual manner

[bl-offerta]",

kien bla bażi għax bħas-sistema eżistenti, b'hekk ukoll seta' jsir it-telf u kien ikollu jtkompla l-indħil fil-kummerċ biex jinbiegħ il-qamħ qabel jehżien.<sup>22</sup>

L-iktar difiża tal-kontroll li mpressjonat lil Goderich, is-Segretarju tal-Kolonji, kienet it-theddida ta' Ponsonby u Hankey li seta' jinqala' l-inkwiet fost il-Maltin għax,

"if the government should remain without such a stock and the prices of grain rule at a high rate for any considerable time, two alternatives would in that case present themselves ... either that the government would be suddenly called on to feed the People at a ruinous expense, or be content to see that People driven to insurrection ... for the Maltese, though a much enduring and patient race, are aware to a man of the pledge that exists ... and when pressed by famine would go to all lengths to exact fulfilment."<sup>22</sup>

Infatti Goderich kiteb lit-Teżor Inġliż li s-sistema ta' Riserva kella tibqa' għax

"there is no calamity which the people of Malta would view with greater dread than the suspension of the control of government over that important branch of their internal economy."<sup>48</sup>

Għalhekk fil-waqt li wissa lil Ponsonby ma jfixkilx lin-neguzjanti billi jixtri l-qamħ minn għandhom, l-affarijiet baqgħu bħal qabel.

Numru ta' Maltin attivi fil-pulitka fl-1832 u fl-1836 baqgħu żewġ petizzjonijiet lill-Parlament Inġliż għal riformi fil-gvern ta' Malta u fost l-oħrajn talbu t-tnaqqis tad-dazju fuq il-qamħ u biex jingħataw sehem fit-tmexxija tad-Dipartiment tal-Qamħ li minnu kien ilhom imcaħħda sa mill-1815.<sup>49</sup>

Fuq dawn it-talbiet ikkummenta Peter Smith, awtorità dwar Malta fl-Uffiċju tal-Kolonji. Huwa qal li dak li talbu l-Maltin kien "perfectly intelligible and fair", u sostna li kienu jagħmlu

"a singular contrast to the object [li allura ma kienx għust] which the few British merchants engaged in trade with Malta have during the last twenty years never ceased to press upon the consideration of Government: namely... the absolute cessation of all interference on the part of Government with the supply of [corn to] the Island."<sup>50</sup>

Imma dak li riedu "the few British merchants" sar fil-fatt.

Meta fl-1836, kienu ġejjin Austin u Lewis bħala Kummissarji biex jstudjaw il-problemi ta' Malta, Lord Glenelg,



is-segretarju tal-Kolonji, fuq talba tan-neguzjanti, qalilhom jirrapurtaw ukoll dwar il-kwistjoni tar-Riserva tal-Qamh u s-‘sliding scale’ tad-dazju.<sup>51</sup> In-neguzjanti Ingliži malajr ippubblikaw din l-informazzjoni f’Malta. U l-mexxejja Maltin ipprotestaw kontra t-tnehhija tal-kontroll tal-gvern mill-kummerċ tal-qamh għax l-interessi tagħhom kienu se ibatu biex igawdu n-neguzjanti.<sup>52</sup>

Imma kif jidher mir-rapport tagħhom, Austin u Lewis kienu favur hafna l-kummerċ hieles.

Infatti, fuq parir tagħhom, it-tnehhija tar-Riserva tpoġġiet quddiem il-Kunsill tal-Gvern, li kien twaqqaf fl-1835 b’7 membri (4 minnhom uffiċjali) u li ma kellu ebda saħħa legiſlattiva, fis-26 t’Awissu, 1836. Mit-tliet membri mhux uffiċjali — il Baruni de Piro, is-sur Agostino Portelli u s-sur Aspinall li kienu jirrapprezentaw lil propjetari tal-art, u lin-neguzjanti Maltin u dawk Ingliži hadd ma aċċetta li titneħħa r-Riserva għad li kollha, bħala produtturi jew neguzjanti tal-qamh, kien jaqbilhom personalment. Portelli ssuġġerixxa li r-Riserva tkun f’idejn bord independenti mill-Gvern; l-oħrajn talbu ż-żmien biex jaħsbu u l-laqgħa aġġornat.<sup>53</sup> L-Acting Governor, il-Kurunell Evans, min kif irrapporta dan kollu, jidher li anqas hu ma ried jeqred il-kontroll tal-gvern.

Imma Glenelg baqa’ deċiż favur in-neguzjanti u fis-7 ta’ Novembru, 1836, ordna l-ħruġ ta’ avviż li l-gvern ma kienx se jixtri iżjed qamh.<sup>54</sup> Sadattant f’Ottubru kien lahaq Gvernatur ġdid, Sir H. Bouverie (1837-43) li milli jidher kien iktar lest joghġob ix-xewqat ta’ Londra bla ma jagħti każ wisq tal-Maltin. Dan malajr laqqa’ l-Kunsill dwar l-ordni ta’ Glenelg u kif irrapporta hu stess:

“the Council at once saw that the steps to be taken appertained to the executive authority and therefore expressed their wish to leave entirely to me the adoption of these executive measures necessary to give full effect to the orders of His Majesty’s Government.”<sup>55</sup>

Jiġifieri l-Kunsill ma riedx ikollu x’jaqsam, u kien ikun kollu ta’ xejn. Tassew kif gergru l-Maltin li l-Kunsill

“cannot in any way contribute to the relief of the deplorable state of the Island.”<sup>49</sup>

L-avviż li temm iż-żamma tar-Riserva deher fil-**Gazetta tal-Gvern** tal-11 ta’ Jannar, 1837.

Jidher li Glenelg kien servili għall-interessi tan-neguzjanti Ingliži f’did-deċiżjoni mill-ittra li baġhaq fil-15 ta’ Jan-

nar, 1837 fejn ordna li d-deċiżjoni li titneħħa r-Riserva tigi ppublikata fil-**Gazzetta tal-Gvern** — kif fil-fatt ġa kien sar —

“for the assurance of the merchants who are still in doubt.”<sup>56</sup>

### **Hobz il-Maltin mingħajr ħarsien mill-Gvern:**

F'tit wara li nbiegħ il-qamħ li kien baqa' tar-Riserva f'Novembru 1838, kien hawn skarsezza internazzjonali tal-qamħ u n-neguzjanti f'Malta hallew 5,000 salma biss (li kienet isservi għal 20 jum). Imma wiehed jinnota r-rejazzjoni differenti tal-Gvernatur il-ġdid. Fil-waqt li stqarr li din kienet sitwazzjoni “of great anxiety”, Bouverie m'ghamel xejn ħlief ittama li xi tagħbijiet qamħ li kienu ġejjin mill-Baħar l-Iswed jinbiegħu Malta fejn il-prezzijiet kenu għolew bħal f'postijiet oħra:

“It is not my intention to lay an embargo upon corn in port unless the stock shall be reduced to within a few days consumption being fully aware of the impolicy of interfering with the trade.”<sup>57</sup>

Xahar wara Bouverie qies il-possibiltà li jbaxxi d-dazju jekk il-prezzijiet joghlew iżjed; imma, għaddli fis-sitwazzjoni l-uniku rimedju li ra kien li l-gvern jerga' jiehu l-monopolju tal-qamħ, xorta sostna li, la dan kien spiċċa sittax-il sena qabel,

“It is better to leave the trade to itself than to interfere with it by any measure of inadequate efficiency.”<sup>58</sup>

Sadattant għall-Maltin dan kien ifisser miżerja akbar għax il-prezzijiet għolew daqs ta' l-Ingilterra, Leghorn u Genoa.<sup>57</sup> Ma kienx argument li dawn kienu prezzijiet kompetittivi, għax il-pagi f'Malta jidher li kienu baxxi hdejn postijiet oħra: J. Davy fl-1842 osserva li l-pagi fil-Ionian Islands “are rather more than twice as high as in Malta”.<sup>59</sup> Jekk fl-1836 ġa kien hemm xi nies li mietu bil-ġuħ, nistgħu nimmaginaw x'għaks inholoq meta għolew il-prezzijiet tal-Fobz, għax dan mhux biss kien jinħass direttament minn dawk li ma kellhomx biex jixtru loqma, imma anki dawk li kienu jaqilgħu xi haġa, ma kienx possibbli għalihom li jagħtu karità lill-eluf ta' tallaba li kien hawn Malta f'dak iż-żmien.<sup>60</sup>

Imma l-Uffiċju ta' Londra kienu mitlufa fi kwestjonijiet ta' prinċipju. Meta Bouverie kien kiteb dwar il-qagħda anzjuża ta' Malta f'Novembru, 1838, Glenelg kien issuġġerixxa s-soluzzjoni tal-Kummissarji tal-1830 li l-Kummissarjat tas-

Servizzi Inglizi f'Malta jzomm Riserva hu: dan issa ntbaghat lit-Teżor Ingliz. Imma t-Teżor wiegeb li dan kien imur kontra l-prinċipju tal-kummerċ hieles li fuqu (jew imħabba l-interressi?) kien tnehha l-kontroll ta' qabel:

"if a reserve stock is held by the Commissariat in the event of a temporary short supply and enhancement of the price, the whole principle of those arrangements would be subverted."<sup>61</sup>

U tassew: kieku l-gvern indaħal b'xi mod kienu jergħu jinqalghu l-istess problemi ta' qabel man-neguzjanti.

It-Teżor ta biss il-permess lill-Gvernatur li f'każ ta' emergenza li ma jkunx hemm qamħ Malta, dan seta' juża terz tar-Riserva tal-Kummissarjat (xi 200 salma li sserve għal jumejn għall-poplu) — u anke din kella tinbiegħ bi prezzijiet kompetittivi.<sup>62</sup>

Dan il-każ ma garax għax il-Maltin qagħdu għal prezzijiet kompetittivi u n-neguzjanti allura għabu l-qamħ Malta.<sup>63</sup>

Imma dan juri kif 'ftit' neguzjanti Inglizi kellhom aktar setgħa fit-tmexxija ta' Malta mill-Maltin kollha f'daqqa. Infatti meta nħoloq bżonn ta' difiża imperjali fl-1840, imħabba l-inkwiet politiku fil-Baħar l-Iswed, it-Teżor kellu jaċċetta li f'Malta tinzamm Riserva spejjeż tal-Gvern Ċivili — għad li f'dal każ ukoll Bouverie qagħad attent li ma jurtax in-neguzjanti.<sup>64</sup>

Billi l-Gvern ma mpurtaħx mill-qagħda ta' Malta, xi Maltin ippruvaw isolvu l-problema minn jeddhom. Hasbu biex iwaqqfu speċi ta' koperattiva fuq l-istil ta' l-Universitá li qabel kienet tmexxi l-monopolju.

Il-prospett ta' dil-koperattiva imsejha "**Società Nazionale dei Grani**" kien ippubblikat għall-inqas darbtejn: jeżistu kopji ta' l-1839 minn F. Naudi & Co., u oħra minn G.B. Mompalao & Co. fl-1840. Kien prospettat li l-kumpanija takkwista l-kapital minn fost il-Maltin b'imgħax ta' 4%

Imma ma jidhri li dan twaqqfet. A. Portelli, li kif rajna kien rappreżentant tan-neguzjanti Maltin fil-Kunsill tal-Gvern, għad li kien jaqbel ma' l-ideja, kiteb lill-Baruni V. Azzopardi, li kien meqjus bħala l-awtur tal-prospett, li kien se jidhol f'riskju kbir għax l-koperattiva ma setgħetx tirnexxi. Portelli deherlu li, minn meta l-gvern ma baqax jindaħal fil-kummerċ, in-neguzjanti tal-qamħ kienu armaw b'vapuri kbar tagħhom u kellhom kapitali kbar li ma għhom ma setgħetx tikkompeti koperattiva.<sup>65</sup> Barra li Portelli kellu ten-

denza jaqbel mal-gvern ma nafux x'interessi ohra seta' kellu f'dil-biċċa.

U l-poplu Malti kellu bħal hmar ibati l-konsegwenzi, għax kien "a much enduring and patient race" iktar milli haseb Hankey. Meta ftit snin wara, bejn 1-1845 u 1-1847 il-prezzijiet tal-qamh għolew b'xi 30% imħabba n-nixfa kbira li hakmet lil Malta u l-bżonn ta' iktar hluq ma' l-Ewropa għall-qamh tal-Mediterran, il-Maltin sofrew immensament min-nuqqas ta' ikel. L-Ingilterra, li f'dak iż-żmien kienet qed tixtri l-qamh għall-Irlanda (fejn ukoll mietu hafna nies bil-ġuħ), lill-Gvernatur P. Stuart ma hallitux jixtri l-qamh għall-Maltin għax "such an indefensible departure from general [free-trade] principle" ma setgħetx issir qabel ma l-gvern ikun inkuraġġixxa "the exertions of private traders" billi jissuspendi d-dazju fuq il-qamh. Stuart, min-naħa tiegħu, ma riedx jagħmel dan għax beża' jhalli barra dħul tant importanti għall-kaxxa tal-gvern — xi 38% tat-total tal-budget.<sup>66</sup> U l-poplu żugraga fin-nofs!

Kien biss meta l-prezzijiet esagerati tal-hobż habtu ma taqlib politkiu ieħor fl-1919, li l-poplu rvella.<sup>67</sup>

Sadattant il-poplu mill-1822 sa l-1939 baqa' dejjem ihal-las taxxa lill-gvern u profit lin-neguzjanti. U n-neguzjanti jerga' kienu jgħollu l-qamh iżżejjed meta jistgħu kif innota Rowsell fl-1877.<sup>68</sup>

Tassew li l-Kummerċ ta' Malta għax kien hieles seta' iktar jespandi għal xi żmien.<sup>69</sup> Imma ma kenitx instabet is-soluzzjoni mixtieqa kif tforni l-poplu Malti bil-qamh meħtieġ bi prezzijiet moderati u ftit jew wisq stabbli mingħajr indħil fil-kummerċ min-naħa tal-gvern. Taht pressjoni ta' ftit neguzjanti, l-Uffiċju Kolonjali kien qies biss l-interessi tagħhom u warrab għall-ġenb ir-responsabilità li ma jhallix il-poplu batut jaqa' fil-miżerja.

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- 64 Ara V.P.R., Desp. 36: Stephen (for C.O.) to Trevelyan (for Treasury), 10 Sept. 1840; Treasury to Commiss General (Malta), 12 Sept. 1840; u Desp. 19, pp. 316-7: Bouverie to Russell, 15 Oct. 1840.
- 65 Ara kopja ta' l-ittra ta' Portelli lill-Baruni Azzopardi f'R.M.L., Ms 263.
- 66 Ara C. Price, **op. cit.**, pp. 106, 213.
- 67 Ara **Commission of Enquiry into the Events of the 7th and 8th June, 1919** (Malta 1919), Part VI; u H. Frendo, **Ir-Rivoluzzjoni Maltija tal-1919** (Malta, 1970), pp. 19-24.
- 68 Ara **Mr. Rowsell's Report, Parliamentary Papers, c-2032** (London 1878), p. 13.
- 69 Ara J. Mifsud, "The Maritime Trade of Malta, 1800-1900 Tesi tal-B.A. (Hons.), R.U.M., 1973, pp. 117-8.

HENRY J. FRENDO

## L-EVOLUZZJONI TA' PARTITI POLITIČI FIL-GŻEJJER MALTI (1880-1926)

*In a liberal adaptation of aspects of his Oxford D. Phil. Thesis (which was presented last year), DR. HENRY J. FRENDO\* here summarizes some of his major conclusions with regard to the origins, formation and development of political parties in the Maltese Islands during the nationalist colonial era. He notes, in particular, both the social and the political aspects of the typical colonial setting, indicating a dialectic forming between what he calls "the Patriotic Mentality" (tradition-resistance-autonomy) and "the Colonial Dynamic" (domination-modernisation-assimilation) from which a new situation very slowly arises. Although it is made evident that partizan rivalry became entrenched as early as the 1880s, it was still possible to rally communal feeling in the patriotic cause when critical situations developed. Partly because of this process — in a society where class differences were not so accentuated as elsewhere — the parties influenced one another in what the author presents as a theory of alternating succession. DR. FRENDO's conclusion may be interpreted as an appeal to the citizen and politician of post-colonial Malta radically to change the traditionally partisan intransigence bred by past conditions into a broadening of political commitment throughout society in the light of a civic disposition. At the end of the article, the author sets out in brief the first reconstruction ever made of party alignments in Malta before the beginnings of parliamentary government.*

Dwar x'hix kienet il-politika f'Malta u Ghawdex fiż-żmien meta harġu l-partiti politiċi fil-ħajja pubblika, bħala dawk l-organizmi vitali li jgħbru, iwasslu u jirrappreżentaw l-ilmenti, l-inċertezzi u l-ħtiġijiet tal-poplu? Kif u għaliex originaw il-partiti politiċi, taħt liema ċirkustanza, b'liema sura, u x'għanijiet kellhom? Minn liema fatturi jew aċċidenti jiddependi x'forma jew fażi ta' organizazzjoni politika tissaqqa, titrabba, titrawwem f'pajjiż? Jekk l-organizzazzjoni politika tiddependi, almenu sa ċertu punt, fuq l-istruttura soċjali, sa fejn nistghu ngħidu li kemm waħda kif ukoll l-oħra jiddependu mill-ambjent u mill-interazzjoni ta' forzi materjali u spiritwali fiż-żmien?

Il-politika hi, kullimkien, dwar l-użi u l-abużi tal-poter, għaliex hemm universalità kurjuża fl-imġieba tal-bnedmin, irrispettivament mill-kulturi nazzjonali u tribali, għalkemm ftit isir qbil dwar fejn jispiċċa l-użu u jidhol l-abbuż, fi kliem iehor dwar x'inhu użu tajjeb u użu ħażin jew inkomplet. Iċ-ċirkostanzi partikolari ta' stati u soċjetajiet f'perijodi differenti ta' żmien jikkontribwixxu attivament għall-iżvilupp ta' xejriet speċjali u distinti f'inhawi diversi, u anki b'manjieri jew metodi li jidhru, u forsi jkunu, almenu fil-wieċċ, uniċi.

"Yes but not in Malta", kienu jgħidu l-Ingliżi, u jirrepetu warajhom il-Maltin b'xufftejhom imqarssa, b'riferenza għall-qagħda speċjali li kellha Malta bħala kolonja-fortizza fl-imperu u li, minhabba f'hekk, niesha ma tantx setghu jitqiesu bħala poplu, imma biss bħala l-abitanti indigeni tal-art. Ir-romantiċiżmu diżappuntat kien jithallat fl-istess nifs ma' patrijottiżmu insulari, forsi biex jaħrab bl-immaginazzjoni minn dak li l-ġurnal **Malta** kien isejjah "iċ-ċirku tan-nar u

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tal-azzar". Ghajdud bhal "Malta piccola fior del mondo" u "La piccola isola delle grandi eccezioni" kienu jirriflettut l-mentalità — anki jekk forsi mhux tant ir-rejalta — ta' pajjiż bhalha entità sui generis f'relazzjoni ma' pajjiżi u popli oħrajn: gżira mediterraneja, proprjeta tal-Ingilterra, tikteb il-lingwa u thaddan ir-religjon tal-gara Italja, titkellem djalett tal-Gharab Misilmin.

Biex nibdew nifhmu xi haġa dwar il-ħmira li minnha tintgħagen il-politika Maltija ma nistgħux ma nharsux lejn tensjonijiet soċjali u rivaltajiet partigġani f'kuntest storiku, vuoldiri f'kuntest li, s'issa, għadu mċajpar hafna u jirrikjedi attenzjoni kbira u immedjata. Irridu nharsu mhux biss lejn **il-politikanti fl-ambitu kostituzzjonali** (wara kollox, kostituzzjoni mhix biċċa karta iżda formula haġja li tintuża u tinbidel minn min jużaha skond kif jużaha); lanqas ma rridu nqisu sempliċiment l-ideologiji li jhaddnu (jew jistqarru li jhaddnu) l-partiti politiċi. Għalkemm dawn huma fatturi indispensabbli fl-eżami ta' x'inhi l-politika, hemm ukoll fatturi oħrajn, iżjed moħbija — imma forsi iżjed rejali — li jiddeterminaw x'sura tiehu l-politika Maltija. Hawnhekk nistgħu niddistingwu żewġ aspetti ta' politika li però jintrabtu ma' xulxin fil-prattika: (a) **IL-POLITIKA NAZZJONALI**, iġifieri l-imġieba tal-partiti fuq **il-livell amministrattiv-legislativ**; u (b) **IL-POLITIKA PARROKKJALI**, iġifieri l-lejaltajiet u r-rivaltajiet, ftit jew wisq emottivi jew interessati, x'aktarx personali u/jew tradizzjonali, f'naħa jew oħra f'dawk l-ibliet, subborgi, villaġġi u rħula hekk ċkejknin, marsusin u kważi-familjari bħalma kienu f'Malta u Ghawdex, u fi gzejjer oħra fil-Mediterran bi klima, temperament u haġja "fil-beraħ" bhal tagħna. Malta kienet pajjiż fqir fejn għax ir-riżorsi kienu limitati l-kompetizzjoni għalihom kienet harxa; kienet ukoll gżira żgħira b'popolazzjoni kbira u qegħda tikber u ssir iżjed kumpressa, u għalhekk bi problemi soċjali u kulturali altru milli negliġibbli. Ma' dan kollu kien hemm, fi grajjietna, fattur vitali li serva, biex inghid hekk, bħala l-qafas li minnu u fiħ faqqset u istituzzjonalizzat ruħa l-mobilizzazzjoni politika u l-polarizzazzjoni partigġjana: dan kien **IL-KOLONJALIŻMU INGLIŻ**.

Fil-kundizzjoni soċjali li kienet fiha Malta fit-tieni nofs tas-seklu l-iehor, wara r-Risorgiment taljan, fit-tielet generazzjoni ta' Maltin influwenzati u kkundizzjonati mill-ħakma nglīża, u fi żmien l-iżvolta aggressiva u espansjonista li ħa

l-imperjaliżmu ewropew, inkluz dak ingliz, is-sitwazzjoni kolonjali pproduċiet u pprovokat ċaqliegħa radikali, fuq livell politiku. L-oriġini tal-aggruppamenti partigjani, li bdew f'din il-ħabta u komplew wara b'doġi intermittenti ta' linearità, kien jinvolvi mhux biss konfliitt akut (għad li moħbi) ta' interessi fost klassijiet u setturi differenti tal-popolazzjoni, iżda wkoll kriżi ta' valuri, ta' għibdiet, ta' direzzjoni. Il-konfrontazzjoni nistgħu nħarsu lejha, b'mod generali hafna, taħt tlett irjus: (a) MODERNIŻAZZJONI kontra TRADIZZJONI; (b) ASSIMILAZZJONI kontra REŻISTENZA; u (ċ) DOMINAZZJONI kontra AWTONOMIJA.

F'sens iżjed generali dawn it-tlett temi li tant ikkaratterizzaw il-ħakma kolonjali fostna nistgħu niġbruhom f'żewġ tendenzi ewlenin: waħda nsejħulha d-DINAMIKA KOLONJALI (=dominazzjoni-moderniżazzjoni-assimilazzjoni), iġifieri l-esiġenzi u l-bidliet ikkawżati primarjament mill-okkupazzjoni ngliza u l-funzjoni ta' Malta bħala kolonja-fortizza fl-interess imperjali; l-oħra nistgħu nsejħulha l-MENTALITÀ PATRIJOTTIKA (=tradizzjoni-reżistenza-awtonomija). iġifieri s-sentiment pjuttost embrijoniku ta' nazzjonalità separata (forsi speċjalment fost in-nies edukati) u konsegwentement l-aspirazzjoni għal miżuri ta' libertà politika u konservazzjoni tal-"patrimonju" lokali bl-affinitajiet kollha li kien jimplika. Minn dawn iż-żewġ għejjun sbukkaw l-"imperjalisti" u n-"nazzjonalisti" ta' Malta u Għawdex. Fid-Dinamika Kolonjali l-emfażi kien fuq l-utilità, il-pratticità u l-progress materjali; fil-Mentalità Patrijottika l-emfażi kien fuq il-kollektività, cioè il-"patria", kif murija l-iżjed fil-valuri tal-borgeżija italjanizzata u anke tad-drawwiet religjużi popolari.

Fis-snin 70 tas-seklu l-ieħor gara li l-gvern ingliz, li kien ilu erbghin sena ma jagħmel inkjesta uffiċjali dwar l-affarijiet ta' Malta, inkariga tlett kummissarji inglizi, wiehed wara l-ieħor, biex iġu hawn u jeżaminaw l-amministrazzjoni pubblika, il-qrati, il-finanzi u l-edukazzjoni. Dawn kellhom jagħmlu r-rakkomandazzjonijiet awtorevoli dwar dak li seta' jinbidel sabiex, fost affarijiet oħra, jekk jista' jkun jitneħħa kull hjiel ta' tariffi "protettivi" mit-tassazzjoni permezz ta' tibdila radikali fis-sistema fiskali f'konformità mal-prinċipju tal-kummerċ ħieles; biex tiġi riveduta l-ispiża pubblika u fl-istess ħin biex tikber l-effiċjenza fl-amministrazzjoni permezz ta' riformi fil-proċeduri u tnaqqis fl-infieq; u biex issir

riorganizzazzjoni s'ha fl-istituzzjonijiet edukattivi bil-ghan, fuq kollox, li jitnaqqas it-tagħlim tat-Taljan u minflok jikber it-tagħlim tal-Ingliš permezz tal-istudju grammatikali tal-ilsien Malti fl-ewwel klassijiet tal-iskola. Fost dawk il-Maltin li kienu jiffavorixxu riforma fiskali f'direzzjoni progressiva kif ukoll l-intensifikazzjoni ta' edukazzjoni "ingliża" kien jispikka Sigismondo Savona (1837-1908).

Isem Savona hu marbut mal-formazzjoni ta' partiti politiċi Maltin għax dan kien, f'ċertu sens, iżjed kawżattiv fil-proċess bipartita mill-istess avversarju prinċipali tiegħu, Dr. Fortunato Mizzi (1844-1905). Kien Savona li spira l-partit riformista pro-ingliż ta' bixra liberali-utilitarja u b'hekk għen biex ikkawża r-reżistenza kompatta mmexxija minn Mizzi u s'ha wara l-1880. L-ewwel indikazzjoni tal-personalitá kontroversjali ta' Savona kien l-istambju tal-15 ta' Mejju 1878, meta għemgħa nies garaw xi għebliet lejn daru bi protesta kontra xniegħat dwar proġett, li miegħu kien assoċjat hu, biex titnehha jew titnaqqas sostanzjalment it-taxxa fuq il-qamh u tiġi sostitwita b'taxxi oħrajn. Savona kien direttament involut ukoll fir-**Reform Committee**, magħruf ukoll bħala l-**Permanent Petition Committee**, li minnu hareg, f'tit wara, ir-**Reform Party**; dan il-"pressure group" għall-bidu kellu l-iskop li jitlob għal riforma kostituzzjonali iżda dejjem fi spirtu ta' moderazzjoni u lejaltá. Kien dan il-grupp li ha l-inizjattiva biex jorganizza l-ewwel assemblea politika kbira fl-apert, fi Pjazza Miratore, il-Furjana, nhar it-2 ta' Lulju 1879. (Għalkemm Mr. Hesketh Hanson, qassis protestant li kien gradwat u ġurnalista residenti f'Malta, kien diġá sejjaħ xi laqgħat dwar kwistjonijiet politiċi, dawn ma kienu fl-epda okkażjoni komparabbli mal-meeting tat-2 ta' Lulju li keilu xejra nazzjonali.) Savona kien kelliem prinċipali fil-meeting, imma fih hadu sehem prominenti wkoll nies bħal Salvatore Cachia Zammit (1831-1918), il-kunsillier li kien kiseb l-ogħla ammont ta' voti fl-aħħar elezzjoni ġenerali, u anke l-avukat Agostino Naudi, li kien minn ta' quddiem fid-dimostrazzjoni tal-15 ta' Mejju.

Dan juri li għalkemm diġá kien hemm differenzi politiċi b'danakollu l-Mentalitá Patrijottika kienet tirbah, speċjalment fejn kienet tidhol il-kawża fundamentali tar-riforma kostituzzjonali.

Kien fl-1880 li l-firda politika dahlet iżjed 'il ġewwa u hadet sura partigjana; dan gara mhux biss għaliex l-1880

kienet is-sena ta' l-elezzjoni generali, lanqas tant kemm kienu sensazzjoali l-bidliet proposti mill-kummissarji ngliżi, imma wkoll għaliex f'Ġunju tal-1880 Savona, sa dak iż-żmien deputat tal-poplu, qaleb mal-gvern billi aċċetta l-hatra ta' Direttur ta' l-Edukazzjoni u Rettur ta' l-Università. Malli libes il-libsa tal-kollaboratur benevolenti, Savona għal darb'ohra ipprovoka eskalazzjoni fir-reazzjoni kontrih u kontra l-gvern li impjegah.

Savona kien raġel bravu u kien avvanza fil-hajja bis-saħħa ta' inċentivi u assistenza minghand il-militar; kien anke ntbagħat jistudja Londra bhala surmast regimentali għal sentejn u kien ilu magħruf bhala ammiratur tal-kultura ingliża u espert Malti tal-lingwa u l-letteratura ingliża. Malli dar mal-gvern, però, beda jitlef mir-rispett li kien igawdi qabel: żgur ġibed l-eqqel stmerrija ta' parti l-kbira mill-borgesija italjanizżata.

L-hekk imsejjah **Partito Antiriformista** beda, permezz tal-organu ġurnalistiku **Il Diritto di Malta** taħt Dr. Ernesto Manara, ftit ġimghat biss wara l-hatra ta' Savona u l-waqfien tal-ġurnal ta' Savona, **Public Opinion**, li fil-pront ġie sostitwit minn ġurnal ieħor ta' kull ġimgha, **Malta Standard**, immexxi minn ingliż (George Alfred Page). Anti-imperjalista, pro-Taljan u fil-idejal, forsi anke irredentista, **Il Diritto** esprima filosofija nazzjonalista-liberali opposta għal dik utilitarja-liberali tar-riformisti.

Fost il-kandidati li kkontestaw l-elezzjoni tal-1880 f'isem il-**Partito Antiriformista** kien hemm, għall-kostitwenza ta' Għawdex, l-avukat Fortunato Mizzi.

Il-ġlieda prinċipali, almenu fil-wiċċ, kienet, bla dubju, dwar l-hekk imsejha "kwistjoni tal-lingwa": kwistjoni li kienet, fil-fatt, waħda ta' interessi xejn inqas milli waħda ta' drittijiet; u kwistjoni li kellha tiddetermina jekk Malta kinitx se żżomm l-italjanità mediterraneja tagħha f'kontinwità mat-tradizzjoni edukattiva-kulturali, jew inkella jekk kinitx se tingibed lejn l-imperu ingliż u l-pajjiżi l-oħra anglo-sassoni li kienu teknoloċikament iżjed avvanzati jew almenu iżjed promettenti mill-punto di vista ta' xogħol, taħriġ u negozju. F'din il-għażla kiefra bejn il-qalb u l-but, bejn il-moħħ u ż-żaqq, kien naturali li l-biċċa l-kbira tal-Maltin edukati, u speċjalment dawk li kienu proprju jaqilgħu l-għajxien tagħhom bl-użu tat-Taljan — il-lingwa tal-qrati, tal-kleru u anke tal-kummerċ — jippreferu lill-Antiriformisti, li

kienu wkoll in-nies l-iżjed kwalifikati biex jikkritikaw u jopponu lill-gvern kolonjali; mentri, għall-kuntrarju, il-biċċa l-kbira ta' dawk li kienu jiddependu għall-ghajxien tagħhom mill-impiegi mat-tarzna u s-servizzi nglizi, inklużi dawk li saru jammiraw lill-Ingilterra kulturalment, setghu liberament jippreferu lir-Riformisti, anke għaliex dawn kienu f'posizzjoni aħjar li jagħtuhom xi haġa, xi benefiċċju, xi żieda, xi "promotion", u dan irrispettivament mill-kwistjoni lingwistika jew kostituzzjonali.

L-idea ta' Malta bħala nazzjon u potenzjalment stat awtonomu harġet bil-mod u evolviet minn — u permezz ta' — dan il-konflitt ta' disposizzjonijiet u orjentamenti; hekk kif evolviet l-istess lingwa maltija matul il-ġlieda twila bejn l-Ingliż u t-Taljan f'Malta, u permezz tagħha; u hekk ukoll evolwew il-partiti nfushom fi proċess ta' interazzjoni tali li meta tarah f'perspettiva, u tinjora r-rettorika u l-passjoni ta' ċikku l-poplu ssib li l-Maltin ma kinux u ma kellhomx għalfejn ikunu, bħala abitanti indigeni tal-istess art maħkuma, il-bogħod minn xulxin daqskemm bdew jidhru f'għajnejn il-partitarji. Kienu, sa ċertu punt, vittmi ugwalj tat-tensjonijiet li bilfors iġġib sistema kolonjali; kienu wkoll effettwati minn manipulazzjoni ta' politikanti barranin u Maltin li riedu jiksbu l-poter u li għalhekk għarfu jinqdew b'rivaltajiet parrokkjali digà eżistenti biex ixewxu u hafna drabi jaljenaw lill-popolin fuq piki u preġudizzji.

Hekk hu li l-Politika Parrokkjali baqgħet stagnata f'immaturità liema bħala f'relazzjoni mal-Politika Nazzjonali: dan ma setax jonqos li jkollu effett fuq il-hsieb politiku (jew il-mankanza tiegħu) u l-istrateġija elettorali tal-partiti politiċi, li jimpurtahom, l-ewwelnett, minn kemm jiġbru voti.

Biżżejjed thares ftit lejn il-belt kapitali biex tara x'kien hemm "minn taht" fil-politika maltija: tal-banda **King's Own** mal-gvern, tal-banda **La Valette** kontra l-gvern (meta l-imsejbin ta' dawn il-baned huma tista' tghid nies tal-istess klassi soċjali jew kważi l-istess); ta' San Pawl ma' dak (aktarx ma' Mizzi), ta' San Duminku ma' l-iehor (pjuttost ma' Savona). X'kien ifisser dan kollu f'termini idejoloġiċi? Ftit jew xejn: imma s-sitwazzjoni kienet idejali biex, fuq il-baži ta' għaqdiet u ċentri ppikati ma' xulxin, "għall-gost", tiftaħ imbagħad ġlieda fuq il-livell politiku — iżjed u iżjed meta l-gvern kolonjali kellu x'jakkwista mill-kultivazzjoni ta' baži ta' appoġġ popolari għalih.

F'dawn iċ-ċirkustanzi ssib li l-ligijiet tas-simpatija u tal-antipatija, "ta' magħna" u "ta' kontra tagħna," jaħdmu wisq iżjed minn xi djalettika dwar il-ġlieda tal-klassi jew xi dibattitu dwar idejoloġiji politiċi: xi djalettika u x'ideoloġija tkun dik fejn tal-Arċipiergu jehduha kontra tal-Mandragg, ta' Bormla kontra tal-Belt, tar-Rahal ta' Fuq kontra tar-Rahal t'Isfel, ta' San Ġorġ kontra ta' San Bastjan?

L-imġieba li sikwit tiltaqa' magħha f'sitwazzjonijiet bħal dawn tfakkrek f'dak li qal Sibbes f'kuntast ieħor, illi "opposition is bittrest betwixt those that are nearest"; tfakkrek fir-rivalta' akkanita bejn familja u offra fl-istess belt bħal dik li ssatirizza Shakespeare f'**Romeo and Juliet** (II, ii):

.....  
 — Deny thy father and refuse thy name;  
 Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,  
 And I'll no longer be a Capulet. —

.....  
 'Tis but thy name that is my enemy;

.....  
 What's Montague? it is nor hand, nor foot,  
 Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part  
 Belonging to a man .....

..... By a name

..... I know not how to tell thee who I am...

L-ironija tikber u ssir kważi tad-daħk meta tara kif, per eżempju, Mizzi u Savona kienu ġirien, joqgħodu litteralment f'tit bibien 'il bogħod minn xulxin, u, jekk niġu f'dan, it-tnejn imghammdin San Duminku.

Parti mill-element ta' klassi li jidher ċar fihom, u li ovyjament influwenza l-atteggjament u l-karriera tat-tnejn, kien ġej mis-sitwazzjoni kolonjali: Savona ma kienx jilhaq fejn lahaq kieku mhux għax kien tajjeb fl-Ingliż, u ma kienx ikun tajjeb fl-Ingliż kienu ma marx jistudja Londra, u ma kienx imur jistudja Londra li kiekn mil-Liċejo ma daħalx "private" fil-Royal Malta Fencible Artillery. Lanqas Mizzi ma kien ikun il-mexxej tal-kawża nazzjonalista li kieku ma kienx ammiratur prim tal-kultura taljana, u forsi ma kienx ikun hekk li kieku ma sarx avukat, u ma kienx isir avukat kieku ma kienx tajjeb fit-Taljan.

Ma rridx nġhid li mingħajr il-kolonjaliżmu ma kenux xorta wahda jgumu differenzi soċjali fuq livell politiku. Il-fatt li Mizzi kien bin maġistrat u Savona bin biljettinar

f'tejatru digà kienet xi haġa tal-“klassijiet il-qodma”; imma lanqas hemm dubju li l-kolonjaliżmu aċċentwa u sfoka d-differenzi bit-tixjir ta' bandieri ta' stati barranin u bl-introduzzjoni ta' tabelli terminoloġiċi u influwenzi psikoloġiċi li rrendew il-ħajja pubblika ġlieda grotteska bejn “tradituri” u “salvaturi”, bejn “mixtrija” u “xewwiexa” ... min idoqq it-trumbun, u min idoqq il-bugle, min jahraq il-mortal u minn igħolli l-istandard.

Issa li għandna idea vaga tal-kuntest kolonjali nistgħu nħarsu ftit iżjed mill-qrib lejn il-partiti, nippruvaw naraw is-similitudjiet u d-differenzi ta' bejniethom f'dak li hu komposizzjoni, organizzazzjoni, distribuzzjoni ta' appoġġ f'Malta u Ghawdex, stili ta' tmexxija u ta' propaganda; fuq koll, irridu naraw kif dawn evolwew mill-bidu originali tagħhom fir-Riformismo u l-Antiriformismo tas-snin 80.

L-ewwelnett irridu nżommu quddiem għajnejna li l-vot għal kulhadd hu żvilupp li ġie biss wara l-aħħar gwerra mondjali: għalhekk l-elettorat mill-1849 sal-1883 kien ta' inqas minn 3,000 ruh; wara l-1883 l-elettorat tela' għal 10,000, inkluż eluf ta' inalfabeti li l-bieċa l-kbira minnhom ma kienu jivvutaw xejn; u fl-1921 l-elettorat reġa' żdied konsiderevolment. Dan ifisser li fil-perijodu li għandna quddiemna l-politika kienet elitista, imma dan mhux bilfors ifisser li kienu jiehdu interess fil-politika dawk biss li kienu intitolati għall-vot.

Malta żgħira u niesha magħrufa: kienet issir ħafna diskussjoni fuq affarijiet pubbliċi, p.e. it-taxxi, f'kafejiet u każini, u ġieli kien hemm attendenzi enormi għal dimostrazzjonijiet u meetings pubbliċi. L-ewwel okkażjoni grandjuża ta' din ix-xorta kienet id-dimostrazzjoni tar-rebħa anti-riformista tal-4 ta' Ġunju 1884 meta l-pulizija kkalkolat li għad-dimostrazzjoni fil Strada Rjali, b'baned, torċi u bandalori, kien hemm madwar 30,000 ruh, vuoldiri tlett darbiet iżjed mit-total ta' dawk kollha li kienu intitolati għall-vot. Dan kien ftit wara li beda t-tren (fl-1883) u għalhekk il-villagġi kollha fuq il-linja tal-ferrovija setgħu jmorru l-Belt b'faċilità ferm ikbar minn qabel: il-ferrovija kienet, fil-fatt wiehed mill-mezzi ta' modernizzazzjoni li servew, indirettament, għal politizzazzjoni ikbar.

F'din il-konkorrenza għal manifestazzjoni politika fil-belt kapitali naraw kemm dak li kien NAZZJONALI, kif ukoll dak li kien PARROKKJALI, fil-politika Maltija. Min-naħa,

jidher ċar li l-**Partito Antiriformista** kellu, permezz tal-professjonisti u l-kleru rurali, il-hila li jiġbed il-massa warajh f'kampanja eminentement politika, dik lingwistika-kostituzzjonali, "kontra l-gvern". Min-naħa l-oħra, jidher ukoll kemm il-massa ma kenitx tant intiża f'dik li hi politika u kemm kienet attirata minn ċelebrazzjoni kollettiva u storbu-ża li kienet speċi ta' avventura gregarja minn dawk li tant jixxalaw fihom il-Maltin. Biss, hu importanti l-fatt li r-**Reform Party** kien qiegħed jitlef l-appoġġ filwaqt li l-**Partito Antiriformista** kien qiegħed kull ma jmur iżid fl-appoġġ, kemm fil-voti kif ukoll fil-pajjiż in generali: kien għal din il-habta li l-partit beda jissejjah **Partito Nazionale**. Il-politiki Maltin ftit li xejn kellhom poter; ta' kull ma jsir hażin kien jehel il-gvern u dawk li jidhru li jzommu miegħu (fosthom il-kapijiet tad-dipartiment Maltin li kienu fil-Kunsill); il-gvern kien ippresedut minn barranin (il-gvernatur u l-prinċipal segretarju jew logutenent gvernatur kienu Inġliżi); u għalhekk fost il-poplu kien faċli li tqajjem l-antipatiġa għall-gvern u s-suspett fih, iżjed u iżjed meta kien hemm fin-nofs il-kwistjoni tal-italianità bil-konnottazzjonijiet tradizzjonali kollha tagħha, inkluża l-konnotazzjoni denominazzjonali.

Kien hemm ukoll, in parti minhabba f'hekk, differenza ftit rimarkanti fil-komposizzjoni tal-partiti, għalkemm il-kap nominali tar-riformisti, Pasquale Mifsud, kien, bħal Mizzi, avukat. Ir-**Reform Party** kien qisu iżjed kollezzjoni ta' individwi u allura, fit-tmexxija tiegħu, iżjed imħallat: fost dawk minn ta' quddiem fih kien hemm ex-prim imħallef (Sir Antonio Micallef), negozjant fil-bhejjem (Francesco Saverio De Cesare, li kien ukoll ġurnalista), nobbli (l-markis Giuseppe De Piro) u resident inġliż (George Alfred Page tal-Malta Standard). Il-**Partito Antiriformista** kien iżjed kompatt, bi tmexxija ċċentrata fil-klassijiet tan-nofs, speċjalment avukati (Fortunato Mizzi, Zaccaria Roncali, Agostino Naudi, Giovanni Sciortino); kien hemm ukoll kanonku ta' San Pawl (E.M. Debono) u negozjant li wkoll kien prominenti fl-istess parroċċa (Carlo Maria Muscat). Minkejja t-tibdil fl-ishubija tal-partiti matul iż-żmien, l-element legali dejjem baqa' predominanti jew almenu kospikwu fuq in-naħa mizzjana.

Sal-1889, meta daħlu għall-ewwel darba d-distretti elettorali, ma tantx tista' titkellem dwar **distribuzzjoni ta' appoġġ** għal partit jew iehor f'Malta; f'Għawdex, li kienet sa mill-



1849 kostitwenza ghalha, Mizzi kien jegħleb li kull avversarju, meta n-nomina tiegħu kienet tiġi kkontestata.

Anke wara li bdew id-distretti elettorali, hu diffiċli li titkellm b'xi ċertezza "statistika", minħabba l-fluwidità tas-sitwazzjoni, is-sehem tal-personalitajiet, u t-transizzjoni li kienet għaddejja fil-partiti nfushom, imma wiehed jista' forsi jgħid b'mod generali li Savona kellu appoġġ akbar fil-Kottonera milli kellu Mizzi, filwaqt li Mizzi kellu appoġġ akbar fil-kampanja u s-subborgi milli fil-ibliet, għalkemm il-belt Valletta — minkejja "floating vote" qawwi rigward personalitajiet — kienet nazzjonalista, tant li Faurè, fil-istorja popolari tiegħu, jirreferi għal "partit tal-Belt."

Il-politika tal-personalitajiet kienet tghallem: per eżempju, Monsinjur Ignazio Panzavecchia (1855-1925) u anke l-avukat Alfredo Mattei kienu popolari bhala sengleani, għalkemm fil-Kottonera kien hemm, liżjed minħabba t-tarzna, proletarjat inċipjenti li kien jara fil-okkupazzjoni ngliza l-mezz ta' għejxien u sigurtà, anke jekk kien jistmerr id-diskriminazzjoni fil-pagi u trattamenti inferjuri: hawnhekk il-lingwa taljana kienet barra minn postha. F'Valletta, għall-kuntrarju, kien hemm iċ-ċentru amministrattiv, legali, kummerċjali u rikrejattiv, b'sotto-proletarjat shiħ madwaru.

Ebda partit ma kien organizzat wisq, imma kull wiehed kellu biżżejjed organizzazzjoni biex ikun identifikabbli bhala partit u jikkontesta l-elezzjoni: ċioè kap, kumitat (formali jew informali) u organu ġurnalistiku għall-propaganda. Fil-1887 Savona irriżenja minn mal-gvern, ha r-**Reform Party** taht idejh u beda johroġ mill-ġdid il-**Public Opinion**, il-gazgetta li kellu qabel; f'nofs is-snin 90 il-partit tiegħu beda wkoll organu effettiv bil-Malti, **Malta Tagħna**: din il-gazgetta sensazzjonali antiċipat bi ftit snin l-ewwel organu bil-Malti tal-P.N., **Il Poplu Malti**, fil-bidu nett ta' dan is-seklu. Id-**Daily Malta Chronicle**, tal-familja Bartolo, li beda fil-1887, kien aktarx favur il-gvern milli marbut ma' xi partit partikolari; dan sar iżjed sinifikanti wara l-ewwel gwerra mondjali meta Dr. Augusto Bartolo, bin il-fundatur tiegħu, hareġ għall-politika u ingħaqad mal-partit tal-Konti Gerald Strickland (1861-1940). Mill-1883 'il quddiem l-organu prinċipali nazzjonalista kienet il-gazgetta ta' kuljum **Malta**, imwaqqfa u editjata minn Fortunato Mizzi: fit-13 ta' Marzu 1902 dan il-ġurnal beda jsejjah lilu nnifsu "Organo del Partito Nazionale". Il-ġurnali huma importanti għaliex hafna mill-għawi

partigjan kien jirrifletti l-battalja fil-ġurnali. F'dak li hi organizazzjoni generali, il-P.N. kien pijunier: fl-1885 kellu żgur kumitat eżekuttiv — is-segretarju tiegħu kien iż-żagħ-żugh Benoit Xuereb; fl-1886/1887 kellu dak li, sa fejn naf jien, kien l-ewwel każin ta' partit politiku f'Malta, iċ-Circolo Fortunato Mizzi fil-belt — is-segretarju tal-każin kien Eliodoro Barbaro. Wara l-kisba tal-Gvern Risponsabbli fl-1921, kien Strickland — milord sinjur — li ha l-inizjattiva organizzattiva u propagandistika, imma anki l-partiti l-oħrajn kollha bdew jorganizzaw ruhhom ahjar in vista tal-fatt li issa setgħu jiksbu poter effettiv b'mandat popolari u mhux biss, bħal qabel, iparlaw, jittamaw u jikkwistjonjaw.

Forsi l-iżjed aspekk intriganti u deterrenti fl-appell tal-partiti lokali kien l-istil ta' **tmexxi** li dawn kienu joffru. Mizzi u Savona kienu tipi differenti u żgur ma setgħux jappellaw bl-istess intensità għall-istess nies: wiehed l-avukat jipperora l-kawża, l-iehor is-surmast jiddetta l-lezzjoni, wiehed italanizzat, pjuttost argumentattiv fl-indirizz tiegħu, l-iehor inglizzizat, impekkabbli bit-tomna u s-surtan u jmur għal **meeting** b'karrozzela tal-par. Imma t-tnejn, mod jew iehor, Maltin imqaxxa, għax ridt tkun Malti biex tivvinta stratagemma karnivaleska (imma effettiva) bħal dik ta' Mizzi għal elezzjonijiet "ridikoli" u "infami", kif ġara fis-snin 80 meta nies ċarlatana u ta' kondotta hażina ġew eletti fil-Kunsill tal-Gvern bl-iskop li jostruzzjonawh u jattiraw l-attenzjoni ta' Londra għall-istat kostituzzjonali tal-kolonja; jew ridt tkun Malti biex tagħmel teatrin pubbliku bħal Savona bil-baned fil-meetings, illum jipprezenta xi standard, għada jagħmel huġġieġa minn xi gazzetta avversarja u anke, bil-kunsens tal-Monsinjur Panzavecchia, jaħlef pubblikament fuq kruċifiss li jsegwi l-programm tal-partit, fost l-eċċitament tal-folla fidila, kif ġara fl-1895 meta Savona u Panzavecchia waqfu l-**Partito Popolare**.

B'danakollu kien hemm mument meta l-partiti qablu bejniethom u kkoperaw flimkien, hekk kif kien hemm żmenijiet meta qalbu s-sehem tagħhom u prattikament ittrasferewh lil xulxin, immodifikaw u biddlu l-impronta tagħhom u, mingħajr ma ammettew, u forsi mingħajr ma ntebħu, influwenzaw wiehed lill-iehor, kif, wara kollox, ġeneralment jagħmlu l-partiti politiċi kull fejn jeżistu, fil-gvern jew fl-oppożizzjoni.

Jekk taraw l-iskeda li qiegħed nipprezenta biex nindika

kif bdew u żviluppaw l-allinejamenti partigjani ewlenin f'paj-  
jiżna, issibu li kien hemm iżjed minn okkażjoni waħda fejn  
saret fużjoni ta' fazzjonijiet u partiti, hekk kif kien hemm  
ukoll okkażjonijiet meta partit inqasam f'fazzjonijiet, in-  
għaqad u inbidel fl-isem, iżda imbagħad, wara ftit snin,  
reġgħu hargu d-differenzi u l-fazzjonijiet bħal qabel. Fil-  
waqt li hemm **tendenza qawwiya għal sitwazzjoni bipartita**,  
hemm ukoll **tendenza għall-għaqda nazzjonali** fi żminijiet ta'  
kriżi.

Iċ-ċentri l-iżjed fissi ta' **polarizzazzjoni** kienu, natural-  
ment, fuq naħa l-gvern kolonjali u fuq in-naħa l-oħra l-oppo-  
żizzjoni nazzjonalista, però dan ma jfissirx li l-istess partit  
**dejjem** kien l-iżjed wiehed kontra l-gvern, jew inkella l-istess  
partit **dejjem** kien l-iżjed wiehed favurih. Minkejja li kien  
hemm simpatija kulturali u attrazzjoni politika lejn l-Ingil-  
terra jew l-Italja f'naħa u oħra, il-politika partigjana għali  
nbidlet sostanzjalment b'manjera li kienet tirrifletti x-xewqa  
ta' partit jew iehor li jikseb, iżomm jew ikabbar, kif jista',  
l-influwenza tiegħu fuq il-gvern. U dan kien jigrigi diġà, min-  
natura tal-affarijiet, meta ma kien hemm ebda istituzzjona-  
lizazzjoni tat-trasferimenti ta' poter minn partit għall-iehor  
permezz ta' sistema parlamentari. Fl-attentat biex issib  
**x'linejarità hemm fl-evoluzzjoni tal-partiti rispettivi**, trid  
iżzomm quddiem għajnejk li għalkemm il-lejaltà, il-għibda  
partigjana tista' tibqa' fil-partitarju akkost tad-disgwid u  
l-intriciċi tal-politika, il-partiti xorta jinbidlu, u jistgħu jin-  
bidlu hafna skond iċ-ċirkostanzi u min ikun imexxi. Il-partit  
jista' jinbidel anke jekk jibqa' bl-istess isem, u jista' jibqa'  
identifikabbli avolja jbidel ismu. L-ismijiet u r-rettorika  
iqarrqu bik, speċjalment fil-qasam politiku partigjan: trid  
thares lejn id-**distribuzzjoni tal-poter** bejn gvern u poplu,  
bejn partit u iehor. L-iskeda li qiegħed nipprezenta hawn-  
hekk turi kif, anke qabel ma ksibna l-Gvern Risponsabbli fl-  
1921, diġà kien hemm kambjamenti fid-distribuzzjoni tal-  
poter bejn partit u iehor: kien hemm **suċċessjoni alternanti**  
fis-sehem tal-partiti versu l-gvern, daqqa jippredomina  
wiehed, daqqa jippredomina l-iehor. Hekk naraw kif matul  
is-snin 1880-1887, waqt li Savona kien uffiċjal governattiv, il-  
partit ta' Mizzi kiber tant li fl-1887, meta Savona kkontesta  
l-elezzjoni bħala kap tar-**Reform Party**, il-P.N. rebah is-siggi-  
jiet kollha. F'dan iż-żmien il-P.N. kien stinka għal riforma  
kostituzzjonali: u fl-1887 gie l-Gvern Rappreżentattiv li per-

mezz tieghu, għall-ewwel darba, id-deputati eletti kellhom maggoranza fil-Kunsill tal-Gvern u tlieta minnhom setghu anke jkunu membri tal-Kunsill Eżekuttiv. Minhabba f'hekk il-P.N., li qabel kien kontra l-gvern, ha ftit hu stess il-qagħda ta' partit "fil-gvern" ghax għall-ewwel beda jikkollabora bis-shih mal-gvern u, f'ċerti affarijiet, seta' jeżercita influwenza diretta fuq l-amministrazzjoni. Mizzi u l-Kontj Strickland (li kien ikkontesta l-elezzjoni b'suċċess bhala kandidat tal-P.N.) kienu fost dawk mahtura fil-Kunsill Eżekuttiv; u wara Strickland għamel bħal Savona qablu u qaleb mal-gvern tant li lahaq Segretarju Principali tal-Gvern. Savona, li kien irriżenja minn mal-gvern u ried jikseb lura l-poter, ra lil fejn kien qieghed jonfoh ir-riħ u dar kontra l-gvern li qabel kien parti minnu, u sar, b'mod speċjali, għadu ta' Strickland, li tant seta' jitqabbel mieghu kemm f'dik li hi influwenza ingliża f'edukazzjoni u orjentament kif ukoll f'dik li hi politika kollaboratriċi. Meta ra dan Mizzi irriżenja mill-Kunsill imma l-partit tieghu baqa' favorevolment dispost lejn il-gvern għal xi snin, mentri Savona, li qabel kien oppona l-ghoti ta' Gvern Rappreżentattiv, issa ha l-offensiva bit-tal-ba għal Gvern Responsabbli. Hekk naraw kif mhux biss il-partiti alternaw fil-poter — mill-"oppożizzjoni" għall-"gvern", mill-"gvern" għall-"oppożizzjoni" — iżda anke kif influwenzaw wiehed lill-lehor fl-impronta politika, u dan meta t-tnejn kienu għadhom bl-istess mexxejja u ftit jew wisq bl-istess laqmijiet. Il-partiti ma setghux għajr jinfluwenzaw lil xulxin — huma lill-eletturi, u l-eletturi lilhom — għaliex kienu organiżmi politiċi joperaw fl-istess ċirku, f'soċjetà waħda u żgħira; kellhom ukoll, ftit jew wisq, problema komuni: kif se jikkontrollaw lill-gvern, li seta' ma jaghti kont lil hadd, u kif se jkabbru l-appell tagħhom mal-poplu.

Il-politiċiżazzjoni li beda l-partit ta' Mizzi fis-snin 80 giet intensifikata fis-snin 90 mill-partit ta' Savona, hekk kif fil-bidu ta' dan is-seklu, meta Savona kien irtira, din reggħet tkabbret u tferxet meta Mizzi ha f'idejh, u nistghu nibqgħu sejrin hekk f'veduta tal-politika bhala mewġa fuq l-oħra fl-istess ilma. Fis-snin 80 kienet il-lingwa li hegġet lill-eletturi, fis-snin 90 kienet ir-religjon li nkwetat il-popolin, f'tarf is-seklu kienu t-taxxi, wara l-1903 b'mod speċjali, kienet il-kostituzzjoni għaliex il-Gvern Rappreżentattiv gie revokat u sostitwit b'kostituzzjoni reazzjonarja: anke wara l-kisba tal-Gvern Responsabbli fl-1921 il-problemi principali tista' tgħid

li kienu l-lingwa, ir-religjon, u l-kostituzzjoni, almenu għal bosta politikanti.

**Ideologikament** il-partit Savonjan u l-partit Mizzjan donnhom resqu lejn xulxin iżjed ma għadda ż-żmien; aktarx li l-iżjed fattur li kien jiddistingwihom kien l-atteggjament lejn il-funzjoni tal-lingwa ingliża u taljana. Is-Savonjani (u warajhom l-Istricklandjani u l-Laburisti) kienu favur li tkun imgħallma l-lingwa Maltija fl-iskejjel. Differenzi oħrajn, per eżempju dwar politika fiskali, kienu mmoderati biż-żmien u, sa ċertu punt, anke ittiehdu minn kunsillieri fuq in-naħa l-oħra. Għalhekk id-differenza primarja bejniethom baqgħet, fuq il-livell ideologiku, dik ta' disposizzjoni lejn il-presenza ingliża f'Malta u konsegwentement lejn l-aspirazzjoni għal xi futur differenti, imma b'danakollu xorta wahda riedu jappellaw fuq kollox għas-sentimenti popolari u għalhekk l-iħfef u l-iqsar triq għat-tnejn kienet li jipprezentaw tghassida ta' "patra u religjon" — *amor patriae religio est* — imma bi prioritajiet differenti f'ċerti aspetti minuri, u, ċertament, b'appelli kuntrastanti f'dak li kellu x'jaqsam ma' indirizz partigjan lejn l-awtorità, il-poter, u l-massa.

Minhabba li l-gvern kien wiehed strangier, iċcentraliżżat, burokratiku, iħares l-ewwelnett lejn il-fortizza u l-gwarnigjon, il-qasma bejn kollaborazzjoni u reżistenza kienet profonda: biex tinstema ridt tghajjat b'kemm kellek gargi għax il-vuċi riedet twassal sa Londra, jew almenu sa Ruma. F'dan l-istat isteriku, fejn il-poplu qisu ma kien iġhodd għal xejn hief biex jaqla' x'jiekol billi jakkomoda l-interessi tal-gvern, ftit seta' jkun hemm evoluzzjoni razzjonali u programmata; fi kliem ieħor, it-tattika kienet iżjed necessarja mill-ideologija, tneħhi t-tigbid fl-aċċettazzjoni tal-Mentalità Patrijottika. Hekk hu kif il-ġibda patrijottika għall-għaqda nazzjonali, għal front komuni, minhabba s-saħħa sproporzjonata tal-gvern versu ċ-ċittadin, kienet kultant tirbaħ fuq il-ġibda naturali lejn il-partiti, (għax kull fejn hemm il-hajja hemm id-differenzi u interessi konfligġenti). F'dan id-dawl tifhem kif Mizzi, fl-1891, wasal biex aċċetta li jitla' fuq il-palk waqt **meeting** pubbliku u jieħu b'idejn Savona. Hekk sar, f'żewġ **meetings** kbar wara xulxin, il-**Partito Unionista**, f'mument meta l-gvern kien qieghed jhedded li jikser sfaċċatament il-kostituzzjoni. Il-**Partito Unionista** malajr kien sigillat, għal ftit żmien, bl-atroċità tas-**Sei Maggio** (1891) meta l-pulizija maltin, kif ri-organizzati mill-amministrazzjoni Strickland,

użaw il-lembubi għall-ewwel darba, u kien hemm saħansitra xi torturi ta' whud mid-dimonstranti arrestati; però l-partit il-ġdid ma kampax u wara sentejn harġet bħal qabel ir-rivalità bejn mizzjani u savonjani. L-istess ġara, almenu sa ċertu punt, lill-**Partito Popolare**, li wkoll twaqqaf minn Savona f'assoċjazzjoni ma' personalità politika oħra, din id-darba Panzavecchia, iżda lanqas dan ma dam wisq. Il-**Partito Popolare** kien fl-aqwa tiegħu matul l-hekk imsejha "kwistjoni taż-żwieġijiet" li, bħall-kwistjoni tal-lingwa u tal-kostituzzjoni qabilha u warajha, tat-skussatura oħra għal mobilizzazzjoni politika ta' natura popolari. Qanqlet, mill-ibghad irkejjien tal-gżejjer, lil eluf ta' raħhala u kampanjoli, flimkien man-nies tal-ibliet — irġiel u nisa — l-iżjed bis-saħha tal-involvement tal-kleru kważi kollu, b'mod partikolari l-ġerarkija ekkleżjastika, fil-biża' miż-żwieġ ċivili u xi miżuri arbitrarji da parti tal-parlament ingliż rigward ftehim mal-Vatikan li kien sar qabel. Imma din il-kwistjoni serviet ukoll biex għal darb'oħra temfasizza d-differenzi li kien hemm bejn il-**Partito Nazionale** ta' Mizzi u l-**Partito Popolare** ta' Savona u Panzavecchia: wiehed iżjed legalistiku, sekulari u dinjituż, l-iehor iżjed populista, klerikali u fanatiku.

Wara l-irtirar ta' Savona mix-xena politika fl-1898, Mizzi bħala kap tal-P.N. żamm l-oppożizzjoni anti-stricklandjana magħquda billi ġabar wrajh elementi savonjani u panzavecchjani fil-ġlieda kontra l-amministrazzjoni Strickland, amministrazzjoni li fha kienet tinkorpora l-ifjen koncentrament tad-Dinamika Kolonjali (dominazzjoni-modernizzazzjoni-assimilazzjoni). Hekk fl-1901, fl-eqqel tal-imperjalizmu ngliż, kien imiss issa lill-partit ta' Mizzi li jirkeb fuq dak li halla warajh Savona u jifrex il-messaġġ politiku mal-pajjiż kollu b'kumitati u sotto-kumitati u permezz ta' **meetings** kbar daqs dawk ta' żmien il-kwistjoni politiko-religjuża ta' ftit snin qabel, għalkemm żgur f'sitwazzjoni inqas favorevoli peress li Strickland kien ipprojbixxa l-laqqhaat publiċi fl-ibliet ta' Malta. Fil-proċess biex jinħarġu n-nies minn djarhom għal manifestazzjonijiet publiċi anti-governattivi taht sistema iżjed ripressiva kien jinħtieġ mill-ġdid it-twaħhid tal-Politika Parrokkjali mal-Politika Nazzjonali; hekk ukoll naraw kif partit wara l-iehor kien qieghed ighin fl-iżvilupp ta' kuxjenza nazzjonali billi jagħmel liċ-ċittadini jagħrfu xi ftit x'kienu u x'setghu jkunu d-drittijiet tagħhom f'konfront mal-gvern.

Taht is-suċċessur ta' Mizzi, il-prokuratur legali Francesco Azzopardi, la l-P.N. u lanqas l-**Associazione Politica Maltese** (li kienet saret biex tipprowa tiffirma speċi ta' gvern alternattiv għal dak effettiv), ma setgħu jibqgħu jgawdu l-istima ta' qabel. It-tort ma kienx kollu ta' Azzopardi għaliex apparti l-fatt li Strickland kien telaq meta fl-aħhar lahaq gvernatur f'kolonja oħra, x'seta jsir meta għal sena wara l-oħra l-gvern ma kien jippermetti ebda partiċepazzjoni f'deċiżjonijiet ta' interess pubbliku sakemm l-oppożizzjoni ma toqgħodx għall-kundizzjonijiet despotiċi tiegħu? Fl-assenza ta' rivoluzzjoni, din kienet is-sitwazzjoni li tkattar il-mentalità tipika tan-“nejja jew maħruqa”, ċioè, tal-“moderat” u l-“estremist”: dak li jkun lest jagħmel il-kompromessi u forsi jiggwadanja xi haġa u l-iehor li ma jċedix u jibqa' jgħid “le” akkost ta' kollox. Ta' din ix-xorta kienet il-firda fil-P.N. bejn l-Azzopardjani u l-Mizzjani fl-1910 u wara. Fuq naħa, kien hemm dawk, bħal Azzopardi, it-tabib Filippo Sceberras u l-avukat Arturo Mercieca, li mill-mitluf xtaqu jieħdu li jistgħu. Min-naħa l-oħra, kien hemm nies bħal Dottor Giuseppe Mizzi — bin Fortunat, frisk frisk mill-istudji tiegħu f'Ruma — li ma riedux jidhlu jew ikunu nominati għall-Kunsill qabel ma tingħata lura l-kostituzzjoni rappreżentattiva. Din kienet, fil-verità, il-politika “astensionista” li kien segwa u rrakkomanda Fortunato Mizzi innifsu wara r-revoka tal-Gvern Rappreżentattiv fl-1903. Hekk kienu jaħsbuha wkoll benjamini panzavecchjani bħat-tabib André Pullicino u Antonio Dalli, li kejn ma kellhom simpatija ma' Azzopardi.

Proprju minn din il-firda reġa' tfaċċa l-attentat għal fużjoni fis-sura tal-**Comitato Patriottico**, taht il-presidenza tal-Monsinjur Panzavecchia. Il-**Comitato Patriottico**, li dam tista' tgħid sa tniem il-gwerra, għaqqad fih elementi Nazzjonalj u Popolari, tant li kultant issib riferenzi għalih bħala l-Partit Popolari u kultant, x'aktarx iżjed spiss, bħala l-Partit Nazzjonali. Apparti dan il-**Comitato**, kien hemm elementi oħrajn, inqas organizzati u allura mhux tant attivi politika-ment, li forsi nistgħu nsejnhom neosavonjani, bħal Cesare Darmanin u l-perit Francesco Wettinger (savonjani li wara seggew lil Mizzi u lil Panzavecchia), jew addirittura stricklandjani indipendenti, iġifieri anglofilj ad oltranza, progressisti u anti-nazzjonalisti fl-istess ħin, nies bħal Dr. Giorgio Borg u Dr. Augusto Bartolo tal-**Chronicle**.

Sal-1921, meta sar riallineament definittiv tal-forzi par-

tigjani għall-ewwel elezzjoni taht il-kostituzzjoni l-ġdida, kienu diġà inqalghu divergenzi fil-kamp Nazzjonali-Popolari. Kien hemm, fuq kolloxx, l-entrata tal-avukat Enrico Mizzi (1885-1950) li, waqt li kien għadu jistudja l-Italja qabel il-gwerra, kien issogra jesprimi soluzzjoni irredentista għal Malta. Fil-każ ta' Mizzi ż-żgħir Għawdex reġa' spikka bħala distrett mizzjan bi għaru u minkejja hafna akkużi Mizzi malajr stabilixxa hawnhekk bażi ta' appoġġ għalih tant li, kif uriet l-elezzjoni tal-1921, kien ihabbatha sewwa mal-appoġġ li rnexxielu jikseb Strickland fid-distrett tiegħu, ukoll distrett primarjament rurali u agrikolu. Fis-sena tal-qorti marzjali ta' Mizzi, fl-1917, nistghu nġhidu li kienet tidher diġà l-firda, li harġet ahjar wara l-1921, u li baqgħet almenu sal-1926, dik bejn l-element mizzjan, jew Nazzjonali, u l-element panzavecchjan, jew Popolari.

Is-sorpriża l-kbira ta' wara l-ewwel gwerra kienet irritorn tal-Gvernatur Strickland, li mill-ġdid ippolarizza bis-sħiħ lin-naħa imperjalista, b'bażi fl-aristokrazija u "l-klassijiet il-godda", u lin-naħa nazzjonalista, b'bażi fil-borġeżija italjanizzata u "l-klassijiet il-qodma". Kiber l-estremiżmu fuq iż-żewġ naħat u kien hemm anke inċidenti żgħar ta' vjolenza politika. L-avveniment l-iehor importantissmu ta' wara l-ewwel gwerra kien, bla dubju, is-**Sette Giugno**, li mhux biss haffef l-għotja tal-Gvern Risponsabbli iżda ta wkoll spinta konsiderevoli lill-moviment tal-haddiema. Mill-**Assemblea Nazionale**, li hadmet pjuttost kordjalment għall-Gvern Responsabbli, kienu harġu sal-1921 erba' partiti politiċi li meta tisma x'kienu faċilment titfixxkel u taħseb li qiegħed tighx xi nofs sekl u qabel: dawn kienu l-partit ta' Strickland, f'assoċjalizzjoni mal-avukat Augusto Bartolo (imsejjah il-**CONSTITUTIONAL PARTY**); il-partit ta' Mizzi, li din id-darba kkontesta biss għal Għawdex (imsejjah il-**PARTITO DEMOCRATICO NAZIONALISTA**); il-partit ta' Panzavecchia, il-ovvjament kien l-ikbar u l-iżjed wiehed stabbilit (imsejjah il-**PARTITO POPOLARE** jew **UNIONE POLITICA MALTESE**); u l-partit ta' Savona: fi kliem iehor, **LA CAMERA DEL LAVORO** li minnha hareġ il-**LABOUR PARTY**, keilha bħala l-ewwel mexxej tagħha lil bin Sigismondo Savona, il-kurunell u avukat Willie Savona (1868-1937), li bhal missieru kien għamel karriera fil-militar u wara taha għall-politika. Għalkemm Mizzi ż-żgħir u Savona ż-żgħir żgur kienu persuni differenti minn missirijethom, dan juri kemm il-politika



kienet baqgħet elitista, minkejja ż-żieda fin-numru ta' elettu-  
 ri, u juri wkoll kif u kemm r-rivaltajiet familjari u l-politika  
 tal-personalitajiet, kienu qawwiya fil-partiġjanizmu lokali.  
 Imma lanqas irridu ninsew lill-massa bla isem u bla krettu,  
 lil dawk li l-politikanti l-hin kollu jsejju "l-poplu", lil dawk  
 li minghajrhom ma jistax ikun hemm "il-patria", cioè il-  
 maġġoranza "siekta" (fi kwalunkwe pajjiż), u li issa bdew  
 iqumu ftit fuq tagħhom speċjalment permezz tal-estensjoni  
 tal-vot f'sistema parlamentari u tal-formazzjoni wara s-**Sette  
 Giugno** ta' għaqdiet tal-haddiema profiċjenti. M'hemmx  
 dubju li l-klassi tal-haddiema kienet baqgħet, jekk mhux  
 minsija għal kollox, żgur sottomessa u daqstant iehor sekon-  
 darja għall-ġlieda kostituzzjonali, u għall-fanatiżmu partiġ-  
 jan li hi stess tant kienet kompliċi fiha.

Data sinifikanti hafna, fl-istorja tal-partiti, kienet l-1926  
 meta fl-istess xahar tal-istess sena, hargu mill-ġdid, bħal fl-  
 1880, żewġ allinejamenti prinċipali: dik, biex insejjuha  
 hekk, savonjana-stricklandjana, soċjal-imperjalista, permezz  
 tal-"compact" bejn il-**Constitutional Party** u l-**Labour Party**;  
 u dik, biex insejjuha hekk, mizzjana-panzavecchjana, kon-  
 servattiva-patrijottika, permezz tal-"fuzjoni" bejn il-**Partito  
 Popolare** jew **Unione Politica** Maltese u l-**Partito Democratico  
 Nazionale**.

F'dan ir-riallinejament milli jidher l-iżjed żewġ partiti  
 li tilfu mill-identità u l-emfażi partikolari tagħhom kienu l-  
**Labour Party** u l-**Partito Democratico Nazionale**, li fil-fatt  
 kienu l-iżjed tnejn viċin ta' xulxin fil-programmi elettorali,  
 fis-sens li kienu l-iżjed tnejn diposti li jadottaw xi politika  
 radikali, anke fil-qasam soċjali. Gara però li wiehed ġie kważi  
 għal kollox assorbit minn Strickland (li kien kapitalist im-  
 perjalista) tant li fl-1932 it-tabib Paul Boffa kien l-uniku  
 kandidat tiegħu elett, mentri l-iehor ġie tista' tghid assorbit u  
 żgur influwenzat hafna mill-klerikażmu popolari u l-kon-  
 servattivizmu soċjali tal-elementi panzavecchjani, tant li  
 Mizzi dam ma ha l-partit f'idejha għal żmien twil.

Sadanittant baqgħet tiffirma d-djalettika bejn Dinamika  
 Kolonjali u Mentalità Patrijottika fil-kuntest soċjo-psikolo-  
 ġiku lokali. Imma l-bidla, sa fejn setgħet issir, kienet akarx  
 stagnata jew sfurzata sakemm baqgħet l-**incertezza fil-qasam  
 kostituzzjonali**: bil-gvern ingliż ma jimpurtax mill-veduti  
 tal-maġġoranza tal-elettorat jekk dawn, skond hu, ma kinux  
 fil-interest imperjali u allura ta' Malta stess (is-sospensjoni



tal-Gvern Risponsabbli fl-1930 u r-revoka tiegħu fl-1933 huma xhieda biżżejjed ta' dan). Bqajna bil-manija lingwistika-kulturali-psikoloġika, it-tixjir ta' bandieri mhux Maltin, il-karba għal żewġ ommijiet li ma jwelledux; bil-piki u l-preġudizji tal-kampanilizmu ta' min ma jarax 'il bogħod iżjed miz-zuntier u l-każin, u tal-klijentilizmu, ta' min ma jarax 'il bogħod iżjed mill-obbligu u l-intriċċ. Bil-persuna fi għieda mal-prinċipju, l-interess fi għieda mar-raġuni, il-parroċċa fi għieda man-nazzjon, in-nazzjon fi għieda mal-imperu, baqgħet l-istess firda infatwata, aċċentwata mill-isfukar u l-kuntradizzjonijiet inerenti fil-qagħda kolonjali, mingħajr ebda integrazzjoni radikali ta' interessi reċiproċi u d-diskusjoni matura ta' prijoritajiet soċjali u nazzjonali.

Tista' tara l-aspetti pożittivi tal-kolonjalizmu ngliż f'Malta billi thares lejn il-modernizzazzjoni, speċjalment fil-qasam teknoloġiku: titjib sanitarju, bħad-drenaġġ; komunikazzjoni aħjar, bħall-ferrovija; faċilitajiet navali u merkantili moderni, bħall-breakwater u d-dry docks; fil-qasam amministrattiv, legali u edukattiv, proċeduri iżjed effiċjenti millat organizattiv u, ġeneralment, forsi sens aħjar ta' ko-ordinament fil-hajja pubblika, inkluż sens ta' dixxiplina, mhux biss f'oqsma militari. Imma qabel ma tfahhar jew tiskuża, trid tiddistingwi t-teknoloġija mill-kultura, iċ-ċentralizzazzjoni mill-effiċjenza, il-kummerċ hieles mill-kapitalizmu individwalista, ix-xjenza mill-ambjent, id-dixxiplina mis-servilizmu u r-regimentazzjoni, mill-pappagalizmu l-edukazzjoni u l-edukazzjoni mil-lingwa. Għaliex filwaqt li min xtaq iżomm mal-gvern kellu x'jappoġġja, speċjalment jekk kien jara lill-Ingliżi jipprovdule x-xogħol u jonfqu l-flus hawn-hekk, b'danakollu l-kolonjalizmu anke għalih — u forsi speċjalment għalih — kien biss il-hobż għal min m'għandux, u ma jhossx jew ma jirrealizzax li għandu għeruf f'artu, fost niesu, li għandu l-mod ta' għajxien tiegħu, li artu ma setgħetx tappartjeni lil pajjiż iehor u titmexxa minn eluf ta' mili bogħod fl-interess ta' pajjiż li jaħkem fuq inhawi oħra tad-dinja, u titmexxa hekk — bħala pont tal-imperju fuq il-linja lejn is-subkontinent indjan — minn nies li, għalkemm biż-żmien hafna Maltin saru jirrispettawhom u anke jhobbuhom, kienu, fir-rejaltà, poplu differenti għal kollox mill-Maltin. Il-Maltin u l-Ingliżi f'Malta kienu żewġ razez: b'sura, temperament, reliġjon, atteġġjament u drawwiet tant differenti, u fi stat ta' inugwaljanza assoluta. Il-kolonjalizmu kien hażin

mill-qiegħ imma fi gżira żghira u fqira, li niesha kienu raw suċċessjoni interminabbli ta' dominazzjonijiet, dan sab art fertili għall-applikazzjoni tiegħu. Il-kolonjaliżmu ingliz kien sottili biżżejjed biex iġhammex għajnejn eluf ta' haddiema indiġeni bl-illużjoni li l-paga fl-aħħar tal-gimgha kienet biżżejjed biex tagħmilhom bnedmin. Hekk qarraq bil-massa tant li din setgħet tiddefendih kontra min opponih, u, fost dawk li opponewh, kien hemm ukoll uħud li kienu lesti jintefgħu tant l-umbrella ta' imperjaliżmu iehor, hekk kif għamlu l-Maltn fl-1800, meta wara li mietu biex jehilsu minn hakkiem barrani fil-pront stiednu iehor sabiex jipproteġihom... Minkejja l-konsegwenzi pożittivi ta' despotiżmu benevolenti — li għen direttament u indirettament għal politika li kienet influwenzata fl-istituzzjonijiet "tagħna" mid-demokrazija parlamentari ngliza — u minkejja wkoll l-ammont ta' kollaborazzjoni u ammirazzjoni għalih fost dawk li l-iżjed influwenzaw ruħhom mill-kultura tal-metropoli amministrattiva, jibqa' l-fatt innegabbli li Malta għall-Ingilterra kellha qabel xejn skop ta' kolonja-fortizza — lanqas ta' kolonja ordinarja — u li għalhekk il-politika kienet ġeneralment sugġetta għall-interessi imperjali. Minhabba f'dan, hafna mill-benefiċċji li rriżultaw kienu, essenzjalment, **accidentali jew sfurmati**. Taht dawn il-kundizzjonijiet — meta saħansitra kostituzzjoni tingħata u titnehħa kif ġieb u lahaq — bilfors kienet tinħass qawwiya **x-xenqa għall-libertà** u allura problemi soċjali, kulturali u ekonomiċi ġew sugġetti għaliha, probabbli wisq iżjed milli kien jigrri f'ċirkustanzi iżjed normali. Il-problema prinċipali kienet, mela, kif tikseb il-libertà, u mhux x'tista' tagħmel biha. Fuq kollox, però, il-kolonjaliżmu ngliz kien **forza diviżiva** li sposta r-relazzjonijiet tan-"natives" ma' xulxin. Ironikament, kien ukoll **forza li tgħaqqad** għaliex il-Maltn, partiġġjanizmu apparti, kellhom fattur komuni fli kienu poplu b'karatteristiċi differenti hafna minn dawk tar-razza governatriċi: kellhom identitá għalihom, kienu Maltn, għalkemm mhux kulhadd wasal biex japprezza dan bl-istess heffa jew sensittività.

Kif osserva (per eżempju) Shils f'**Political Development in the New States**, (Mouton, 1966), l-istess mexxejja u gruppi li jippretendu li jirrangaw l-affarijiet sikwit ikunu, bla ma jafu, prodotti tas-sistema kolonjali li magħha dejjem kellhom iħabbtu wiċċhom fl-imghoddi, u li fiha, u taħta, kienu mdorrijin jaħdmu; u allura mhux għalkemm tghib f'daqqa waħda

# SKEDA ORIGINALI LI TINDIKA KIF BDEW U ZVULUPPAW L-ALLINEJAMENTI PARTIGJANI EWLENIN TA' PAJJIZNA (1880-1926)

Ismijiet ta' Fazzjonijiet u Partiti fuq in-naħa tax-xellug igifieri "Moderates" versu r-Regim Kolonjali u/jew versu l-Fazzjoni jew il-Partit l-iehor: ismijiet ta' Fazzjonijiet u Partiti fuq in-naħa tal-lemin igifieri "Extremists" versu r-Regim Kolonjali u/jew versu l-Fazzjoni jew il-Partit l-iehor.

- 1880
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>REFORM PARTY (-c. 1891)<br/>(S. Savona, Dr. P. Mifsud, F.S. De Cesare)</p> | <p>PARTITO ANTIRIFORMISTA (-c. 1884)<br/>(Dr. F. Mizzi, Dr. Agost. Naudi,<br/>Dr. Z. Roncali, S. Cachia Zammit)</p> |
|---|---|
- 1887
- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <p>REFORM PARTY<br/>(S. Savona)</p> | <p>PARTITO NAZIONALE<br/>(Dr. F. Mizzi, Dr. O. Grech Mifsud, Ct. G. Strickland)</p> |
|-------------------------------------|---|
- 1889
- PARTITO DELL'ORDINE  
(Count G. Strickland, Dr. Alf. Naudi, E. Ciantar)
- 1891
- PARTITO UNIONISTA  
(R.P. + P.N.: S. Savona, E. Castaldi)
- 1893
- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>PARTITO NAZIONALE (Malta)<br/>(Dr. F. Mizzi, E. Castaldi, Mgr. A. Mifsud)</p> | <p>REFORM PARTY (Public Opinion)<br/>(S. Savona)</p> |
|--|--|
- 1895
- PARTITO POPOLARE  
(S. Savona, Mgr. I. Panzavecchia, A. Dalli, Dr. A. Pullicino)

- 1897
- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>PARTITO NAZIONALE<br/>(Dr. F. Mizzi)</p> | <p>PARTITO POPOLARE (Malta Taghna)<br/>(S. Savona, Mgr. I. Panzavecchia)</p> |
|---|--|
- 1899-1905
- P.N./ASSOCIAZIONE POLITICA MALTESE  
(Dr. F. Mizzi, Mgr. I. Panzavecchia, Dr. F. Sceberras, F. Azzopardi)
- 1905-1910
- P.N.  
(F. Azzopardi)
- 1910
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>P.N. "AZZOPARDIAN" antiastensionista<br/>(F. Azzopardi, Dr. F. Sceberras, Dr. A. Mercieca)</p> | <p>P.N. "MIZZIAN" astensionista<br/>(Dr. Gius. Mizzi, Dr. A. Pullicino, A. Dalli)</p> |
|---|---|

- 1911
- COMITATO PATRIOTTICO astensionista  
(P.P. + P.N.: Mgr. I. Panzavecchia)
- 1914
- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>P.N. (neomizzian) antiastensionista<br/>(Dr. G. Mizzi, Dr. E. Mizzi)</p> | <p>P.N. (panzavecchian) astensionista<br/>(A. Dalli, Dr. A. Pullicino)</p> |
|---|--|
- 1921
- |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| <p>CONSTITUTIONAL PARTY<br/>(Count Sir G. Strickland)</p> | <p>LA CAMERA DEL LAVORO/LABOUR PARTY<br/>(Col. Dr. W. Savona)</p> | <p>PARTITO POPOLARE/ UNIONE POLITICA MALTESE<br/>(Panzavecchia)</p> | <p>PARTITO DEMOCRATICO NAZIONALISTA<br/>(Dr. E. Mizzi)</p> |
|---|---|---|--|
- 1926
- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>C.P. (Strickland) + L.P. (Lt. Col. M. Dundon,<br/>Dr. (Sir) P. Boffa) = "Compact"</p> | <p>P.P. + P.D.N. = P.N. (Dr. E. Mizzi,<br/>Dr. (Sir) U. Mifsud)</p> |
|--|---|

\* cf. Henry J. Frenedo: *The Formation of Maltese Political Parties* (D. Phil. Thesis, Oxford, 1976).

l-impjiba ta' qabel — hekk imdahhla fl-usanzi u l-psikologija tan-nies f'pajjiż — sempliċement għaliex dan ikun għadu kemm heles mill-madmad tal-barrani. La hu hekk, trid tara jekk in-nies infushom jinbidlux, u jekk l-istrutturi ta' poter — politiku u ekonomiku — jibqgħux bħal qabel; b'mod speċjali trid tara kif u kemm tinbidel l-impjiba tal-“ex-natives” ma' xulxin, kif u kemm tista' tkun għida r-relazzjoni li tghaddi bejn in-nies “tal-poter” u n-nies “tal-popolin,” kemm tista' tintrefa' l-Politika Parrokkjali f'relazzjoni mal-Politika Nazzjonali, u kif tista' tiġi modifikata radikalment il-polarizzazzjoni li tkun giet ritwalizzata fi żmien iehor.

Sa fejn il-partiti politiċi kienu kkundizzjonati mill-kolonjalizmu fl-operazzjoni tiegħu fis-soċjetà maltija suppost li, bid-dekolonizzazzjoni, dawn jevolvu minn kważi-tribujiet tal-infatwati f'mezzi kemm jista' jkun razzjonali u effiċjenti għad-distribuzzjoni tal-poter u tal-għid billi jservu l-funzjoni li jiċċekkjaw (bl-effett li jtejbu) wiehed lill-iehor fl-aħjar interess tal-publiku in generali.

Trid tara, iżda, jekk dan ikunx qiegħed isir, jew inkella jekk iżjed ma l-partiti jersqu lejn xulxin fil-politika iżjed tikber (jew titkabbar) ir-rivalità bejn il-partitarji akkaniti. Meta l-istoriċi (u l-politikanti) tal-futur forsi jippruvaw iwiegħbu dawn il-mostoqsijiet diffiċli, nittama li jkunu jistgħu jiggwidaw ruhhom xi ftit mill-esperjenza tal-passat li ppruvajt nirrikostruwixxi, ninterpretu u nfiehem hawnhekk.

## L-ARĊISQOF GONZI

### INTERVISTAT MIR-RIVISTA STORJA

*F'Awissu ta' din is-sena, l-E.T. Monsinjur Mikiel Gonzi, li issa għandu 92 sena u m'għadux jokkupa l-kariga ta' arċisqof effettiv ta' Malta, tkellem mal-Professur Patri ANDREW VELLA, Kap tad-Dipartiment tal-Istorja fl-Università u mis-Sur GEORGE ATTARD, Assistent Editur ta' Storja, dwar sett ta' mistoqsijiet li għamilnilu.*

### SUNT BIJOGRAFIKU

Mgr. Gonzi twieled il-Birgu fl-1885, bin Gużeppi Gonzi u Margerita mwielda Tonna. Ta' hdax-il-sena daħal is-Siminarju u fl-1903 ġie l-ewwel fl-eżami tal-Matrikola. Ġie ordnat saċerdot mill-isqof Pietro Pace fl-1908, ftit wara li Gonzi kien iggradwa b'baċellerat fil-letteratura. Kompla l-istudji tiegħu fl-Università Gregorjana ta' Ruma mnejn illawrja fid-dritt kanoniku sentejn wara. Matul l-ewwel gwerra dinjija (1914-1918) Dun Mikiel inhatar Kappillan Militari kif ukoll avvanza fil-karriera pedagogika tiegħu minn għalliem tal-iskrittura fis-Seminarju għal professur tal-iskrittura u tal-Ebrajk fl-Università.\*

*Hawnhekk nistgħu nġhidu li tibda l-ħajja pubblika ta' Gonzi, mhux biss bhala għalliem, imma wkoll bhala dinjitarju ekkleżjastiku b'relazzjonijiet tajbin mal-isqof Mauro Caruana; u anki, sa ċertu punt, bhala politikant, meta fl-1921 huwa aċċetta li jikkontesta l-elezzjoni għas-Senat fl-interessi tal-Labour Party.*

Gonzi dam senatur mill-1921 sal-1923 — meta kien ukoll rettur ta' l-iskola S. Pawl tal-Belt — imbagħad għadda minn segretarju privat tal-isqof Caruana għan-nomina ta' isqof ta' Għawdex fl-1924, fl-eta ta' 39, wara li sa minn qabel kien diġà nħatar koadjutur tal-Kanoniku Tejologu tal-Kattidral ta' Għawdex. Huwa dam isqof ta' Għawdex dsatax-il-sena.

Fl-1943, wara hafna attivitajiet pastorali u amministrattivi,

\*Għal kronologija bijografika qasira, ara l-fuljett dwar il-gublew tad-deheb ta' Mgr. Gonzi mahruġ mill-Kumitat Organizzattiv tal-Festj Gubilari (1974).

Gonzi nħatar koadjutur tal-isqof Caruana mill-Papa Piju XII bid-dritt tas-suċċesjoni. Meta miet Caruana f'Dicembru tal-1943 laħaq minflok u Gonzi, li nħata wkoll, għall-ewwel darba f'Malta, it-titolu ta' "Arċisqof". *Din il-ħatra saret ji żmien il-gwerra meta Malta kienet naturalment kolonja ngliza vitali: Gonzi kien figura kontroversjali, kellu personalità distinta, u għaldaqstant il-ħatra tiegħu f'din il-kariga għolja kienet waħda polemika, għalkemm fil-fatt huwa jichad li qatt kien "anti-English". Kwazi kollox jindika li hekk hu, sew qabel kif ukoll wara li Gonzi sar arċisqof: fl-1946 ir-re George VI onorah bit-titolu ta' Sir, u bħala arċisqof huwa ha wkoll ir-rank onorarju ta' Major General fl-armata ngliza.*

Bħala arċisqof, Gonzi ha sehem f'kwazi kull okkażjoni ufficjali ta' importanza u ha wkoll diversi inizjattivi fil-qasam ekklezjastiku, imma x'aktarx li fl-istorja riċenti jibqa' magħruf prinċipalment in konnessjoni mal-għlieda hekk imsejha "politiko-religjuża" ta' żmien is-sittinijiet (li llum ma tantx hu moda li ssemmiha, imqar bl-iżjed intenzjoni retta, u dan "biex ma nqajmux kadavri").

Xi sena ilu Mgr. Gonzi rtira mill-kariga ta' arċisqof metropolitana, għalkemm għadu jgawdi t-titolu ta' Arċisqof Emeritus, u floku laħaq arċisqof il-monsinjur Għawdexi Ġużeppi Mercieca. Peress li l-perijodu ta' dan l-episkopat kien tant twil, u l-istamina tal-Arċisqof Gonzi nnifsu tant straordinarja, wiehed jista' faċilment jitkellem dwar "l-era ta' Gonzi", almenu fil-qasam tal-istorja ekklezjastika.

## GONZI JIFTAKAR

*RIFLESSJONIJIET DWAR EPISODJI U PERSONALITAJIET MATUL IŻJED MINN NOFS SEKLU TA' EPISKOPAT F'GĦAWDEX U F'MALTA.*

L-ewwel mistoqsija ta' *Storja* lil Monsinjur Gonzi kienet dwar l-influenzi formattivi li kellu fil-bidu tal-karriera spetakolari tiegħu. Mir-risposti tiegħu jidher li żgur żewġ persuni li nfluwenzawh kienu l-isqof Mauro Caruana u l-konfessur u konsulent tiegħu: mingħand dawn kien sikwit jiehu pariri u jidher li magħhom kien jikkondividi l-iżjed sentimenti u hsibijiet privati tiegħu. L-Arċisqof tana rakkont ta' ħajtu, f'mument mżewwaq bi kwotazzjonijiet ffit jew wisq kelma b'kelma, sew bil-Malti kemm bl-Ingliż. F'din l-intervista qegħdin appos-

ta nirrstringu kemm nistghu l-interpretazzjoni storika u nhall-lill-Arcisqof innifsu jiftakar u jikkummenta dwar il-passat tieghu u ta' Malta, b'ton karatteristiku, awtobijografiku.

### **Mahtur Professor fl-Università**

L-ewwel hatra importanti ta' Gonzi kienet dik fl-1915 meta sar Professor tal-Iskrittura u l-Ebrajk fl-Università. Ghall-ewwel, fuq parir tal-konsolenti tieghu, ma aċċettax l-offerta tarrettur ta' l-Università ghal dan il-post, ghax beza' li l-Ebrajk tieghu ma kienx ghadu tajjed bizzejjed. Fj kliem il-konfessur tieghu, kif jiftakru l-Arcisqof: "ghax kien hawn hafna ministri protestanti kollha jafu bl-Ebrajk, ma jmorrux ifixkluk." Izda s-sena ta' wara aċċetta, u sar.

### **Magħzul Isqof ta' Ghawdex**

Il-Professor Gonzi dam tlett snin segretarju privat tal-isqof Caruana. "Kont inghix mieghu fil-palazz: kien jafdali s-segreti kollha tad-djoċesi. Wara l-pranzu, wara ċ-ċena, kont immur mieghu — ipejjep sigarru — u joqghod jghidli x'gara f'Malta. Wara tlett snin, gurnata minnhom, wara l-pranzu, tajtu l-korrispondenza, li kont nirċeviha jien. Ghdetlu: 'hawn għandek wahda mportanti: tal-konċistorjali.' F'qalbi għedt: 'din min jaf hix xi hasla!'" Dak in-nhar Gonzi nzerta ma tantx jiflah u għalhekk mar dritt f'kamartu. Izda wara hames minuti mar ihabbatlu l-bieb l-isqof Caruana stess:

- 'Sar l-isqof t'Ghawdex!'
- 'U x'jimpurtani mill-isqof t'Ghawdex jien . . . għandi wġiegh ta' ras.'
- 'Ma ssaqsnix min sar?'
- 'X'jimpurtani!'
- 'Sirt int.'
- 'Sirt jien? Jien ma naċċettax.'
- 'Kif ma taċċettax? Għandek hila tirrifjuta hawn li għandek il-firma tal-papa, Pio XI?'
- 'Jiena ma naċċettax. Ma nhossnix kapaċi ghal din il-biċċa. Jien kuntent kif jien . . .'
- 'X'se tagħmel?'
- 'Ma nafx.'
- 'Almenu mur hu parir.'

Hekk għamel: "Krejt karrozzin — dak iż-żmien! — xi satghejn, u mort għand id-direttur spiritwali, il-konfessur tiegħi:



- ‘Dun, mhux biex inqerr ġejt, biex ittini parir.’  
 — ‘Fuq hix . . . ma nagħmlux li sirt isqof t’Għawdex, hux?’  
 — ‘Għalhekk ġejt . . . ma naċċettax! L-isqof bagħtni niehu parir, il-parir tiegħek.’  
 — ‘Għamlek il-Papa, kif tista’ tirrifjuta?’  
 — ‘Ma nħossnix kapaci, u lanqas denn li nsir . . .’  
 — ‘Ara inti ġejt għall-parir tiegħi bħala kessur tiegħek?’  
 — ‘Iva.’  
 — ‘Ara, Alla jgħinek; inti mhux int fittixtha; tahilek Alla u Alla jgħinek. Aċċettaha.’  
 — ‘Mela naċċetta . . .’  
 U ġejt hawn u lill-isqof għedtlu: ‘Naċċetta.’ Niftakar qalli: ‘Mela l-kelma tiegħi ma swietx; ta’ dak swiet!’ Dik kienet.”

### **Elett Membru tal-Parlament**

*Mistoqsija:* Tahseb, Eċċellenza, li l-pożizzjoni tiegħek fis-senat parlamentari, meta kont membru tal-Partit tal-Ħaddiema, għenitek fil-mixja tiegħek 'il quddiem, f'għajnejn is-Santa Sede. biex imbghad inti lhaqt l-ewwel isqof ta' Għawdex, imbghad arċisqof ta' Malta?

*Twegiba:* Ma naħsibx li l-hajja politika għenet. Forsi es-perjenza kelli, il-għaliex għamilt tlett snin fis-Senat jien. Ma kontx norqod; u darba kellna xi haġa tas-Senat u l-gvernatur kien talabni biex ngħin biex nirrorangaw. U għent; u ergajna ltqajna . . . Kien hemm fis-Senat anke żewġ rappreżentanti ta' l-isqof, li kienu Monsinjur Apap Bologna u Monsinjur De Piro. Għamilt tlett snin hemm, u f'dawk it-tlett snin naf li anke nkor-regġejt hafna l-istudju tal-Malti.

### **Kif Dahal fil-Partit tal-Ħaddiema**

*Mistoqsija:* Imma inti dħalt hekk fil-politika — minn rajk — jew imbuttawk? Xtaqt inti, kont tinteressa ruhek hafna fil-politika, jew sibt ruhek li speċi mbuttawk?

*Twegiba:* Jiena l-haddiema kont — dak li jidhirli ġust — niddefendihom; imma nuża moderazzjoni eh . . . U fis-senat — issa la ġie l-kliem, imma qalghuliel: ‘inti, avolja tal-*Labour*, moderat; ma tagħmilx differenza.’ Għedt: ‘jiena kulhadd Malti għalija.’

*Mistoqsija:* Kif dħalt fil-politika inti?

*Twegiba:* Ara dan: kont il-Kalkara; kien il-Ħadd — kont

ghadni m'inix ma' l-isqof jien — u ġew tlieta, qaluli: 'Ahna fformajna l-partit tal-*Labour*. Ġejna nitolbuk biex tidhol membru fih.' Ghedtilhom: 'Le! . . . ma rridx naf b'politika jien . . . morru.' Ghedtilhom 'le'.\* Ġie l-*Hadd* ta' wara: reġghu ġew sabuni hemm, il-Kalkara. Qaluli: 'ara, ġejna nghidulek erġajna . . . Is-sur Fons Galea aċċetta, imma ghas-Senat, mhux għall- . . .' Ghedtilhom: 'ara, ma ntkomx risposta. Morru.' U l-ġhada ġejt għand Monsinjur Caruana. Ghedtlu: 'ara, Eċċellenza, dawn talbuni biex nidhol hawn; l-ewwel irrifjutajt, issa . . . x'tgħidli? Tini parir . . .' Qalli: 'Mhux intik parir — nobbligak . . . biex ikun hemm bniedem ekkleżjastiku fil-kumitat.' Qalli: 'mur, nobbligak.' U aċċettajt.

Imbghad, ġiet l-elezzjoni; iffirma ruhu l-partit tal-*Labour* sewwa; kellhom nies li kienu jagħmlu unur lill-partit, tant mill-punt di vista politiku tant mill-punt di vista religjuż. U qaluli 'ara, int trid toħroġ ghas-Senat' . . . u kelli preċiża l-età, għax ried ikollok *trenta cinque anni*. . . \*\*

### **Fil-Funerali tal-Vittm; tas-Sette Giugno**

Mistoqsi dwar l-iżjed esperjenzi memorabbli ta' hajtu, fit-tajjeb jew hażin, l-Arċisqof Gonzi semma l-ewwelnett is-*Sette Giugno*: "Wahda mill-hwejjeg li kienet għamlet kjass kbir f'Malta, u li kienet qanqlet lil kull min ihobb lill-poplu, u qanqlitni kienet, kienet is-*Sette Giugno*; meta anke mietu xi nies. Indifnu f'funeral li haċt parti fih l-*Addolorata*; u bqajt għal snin immur ninvistahom. Dak kien wiehed mill-iktar hwejjeg li rratristaw il-qalb ta' kull min ihobb lil Malta . . ."

### **Fil-Kungress Ewkaristiku tal-1913:**

Mill-aspett religjuż, Gonzi ftakar partikolarment fil-Kungress Ewkaristiku li kien sar f'Malta fl-1913. "Dan kien irnexxa mad-dinja kollha, u kkonsidrat bħala wiehed mill-aqwa kong-

\*Fosthom kien hemm ċertu Alfonso (? Alfons Maria Galea) u iehor kurunell Malti (? il-kurunell Willie Savona); l-Arċisqof Gonzi ma setax j'ftakar sewwa x'kien jismhom.

\*\*Dwar dan il-punt, Mgr. Gonzi ftakar li kienet saritlu kawża fil-qorti minn kandidat iehor, imma dan tilifha (għax fil-fatt Gonzi, skond id-ċertifikat tat-twelid, kien ovvjament għadu kemm għalaq 35 sena).

ressi li saru. Kien haċem hafna l-isqof Pace, għalkemm kien

xih; kellu kumitat ta' ekklezjastiċi u sekulari. Il-poplu aċċetta b'entuzjażmu l-proposta, u kompla ha parti b'veru entuzjażmu u bir-rispett lejn l-Ewkaristija lill-membri kongressisti li kienu ġew minn barra." Huwa ftakar lill-isqof Portelli jagħmel "id-diskors ta' l-ingress" fil-bidu tal-Kungress, hdejn il-kappella ta' Sarrija l-Furjana, fil-prezenza ta' mijiet ta' viżitaturi barranin, inkluz għadd ta' kardinali, u l-folol ta' devoti Maltin. "Kienu hađu parti n-nobbiltà kollha, mingħajr eċċezzjoni; il-kleru kollu, il-poplu kollu . . . "

*Mistoqsija*: Rigward l-Isqof Portelli, li semmejt, tiftakar xi haġa dwar is-*Sette Giugno*?

*Tweġiba*: Monsinjur Portelli kien ha parti; hu hareġ, mar isikket u jippaciġka lill-poplu hemmhekk . . . Ha parti kbira kien l-isqof Portelli. Malli sema' mar jiġri hemm, u għamel diskors u kkwitaw . . .

### **L-Arċisqof Gonzi dwar Nerik Mizzi u Lord Strickland**

*Mistoqsija*: Inti li tiftakar lil Nerik Mizzi u lil Lord Strickland, tista tesprimi l-impressjonijiet tiegħek dwarhom? X'jidhirlek minn dawn iż-żewġ persunaġġi kbar fl-istorja politika ta' Malta?

*Tweġiba*: Mizzi, mill-punt di vista reliġjuż, kien Kattoliċizmu. Mill-punt politiku, kien marbut intimament mal-ilsien Taljan, u allura kien hawn dak il-mument ċerta kwistjoni: dawk li riedu jzommu t-Taljan; u dawk li riedu jeqirduh u jisostitwuh bl-ilsien ingliz. Strickland kien għall-ilsien *ingliz*. Għalhekk, kien hemm oppożizzjoni kbira bejn dawn it-tnejn. Sakemm il-kwestjoni baqgħet politika, l-isqofijiet ma ndahlux. Kulhadd żamm is-sentimentj tiegħu . . . imma meta mbgħad Strickland beda jibżalja u beda jattakka lill-isqofijiet għaliex huma mal-parti l-oħra, insomma, spiċċa kellna l-inkwriet miegħu. Hu kien dar kontra l-kappillani, u kienet qamet kwistjoni. u saru anke xi ittri pastorali biex ikkwitajna, ikkalmajna l-poplu. Imma, anki Strickland kien Kattoliku. Żbalja, b'ċerti atti tiegħu, imma ta' veru Kattoliku li kien, meta għadda ċertu żmien, u rrangat il-biċċa, talab skuża lill-Papa tan-nuqqas li kien għamel anke, forsi xi ftit, lejn il-persuna tiegħu, u lejn l-isqofijiet. Talab skuża; u miet ta' veru Kattoliku." Meta sema' li Strickland kien hażin, Mgr. Gonzi, li kien isqof Għawdex, kien ġie Malta u mar għamillu żjara waqt l-agonija tiegħu, "għax miet ta' veru Kattoliku."

## Jiċċhad li kien "anti-English"

Mistoqsi x'jidhirlu dwar il-pamflet miktub minn student dwar "The Making of Archbishop Gonzi"\* , l-arcisqof Gonzi qal li hu kien qraħ iżda kkummenta li min kiteb dak il-*booklet* ma kien resaq qatt lejħ u, fi kliem Gonzi : "rigward lili qal hafna hmerijiet; hafna affarijiet li huma veri u importanti ma semmi-hom xejn." Mitlub biex ifisser ruħa aħjar, Mgr. Gonzi wara li reġa' lmentha min-nuqqas ta' konsultazzjoni miegħu da parti ta' l-awtur, għadda biex jikkjarifika xi aspetti storiċi li jolqtu r-reputazzjoni u l-karriera tiegħu :

"Dak li deħrlu kitbu — per eżempju, dwar l-oppożizzjoni ta' Strickland; ma semmiex, imbghad, il-parti ta' Ruma. U ma semmiex li anke il-*High Commissioner* ingliż li kien hemm Ruma qatt ma emmen dawk l-akkuzi li kienu qegħdin isiru kontra tiegħi imħabba l-lingwa. Kien *ingliż* — u dejjem kien favur tiegħi; għax kien informat minn wieħed li kien miegħi fil-kulleġġ ingliż Ruma, li mbghad sar isqof u sar *presso il Vaticano*, imbghad spicċa Kardinal ta' Londra (Godfrey). Dan kien ħabib tiegħu. Qallu : 'mhu veru xejn dak li qed jgħid Strickland, li Monsinjur Gonzi huwa *anti-English* !' Qallu : 'għamilna sentejn flimkien il-kulleġġ ingliż jiena u hu. Naf is-sentimentj tiegħu.' U pperswada lill-*High Commissioner presso il Vaticano*. U dan dejjem żamm il-parti tiegħi. Mentri f'dak il-librett, dan ma semmiexx."

## F'Għawdex u f'Malta

Hawnhekk Mgr. Gonzi osserva li hu kien dam isqof ta' Għawdex għal għoxrin sena — u bħala eżempju tal-ħidma pastorali tiegħu hemm, semma' kungress ewkaristiku li kien "trijonf kbir għal Għawdex". Tkellem b'għozza dwar l-Għawdxin : "Għawdex qatt ma kelli x'nilminta, għaliex il-poplu dejjem kien obbidjenti, ossekwijus, lejn l-isqof, ħabib tal-kleru, m'għandix xi ngħid . . ." Huwa irrilieva, iżda, li għall-aħħar seba' snin fl-episkopat tiegħu hemmhekk, kien jassisti lill-isqof Caruana f'Malta, u li dan kien jagħmlu fuq it-talba espressa tal-Papa. "Il-Papa stess — dan hu sigriet li nista nimmanifestah — meta l-Ingilterra, mgħomija minn Strickland, qalu li jiena

\*Ara D. Fenech: *The Making of Archbishop Gonzi* (Valletta, 1976).

*anti-English*, ghamluli l-oppożizzjoni, il-Papa, ftit wara li saret dil-biċċa, f'udjenza kien qalli: 'Ara, taf li Monsinjur Caruana ma jiflahx. Mur oqgħod Malta. Ghinu kemm tista. Ibqa' isqof t'Għawdex, s'intendi, imma għinu f'kull ma tista, għax ma jiflahx.' U għamilt seba' snin — biċċa minnhom is-snin tal-gwerra — qisni kont isqof ta' Malta jien. Id-diffikoltajiet kollha Monsinjur Caruana kien jafdahom f'idejja għax ma kienx jiflah — hafna snin minnhom għamilhom għand is-sorijiet 'Blue Sister'. Il-Papa riedni; u jien għedtlu 'almenu darba fil-gimgha niġi Malta u nagħmel jew ġurnata jew jumejn u nara x'ikunu d-diffikoltajiet. Dak li nista nsolvi, nsolvih; u dak li ma nistax niktlek.' "

### Kif lahaq Arcisqof ta' Malta

*Mistoqsija*: Allura kif tiddlet is-sitwazzjoni biex sirt *persona grata* u sirt arcisqof, la qabel kienu jgħidu li kont *anti-English*?

*Tweġiba*: "Ma kien veru xejn. Dana, fin-1937, Ruma is-sottomettiet l-isem tiegħi bhala isqof koadjutur ta' Malta, għax l-isqof kien marid. F'dak iż-żmien kien hemm il-kondordat bejn l-Ingilterra u Malta, li sar meta Strickland kien segretarju tal-gvern f'Malta — kienu baġtuh bhala rappreżentanti tal-gvern ingliz — kienet saret din: li meta isqof ta' Malta ikun desinjat mill-Vatikan, il-Vatikan irid jissottometti l-isem tiegħu lill-gvern ingliz biex jara huwiex *persona grata* għall-gvern ingliz. Fil-każ tiegħi, ġiet l-ittra lill-gvernatur. Il-gvernatur kien ġdid — Bonham Carter — kien għadu ilu xi gimgha jew hmistax gvernatur. U dana sejjah lil offiċjali għoljin tal-gvern. Qalilhom, 'jiena għadni ġdid, ma naf xejn; x'jidhirkom? Se nirrakkomanda lill-Mons Gonzi, isqof t'Għawdex, bhala isqof għal Malta?' U qalulu, 'm'hemm l-ebda diffikolta'. Dana sejjah lis-segretarju tiegħu, qallu 'lesti l-ittra: *there is no objection*'. Għadda iż-żmien — ma sirt naf xejn. Wara ftit taż-żmien, ġie Għawdex il-gvernatur biex jinawgura *playground*. Sarlu riċeviment, kont prezenti, u qalli: 'iva qatt ma tiġi Malta int? Ejja ftit; nit-haddtu ftit.' Għedtlu 'għejdli meta.' Qalli, 'ara ejja għall-*Empire Day* u wara ejja għall-lunch miegħi.' U ġejt. Għall-lunch konna jien u l-gvernatur, il-kappillan tiegħi, u kien hemm is-segretarju tiegħu." Wara l-ikel, Gonzi talab lil Bonham Carter biex ikellmu privatament, wahdu, u qallu hekk: — 'Jiena hawnhekk, ma' ġenbek, għandi l-ikbar għadu tiegħi.'

— 'Who is that?'  
— 'Sir Harry Luke.'  
— 'Why didn't you tell me that before? Why didn't you tell me that before? I am afraid it's too late now!'

"Imbagħad insib — qalli hu stess — qalli, 'jiena għadni ġej, ma naf xejn. Gvernatur kien ilu nieqes minn Malta marid Londra xi seba' xhur. Sir Harry Luke kien *acting governor* . . .' Sir Harry Luke kien waħhalha f'rasu li jien *pro-Italian*. Qalli: 'jiena naf li kien ilu seba' xhur *acting governor*; naf li issa ġej għax kont tajtu vaganza, *in tre o quattro giorni* jkun hawn; għidt ha nistennieh anki bhala kumpliment.' Qalli meta għedtlu, qalli, 'no, no, no, he's anti-English dak!' Dak kontra l-Ingliżi! Qalli: 'jiena emmintu, u ktibt hekk. Qalli: 'kontra l-Ingliżi u jqajjimlek kwistjonijiet . . .' Jien ktibt hekk. Issa nerga' nikteb.' Kiteb kemm-il darba . . . għalxejn. Imbagħad għad-da ż-żmien, tbiddlu l-gvernaturi . . ."

### **Fil-Għotja tal-'George Cross'**

"Fl-ahħar ġie Lord Gort, u ġiet il-gwerra; fil-gwerra kien Lord Gort, kif ingħidu bil-Malti, ha grazzja miegħi. Meta l-gvern ingliz lil Malta taha l-*George Cross*, jiena ġejt hawn Malta; saret ċelebrazzjoni fil-pjazza; imbagħad għedt lill-gvernatur — għedtlu 'ma jixraqx li tiġi Għawdex, nagħmluh hemm ukoll.' U aċċetta. Hemmhekk ġie, għamel erba' kelmiet, u jien għamilt diskors (li jista' gurnata jkun stampat, għax talbuhuli, u sibt in-noti tiegħu) u dana għoġbu wisq dan id-diskors, u ha grazzja miegħi . . . Imbagħad qallhom: 'dan il qed ingħidu kontra tiegħu?' U fil-gwerra kien jafdali s-segreti kollha! Ġie li kien hemm segreti li lanqas qalhom lil ta' madwaru. Kien jiġi Għawdex joqgħod għandi, jiekol għandi, imbagħad noqgħodu nitkellmu fuq is-sitwazzjoni, kien jafdali kollox: 'biss, ara titkellem.' Kien qalli, darba qalli: 'se jkolna l-flotta Taljana ġejja biex tieħu lil Malta. Allahares issir, għax imbagħad Mata tiffarrak . . . għax l-Ingliżi jibdeu ifittxu li jfarrkuha.' Qalli: 'x'nagħmlu? Naħsbu għall-proviżjon?' Wara ftit qalli: 'spicċat dik.' Imbagħad ġiet diffikoltà oħra. (Iż-żmien kien daħal tal-gwerra.) U għamel seduta — kien jafda kważi kollox lili — u sejjaħli."

### **Kif il-Bdiewa Għawdxin salvaw li j Malta min-Nazi . . .**

"Konna hu, jiena, il-Lieutenant Governor, ċertu Mr. Ward

(li kien inkarigat mid-dqiq) u iehor militari (kien inkarigat mir-raba). U qalilna 'se nafdalkom a top secret. Hadd ma jista jikkellem: ara min jikkellem.' Qal: 'dqiq għandna għal ftit xhur biss. X'se naghmlu?' Jaqbeż Mr. Ward: "*I beg your pardon Sir; it's not a question of months, its a question of days. I have flour for only about one month. I'm not sure whether that will last for one month . . .*" Il-gvernatur għamel '*What can we do? We cannot let the Maltese die of hunger. We must find . . .*' Għedtlu: '*May I say a word?*' (kien is-Sibt dan.) Għedtlu: '*I could find a remedy . . . I'll get wheat from Gozo. It's the time of the harvest.*' Qalli 'tagħmilha?' Għedtlu: '*naghmilha.*'

— '*Jirnexxilek?*'

— '*Sa ċertu punt, tirnexxi. Imma biex naghmilha: on two conditions. Inti għeditilna li dan top secret. I mean to ask the farmers of Gozo to give us the wheat. How can I persuade them unless I lay before them the situation?*'

— '*Alright. Tell them what the situation is like. What is your second condition?*'

— '*Give me petrol. I have only one can of petrol per week as bishop of Gozo.*'

— '*You will have as much as you need.*'

'Dak kien is-Sibt. Il-Hadd, kien hawn Mr. Patrick Holland, li kien qisu l-gvernatur ta' Għawdex. Sejjahtlu, Għedtlu: 'ara: għada mmorru Għawdex, u tiġi miegħi.' It-Tnejn morna. Dorna r-raba kollu ta' Għawdex. U nista nġhid li l-bdiewa kollha ġenerożament tawni. Dawk li kienu jikkonservaw hafna minnu għall-familja tagħhom u jbiegħu . . . għeditilhom 'ara, inhall-sukom tal-qamħ.' Kienu "jadurawni": la l-isqof qed iġhidilna hekk, mela naghmlu hekk. Ċempilt lill-gvernatur, għedtlu: '*send two trucks tomorrow morning and you will have all the wheat of Gozo.*' Iġġennen bil-ferħ dan! Bagħathom. Dik salvat is-sitwazzjoni. Għax imgħad, għadda ftit taż-żmien, u sar li sar, saret il-konkluzjoni, imma baqa' jservi sakemm saret il-paċi. Kellna żewġ trucks immsemi, taf."

### **Fiz-żjara tar-Re George VI**

"Fl-intervall, ġie r-re. Għamel vizita. Jiena fil-gvern kienu kollha kontra tiegħi — għax hekk għawihom Sir Harry Luke, kif għeditkom diġà. Ir-re zammewh Verdala. U dahhalna — qabel kellimna — f'kamra żgħira. Imgħad il-gvernatur qal issa — tkunu erbġha — l-isqof Caruana u jien, flimkien maċ-

*Chief Justice*, u l-kap *tal-Air Force* ingliz, li kienu ghamluhom *Knights*. Ir-re tahom il-pussess bix-xabla, imbghad wara l-gvernatur qalilna: 'irid jismaghkom wiehed wiehed.' Ghedtlu: 'Monsinjur Caruana m'hux kapaçi; rajtuh kif gab ruhu fil-pranzu: marid; ma jiflahx'; u rnexxilna nippperswaduh li jmur fil-palazz. (U, in parenteži, dik in-nhar stess fil-hamsa u nofs ta' wara nofs in-nhar ghamlulu l-griżma tal-morda, hasbu li se jmut; imbghad irpilja.) Allura dhalt jien: ir-re hawn, jiena quddiemu, Lord Gort hawn. Qallu: *Your Majesty, had it not been for the great help I received from the bishop of Gozo, I wouldn't have been able to save Malta. And, Your Majesty wouldn't have been here today.*' Meta qal hekk il-gvernatur, ferahli u rringrazzjani r-re. Mar l-Ingilterra u — sirt naf — qalhom: 'x'intom tgħidu u temmnu dak li ntqal? Il-gvernatur qalli li kieku ma kienx hu ma kienx isalva 'l Malta! Ara, iktbu malajr Ruma *and withdraw your opposition!*' Hekk ghamlu. Malajr mar il-High Commissioner; qalhom: *'The King is sorry to say that he made a mistake, because he was badly informed. He withdraws the opposition, the veto, and wishes to appoint Mgr. Gonzi archbishop of Malta.'* U spiçcat."

Hawnhekk l-Arcisqof Gonzi irrimarka li, fl-aħħar mill-aħħar, hu u Sir Harry Luke kienu spiççaw bit-tajjeb għax ma baqghux miġġieldin.

### **Dwar il-kwistjoni "tal-Caravaggio"**

Gonzi, però, xejn ma kien inklinat li jitkellem dwar episodji riçenti li kkaratterizzaw il-karriera tiegħu, inqas u inqas meta dawn kienu jinvolvu konflitti mal-*Malta Labour Party*. Mistoqsi dwar il-biçça "tal-Caravaggio", li kienet holqot waħda mill-ewwel kontroversji bejnu u l-ewwel gvern immexxi mill-perit Dominic Mintoff, l-Arcisqof wiegħeb f'dawn il-kelmiet, bil-miktub:

Il-kwadru tal-Caravaggio, li kien minn dejjem fl-Oratorju ta' S. Gwann, kellu bżonn ta' restawr, u rnexxielna nott-jenu restawr *gratis* fl-Italja. Baġtnih fuq bastiment tal-gwerra. Meta tlesta, fittixna li ngibuh lura. Allura l-Gvern ippretenda li jzommu fil-Mużew tal-Gvern. Jiena insistejt mal-Gvern Malti li la darba dal-kwadru kien dejjem fl-Oratorju ta' San Gwann u kien sar għal hemm, kellu jerga' jtiegħed f'postu. U wara hafna taħbit, irnexxieli: u hekk dan il-kwadru (il-kapulavur tal-Caravaggio) jinsab illum fejn kien minn dejjem, fl-Oratorju ta' San Gwann.



## Dwar il-Vjolenza Politika

**Mistoqsija:** F'wiehed mill-aħħar diskorsi tiegħek bhala Arcisqof Metropolita, inti dehert imhasseb hafna dwar il-futur ta' Malta, imma b'danakollu ftit wara għedt pubblikament li nies kriminali li kkommettew atti ta' vjolenza politika kien jisthoq-qilhom il-mahfra. Tista tagħti spjegazzjoni ta' dan?

**Tweġiba:** Jiena kont ippublikajt pastorali qasira fejn għedt li jiena kuntent li qed nara l-kwiet u l-paċi. Kont għadni kif qrajt li l-Papa kien għamel rakkomandazzjoni: kien hemm wiehed li kienu kkunddanawh għall-mewt u dan il-Papa talab għalih, u kienu laqgħuha sa ċertu punt. Dak inkoraġġini . . . Jiena kkundannajt dak il-hsarat li saru fil-pastorali li ktibt ta' qabel dik; għedt però: dawk kien hemm hafna żgħażaġh li lanqas età m'għandhom — dawn jekk tibgħatuhom il-habs jithassru iżjed hemmhekk. Dawn, naturalment, kienu fil-*gioventù* tagħhom, f'dak l-entuzjażmu, dawn lanqas kienu jafu x'inhuma jagħmlu; wiehed juża moderazzjoni magħhom. Inkoraġġejt minn dak li l-Papa stess għamel . . . Din giet minn xi wħud interpretata hazin. Jien m'għedtlux jaħfer lil dawk li kissru l-kazini u għamlu — l-irġiel li kienu; imma dawn iż-żgħażaġh lanqas kienu jafu, mfixklin minn dak l-entuzjażmu; dik kienet. Ma stajtx napprova dak li għamlu jien — ma jfissirx li approvajtu — imma jiltaqgħu ma' hafna brikkuni hemm fil-habs, u jagħmlu xi sena hemm, jikkorrompu ruħhom . . .

## Dwar iż-Żwieġ Ċvili

**Mistoqsija:** Ma taħsibx li jista jkun hemm, sa ċertu punt, separazzjoni legali bejn dak li hu dover religjuż u dritt sekulari f'dawn iż-żminijiet, bħal, per eżempju, fil-każ ta' żwieġ ċivili? Jekk taqbel ma' dan, sa fejn taħseb li hu possibbli f'Malta?

**Tweġiba:** S'intendi, in ġenerali, ma nistax napprova kull ma sar. Saru hwejjeġ li ma stajt napprovahom qatt. Imma nsemi haġa: is-sagrament taż-żwieġ. Iż-żwieġ, kif inhu llum, jiena ma approvajtu qatt. Jiena xtaqt li jsir almenu — la darba riedu jagħmlu — l-isqfijiet kienu favorevoli għaž-żwieġ ċivili *għal dawk li m'humiex Kattoliċi*. Dik iva. Konna favorevoli: għedna jsir iż-żwieġ ċivili għal dawk. Imma għal min hu Kattoliku, xtaqna li almenu — jien almenu nsistejt — li jkunu bħal ma hi l-Italja: li l-kappillan jibqgħalu l-fakoltà li jirċievi l-promessi ta' dawn, ikun awtorizzat bħal ma hu l-Italja. Fl-Ital-

ja l-*parroco* ghandu l-fakoltà — kousiderat bhala ufficjal tal-gvern — ghaż-żwieġiet biss. Li jkun il-kapillan malti, bhala ufficjal civili tal-gvern, ghaż-żwieġ: iż-żwieġ jsir quddiemu, minghajr il-presenza ta' dak li jakkompanja ż-żwieġ. Illum din ma rnexxielix; jiddispijaci, dik li xtaqt jien.

### Dwar dak li hu Essenzjali fil-*Majja* ta' Poplu . . .

Mitlub jaghti “veduta generali” ta' dak li fil-fehma tiegħu “hu essenzjali fi grajjietna bhala poplu”, u x'jahseb dwar it-tibdil fil-mod ta' ghajxien ta' niesna, l-Arcisqof Gonzi sahaq hafna kontra “d-dizonestà” u semma “l-oxxenitajiet” pubbliċi fiċ-ċinema u anki fin-night clubs, li huwa sostna, qegħdin jikkorrompu liz-żghazagh ta' Malta, speċjalment gūvintur u xebbiet. “Hwejjeġ li qed jiddizonuraw lil Malta. Ghandna pajjiżi fejn hemm ċertu kontroll. Ghaliex ma jsirx kontroll fuq dawn li qed iġibu dawn l-gharukażijiet ta' xeni li qed jaraw? Dan ma nistax ma nipprotestax kontra tiegħu. M'ghandi l-ebda fin politiku — fin religjuż: ghax nibki, meta nara l-korruzzjoni li qegħda ssir partikolarment fiz-żghazagh. Jiġu anki kapijiet ta' familji jghiduli ‘ahna sthajna u hriġna’ . . . Donna qed insiru bhall-aghār pajjiżi ta' l-Ewropa fil-moralità. Jiena dan nixtieq nara: kontroll fuq il-moralità.”

Mistoqsi, fl-ahharnett, x'jissuggerixxi bhala messaggħ għall-futur, Gonzi rrikmanda r-reċtar tar-rużarju, preferibbilment kuljum. U reġa' semma l-immoralità “sesswali”: “U ghandna bżonn ilkoll, ibda mis-sacerdoti, nitolbu għal Malta”, huwa ikkonkluda, “ghax jekk nibqgħu sejrini hekk fil-moralità u fir-religjożità, se nsiru bħal pajjiżi oħra: tispicċa r-religjon — tispicċa l-prattika, ghax ir-religjon ta' Kristu ma tispicċa qatt — imma tispicċa l-prattika tar-religjon. Darba l-Papa Piju XI, f'pellegrinaġġ li konna għamilna, bejn Malta u Għawdex, kien sejhilna “*Malta Cattolicissima*.” Imma illum nistgħu nghidu li Malta hija *Cattolicissima*? B'dawn ix-xeni li qegħdin naraw fiċ-ċinema tagħna u anki fil-pubbliku f'ċerti postijiet u f'ċerti *night-clubs* li qed isiru l-oxxenitajiet! Naf li min hu nteressat fin-negozju forsi ma jieħux pjaċir bih dan, sew tan-*night clubs* sew taċ-ċinema; imma jiena, għalkemm m'ghadnix l-Arcisqof ta' Malta, għadni Arcisqof Malti u għadni nħoss u nixtieq li dawn l-abbużi jispiċċaw. Ghax se nsiru bħal pajjiżi oħra: irreligjużi u dizonesti.”

## INTERVISTA STORJA

### Spiro Mizzi: Il-Karriera Twila Ta' l-Industrijalista Numru Wieħed ta' Malta

*Din l-intervista ta' Dr. Henry Frendo mas-Sur Spiro Mizzi toħroġ tagħrif dwar xi effetti li kellha l-flotta imperjali fuq i-iżvilupp industrijali f'pajjiżna kif ukoll xi konsegwenzi li rriżultaw mill-kuntatti anglo-maltin fost ċerta sezzjoni tal-popolazzjoni. Fil-persunaġġ in kwistjoni toħroġ l-esperjenza u saħansitra l-personalità ta' negozjant influwenzat mill-għeruq tiegħu fl-ambjent parrokkjali kif ukoll mill-hajja differenti tan-nies tas-Servizzi li kien jagħmilha magħhom; in-noti predominanti f'moħħu huma dawk tas-suċċess individwali fid-dinja tan-negozju u tal-ġabra reliġjoċentrika fil-familja.*

SPIRU MIZZI huwa l-bennej tal-intrapriża *Mizzi Brothers* li illum tinsab imxerrda ma' Malta u Għawdex. Il-*Mizzi Brothers* fil-preżent huma iżjed kuġini milli ahwa: ulied u ulied ulied is-Sur Spir u l-familja għammiela tiegħu. Għax is-suq għall-prodotti nbidel; iżda kiber — kiber bir-ritmu imghaġġel tal-*consumer society* — tant li l-*Mizzi Brothers* huma aġenti ta' ruxxmata kumditajiet. Fost l-aġenziji tal-karrozzi għandhom l-aqwa ditti li jeżistu fl-Ewropa; għandhom ukoll aġenziji oħra kbar ta' *domestic appliances*. F'dawn l-aħħar għaxar snin il-kumpanija espandiet fl-oqsma tat-turiżmu u tal-esportazzjoni (karrozzi u komponenti elettrici lill-Germanja u pajjiżi oħra tas-Suq Komuni). Jimpjegaw 'il fuq minn 500 haddiem. Mill-kumpaniji kollha registrati f'Malta, din hi wkoll l-intrapriża li toffri l-oġġla somma at' flus bħala għajnuna lil studenti li jipromettu.

Meta tipprova tiskopri l-bidu ta' din l-intrapriża industrijali (kbira għal Malta, għalkemm zġhira hdejn kumpaniji oħrajn barranin) issib li l-oriġinatur tiegħu, Spiru Mizzi, kellu jhabbat wiċċu ma' hafna tlajja u nżul. Kien l-istinkar tiegħu — keinet l-ambizzjoni tiegħu li "jikber" — kif ukoll kienu *ċ-ċirkustanzi ta' Malta fi zmienu*, li wassluh għas-suċċessi li kiseb wara.

L-iżjed fattur importanti li għen u saħansitra għamel pos-

sibbli l-iżvilupp tal-personalità intraprendenti ta' Mizzi kien, bla dubju, n-navy; fi kliemu stess: "il-presenza tan-navy — hi kienet is-suċċess tiegħi."

Spiridione Mizzi twieled fl-1895 fil-Birgu, bin Giovanni Maria Mizzi, ukoll mill-Birgu, li kien *ship-chandler* (ibiegħ l-affarijiet ta' l-ikel u manutenzjoni lill-ekwipaġġi tal-vapuri navali u merkantili): kien fix-xogħol ta' missieru li Spuru ha l-ewwel apprendistat tiegħu bhala ġuvnott.\* Huma kienu jaħdmu bhala "Admiralty Canteen Contractors" — jiehdu hsieb li jissupplixxu l-*canteens* tal-flotta ngliza fil-Port il-Kbir; hekk ukoll kienu jaġhmlu xi ftit familji oħrajn (ta' Tabona, ta' Borda, ta' Borg Costanzi) qabel l-ewwel gwerra dinjija.

Fl-1919, iżda, gie n-NAAFI: u hadilhom xogħolhom huwa. Għalkemm in-negozju ta' qabel sfaxxa minhabba l-wasla tan-NAAFI, is-suq tal-flotta kien jippermetti varjetà ta' inizjattivi li jirrendu, u hekk hu li Mizzi malajr ha hsieb li b'metodi ġodda jattira klijenti mill-istess suq ta' qabel. Kienet ironika li s-Servizzi li kienu il-kagun li ġiebh kwazi b'id wara u bl-oħra quddiem malajr reġġu stimulawh biex jaqbad triq ġdida fin-negozju.

Dan tabilhaqq kien il-bidu tal-"Mizzi Brothers" meta Spiro flimkien ma' hih Joseph xtraw xi erba' jew hames karrozzi Daimler minghand il-militar u kkonvertewhom f'xarabanks ("buses"): dawn bdew jiffunzjonaw fuq ir-rotot ta' Tas-Sliema, Marsascala u San Pawl il-Baħar. Kienu jgħaddu mill-Birgu sa Wied il-Għajn u minn Tas-Sliema għall-Belt, imma kienu jaġhmlu dan taht żewġ kundizzjonijiet: wahda kienet li ried ikun il-maltemp tax-xitwa biex ma jaħdmux il-laneċ tal-portijiet u allura kineu bżonnjużi x-xarabanks; l-oħra kienet li ried ikun il-bnazzi tas-sajf meta n-nies mill-ibliet imorru fejn il-baħar mal-familja. Dan però ma kienx xogħol li jirrendi bizzejjed: kien xogħol li jiddependi mill-burdati tat-temp (sa ċertu punt bhall-flotta nnfisha!) u fuq kollox kien xogħol li kellu suq lokali limitat fid-dhul ta' flus li kien ihalli. Għalhekk l-aħwa Mizzi fethu bil-"garage hire": irmaw b'garaxx (il-Barriera, il-Belt) li kien jikri karrozzi Chevrolet, Overland, Buick u oħrajn bix-xufier b'kollox, għal temp ta' żmien li jvarja minn ġurnata sa ġingħa jew iżjed. L-ewwel "public relations stunt" li għamlu ta' Mizzi kienet proprju li jgħarrfu li kull vapur li jidhol bis-

\* F'nofs is-seklu dsatax lil Għanmarj Mizzi l-Ingliżi kienu bdew isejhulu "Frank"; allura dan malajr iddeċieda li jibdel ismu, u hekk sejjah lill-kumpanija FRANK MIZZI & SONS.

servizz li kienu joffru; u dan kien servizz rari għax f'Malta wara l-ewwel gwerra ma kienx hawn iżjed minn tużżana karrozzi bħal dawn. (Wiehed mill-ftit nies f'Malta li kellhom karrozzi kien, per eżempju, Sir Gerald Strickland.) Il-klijentela ta' Mizzi malajr saret mill-gdid il-flotta, b'mod speċjali l-uffiċjali tan-*navy* Ingliża, filwaqt li mill-banda l-oħra kompli għaddej ukoll l-inkarigu fit-trasport pubbliku.

Lil Spiro Mizzi xejn ma kont tghaddih mill-ghajn il-labra : b'perseveranza liema bhala baqa' għaddej iżid u jkabbar fuq li kien irnexxielu jagħmel. Kien determinat li ma jhalli lil hadd jidhak bih u li kemm jista' jkun ma jkollu għalfejn jiddependi fuq hadd : għalhekk beda jaqra kemm jiflah rivisti amerikani u ingliżi dwar il-karrozzi u l-mekkanika.

Minn dan l-istadju ta' garaxx tal-kiri Mizzi espanda għal dak ta' importatur tal-karrozzi, li bil-mod il-mod kienu bdew isiru popolari fis-snin ghoxrin u tletin. F'Malta tas-snin ghoxrin kien hawn aġent tal-FIAT u iehor (mhux Gasan għalissa) tal-FORD. Imma kellu jkun proprju uffiċjal tan-*navy* (klijent tal-garaxx) li jintroduċi lil Mizzi għall-isem ta' Lord Nuffield, u saħansitra kellu jkun dan l-uffiċjal ingliż li ta lil Mizzi "letter of introduction" biex hu jiltaqa' mar-re tal-karrozzi MORRIS f'Cowley, hdejn Oxford, fl-Ingilterra. Mizzi beda jgħib il-MORRIS. "Bull's nose" — hekk kienu jsibuhom l-ewwel mudelli tal-MORRIS li deħru f'Malta fl-1924. Hæga ggħib lil oħra — għax kif sewwa jghidu : "il-fius ighamlu l-fius".

Nuffield kien beda haġtu jsewwi u jagħmel il-*push bikes* u spiċċa multi-miljunarju : il-"Henry Ford" tal-Ingilterra. Spiro Mizzi ta' Malta issa għamel hbieb miegħu u mar għandu diversi drabi, anki akkumpanjat minn martu\*. Mart Nuffield ukoll zaret Malta, wara t-tieni gwerra dinjija. Lord Nuffield hu magħruf sewwa għall-ghotjiet kbar tiegħu ta' benefiċenza, u fl-Università ta' Oxford u l-inħawi ta' fejn kien joqghod — fejn illum hemm il-British Leyland — huma mimlijin istituzzjonijiet u postijiet imsemmijin għalih. Aktarx li Mizzi ttiehed xi ftit minn Nuffield għaliex hu wkoll kellu l-idea li jghin l-edukazzjoni u lil niesu permezz tal-Mizzi Foundation ta' £M10,000 stabbilita fl-1970, u permezz tal-hafna għotjiet li ta bil-qalb lil knejjes Maltin għal tiżjin u hwejjeġ oħra tal-parroċċa, li hu ilu tant jiddiletta bihom sa minn mindu kien tifel jerfa' l-Irxox

\* Genoveffa née Moncada minn Bormla, li żżewġet lil Mizzi fl-1916, kienet bint inginer ta' dixxendenza nobbli li kien harab lejn Malta minn Catania.

fil-Birgu.

Mizzi fil-fatt għandu ammirazzjoni speċjali għall-Madonna ta' Philermu, li dwarha ippublika fuljett bit-titolu : **STORJA VERA TAL-MADONNA TA' PHILERMU**. Qalbu tajba u rasu iebes fl-istess hin, Mizzi kien jimxi bil-proverbju "agħmel il-gid u nsieh; agħmel id-deni u ftakar fih". Fil-gwerra, meta kien joqgħod Birkirkara, ix-xelter li kellu fil-ġnien kien miftuħ għal kulhadd lejl u nhar. Meta kellu "Rolls Royce" kien jiddejjaq jirkeb fiha u pprefera jsuq il-karrozza żgħira tiegħu.

"Konna dejjem infittxu d-dar, il-knisja", huwa jirrakkonta b'ċerta nostalgija; għalkemm gharaf tajjeb iżomm kuntatti personali permezz tas-safar, biss biss dawk il-vjaġġi kollha sal-Londra u lura biex iżur lil Nuffield : "bit-tren kont iddum sitt ijiem; bil-vapur tnax-il ġurnata." Il-problemi tat-trasport Mizzi hu konxju tagħhom biżżejjed : fil-fatt ix-xewqa kbira tiegħu hi li jinholoq mudell ta' karrozza "Maltija", karrozza li tkun tista' tinhadem kemm jista' jkun f'Malta, kemm għas-suq lokali kif ukoll għall-esportazzjoni.

Mizzi jammetti li fi żmien "ma tantx kien hawn kompetizzjoni, mentri llum hawn kompetizzjoni qawwija". Għalkemm dan hu jarah bħala sinjal tajjeb, l-implikazzjoni ta' kliemu hi li kien iżjed faċli tirnexxi fin-negozju qabel mill-llum !

L-esperjenzi ta' Mizzi f'żewġ kampi hekk varji — dak tal-parroċċa u dak tan-negozju — tawh karatteristiċi doppji : fuq naħa għandek lit-tifel jilgħab bil-ballun taċ-ċarruta u ċ-ċippitatu, imbagħad jikkontribwixxi l-flejjes għall-armor tal-knejjes u jemma fil-mirakli tal-Madonna ta' Philermu; fuq in-naħa l-oħra għandek lin-negozjant, il-vjaġġatur, u l-isportiv li kien *champion tal-outboard racing* mar-Royal Malta Yacht Club (*club* li kien inbeda — jista' jonqos? — minn ingliz : logutenent fir-RAF).

It-tifel imqareb li ried jirnexxi u ma jibqax fejn kien wera x'isarraf meta kien għadu jattendi l-kulleġġ ta' Flores — mnejn spiċċa hażin, jew aħjar spiċċa bit-tajjeb : għaliex meta nduna li kien qiegħed jiġi kkastigat waqt il-hin tal-pranzu sempliċiment biex is-surmast kien jiffranka li jixtri l-frotta għad-diżerta, Spiru irrabja u telgħalu, qaleb il-mejda għal fuq is-surmast, u minn dak in-nhar ma marx iżjed skola . . .

## RESEARCH WORK AND PUBLICATIONS

CLAIRE SAMUT\*

### HISTORY THESES AND DISSERTATIONS

### SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF MALTA IN RECENT YEARS

*This alphabetical list, compiled by Claire Samut, includes titles of research projects presented for the degrees of B.A. (Gen.), B.A. (Hons.) and M.A. at the University of Malta from 1968 onwards.*

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Why is the 14th century known as the Dark Ages?  
Too many Knights!

**LIST OF HISTORY PROJECTS PRESENTED BY  
STUDENT-TEACHERS AT ST. MICHAEL'S TRAINING  
COLLEGE (NOW THE MALTA COLLEGE OF  
EDUCATION) DURING THE PERIOD 1949-1972**

*Although by no means complete or precise, this list, made-available to us by MICHAEL SANT,\* makes several minor research works known to the public. The projects listed here are presently based in the History Room (Room 25, Third Floor), Department of Education Studies, M.C.A.S.T., Msida, and they may be consulted by arrangement with the said Department.*

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NORA SAMMUT\*

## MELITENSIA 1975-1977

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Dissertations submitted for the B.A. (Hons.)  
degree in History, University of Malta, 1977.

## **Ray Bondin: Events Leading to the Internment and Deportation of Maltese Nationalists, 1940-1942**

In May and June of 1940 more than a hundred Maltese were interned in a local camp. Forty-five of these were deported to Uganda in February of 1942. These persons were deported without ever having been accused publicly for any reason whatsoever. They were interned "for security reasons" and never told precisely why each one of them was interned.

The thesis studies the events that might have influenced the British Authorities in Malta to take such drastic action. The whole matter of internment and deportation has previously been ignored by all contemporary historians even though it is such an important incident in the social and political contemporary history of our islands.

The thesis studies the political atmosphere of those years, in particular the growing fear among the pro-British and the British of the Nationalists and the Italian sympathisers.

The conclusion reached by this study is that the British Authorities would never have acted as they did were it not for the insistence of certain Maltese. To prove this, one whole long Chapter is dedicated to the incitement of the Constitutionalist press, particularly in the months preceding internment. In another chapter the part played by the Constitutionalists in the Council of Government is recorded, particularly a speech of Major Roger Strickland calling for internment and deportation.

The involvement of the Constitutionalists is further documented through their contact with the Security Officer, Colonel Bertram Ede, who seems to have been a very powerful personality in the British ranks in the island.

Part of the research for the thesis was done at the Public Records Office in London. Almost everything that had to do with these incidents was "destroyed under statute". This of course means that we could never know fully the British side to the story.

The thesis is far from a complete history of these incidents. Much more research has still to be done on the subject. It is



after all extremely difficult to try and understand why the British authorities wanted to deport persons who varied from an ex-Chief Justice to an ordinary Dockyard worker. Some are still alive but even they never knew exactly why they were deported; they only know of the hatred that certain other Maltese had for them. For some, the war was a good excuse to get rid of certain opposition politicians.

An important part of the thesis regards the deportees' defence against the order for deportation. It was possible for the Government, through the Malta Defence Regulations, to intern persons in Malta but deportation was something altogether different. It was condemned even by British constitutional principles.

For these reasons, on receiving the order for deportation the deportees presented a case in court. They won the case but on the following day the Council of Government met and passed Ordinance No. 1 of 1942 giving the Governor the right to intern Maltese in other parts of the Commonwealth. The deportees presented another case in court, which they lost. They appealed from this sentence, but by the time the case came to an end in May of 1942 they had already been in Uganda for nearly three months.

## **Anton Quintano: Fort Ricasoli: A Historical Survey, 1670-1798**

The main object of the dissertation is to present a picture of the seventeenth-century fort under the Hospitallers' rule. The research involved was carried out in the National Library of Malta, mainly from manuscripts in the Archives of the Order of Malta. The registers of the Congregation of Fortifications is the particular section which provided the bulk of the material used.

The dissertation has five chapters. In Chapter I it discusses the history of Rinella Point before 1670, the year in which the fort was built, explaining how the site became known as 'Gallows' Point'; the role Gallows' Point played during the siege of 1565; the building of Orsi Tower at its point in 1629; as well as the proposals for the building of a fort there.

The second chapter deals with the arrival of the principal military architect of the House of Savoy, Count Antonio Maurizio Valperga; his plans for the fort; Giovanni Francesco Ricasoli's donation of 20,000 scudi for its erection; and a study of the fort's plan, as constructed between 1670 and 1674.

Chapter III is a study of various stages in the building of, and extensions to, the fort, as could be deduced from the reports of the military engineers, which commented on the state of Fort Ricasoli. About twenty-five engineers including Don Carlos de Grunembergh, Jacob de Tigne' and Francois Charles de Montdion commented on the fort.

Chapter IV deals with the garrison inside the fort and its work in case of an invasion. It covers the data available for the artillery extant in the fort during the eighteenth century, and Orsi Tower's function in the prevention of the escape of slaves; the Fondazione Cotoner, which was a fund instituted by Grand Master Nicola Cotoner for the maintenance of the garrison, is also discussed.

The last chapter deals with the history of the Church of St. Nicholas, which served the fort, and with the social history of the fort, especially by means of tables which give data regarding incomes of the garrison and the workers on the walls of the fort. Mikiel Anton Vassalli's imprisonment in the fort in 1797 is also covered in this chapter.

The main cause for building the fort had been the need to defend the entrance to the harbour, to guarantee shelter for the relief upon which the island ultimately depended in case of siege. The dissertation considers how such protection was provided for the Christian navies by means of Fort Ricasoli.

## **KOTBA TAS-SENA/BOOK REVIEWS**

**Brigadier A. Samut-Tagliaferro C.B.E. — History of the Royal Malta Artillery, Vol. 1, 1800-1939 (Lux Press, 1976)**

496 pp., 8 appendices, index, supplementary notes and corrections, maps, photographs and illustrations — £M6.

The most cursory glance through this book will show that it is very much a work written by a soldier for soldiers. Indeed

it originally appeared as a series of articles in the *Armed Forces of Malta Quarterly Journal* between 14 and 147. It contains a great mass of detail which really can only be fully appreciated by those with some experience of the army. In parts therefore the layman will find the going rather heavy. The sheer weight of data — this is a long book with narrow margins — is most impressive and informative but impossible to absorb in one or two sittings. Extracts such as the one reproduced below thankfully do liven the text occasionally :

“I have recently received the command of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, Major General Layard, to direct that you will give the necessary orders to Lieutenant A. Beamish . . . under your command to restore the daughter of Signor Nicolò Attard to him immediately upon his application for her.” (p. 79)

It makes a most welcome change from :

“ — All duties will be performed in Cloth Tunics and Chacos (or Busbies), except fatigues, which will be performed in white frocks and forage caps.

— Regiments in possession of the Norfolk Jacket may wear it on those occasions, on which the Shell Jacket was worn, when that article formed a part of the soldiers' dress at this Station.” (p. 223)

But apart from merely being the painstaking accumulation and presentation of minutiae — and to be fair most of it is useful for reference purposes — the book does succeed in its theme of tracing the evolution of the Royal Malta Artillery. The Brigadier tells the story of the ancestry of his regiment from its conception with the Maltese Light Infantry of 1800-1802, through the various short lived units raised in the period 1803-1815 — such as the Malta Coast Artillery, to the Royal Malta Fencible Regiment created in 1815 and converted into an Artillery Corps in 1861. The term Fencible (i.e. for defensive purposes only) was dropped in view of the regiment's service in Egypt and from 1889 the corps was designated the 'Royal Malta Artillery'. For the history of these units this book supersedes the accounts in Major A.G. Chesney, *Historical Records of the Maltese Corps of the British Army* (London 1897).

Brigadier Samut-Tagliaferro has delved deeper and attempted to examine the attitude of the British authorities in Malta and (more important) that of the War Office in London towards the units raised in Malta. The picture that emerges is of signi-

ficance generally to the student of Anglo-Maltese relations during the colonial period. The Maltese corps was caught in a vicious circle. The men were quite prepared to serve abroad provided they were given treatment equal to that of general service units. This the War Office refused to sanction. Then the corps was obliged to serve in Malta only and to accept a lower status as regards pay, rights and conditions of service (eg. pensions) even though it carried out the same duties as other units stationed in Malta. Officers found it next to impossible to obtain promotion and periodically the units had to be rejuvenated through the simple but cruel expedient of axeing the ageing officers corps and shedding worn out troops. Since the British authorities in Malta were normally satisfied with the quality of the Maltese units the situation was clearly frustrating and tragic.

There are two points about this book which the academic will not like. Though the author has depended almost entirely on primary source materials and very laudably gives us very generous extracts from original documents, he does not clearly identify the location of his sources. To take an example at random; a reference to War Office letter 4822/1/165 of 20th December 1896 (p. 317) does not tell the reader where he can look at the original be it in a private collection, a public Archive, in Malta or in London. A footnote must not only give the authority for a statement of fact or opinion; it *must* also give the location (in the case of unpublished material) of the authority cited.

Secondly while the author is in complete command of the history of the R.M.A. there are a few irritating errors in some of his essays into wider fields. For example (p. 318) H.M.S. Victoria did not blow up after colliding with the Camperdown; she capsized as a result of a second terrible mistake by Admiral Teyon. He ordered the vessel to move forward and the extra pressure on her submerged bows tipped her over.

These matters must not be allowed to detract from the importance of this book. I for one am very much looking forward to the second volume.

**Roger Vella Bonavita**

**Hal Millieri: A Maltese Casale, its Churches and Paintings.** Editor: Anthony Luttrell, Maltese Social Studies Series, Vol. 1. Midsea Books, Malta 1976, 143 pp., illus., £M4.50.

Much ado about something — could well be the initial comment passed by readers of “Hal Millieri — A Maltese Casale, its Churches and Paintings”. A somewhat harsh, cynical — and in some cases typical — but, for all that, correct judgment.

Correct, only if the reader belongs to that class affected by intellectual affectation, a not uncommon local condition among a few of those who somehow made it to tertiary level of education, occasionally not even as far as that but who have been catapulted by some mysterious force by means which are equally mystifying and mind-boggling, to the (to them) exhilarating heights (metaphorically speaking of course) where they cannot be but seen, hear or read (small thanks to modern methods of communication to lecture to us (one should say at us!) poor long-suffering reading, listening and viewing public, on any and every subject they may, in their wisdom, care to file under the much abused term ‘culture’. All this to such an extent that when contrary to expectations a really worthwhile contribution is projected by our communications media its brilliance is more often than not dulled and blunted by the surrounding trivia. The reader of the above intellectual calibre, who excels through the quality and quantity of his mediocrity is invariably harsh and cynical in his appraisal of a book like “Hal Millieri — A Maltese Casale . . .”

Correct, only if the reader allows himself to drift into a dark ugly mood and broods with each page read on the price, which ever since the purchase he has decided to be prohibitive to say the last, especially in the light of the present crazy age of stringent economies. The atmosphere becomes too oppressive and unbearable — at least as far as further reading is concerned — and paves the way to a cruel, negative, statistical analysis of the work itself. The findings are appalling: besides forty unnumbered pages of photos of questionable technical and artistic quality, the book boasts of no less than forty three pages taken up with footnotes (too technical decides the reader); plans and outlines (which look as if they were lifted out of a child-

ren's drawing book — scoffs the reader!); appendices — some of which are in Latin (what use is a dead language in this day and age demands the reader!); introductory pages which are either blank or contain an orgy of thank-yous, prosits and well-dones (never from so few to so many muses the reader caught in a rare moment of comiseration with the editor!). A quick subtraction from a total of one hundred and forty three pages and placed against the price of the book convinces the reader beyond reasonable doubt that he has been had. Even if one is prepared to take into account, and the reader does so very reluctantly, the excellent printing, efficient binding and attractive jacket, the price still remains pretty steep for a collection of studies about a pretty little church in a pretty little spot near a pretty little village on a pretty little island and to cap it all, the whole thing is about a pretty little settlement which in its hey-day numbered fewer than sixty households all of which have disappeared centuries ago. In the light of the above, claims that the book has a "significance (that) goes beyond the island itself" and that "the whole work represents a contribution to Mediterranean studies in general and to its island life in particular" seem somewhat pretentious to say the last.

But are they? Even if one goes as far as accepting some of the foregoing criticisms and he must also accept the true worth of the book. This is so when one considers the fact that the bulk of historical publications have to date followed two main trends: accounts of what foreign powers ruling Malta accomplished or failed to accomplish, and folklore. Because the former has largely failed to quench the thirst for a history that is founded on a purely Maltese nationalistic identity, the latter has also been allowed to become synonymous with that identity, resulting in projecting folklore as the only 'discipline' to the exclusion of all others that together should make up that identity. "Hal Millieri: A Maltese Casale . . ." goes a long way to revealing that identity by making use of a data available and creating a global picture of medieval Malta in all its aspects be they economic, social, religious or artistic, not forgetting to incorporate folklore to complete the scene. The contributions made by Anthony Luttrell (who is also the editor), Godfrey Wettinger, Mario Buhagiar, Genevieve Bautier Bresc, Paola Zanolini, Tony Mangion and others are most worthy of note if only because they evaluate their findings on two levels running parallel. For instance they conclude that the paintings of the Church of the

Annunciation at Hal Millieri are Byzantinesque in style, Catalan and Valencian in influence and Italian in execution. In other words "at the heart of Malta's artistic history, the Hal Millieri paintings possibly reflect a Norman-Byzantine iconography while foreshadowing the predominance in Malta of a Sicilian school, the establishment of which was probably connected in some way with the apparent Maltese origin of Antonello da Messina's Saliba kinsmen. Malta was thus associated with Sicily in a common artistic experience and development".

The book itself is the result of an unusual and unique cooperation between the Ecclesiastical Authorities, the State and a leading public voluntary organization, Din l-Art Helwa, in salvaging from total destruction by the two relentless enemies of all historical monuments — the weather and vandalism, and restoring and preserving what was left of one of the very few examples of medieval buildings still standing. That this building still stands is in itself a marvel since according to experts a building, given normal weather conditions, and made of the local soft limestone has a maximum lifespan of only about seven centuries. The book comes into its own when one appreciates that it incorporates all the material and records that have been compiled about Hal Millieri and the surrounding area thus making available a sound basis for further investigations. In fact soon after publication the Museums Department conducted (in April) extensive excavations leading to new discoveries besides confirming what was already known but only through the local parish and notarial archives.

In the words of the Editor, Dr. Luttrell: "The aim (of the book) was to provide something more than technical reports and guide to the Church; it was hoped to make a modest contribution to Maltese, and even perhaps Mediterranean history, through a work which would form an introduction to an essentially Maltese aspect of the island's past . . . it seemed valuable not merely to study a single village but also to test theories on a narrow front, to produce a particular case study in depth and detail which might provide fresh insights and suggest new materials and methods of approach". This clearly shows that the book is not intended to be the last word on anything. It may be regarded as an essential cog in a wheel full of incentives and initiatives on its way to opening a global vista of the hitherto largely unknown medieval history of the Maltese Islands.

**George Attard**

Paul Cassar: **Early Relations between Malta and U.S.A.**, Midsea Books, Maltese Social Studies series, Valletta, 1977, £M4.50/U.S. \$10.50, 129 pp., 3 Appendices, Name Index, Subject Index. With a Foreword by Professor A.P. Vella.

Dr. Paul Cassar, who may be said to have established himself as Malta's leading social historian by his *Medical History of Malta* (published in 1965) has now tried his hand at an exercise in diplomatic history. As two more far removed aspects of the same subject as social and diplomatic history it is difficult to contemplate, what happened in fact was that the author used Consular Despatches (1801-1906) while keeping a keen eye for data that had a social relevance and especially for that having a 'medical' character. Dr. Cassar is understandably conscious of his own inclination: "This association of illness and navigation", he writes (on p. 73), "is familiar to the medical historian for whom the story of sea communications is but one aspect of the history of the spread of disease from one country to another." The book is meticulously written, carefully documented, and indeed it could not have been more detailed than it is. One wonders, at some points, what the historical significance of certain facts is. For example (p. 29): "Most probably the first occasion on which the American flag flew on this flagstaff was the feast of the Assumption of Mary into Heaven which falls on the 15th August." Or (p. 38): "On the 7th September 1848 Mr. Winthrop married Emma, daughter of Sir William Curtis, at the Collegiate church of St. Paul in Valletta. At about this time he resided at 76 Kingsway Valletta."

The book brings to light some very noteworthy documentary evidence relating both to international relations in commerce and politics as well as to social and political conditions in Malta itself. There are at least two despatches which clearly illustrate Malta's utility with regard to U.S. interests in the Mediterranean and simultaneously Malta's interests arising from this American presence. The elaborate proposals made by M. de Maissonneuve (Malta's Minister Plenipotentiary at Berlin and Warsaw) to Mr. Thomas Pinckney (Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States in England) in 1794 are stunning. They lay out a *quid pro quo* in the form of "a treaty of union and alliance between the United States and the Grand Master of Malta" at a



time when the Order's relations with France were deteriorating and the U.S.A.'s interest in the Mediterranean was increasing. In exchange for American security and finance, the Malta government offered, *inter alia*, the use of "a free port", "the ship-yards", "the arsenals", "the stores", "a free medical service", "excellent sailors" and galley convoys for American merchantmen. The document is reproduced in full (unfortunately in the same type-print as the text) on pages 5-8, but without comment. This early functional view of Malta's strategic location as an entrepot which could be "patronized" by the U.S.A. ties up with the ideas expressed by Mr. John Worthington (American Consul in Malta from 1882 to 1894) who envisaged Malta as potentially "the headquarters for a central Mediterranean trade depot for introducing and distributing (American) goods into Sicily and North Africa." "It is remarkable," Cassar observes (p. 52), "that Worthington's advice cannot be bettered after the lapse of almost a century."

*Early Relations between Malta and U.S.A.* treats particularly of various incidents associated with major events — such as the Tripolitan War (1801-1805), the Anglo-American War (1812-1814), the Crimean War (1854-1856) and the American Civil War (1860-1865) — that directly or indirectly affected Malta, or that at least attracted the attention of the local American consul. In doing so, it often makes use of the consul's despatches — giving views or eye-witness accounts — to describe facets of the Maltese situation. For example, we get vivid descriptions of popular festivities to mark the fall of Sebastopol in October 1855 (p. 35); rival newspaper accusations regarding freemason practices (pp. 39-40); demonstrations by "pro" and "anti" factions during Giuseppe Garibaldi's visit in 1864 (pp. 41-44); and the continuing slave business during the 1870s, via Malta, in negro women and children — including the "best looking girls" captured from tribes inhabiting the territory around Khartoum (pp. 46-47).

In writing on trade relations — and often enough the Anglo-American rivalry in this field — Dr. Cassar provides us with some useful information on factors influencing the fluctuating fortunes of local crafts and produce: lace, tobacco, cotton, **wheat**.

The ingenious, straightforward William Winthrop Andrews (American Consul from 1834 to 1869) was quite a character and his personality dominates the book. This causes some

slight repetition at times since Dr. Cassar has (rightly in my view) tried to avoid a strictly chronological, "consul-by-consul" methodology, preferring instead to concentrate on themes: "The American Navy and Malta"; "Trade"; "Emigration"; etc. As for our dear departed friend Winthrop, suffice it to record that his versatility comprised actions ranging from mistaking an invitation card from Governor More O'Ferrall for "a lady's handwriting" (p. 33) to successfully advocating "the creation of the postal money order system in the United States" (p. 59).

The chapter on "Emigration" is only four pages long but it is arguably the most stimulating; in this I may be prejudiced however owing to my own modest (if growing) interest in the field of migration studies. He has been on the look-out for conspicuous Maltese surnames in U.S. history but apart from individual names here and there he does not attempt to look further for the causes or patterns of emigration, which is clearly not his task here.

Cassar has an uncomplicated style of writing and he is obviously capable of a nice sense of balance. For example (p. 83):

With regard to the Maltese political scene, Sir Richard More O'Ferrall had to steer a middle course between the currents of liberalism and the waves of reactionary opposition. On one hand he was accused of treating 'the unfortunate with inhospitable harshness and inhumanity'; on the other he was urged to keep the refugees away from the Island.

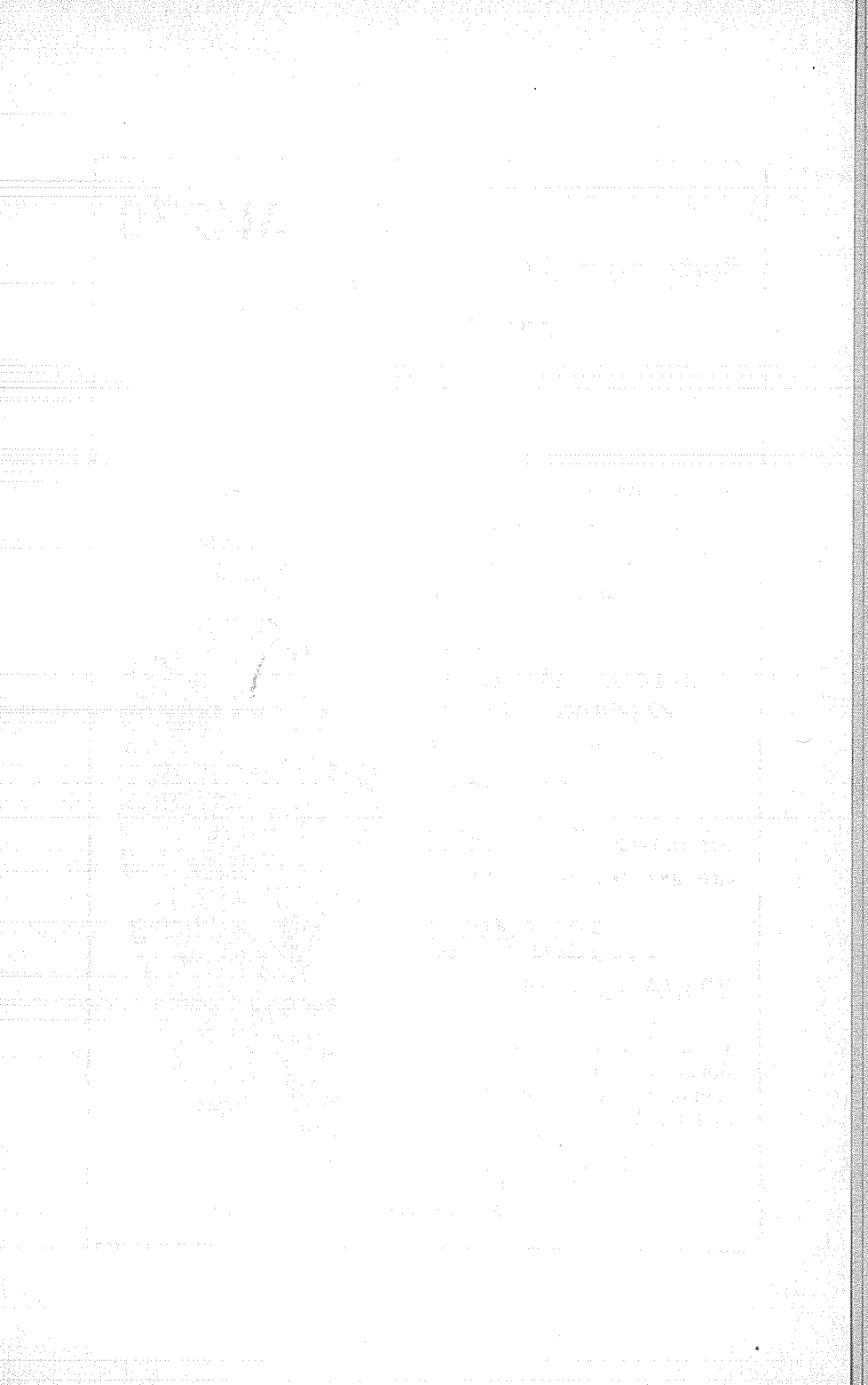
Beautifully printed and bound at Interprint (Malta) Limited, this second Midsea publication is reasonably priced: it is an original, sober and specialized study. It should certainly be on the shelf of anybody with a "Maltese-American" connection, as well as in every Melitensia library.

The book ends with a hilarious scene which truly deserves to be called by that untranslatable Maltese cultural stereo type term "*amerikanata*", or the exploits of Rufus Wells, "an American 'Professor of aeronautism' ", who in 1870 thrice failed in his attempt to give a public show outside Valletta in a gas balloon and ended up in jail after being pelted with stones and other missiles by the many angry spectators. Charlie Chaplin, who came later, might have been inspired.

More seriously now, I venture to hope that perhaps the

British High Commission and the Italian Embassy in Malta may be inspired by the praiseworthy initiative taken by the American Embassy in making a century's consular despatches available in microfilm at the University of Malta Library: theirs would, of course, be a more expensive process but also one more relevant to the brass tacks of Maltese colonial history.

**Henry Frendo**





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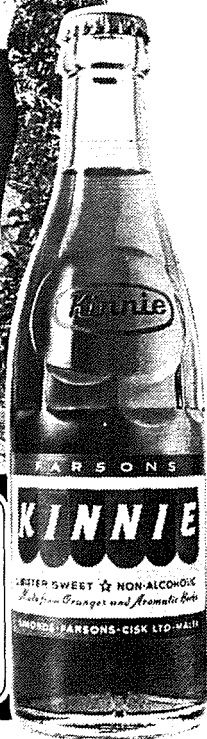
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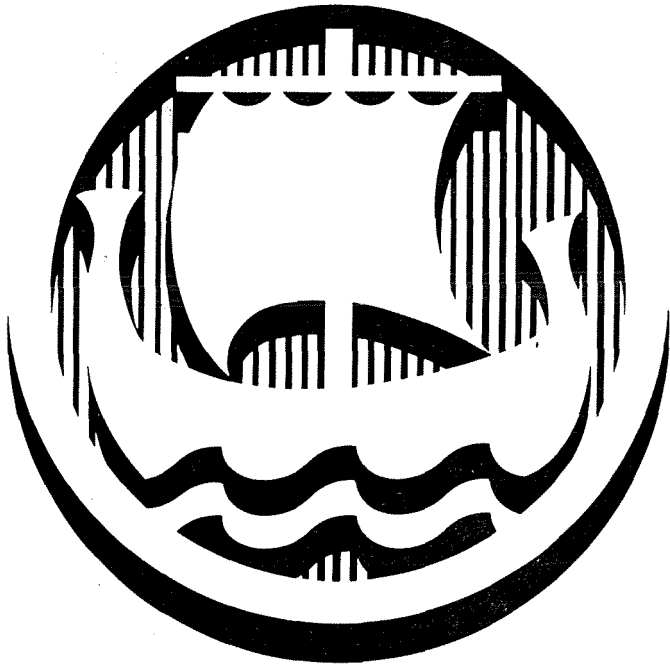
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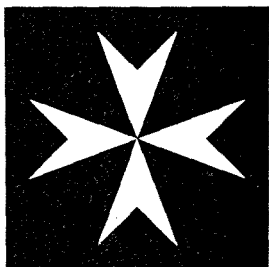


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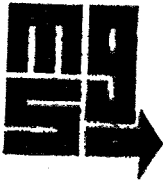
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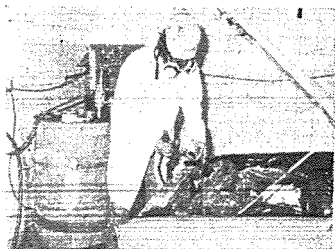
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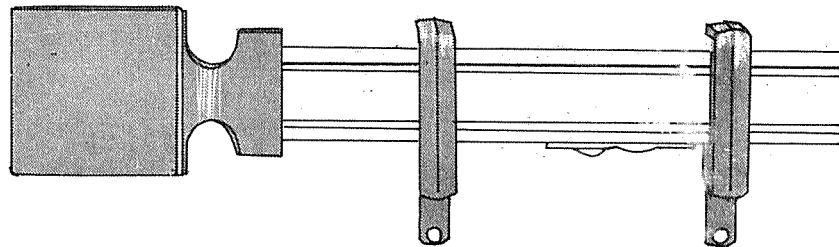
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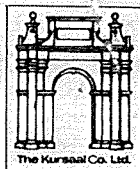
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