The Armistice: November 11, 1918

On November 11, 1918, an eerie silence descended on the scarred battlefields of Europe. The Armistice had been signed and the First Great War came to an end. A number of European nations had bled themselves white during four years of senseless carnage which had started on August 1914 and which eventually involved the USA three years later. This tragic folly was supposed to end all wars. Instead it made the Second World War of 1939 inevitable.

The war in Europe had caused a temporary halt in the migratory movement. Within Europe itself old communities which had been established for centuries were either wiped out or uprooted. This upheaval made mass emigration inevitable after hostilities had come to an end on Armistice Day.

Russia gave up the struggle in 1917 because of internal chaos which eventually brought the Bolshevik Revolution and that country not only rid itself of the monarchy but was to be the first nation to officially proclaim itself a Communist state.

Austria had declared war on Serbia in order to teach that upstart nation an enduring lesson. Instead, after the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, the Austro-Hungarian Empire disintegrated into various states. While Austria was reduced to the city of Vienna with a few historic towns and cities, Serbia was enlarged and became Yugoslavia.

The German Kaiser, Wilhelm II, had to abdicate. He died in Holland in 1941. The Ottoman Empire, which for so many years had been nicknamed "the sick man of Europe" eventually disappeared and the Turks left Europe except for Constantinople and the adjacent territory which guarded the entry into the Sea of Marmora and the Black Sea.

Peace was officially declared in 1919 by the Treaty of Versailles. The emerging German Weimar Republic laboured under the extremely harsh conditions insisted upon by Georges Clemenceau who was then Prime Minister of France. The determination of this sturdy defender of the French Republic was mainly responsible for imposing stiff reparations on the Germans. Clemenceau's intransigence made the rise of Nazism inevitable.

Political confrontation in Europe discouraged many people who felt that the Old Continent had no future and that Versailles had set the course for destruction. From the Urals to the Pyrenees many started packing their belongings to go to America. It was then thought that the shores of America offered the only safe haven from famine, unemployment, extreme nationalism and Bolshevism. Europeans sought refuge and hope in America. They left Europe in their millions.

The President of the USA, Woodrow Wilson, presented his famous Fourteen Points to his European partners. He insisted on the principle of self-determination for subject races and for the removal of trade barriers between nations. These same nations were to communicate with each other through "open diplomacy". Wilson suggested the creation of the League of Nations which he envisaged as an international body which was to provide an open forum for all governments. In such a forum litigants could air their differences in the hope of settling them by peaceful means.

Ironically the US Congress refused to involve the country in the experiment proposed by the American President. This was a tragic decision which greatly reduced the efficiency of the League. Germany and Russia were denied membership, though both nations eventually joined the League in 1935.

The effects and consequences of the First World War (1914-1918) were many. Central and Eastern Europe became a mosaic of small nations which felt very ill at ease with each other. Germany chafed under the humiliations of Versailles and Italy felt that although it was on the side of the victors, the sacrifice made did not justify the gains received. Latent resentments
were soon in the open. Capitalism was being challenged by Communism and the evils of extreme nationalism were again tearing Europe apart. By 1939 Germany had recovered sufficient strength to challenge her rivals both in the East and in the West. When the Second World War came to an end, Europe had lost its predominant role in international affairs.

By 1919 much of the old structure of Europe had been destroyed. Communism and nationalism meant the end of the old Colonial Empires. Woodrow Wilson's principle of self-determination meant that the empires of Vienna and Constantinople were to be broken into small geographical entities based on language or race. The pre-1914 map of Europe was now outdated as emergent nations achieved their cherished independence.

Such drastic changes inevitably brought economic chaos, political confusion and great social unrest. Communism was presented as the only solution to the poverty and insecurity of the masses. Nationalism had made interdependence impossible. The European stage was being prepared for the rise of the dictators. Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany. Benito Mussolini brought Fascism to the Italians. Joseph Stalin's spectre was to terrify the Soviet Union for many years. Kemal Ataturk proposed a new secular Turkey to his people who saw in him the saviour of their country. Joseph Pilsudski held the reins in Poland as did Francisco Franco in Spain and Antonio de Oliveira Salazar in Portugal.

The war had its effects on the way of life of the Maltese. Martial Law had been proclaimed by Governor Sir Henry Rundle on August 2, 1914. Censorship was imposed on newspapers and paper money replaced gold coins. There was a steep rise in prices and some commodities became scarce. Sugar, bread, kerosene and meat were difficult to obtain.

On the positive side of the situation, the Maltese were left out of actual fighting. A number of Maltese did volunteer and some were lost at sea and on the fronts. British and French vessels sought the security of Maltese harbours from German submarines. By 1915 the Dockyard was brimful with work.

In May of that same year the Maltese saw the first of hospital ships enter the harbour and many watched in silence as young men left their ships on stretchers or on crutches. Maltese doctors and nurses helped some 80,000 sick and wounded and Malta's kindness to these men earned her the affectionate title of "Nurse of the Mediterranean". Many of the sick and wounded were from Australia and New Zealand. These had suffered horribly from the Turks during the Gallipoli Campaign at a place now known in history as Anzac Cove.

Many of these soldiers were nursed back to health, but others found their final rest in Maltese graves. In one particular cemetery situated at Pieta one thousand two hundred and seventy six men from Australia and New Zealand lie buried. The experience of wounded men who regained their health in Maltese hospitals, some of whom married local girls, and the resting places of so many gallant young men forged a sentimental link between Maltese and Australians. Such a link was to prove useful when Maltese leaders vindicated the right of their migrants to call themselves British and therefore to be considered not as foreigners but as friends and allies.

The war had brought thousands of Allied soldiers and sailors to the shores of the Maltese islands. There were also a considerable number of German, Austrian and Turkish prisoners. The presence of these men swelled the population which had already been increased by returned emigrants from Tunisia and Algeria. The addition of so many extra mouths to feed and the economic dislocation brought about by the war caused a severe strain on the economy of Malta which, at that time, still depended largely on factors beyond the control of the Maltese themselves. These factors were popularly referred to as "steamer, soldier and sailor". At the sitting of the Council of Government held on February 1, 1919, one of the members, Mr. F. Azzopardi remarked: "Complaints are general, owing to the limitations of imports ... a shortage of the most necessary food-stuffs with the consequent excessiveness of prices which in many cases are prohibitive".
When the war was in its third year the cost of living in Malta had more than doubled while wages had increased by only 10%. Although during the war jobs were available not many were earning enough money to keep going. Prices of basic necessities had increased beyond control. Thus the price of bread had gone up by 125%; vegetables by 200%; milk by 200%; meat by 250%. Very often these items were not only very expensive but actually unavailable. The threat of the German U-Boats had made shipping hazardous.

Industrial unrest was inevitable. On May 7, 1917, the Imperial Government Workers Union proclaimed a strike at the Dockyard. That strike was a serious warning to the Imperial Authorities. The workers had shown that they were capable of fighting for just wages even if they risked being accused of treason at a time when a war was going on. Two days later the workers marched into Valletta to present a petition to the Governor, Sir Paul Methuen. The petition demanded higher wages. Eventually a small rise was granted to the workers at the Dockyard but the clash between the workers and the British Authorities was only postponed.

A White Paper on the financial state of Malta had shown that while the revenue of the Island in 1918 had amounted to £435,497, expenditure had totalled £449,247. Imports had fallen from £3,318,412 to £2,287,420. This decrease was due to the difficulty of importing things at a time when shipping in the Mediterranean was very hazardous.

At the 69th Annual General Meeting of the Chamber of Commerce held on December 12, 1918, the President of that body, Col. J.L. Francia, made suggestions of increased taxation to meet the rise in expenditure. Among Francia's suggestions the most unpopular were:

1. additions to the "ad valorem" and other duties;
2. increases in port duties;
3. tax on entertainment;
4. increases in stamp duties;
5. succession and legacy duties.

While suggestions for further taxation were being mooted, it must be remembered that the Maltese had no real representation at the seat of power. The British Governor was the complete overlord. He was helped by a Council of Government which was not representative of the people. Great Britain had declared war in 1914 to protect the freedom of small nations. Malta was a very small nation with no representative government. The Maltese had agitated for self-government for a long time. Now, after the Treaty of Versailles many small nations in Europe were being declared independent. Versailles accepted in 1919, as prerogatives of distinct nationhood, natural boundaries, ethnic identity, a national language, religion and culture. The Maltese felt they possessed such distinctive qualities which were backed by a long and eventful history.

There were also a number of articulate politicians who agitated for the removal of Malta's colonial status. In 1918 Dr. F. Sceberras issued a call to all constituted bodies to send representatives for a national meeting. The aim of this meeting was to send a petition to London to request self-government for the Maltese. This historic meeting was called a National Assembly and was convened on February 25, 1919. A resolution was unanimously carried which stated that the Maltese had voluntarily placed themselves under British protection for more than a century and were now demanding home rule for their island. It also expected the British Government to grant to Malta all those rights which the Treaty of Versailles had assured to small nations.

The National Assembly of 1919 was largely a creation of the upper classes of Maltese society. The emergence of the working classes was slow but in 1919 it was already apparent. The Dockyard strike of 1917 had given power and popularity to the Imperial Government Workers Union. This same union had taken part in the proceedings of the National Assembly. By then so many Dockyard workers had been given the sack since the Armistice that the voice of the labouring masses was becoming more strident.
In 1911 the civil population of Malta was 21,100. Half that figure were either unemployed or unproductive. Some 52,000 had declared they did not have a steady job. Although between 1914 and 1918 jobs had become available because of the war, by 1919 the economic plight of the Maltese had grown even more dramatic. Peace had brought redundancies and unemployment.

The Naval Dockyard had provided work for 15,000 men during the war. In 1919 the Admiralty was insisting that 5,000 workers were enough for the maintenance of the Fleet. Other military establishments were firing redundant workers and many had found themselves without jobs which had been related to the war effort. Others who had sailed with the Merchant Navy had come home to find no jobs available for them. Such drastic measures had brought the number of unemployed to 20,000. It came as no surprise when many began thinking of emigrating. In the period between 1919 and 1920 some 10,000 Maltese left their homes to seek employment abroad, mostly in American cities.

Unemployment, poverty and political frustration were the main factors which contributed to the general unrest among the Maltese in 1919. One commentator described the feeling of the Maltese on February 27, 1919.

"No Nation is immune from the prevailing spirit of unrest, and we are no exception. There can be no doubt that Malta is in a state of unrest, and we are no exception. There can be no doubt that Malta is in a state of dire distress. What lies at the root of our individual unrest and what are the causes of our complaints?"

The writer gave his reasons for the prevailing situation which was to explode into serious violence four months later. He complained that food was very expensive, of poor quality and scarce. He felt that the Food Board was not doing enough to check rascals and profiteers who were making money at the expense of the ordinary people. Importers should be checked, particularly those responsible for the importation of coal who were compelling civilians to pay six times as much as other sections of the public.

The British public was not unaware of the hardships suffered by the Maltese. One influential newspaper had a comment to make: "Malta has a population of nearly a quarter of a million and is a strategic centre of vital importance to the whole British Empire. Of this population over 30,000 men served as soldiers, sailors and dockyard workers for nearly the entire period of the war. They returned finding no work; thousands were necessarily discharged from the dockyard. Contractors and small businessmen found their businesses ruined through the establishment of the Government monopoly in the Navy and Army Canteen. These men were hungry and half-fed for months until they determined to emigrate".

There had been subtle changes in the Maltese way of life. Mr Henry Casolani, who was himself appointed as superintendent of emigration, had this to say about the changes in Maltese mentality after the war: "Rice eaters became bread eaters. The automobile displaced the horse conveyance. The dancing hall and the cinema became national institutions. Silk took the place of the longcloth and dungarees. And the pound sterling became the measure of the workman's wage".

The same writer stated that between 1918 and 1920 there was "a wonderful exodus which saved the country from anarchy and starvation". This wonderful exodus was that of some 10,000 emigrants who had left Malta, mostly for North America. In the same period four times that number had applied for their passports but only 27,000 were passed through the selective system applied by the Emigration Committee.

**Political Agitation and Problems of Over-Population**

Not all Maltese wished to emigrate. Many hoped that Dr. F. Sceberras and the National Assembly would defend the nation and bring about social and political changes. Dr. Sceberras
had called for a second meeting of the National Assembly on June 7, 1919. The aim of the Assembly was to press on for the granting of self-government. Many delegates answered his call. Thousands of Maltese entered Valletta to show their interest in what the delegates were discussing.

Among those who had converged on Valletta on that historic and tragic day were many who had recently lost their jobs with the British Forces. Others were politically motivated because they opposed Malta's political status. A few were anarchists who felt inspired by the recent events in Russia. There were also supporters of a local politician, Manwel Dimech, who had spread radical and nationalistic ideas particularly among the unemployed. Dimech had been exiled by the British during the war and he was to die in Alexandria, Egypt, never to return to his native land. Dimech's ideas however, did survive him.

Dimech's followers were never very numerous but they were determined in their quest for national independence and for the setting up of a Maltese secular state which was to be egalitarian and free from the impositions of external forces.

While the National Assembly was at its deliberations, it became known that the demonstration outside had turned into a riot. Some demonstrators tore down British flags to the delight of the excited crowds. They also attacked houses and other premises which belonged to Imperialist sympathisers. Those who were thought to have made good money out of the misery of the people were especially attacked. The crowd also taunted the few British soldiers who had been called out to contain the riot.

Someone in a British uniform panicked and shots were fired into the unarmed crowd. When the uproar died down four Maltese victims had lost their lives.

The Maltese now felt that not only did they have a just cause but that their wishes were hallowed by the blood of four of their brothers. The names of the four men were to be remembered and revered. The men killed were Lorenzo Dyer from Vittoriosa, Giuseppe Bajada from Gozo, Emmanuele Attard from Sliema and Carmelo Abela from Valletta.

The effects of the riot of June 7, 1919, were many. The British realised that the Maltese could not be taken for granted any longer. Constitutional progress was accelerated and on November 20, of that year the Maltese were promised their own parliament which would have jurisdiction over internal affairs. A new constitution was granted on April 30, 1921. In October elections were held and in November the first Maltese Parliament was convened.

Bread was again subsidised. The price of bread had been one of the major masons of unrest since 1917. In that year the situation had grown so serious that the Church in Malta had opened a Bread Fund. This same Fund had been closed on January 20, 1919. By that date the Fund had amounted to £5,000. That considerable amount of money had been used to alleviate suffering and hunger among the unemployed and during the time the Fund had functioned helpers had issued 598,394 tickets to needy persons. Those tickets entitled the holders to a portion of bread and a plate of soup. At times about 25,000 tickets a month were distributed to needy persons in Malta and Gozo.

The Bread Fund was only a partial solution. Those who had no steady income or no income at all were forced to roam the streets asking for alms. Beggars were a common and pitiful sight. They were numerous near churches at times when worshippers went to attend religious functions. Those who did not need to worry about their livelihood complained about the nuisance beggars were making of themselves and they expected the police to be more efficient in controlling beggars, especially children.

Men and women from the villages used to drive their herds of goats to the towns to sell milk. They drove their herds into the narrow streets and milked their animals by the doorstep of their customers. A resident of Valletta wrote on September 1920:
"Some 2,400 goats are driven into Valletta every day. This makes it impossible for pedestrians to walk. Each goat has a bell round its neck and the jingling which ensues wakes one up as the herds are driven into the street in the early hours of the morning. The pollution in the streets was incredible and the stench caused by the refuse of the goats was unbearable. Indeed the smell was so terrible that it was unadvisable to open the windows".

Had this disgruntled resident known then that those goats and their milk were the source of undulant fever so prevalent in Mediterranean lands in those days, he would have felt even more aggrieved against those animals.

The lack of nutritious food and poor hygiene made a fatal toll on child life in the Maltese Islands during the years between the two wars. Governor P.S. Methuen made a reference to premature death among babies and children in his farewell speech delivered on February 2, 1919. He complained about "the terrible loss of child life in Malta where one in every four babies dies before the age of one year". Maltese babies perished because of poverty, dirt and ignorance. Families were large and those who lived in the towns, particularly those in Valletta and in Cottonera, suffered from over-crowding and very poor sanitation. In a speech given at the Palace by a Maltese doctor, A. Critien, on February 14, 1919, the speaker claimed: "One sees a woman feeding her child, a few months old, with macaroni or other food unfit for a baby". Malta's record on infant mortality during the first year from birth was among the worst in Europe at the time.

In 1919 The Mothers and Infants Welfare Association was set up in Hamrun. Later the Association opened other centres in Valletta and Zejtun. At these centres free medical advice was available and newly-born babies were given after-care till they completed their first year. During the first two years of its existence the Association had helped over 1,000 mothers. It had continued the work which had been initiated by an older society which was known as "Pro Infantia". However up to 1932 over 50% of registered deaths were those of children under five years and this was reputed to be one of the highest rates of infant mortality in any civilised country. Improper feeding and enteritis were then listed as the major causes of such deaths.

The year 1918 was momentous not only because the Armistice had been agreed upon but also because it was the year of the outbreak of the dreaded Spanish Influenza. It was first recorded in the Northern Hemisphere in 1918 and it carried off more people than the war did. It was in that same year that the epidemic visited Malta. Between September 1918 and March 1919, 651 people succumbed to it. The appalling lack of hygiene and the prevalence of dirt coupled with overcrowding and the lack of a healthy diet, all contributed to the spread of the virus.

The Public Health authorities issued a leaflet early in 1919 which gave some useful hints to those privileged few who could read and were capable of following those hints. The pamphlet suggested that the sick should be left in separate rooms which were to be well aired and with plenty of light. Nobody was to have access to the sick unless it was absolutely necessary. It was stated that visiting the sick and frequenting houses where the influenza was prevalent was dangerous. People were urged to avoid crowded places.

By March 1919 the spread of Spanish Influenza had become so serious that the Military Authorities placed the village of Mellieha out of bounds to all troops and no sleeping out was allowed. The Floriana Army School was closed. On March 13, all Government Elementary Schools were closed. The Lyceum and Secondary School in Valletta were closed for two weeks.

On the last day of March masses for the dead were said in all churches. The bishop gave orders that all churches were to be well-ventilated and kept clean and disinfected especially at the corners. People suffering from colds were asked not to frequent churches and priests were advised to send home gently any boy who during catechism classes gave signs of being unwell. No person accompanying Holy Viaticum was allowed to approach a person dying of the Spanish Influenza. Only the priest administering Holy Communion was to approach the sick person.
By the middle of 1919 the worst of the epidemic was over. A thanksgiving ceremony was held in Valletta where the bishop intoned the Te Deum. It was rumoured that in the crowded church someone felt sick, but he was quickly rushed out and the fear of the Spanish Influenza was soon relegated to the memories of the past. Many young and useful lives had been sacrificed and such a loss added to the general gloom hovering over the Island.

Illiteracy was a consequence of the general poverty in an island which depended largely on policies which considered the need of the Imperial Garrison as paramount and those of the civil population as very secondary.

The civil population of Malta in 1920 stood at 224,859. It was calculated that some 114,000 were men and women who were unable to read and write. The gentlemen on the Emigration Commit-tee who were expected to screen prospective migrants complained that of the 5,601 emigrants who left Malta between November 11, 1918 and March 31, 1920, many were practically illiterate. On August 22, 1920, the Workers' Union called a meeting at the Manoel Theatre in Valletta which was addressed by a certain Mr Giles. Mr Giles had come over from England and was himself a delegate of the trade union movement in that country. Mr Giles decried the pathetic state of education in Malta, especially in so far as the workers of the Island were concerned.

The satirist Juan Mamo wrote a book in 1930 about the plight of Maltese emigrants to the U.S.A in the 1920's. Mamo's book was in Maltese with a title that clearly showed that his book was about very ordinary men and women who expected no special treatment from contemporary society. The title in Maltese was: "Ulied in-Nanna Venut fl-America". Freely translated that meant that Juan Mamo's story concerned the mishaps of the grandchildren of Grandmother Venut who had emigrated to USA.

Mamo's heroes had humble origins like most Maltese who had to leave their homes to try to make a living in foreign countries. A number of young men and some girls from the villages decided to emigrate. They had never ventured out of their village square before. They were illiterate and could only communicate in a heavily accented Maltese. They had no money and no trade. Their insular upbringing mercifully spared them the realisation of what they were intending to do.

Juan Mamo's migrants had a limited vocabulary except when it came to untranslatable imprecations. Most of their expressions were foul. They decided to consult their village lawyer Baskal to get from him some information on how to travel from their village to the city of New York. Baskal was not completely illiterate but he knew very little of the world outside his surroundings and his knowledge of America was meagre.

Baskal spoke garbled Maltese interspersed with some legal expressions which must have had their origins in Latin. His clients did not comprehend and they assumed that their lawyer was a very learned man. The only phrase that they understood clearly was when Baskal wanted a fee of $1 before the discussion could become really professional.

The grandchildren of Nanna Venut left Malta by boat for the port of Naples. Thence they travelled overland to Marseilles, Paris and Le Havre. From Le Havre they boarded their trans-Atlantic ship for North America and finally disembarked at New York. Juan Mamo follows the footsteps of those who stayed in New York, even though some of the others went to Detroit, Chicago, Cleveland, Buffalo, Cincinnati, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington D.C., Charleston and New Orleans. Some even crossed the border into Canada.

Ten of Venut's wandering grandchildren settled in New York. They were six men and four women. They rented one room. The women hardly ventured outside, frightened as they were by the vastness and the noise of the great unfamiliar city. Baskal had never prepared them for the life of metropolitan New York. The men went out for work and then hurried for the relative security of their room.
Juan Mamo's fictional characters were uneducated, unbearably rude and very often blasphemous. The author knew of the defects of men and women of his time and he consciously exaggerated them. He produced a satirical attack not on the Maltese uneducated masses but on the system which produced such characters and then wanted to get rid of them through emigration. Although it cannot be said that Mamo's picture of Maltese emigrants was fair or accurate, at the same time many of his insinuations were basically justified.

Irredentism, Language and Emigration

The experiment in self-government for Malta began in November 1921. Senator Joseph Howard was appointed head of the ministry. Howard had been very active in the Emigration Committee which had been set up in 1919. Soon after his appointment he made a statement of policy on emigration. The statement was made in December 1919 and it had three fundamental points:

1. The information in possession of the Government and a close study of the situation made by the Emigration Department during the past two years indicate Australia as the most suitable, if not the only country, to which the flow of Maltese emigration should be directed.
2. Australia expected all immigrants to possess a colloquial knowledge of English. Joseph Howard also noted that there was then no country worth mentioning which had not laid down a condition that all arrivals should undergo a literacy test before being granted admission.
3. The Maltese Government intended to revive without delay classes for intending emigrants. Such classes had been held till 1919 and had proved to be very useful.

These three points showed that already in 1920 Australia was becoming very popular with Maltese migrants. This was before the US government had adopted stringent conditions on entry into that country. Howard also admitted the need to combat illiteracy which was then the scourge of the Maltese seeking work. Finally the importance of learning English was becoming more evident as the Maltese preferred to emigrate to countries where that language was spoken.

The need to learn English was obvious enough. However, at the time that Joseph Howard was speaking, many saw that suggestion as an excuse to help English to oust Italian in Malta. What became known as the Language Question was a very divisive issue. In January 4, 1922, the pro-English language newspaper, itself printed in English, The Daily Malta Chronicle, had this to say on the burning issue of language in Malta: "The Language Question remains the main cause of division.... The upper classes can perhaps afford to waste time and energy over idle questions of this sort, but with the lower classes generally, and with the workers in particular, the Language Question is one of bread and butter. Even the present Government realists that English, and English alone, is necessary for the working classes which constitute the backbone of the nation".

The Language Question was a political issue which for many years drained Malta's limited intellectual capacity. For over sixty years Maltese argued with fellow Maltese as to which foreign language should be dominant in Malta. Was it to be English or Italian? Italian had been the language used in administrative circles since the sixteenth century. It is possible that Italian, or the Sicilian version of it, was in use in the Island before 1530 when the Crusader Knights of St. John made Malta their home for 268 years. Malta and Sicily were not only neighbours in the Mediterranean, but they also shared a common heritage in history, culture and religion. Although the Maltese did not speak Italian as their native language, the ruling classes had imposed that language as the official idiom of government and culture.

Trouble started when after 1878 the British administration began to enforce the teaching of English in State schools at the expense of Italian. The vast majority of the Maltese were illiterate and did not feel involved in the Language Question. Politicians however, soon found
them-selves with something to shout about. The Reformers insisted on a reform of the educational system making English the language of a British colony. The Anti-Reformers were determined to oppose any change which would jeopardise the privileged status of the Italian language in an island which considered itself as European, Latin and Catholic.

The Constitution of 1921 had recognised Italian and English as the official languages of Malta, but the preponderance of English was becoming obvious. The Colonial Administration had all the power it needed to advance the cause of English, and the Maltese in general realised the advantages of English. After all English was spoken in USA and in Australia and those were the countries most Maltese who wanted to emigrate wished to settle in. Italian was the language of the past. English belonged to the present and to the future.

The position of the Anti-Reformers became compromised when Benito Mussolini seized power in Italy in 1922. Fascists claimed Malta as part of unredeemed Italy. Most Maltese, even those who favoured the language of Italy, did not cherish such claims put forward by Fascists. There was a negligible minority who not only loved Italy's language but also saw Malta as a geographical extension of the Italian mainland. Senator Caruana Gatto in a speech delivered at the Royal Opera House in honour of the celeb-rated Maltese tenor Calleia, described Malta as "the extreme end of Italian soil". Caruana Gatto represented the nobility in the Senate. His speech was delivered on March 21, 1923.

Such irredentist claims were ignored by most Maltese. When sustained efforts were made to educate the masses the people wanted to study their own Maltese language. They also preferred to learn English because it was the language used by most Maltese emigrants and it had an international status. When Italy and Great Britain found themselves at war, Italian bombers began dropping their bombs on Maltese towns and villages. The Second World War buried the Language Question.

More than sixty years had been wasted in disputes which had caused deep and painful rifts in an insular society. At a time when the Maltese economy was beset by over-population and unemployment, Maltese politicians generated an abundance of verbal heat which was of little practical use to the nation and to the people who needed urgent help. At a time when emigration was one possible solution to the thousands who had no work, a section of Malta's politicians was greatly hindering the migratory flow towards the English-speaking countries.

The anti-Reformers knew that emigration to English-speaking countries was providing a telling argument against their position. It was only logical for them to embark on a vicious propaganda in Parliament and in their newspapers, to discourage intending migrants from emigrating to countries which were either English-speaking or else within the British Empire. The pro-Italian press printed reports of dis-crimination against the Maltese in Australia while urging prospective migrants to emigrate to Argentina where there was a Latin culture and where the people spoke Spanish, which as a language was similar to Italian.

O.F. Tencajoli in 1927 wrote an article which put emigration to Australia in an unfavourable light. Tencajoli wrote at a time when Fascist propaganda was at its highest. He condemned emigration according to the selective system because the healthy left their country and thus the process debilitated the whole population. Tencajoli claimed that the Maltese were Southern Europeans and therefore unacceptable to the racists in Australia.

Tencajoli admitted that the Federal Australian Government was not against admitting the Maltese into the country, but he claimed that the Australians wanted the Maltese to populate the unhealthy regions of Australia and thus help them defend Australia against the Asian Peril.

Tencajoli asked his Maltese readers why they should let the British use them to defend their Empire? Did they realise that not only were they allowing the British to use them under conditions which the British themselves would not accept, but when they left Malta for distant
lands, did the Maltese realise that they were vacating their own Island to make room for British settlers?

The arguments went on till the outbreak of the Second World War. But even before that unhappy event most Maltese ignored their politicians and settled in their thousands in countries which they themselves preferred.

**Organised Emigration**

Over-population, unemployment and political unrest made life for the Maltese very uneasy. The Maltese lived on a small island and their livelihood depended, almost entirely, on the jobs created by the presence of the British Forces. Since the Armistice jobs had become very scarce and Maltese society was just beginning to experience the beginnings of those fundamental social upheavals which had become so endemic on the European mainland. The clash between the overriding needs of the Empire and those of the civil population was inevitable.

There was one solution to the problems of the Maltese on which there seemed to have been a consensus between the British and the Maltese sides. That solution was emigration. The British favoured fewer civilians on the island because that would make the strategic position of Malta secure from political agitation. Maltese political leaders saw emigration as the only practical solution to unemployment.

Although many were in favour of emigration few dared to suggest ways and means of helping those who intended to seek a better future in foreign lands. Political leaders felt that the best way of dealing with intending emigrants was to leave every initiative to the spontaneous urge to seek foreign lands. Emigration was to be left to the emigrants with little or no intervention from official quarters.

However, some steps had to be taken in order to keep the flow of emigration under some control even if that control had to be a remote one. On January 21, 1919, the Colonial Administration allowed an Emigration Committee to be set up. The specific aim of this body was to provide reliable information to those people who asked about conditions prevailing in the lands in which they were interested. In 1907, Sir Harry Barron, then Acting Governor of Malta, had created the Malta Emigration Committee. The members of this Committee were influential men who kept in touch with representatives of various countries to explain to the Maltese the prevailing economic and political situation in those countries to which Maltese were more likely to emigrate. Although Barron’s Committee was purely consultative, it was then the only semi-official body which directly interested itself in bringing some organisation into the migratory flow from the Maltese Islands.

The Malta Emigration Committee functioned till the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. It then became dormant because emigration came to a practical standstill while Europe was at war.

The new Emigration Committee of 1919 was in fact very much like its predecessor of 1907. The new Governor of Malta, Field Marshal Lord Plumer, wished the new Committee a successful start in its merely consultative capacity. He had arrived in Malta after the chaos brought about by the riots of June 7, 1919. He saw his mission as one of pacification and he did manage to bring a measure of reconciliation between the British and the Maltese.

On November 3, 1919, the new Governor ad-dressed the Senate. In his speech he referred specifically to emigration. He said: "As regards emigration a Committee was formed in 1919, under the chairmanship of Mr. Joseph Howard, to deal with the question and to advise the Government on all matters connected with it. The work of the Committee has been of great value and their efforts to place the Maltese in suitable spheres of employment in other countries have been very successful in face of difficulties which the congested state of labour
markets all over the world has presented. The congestion of labour markets still obtains and it would be foolish to anticipate any immediate general improvement in this respect.

Emigration from Malta, in small but gradually increasing numbers, can be anticipated and while skilled artizans can be certain of obtaining employment anywhere, there is no country where climatic and other conditions are suitable, which is ready to receive unskilled labourers of inferior education in any considerable numbers, and it follows that any scheme of emigration on a large scale is only practicable on the lines of the establishment of a colony with the large capital expenditure which such a plan involves.

Such a plan is by no means impracticable or beyond the resources of Malta to carry out, but it obviously cannot be undertaken without a considerable amount of forethought and preliminary investigation”.

The idea of establishing a Maltese Colony somewhere had long been canvassed. Sir Adrian Dingli had suggested Cyprus. Others had thought that Cyrenaica was suitable for the Maltese to colonise. In 1912 a number of Maltese arrived in Brazil with the hope of establishing a colony on a fazenda. On January 12, 1922, Colonel A. Samut suggested to the Senate that that body should present a petition to the King for a Royal Charter to obtain a grant of land somewhere in the British Empire. Samut thought that Jubaland was a place worthy of consideration.

Even as late as February 1928, Lord Strickland still had hopes of establishing a Maltese Colony in Australia. On the 22nd of that month Lord Strickland informed the Legislative Assembly that his Australian friend, Sir James D. Connolly had written to him to let him know that the Australian Government was "strongly disposed to encourage Maltese migration to the Berkley tableland, a portion of Australia with a climate very similar to that of Malta, with an assured rainfall and a very fertile soil". Strickland and Connolly were of the opinion that a Maltese Settlement could be established in that part of Western Australia.

Maltese official sources felt that to overcome the difficulty of illiterate migrants, the only plausible solution was group settlement. A group settlement would overcome the difficulty of individual migrants having to grapple with a foreign language. Also, the Maltese Government would ensure that within a Maltese settlement there would be a priest of Maltese nationality, and preferably also, a doctor. In a report published by the Government on the question of organised emigration it was noted that "it seems certain that in any event, facilities must be found for the foundation of an agricultural settlement of Maltese on a large scale in some other country. Australia presents the greatest attractions and should present the least difficulty”.

Fortunately for the Maltese emigratory movement Senator Joseph Howard was in a position to understand very well what Lord Plumer was implying in his speech. Mr. Howard had been a prominent member of the Emigration Committee and he was, in 1921, the Head of the newly formed Ministry. Mr. Howard knew that the basic problems of most emigrants fell into one or more of the following categories:

1. There were too many emigrants from Malta and from the Continent who were flocking to the same cities in the New World and in Australia. These were creating congestion and local opinion was becoming hostile to them.
2. Too many immigrants, Maltese and foreign, had no money, skill or education. Most of them knew no English. Their style of life was completely different from that of the receiving country. They gravitated to the same areas and created ghettos.
3. Some ethnic groups overcame such handicaps by creating their own colonies. For a time the Maltese nurtured the thought of founding a Maltese Colony, preferably in Australia. Such a scheme needed serious planning and hard cash which only a Government could provide. The Colonial Administration never offered any financial assistance and public opinion in Australia was not enthusiastic about nursing a colony peopled by foreigners.
Emigration and Education for the Masses

Before 1921 the people of Malta had clamoured for self-government because they thought that only the Maltese were capable of caring for the unemployed of the Island. Lord Plumer had promised to do his best to set up new industries and revive old ones. The challenge confronting the new Maltese Government was to find work for the thousands who had been laid off since the Armistice two years before. Emigration had a twofold importance: to check the natural increase of the local population and to reduce the numbers of those who were idle. The combination of emigration with a modest programme of industrialisation was expected to put the people of Malta out of their predicament.

The unemployed people of Malta and Gozo were not waiting for their statesmen to tell them what they should do. Between November 1919 and December 1921 more than 14,000 emigrants had left the shores of the Maltese Islands. Too many of them were unprepared for life in strange lands and the number of returnees for the same period amounted to 5,000. Yet even those who had come back had helped to relieve the congestion prevalent at home and some of them brought money and expertise with them. Also, they had acquired a personal knowledge of the big world outside.

In spite of the stories related by those who had come back and of the reports sent to Malta by those who stayed in the countries of their choice, the local authorities remained adamant against financing organised emigration. In his speech of November 3, 1921, Lord Plumer boasted that Malta had no public debt. He said: "I do not think that any country which has suffered as Malta has from the trade depression of the past seven years, has emerged from the trial in so sound and satisfactory a condition".

Yet the Government remained indifferent to those who were asking for help. Mr. Henry Casolani gave some ten years of his very active life to working and pleading for the Maltese emigrant. Yet, when it came to financial assistance to those migrants who needed such assistance, Mr. Casolani simply told the official line. He too remained against subsidised emigration and his thoughts on the matter were very clearly explained by himself in 1921:

"If left to himself, the Maltese of the emigrant class will work wonders; there is no limit to his resourcefulness, for besides brawn he possesses brains. He is thrifty and will live on a crust and by the sweat of his brow will build a future. Let him feel that you are behind him and he will come stagnant, unproductive and a nuisance to the nearest British Consul. In the end he will contrive to obtain subsistence and repatriation at Government's expense".

That line of thought was to hinder the development of emigration for a number of years. When eventually the scheme for assisted passages came into operation, much hardship was avoided and a better class of prospective emigrants came into being. The Malta Government Gazette of April 29, 1919 had carried a notice which announced that the Emigration Committee had been formed to deal with questions regarding emigration from Malta to British Dominions beyond the seas and other countries. The original Committee was formed of four persons: Judge G. Pullicino as chairman, Mr Antonio Lanzon and Mr Joseph Howard as members and Mr Henry Casolani as secretary and executive officer. Mr Joseph Howard soon replaced judge G. Pullicino because of the judge's death. On November 11, 1921 the Governor, Lord Plumer, appointed Mr H. Casolani as Superintendent of Emigration, and in 1922 Casolani went to London to plead for the unhindered entry of Maltese emigrants into Australia.

Another effort to put some organisation into the movement of emigrants from Malta was the setting up of an Emigration Bureau on October 1, 1919. The Bureau was an offshoot of the Emigration Committee and its aim was to furnish information to emigrants and to the unemployed about those countries where work was available. Information was given either by word or in writing. The Bureau also organised literacy tests, issued health certificates and examined those prospective migrants who had applied for a visa. It also issued passports and kept statistics on the movements of migrants.
In a dispatch from Malta dated September 9, 1920, Reuter's correspondent had this to say about the function of the Emigration Committee: "From November 11, 1918, to March 31, 1920, 5,601 Maltese emigrants have left Malta for British Dominions and other countries. Since then about 3,000 have emigrated. The exodus, which is unprecedented within living memory, proved a great blessing in many ways, considering that 15,602 Maltese workers were discharged from naval and military establishments and the mercantile marine. Only 4,029 obtained engagement. It is admitted that a serious crisis has been averted. In this connection, the work of the Emigration Committee is beyond praise and but for its assistance, emigration would have been a failure. America, Canada, Australia and France have seen and appreciated the fine specimens arriving and are all anxious to have Maltese immigrants. The surplus population is leaving for these countries in small numbers week by week".

A major headache for the gentlemen serving on the Emigration Committee was illiteracy. It was then estimated that half the adult population was unable to read and write. The governments of the USA and of Australia had already imposed literacy tests. Canada soon followed suit. Illiterate men and women were also ignorant of the English language and generally unprepared for life overseas. Although the worker who wished to emigrate was usually a reliable person, sober and hardworking, his lack of formal education very often relegated him to the category of the unskilled and therefore unable to seek profitable jobs. The lack of the English language very often meant that the doors of North America and those of Australia were closed to him.

The Emigration Committee began organising evening classes for those who were planning to emigrate. Twenty centres were opened, eighteen in Malta and two in Gozo. Classes were of two grades: one for those who were completely illiterate and another for those who knew how to read and write but felt that their English was poor. In Malta the development of emigration helped the spread of popular education.

A notice in the Malta Government Gazette of August 8, 1919, stated that intending emigrants between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five were eligible to apply for admittance into the evening classes. Those who qualified for such classes were to apply for admission to the headmaster of the local centre not later than August 31, 1919. The members of the Emigration Committee advised those who intended to emigrate to avail them-selves of this free service. If they did not they ran the risk of being ignored by those who could offer good jobs and being treated with contempt because of their lack of education.

On March 31, 1920, the evening classes for migrants passed under the administration of the Elementary Schools Department. At that time it was calculated that each student cost the Government about Is 41/2d a month.

According to official statistics in 1920 there were in Malta and Gozo 142,113 men and women who were classified as illiterate and therefore not eligible for emigration. Besides the illiterates there were those whom Casolani called "incompetents". These were sons of well-to-do families who had received a formal education but who had not been trained for any useful occupation. In pre-war times such "incompetents" usually did clerical jobs and Maltese Society never expected from these privileged few that they should do manual work if they had found no job to occupy themselves with. Emigration was a solution for the working classes, not for those who looked down on manual work with open disgust. Casolani did demonstrate unusual courage when he called these people incompetent at that time. He was also far-sighted when he suggested that those who considered themselves superior had better take a course in a technical college.

In 1919, 2,011 intending migrants registered as students, and of that total 1,285 managed to attend their evening classes regularly. When classes re-opened on October 1, 1920, as a branch of the Elementary Schools programme, there were only eight centres functioning against the original twenty. Six centres were operating in Malta while the remaining two were in Gozo.
Within two years of operation the evening classes for those who wished to settle abroad were in serious trouble. During the first scholastic term of 1921 student registration in Malta and Gozo had fallen to 112 and of these only 55 attended regularly. By June of that year Government decided to discontinue the experiment.

On February 3, 1919, someone had commented that the fittest subjects for emigration, types that would be welcomed in any country, were also the least educated. While the Colonial Administration adamantly refused to finance those emigrants who did not have the necessary cash to buy their tickets, education for the illiterate had to wait for many years until Malta too made education compulsory for all. In the meantime the evening classes for those who wished to emigrate had come to their untimely end.

Malta's Superintendent of Emigration, Mr. Henry Casolani, wrote a book about emigration which was published in 1927. In his book, written in Maltese and titled aptly: "L-Emigrazzjoni tal-Maltin" Casolani noted that 400 students had finished successfully their courses during 1919 and 1921. Yet even among these, many failures had been registered as many did not pass the simple literacy test. It was not easy to teach an illiterate person how to read and write within a few months. Casolani himself wrote down the post-mortem of the system: "In spite of our good will, the efforts shown by teachers and the wish to succeed shown by the emigrants, hundreds failed to pass their tests and therefore I can honestly say that the system did not produce the results we waited for. It is impossible to describe the frustration felt by those who, after so much effort, are told they cannot emigrate".

Casolani's scepticism went further than that. He even doubted the effectiveness of the system on those who had managed to pass their tests. He complained that what was hurriedly learned was also hurriedly forgotten and therefore the evening classes did not produce permanent results.

Casolani also noted that as soon as a former student reached Australia he sought out the company of other Maltese and soon forgot the little English he had so painfully acquired. In short, Casolani pointed to a complete overhaul of the education system in Malta where the study of English would be based on a sound foundation. Only then would students acquire a permanent command of the English language which would last them their lifetime. Here Casolani was years ahead of his time and the passion aroused by the Language Question did not permit clear and logical thinking. Eventually however, the line of thought pursued by Casolani was to be accepted by those who held the reins of power.

**Trade Schools and Technical Education**

On May 19, 1928, Malta received a distinguished Australian visitor. He was Mr. Jack Barnes OBE, who was a Deputy Director of Migration and Settlement at Australia House in London. Mr. & Mrs. Barnes and their son arrived on the ship "Orford" which was then on her maiden voyage. The Barnes visit was the third visit to Malta by important Australians in a few weeks. In April a group of Western Australian Parliamentarians arrived on a visit and between May 11 and 12, 650 Scottish Australians on their way to Scotland made a stop in Malta and visited the war dead.

The Migrants Training Centre had been opened just six weeks before the arrival of Jack Barnes. Mr. Barnes visited the Centre which was then housed at Bugeja Technical Institute at Hamrun. He was there received by Captain Henry Curmi who was responsible for the Training Centre. Captain H. Curmi himself was to be appointed Commissioner for Malta in Australia in 1929 and his name was to be indelibly written in the annals of the history of Maltese emigration to Australia.
Captain Curmi introduced the trade masters to Mr. Barnes. All of them had spent more than fourteen years in Australia and had received their training in that country. Mr. Barnes also visited the Emigration Department and spoke with several intending emigrants. He expressed his satisfaction at their fine physique and at their knowledge of English. He also inspected the Medical Branch and its equipment. Later Jack Barnes, his wife and his son Fred, paid their respects to the Australian soldiers who had been buried at the Pieta Military Cemetery.

The Barnes visit had been an important event in establishing lasting links between the Maltese authorities and those of Australia. The Maltese had won an influential friend and Mr. J. Barnes was to be a useful asset to the Maltese in Australia House, London. When asked about his visit to Malta, Mr. Barnes sounded almost lyrical:

"Sunshine which helps to make happiness; smiling faces, healthy and well-fed children, and cleanliness on every side. I shall always remember Malta as the Smiling Island where everybody smiles and seems to be happy what-ever his place in the country's machinery."

In May 1929 the Department of Labour issued a pamphlet entitled "Migrants Training Centre". In spite of its English title the pamphlet was printed in Maltese. First the pamphlet explained the nature and scope of the Training Centre but then it went on to give an introduction to Australia and her people. There was practical information on the conditions of work in Australia and an extensive list of jobs available at the time in all the States. It even published a list of tools in English and Maltese. The pamphlet explained the importance of trade unions and the need of the Maltese worker to obtain his membership ticket and to abide by the directives given by the shop steward.

Some of the suggestions put forward to intending emigrants to Australia throw light on the way of life prevalent in Malta in the twenties:

1. The first and most important thing for an emigrant is to keep his mouth shut and his eyes wide open.
2. One should never brag about the amount of money he is earning. If you do you will probably find someone willing to relieve you of your earnings.
3. Learn to trust the banks. Money under your mattress invites thieves. Money in the bank earns interest and it will be harder to squander.
4. Remember your obligation to pay back the money lent to you by the Government of Malta. (This was a reference to a loan scheme initiated in 1926 when the passage to Australia then cost £60 and the Maltese Government loaned half the sum. Between 1926 and 1929 about one hundred and twenty emigrants availed themselves of this scheme).

The writer of the pamphlet also advised prospective emigrants to send some money to Australia before their actual departure. This was a pre-caution against an initial period of unemployment. Another advice was to avoid settling in the cities which were already crowded and where unemployment was a serious problem. The writer also added that Australians did not like to notice too many foreigners loitering around street corners. One should visit a city only when he felt he knew the country.

One particular piece of advice was interesting because it showed the kind of personal needs Maltese emigrants had in the twenties. They were told to carry with them two pairs of shoes, one fit for city walking and the other tough and durable. A pair of slippers were to be used indoors. Other necessities were: four shirts, four underparts, four vests, a dozen handkerchiefs, six pairs of socks, a good suit and used clothes to go to work with. A coat and a raincoat were also suggested.

The tone of these paternal warnings became more and more pressing: never go out barefoot and remember that sandals are simply not accept-able. Not even the most destitute of beggars would dare do such unheard of things. Do not wear caps or straw hats. Never put around your
waist the traditional sash but use a belt instead. This warning read in Maltese like this: "Ankas it-triehi ma huma uzati; min irid jithazzem juza cintorin".

Try not to be different. Australians will judge you by the way you dress. Remember, in Australia all the workers go to work with their jackets on and they always wear shoes.

There were some tips about shopping. In Australia all items in shops had a price marked on them. The Maltese shopper was told to pay the price shown on the object he wished to buy. In no circumstances must he haggle about the stated price.

Personal hygiene was important too. The Maltese migrant was urged to wash often and he was told not to start eating before having washed his hands. The writer of the pamphlet told of some Maltese workers in the USA who were sacked because they presented themselves at the canteen without having washed their hands first. Another suggestion was about their hair. They were told to keep their hair short because short hair was easier to keep clean. Fingernails too were to be kept short and clean.

The emigrants were urged to seek membership of a trade union if they wanted secure jobs and avoid trouble with local workers. When looking for a job one was told to do so on his own and not to go in groups. When not at work the Maltese were told not to gather in groups and talk aloud in a foreign tongue. This would attract attention and hostility. If the Maltese wished to meet fellow Maltese they were to do so in clubs or in parks. Never on a street. Australian streets were for traffic and the pavements for busy pedestrians.

A vivid insight was given by the advice preferred about the habits concerning eating out. According to the author of the pamphlet restaurants abounded in Australian cities and there too prices were determined by the local authorities. Therefore one was never expected to argue about the bill. In 1929 an ordinary meal in an ordinary restaurant cost about a shilling. Here too table manners were important: "At table keep your voice low, take off your hat and do not smoke. Use knives and forks; never eat with your fingers. If your tea or coffee is very hot do not do what so many men do in Malta, that is, never pour your tea or coffee in your saucer and blow on it to cool it and then drink your tea or coffee from the saucer. Allow your tea or coffee to cool in the cup and drink it from the cup, not from the saucer".

Water in restaurants was served in jugs: "You are not to drink straight from jugs because those are there for the convenience of others too. Pour the water from the jug into your own glass and drink from the glass. If your appetite is healthy and if you have finished the food that has been served to you, never wipe your plate with a piece of bread and then eat that piece of bread as is so often done in Maltese homes. This is not done by people trained in good manners. Finally, remember never to speak to anybody, including your waiter, with your mouth full".

One final bit of advice concerned church-going. According to the pamphlet issued by the Department of Labour, in the late twenties there were about two million Catholics in Australia. Priests were only too willing to help new arrivals. When the Maltese went to church in Australia they were told to imitate the Australians and to avoid some of the peculiar customs prevalent among the Maltese. Some warnings concerned:

1. Waiting in groups outside the church and talking aloud and then rushing in at the last minute.
2. Praying aloud to the annoyance of those sitting next to you; avoid sitting next to your friends because they will start talking to you while the priest is saying Mass. This habit of talking in the church gives Maltese Catholics a bad image.
3. Leaving the church before the last prayers are said. It is very unbecoming to leave your place and walk out when others are still in their places, praying or singing.
The Maltese authorities did their part in trying to educate the people who were interested in leaving their home to seek a new life abroad. The basic flaw in all these efforts was that they were trying to teach people who were already adults and therefore less receptive to new ideas. Education had to start with young children if these were to develop into grown men and women ready to compete with other adults from more developed environments. The erection of trade schools and technical colleges was a step in the right direction.

In 1923 the Department of Agriculture had taken in a number of young students to train them in market-gardening and in horticulture. Although this experiment lasted only one short year, it helped to condition the mind of those people interested in education and in the movement of migration that technical education was becoming imperative if the Maltese abroad were to compete successfully with others.

Australia, Canada and even the USA had made it clear that they were not willing to accept illiterate and unskilled labourers who would swell the ranks of the unemployed living in squalid conditions in the more depraved areas of their cities. What those countries were after were healthy men and women capable of hard work on the land. Henry Casolani had been told this in 1922 during his talks with representatives of those countries in London.

To his credit Casolani insisted with his superiors to change Maltese secondary schools into polytechnics which... "besides the usual Day and Evening Classes for the teaching of Languages and Mathematics and all branches of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering, will comprise a course of Practical Chemistry, Tailoring, Cookery, Bakery and Confectionery, Women's Trade and Domestic Economy classes, and other live instruction which has a present market value and can immediately be turned into cash".

In his book "Awake, Malta" Casolani dwelt extensively on what he termed as the hard lesson of emigration. That hard lesson meant that Maltese mentality had to change and adapt to the advent of the technological era. In some ways Casolani could be said to have been more than thirty years ahead of his time. He envisaged an educational system that would cater for a Maltese society that would eventually rid itself of colonial bonds and experience a mild form of industrial revolution. However the author of "Awake, Malta" called for a reform in Malta's schools not because he saw a bright future for Malta but simply because he was the Superintendent of Emigration.

It is ironic that the development of the Maltese educational system had to be linked with such an unlikely phenomenon as emigration. Casolani championed the cause of the English Language and the opening of polytechnics not because they were meant to improve the quality of Maltese life, but because a Maltese emigrant who was able to read and write in English and possessed a trade as well was capable of adjusting to life in a foreign country much quicker than his illiterate and unskilled brother.

The Language Question was still a burning issue in the middle twenties when Henry Casolani was the prime mover in the development of the migratory movement from Malta. In his capacity as Superintendent of Emigration he had the foresight to envisage emigration to the USA, Canada and Australia as the best proposition for the Maltese migrant. Casolani had stated this in the clearest of terms: "Our two most successful settlements are, unquestionably, the American and the Australian". Casolani had written this at a time when those who opposed the teaching of English in schools often suggested Latin America in general and Argentina in particular, as the area they thought most suitable for the Maltese emigrant.

**Categories of Potential Emigrants**

Some people considered emigration as a bad proposition because it deprived the country of some of its best people. This was a true objection, but Casolani referred to what was happening in Europe. In that Continent millions were leaving Italy, Poland, Germany and Great Britain because of the economic depression which was hitting those countries and social
upheavals happening all over Europe since the end of the First Great War. Casolani tried to fit Malta into the inter-national situation where emigration was an international movement. Workers all over Europe were seeking work and security across the Atlantic Ocean hoping that the New World would offer them a life better than that they had so far known and experienced. The Maltese were only following their brethren on the Continent in trying to avoid hardship brought by unemployment.

Those who opposed emigration to English--speaking countries did so not because they had any interest in migration but because they did not like to see English supplant Italian in Maltese education and culture. Hence, Casolani noted, these people not only objected to emigration to Anglo-Saxon countries but they also objected to the teaching of English and they called for a halt to the Evening Classes and for the closing of the Migrants' Training Centre.

In 1933 the Nationalist Government resigned and in November of that year the Constitution was suspended. The Maltese found themselves with-out a say in the government of their island. During the previous years the Emigration Department had been neglected and eventually the Migrants' Training Centre was closed down. By that time Casolani had retired.

To Casolani organised emigration based on the Selective System was the only solution to the twin problem of unemployment and over-population. He dismissed the objections to his arguments as "old shibboleths". Casolani had felt confident that ... "as long as the God-fearing Maltese and Gozitan farmer produced healthy families of fifteen or twenty children, men would never be lacking to till our cultivated land. Moreover it is far better that Malta should lose a great part of her agriculturists to another country, than they should be allowed to exist on starvation wages".

The "old shibboleths" dismissed by Casolani were basically three: First, that if emigration were to continue unchecked the best element would disappear. Second, that the population Maltese islands would dwindle to nothing, that the day would come when only old men, women and children will be left.

The answers to such objectives were all. In a correspondence which appeared on August 17, 1920, it was pointed out that:

1. Emigration was relieving over-population and disposing of the unemployed thus removing an anxious source of trouble to the country.
2. The preparation of intending migrants necessarily educated the minds not of themselves alone but also of the families and their connections and brought vividly before a class of people who would not otherwise be convinced, that without instruction the were tied hand and foot to the village pump. From this point of view emigration served a stimulus to education.
3. There was not one among the thousands emigrants who yearly left our shores, be they fathers, husbands, brothers or sons, who did not send a substantial money remittance to their home. Hundreds of pounds passed daily through the local banks, some of which had lately to increase their staff in order to cope with the new branch of business, while the Money Order Department of the Post Office was regularly flooded with remittances sent by Maltese emigrants.

The unemployed youth of Malta and Gozo agreed with such reasoning. The only two obstacles which prevented a veritable exodus were the conditions of entry prevalent in receiving countries at the time and the lack of cash without which most people were unable to buy a ticket to their final destination. When America made it harder for immigrants to settle in that country, the Maltese switched their attention to the distant shores of Australia. The Great Depression of the thirties hindered such a flow but by 1937 the situation in Australia had improved. When unemployment in Australia dwindled to a mere 4% the Maltese authorities opened another centre at Ghammieri.
The new centre soon received forty candidates. Their principal subjects were English, agriculture and carpentry. The last two subjects were taught with Australian conditions in mind. Those who were accepted at Ghammieri had to be physically fit and of a good character and considered capable of settling permanently in Australia.

While going through their courses students at Ghammieri received 10s a week for their expenses. They lost 2s for each day they were absent.

Early in 1937 Housecraft Schools were opened. These were meant for those who came from remote areas. Besides basic knowledge important for all migrants, there were also special lessons on good manners, especially during the long weeks which emigrants had to spend on board their ships which were taking them to distant lands. The Emigration Report issued for the years 1937–1938 stated with obvious gratification, that big strides had been made in education in Malta. In fact all the candidates -who had attended the courses organised specifically for them, passed their literacy test. In about ten years the migrants from Malta had become a very different class from the rude and rough who had emigrated from Malta in previous times.

In the late thirties it had become clear to all intending migrants that they had to be prepared if they wanted to succeed in their newly-adopted land. By the end of 1939, 150 trainees had completed their courses at the Housecraft schools. Such courses averaged between five and twelve weeks, according to the standard of education of the student. Unfortunately, the international situation had worsened and Malta and Australia found themselves embroiled in another war which was not of their making. When the Second World War was declared, normal daily life had to give in to a state of emergency and emigration was to cease for the next six years.

**Who Should Emigrate?**

Maltese society was a class-conscious one. The First World War had caused social havoc. Women clamoured for their liberation with equal rights. They had helped to fight the war, they had worked in factories and they had shown that while their men were on the fronts they performed their jobs with equal efficiency. The workers in general were not prepared to integrate themselves into a system where the labouring classes were expected to toil and feel thankful for the little money they were given. The Bolshevik Revolution in Russia showed that the clock of history could not be put back.

The ruling classes in Europe dreaded the curse of "Bolshevitis" and kept asking why the victorious Allies did not take effective steps to stamp out that cancerous creed. The unemployed men and women of Europe were suspected of being tinged with the red colour of Communism. The Labour Party in Australia was accused of being under the influence of Marxists who had dared to raise the red flag on the Trades Hall in Brisbane. The revolution in Russia had been hailed by workers throughout Europe.

The case of Lafarre and Galina Rudenko was given great publicity in 1919. These two Bolshevik propagandists had been issued with false Swiss passports in the names of George and Elise Trochet. Their supposed aim was to create a Bolshevist base in Spain. They were also prepared to blow up the Eiffel Tower while the Peace Conference was going on in Versailles.

The upper classes of Malta felt uneasy about the, amount of men in the streets doing nothing. They feared that the unemployed would create disturbances and join the Bolshevist movements. Emigration would not only dispose of unwanted mouths but would also rid the Island of potential trouble makers. In the report of the Emigration Committee published on March 1, 1921, Henry Casolani and Joseph Howard were quite explicit as to the types of Maltese they wished to see leaving Malta. Casolani and Howard suggested that Malta would be a better place to live in if people belonging to the following categories would decide to emigrate:
1. Unskilled and illiterate labourers. These formed the bulk of the Maltese work force. Unemployment was severe among these people. However, in spite of their handicaps, they were reliable workers if only the Emigration Committee could convince some country to take them in. Most of these men had gained useful experience during the war. Some had joined the Salonika Labour Battalions. If only these men could be taught how to read and write, they could be sent as migrants.

2. The second category of people who could be persuaded to emigrate were those already referred to: the incompetents. Although educated, they were incapable of productive and useful work. They could not be gainfully employed and therefore needed re-education. Unless they went to a technical college, these men would join the others who loiter in the main streets of their towns and villages.

3. Skilled men who simply could not be used had better seek their fortune abroad. After the Armistice of 1918, the Dockyard, Army and Navy had discharged thousands of these workers. Many of these had already emigrated to Detroit where they worked in car factories and where they made a good name for themselves and for their country. Men who had skills and were able to speak English were wasting their time hoping for a job in Malta which would never materialise.

4. Port workers were either unemployed or depended for their living on casual work. Shipping had been greatly reduced and Great Britain was planning to reduce the fleet. Facilities for merchant shipping were primitive and rival ports in the Mediterranean had taken for themselves much of the trade that used to be handled in Maltese harbours. Coal bunkering was on the way out as oil was replacing coal and ships were capable of longer voyages without having to make a call at local ports. Hence stevedores, coal heavers and navvies were not in great demand.

5. Seafaring men such as stokers and stewards were to be found lying about the quays looking at an empty harbour.

6. Finally Casolani and Howard mentioned farm hands and agriculturists who had a much better future on the vast spaces in Canada, Australia and the USA than they had on their small and meagre holdings in Malta and Gozo. These had to be trained in modern methods of a mechanised agriculture. Such potential emigrants needed capital and at least a rudimentary education.

These were the six categories of potential migrants as described by the members of the Emigration Committee in March 1921. According to the report of the Committee these people had no future on the Island. They were a burden on the fragile economy of Malta and they also presented an embarrassment to the rest of the community. Unless they emigrated, some of them might become a political hazard and the security of the Island might be put in jeopardy.

Casolani and Howard were of the opinion that the Governor had to take the situation seriously and let the British Government know that Malta was unable to carry the load of unemployment and overpopulation. The Governor was urged to contact leaders of the Dominions to find work for the Maltese. Most of these potential emigrants were capable of hard work. They were able to work on the construction of new roads and on the laying down of new railway lines.

The educated unemployed were considered as possible clients for such jobs as those of linguists and clerks with commercial enterprises within the Empire. Some of them could be employed as teachers in the USA where their knowledge of Maltese, English and Italian could prove useful in a multicultural and multilingual society such as America. Those who knew French and Italian were advised to seek jobs in the Levant.

Skilled Dockyard workers were told that "the whole world is open to this fine body of workers who are the pride of the Island".

Farmers were in demand in all the British Dominions. Maltese farmers were to be taught the skills needed in such regions where conditions of work and climate were very different. Farm workers from Malta had emigrated to Louisiana, California and Texas. There were farmers from Malta and Gozo who were doing very well in Australia, particularly in the State of Queensland. In the north of that State men and women from Malta had settled in appreciable numbers.
Some had even bought sugar-cane farms and made a financial success of them. No one can say that the Maltese were not adaptable. After all these emigrants had never cultivated sugar-cane before.

**The Mediterranean and beyond**

The lands within the basin of the Mediterranean were the first obvious choice of the Maltese emigrants. By the middle years of the nineteenth century European powers, particularly Great Britain and France, were extending their spheres of influence in the Mediterranean and as the strength of the Ottoman Empire waned, the influence of these two nations grew even more evident.

Palestine had fallen under the Turks' sway since the eleventh century, but as the hold of the Sublime Porte grew weaker over that land, the British began to fill the vacuum. To Maltese observers Palestine was a Mediterranean country where Great Britain was exercising significant political power. The Governor of Malta, Lord Methuen, referred to the possible creation of a Maltese Colony in Palestine in a speech he delivered on January 21, 1919. In his speech at the Aula Magna of the University in Valletta, the Governor made a reference to the serious unemployment situation in Malta since the Armistice and said that he knew that there were about 10,000 Maltese workers lying idle. The distinguished audience which was invited to hear Methuen's speech heard the speaker say:

"I cannot point out too strongly to the people of these islands the absolute necessity of encouraging people to emigrate from Malta. The total number of the population of Malta is at the present 226,000; and if you think of the enormous increase there has been within recent years, do reflect for one moment, what the number must be in ten years hence, and how dangerous epidemics would be and how impossible it would be to find employment for the number of people that would be then living in these islands. I am therefore not only speaking to you here, but to all Maltese, and I hope that by means of the press and by means of the pulpit, every endeavour will be made to place clearly before the people of Malta to carry out the scheme which I think is feasible. Not only do I see the possibility of a colony being formed in Haifa, but also in other parts of Palestine, for instance Jerusalem, where there is plenty of available ground".

The speech delivered by Governor Lord Methuen was acclaimed by loud and prolonged cheers. Most of the invited guests were of the affluent classes and they knew that Palestine was of no direct interest to them. They did approve however of the idea, that those less fortunate than themselves should not let Methuen's suggestion fall on deaf ears.

On February 2 of that same year the Governor delivered the traditional Candlemas speech to the parish priests of Malta. That speech was also his farewell to the people of Malta as he was relinquishing his post. In the presence of those parish priests Methuen reiterated his strong support for Maltese emigration to Palestine. He said: "Fathers, the subject that is nearest to my heart is that of emigration. We can do no more than what we have done in the matter.....When I was in Palestine the other day, I saw there what I believe and hope to be a great opening for the people of Malta. There will be in the future a demand for labour which cannot be met. That means that men and women will be unable to purchase food for themselves and their families. You can depend on it that the seeds of death will be sown thick and fast in many a house in Malta, unless you priests help us, and I believe you will help us by urging from your pulpits on your flocks the absolute necessity of some amongst your charges leaving Malta".

The British Governor of Malta had visited Palestine as that country had been recently pushed into the sphere of Imperial policy-making. Towards the end of 1917 field Marshal Lord Allenby had entered Jerusalem, thus becoming the first Christian conqueror to enter the Holy City since the end of the crusades. Allenby brought his four centuries of Moslem and Turkish rule and the League of Nations entrusted Great Britain with a mandate over Palestine.
That mandate came into force on September 29, 1923. Maltese emigration to Palestine would have eased the problem of unemployment at home and provided the British with manpower.

The Catholic hierarchy in England supported the Palestinian project because the Maltese were staunch Catholics of the Latin rite and they were also loyal to the British crown. Cardinal Francis Bourne of Westminster was an ardent supporter of Maltese emigration to Palestine. He had a meeting with Admiral Sir S.A. Gough Calthorpe about the project. It was Calthorpe who contacted Methuen about enlisting the support of the Maltese Church for initiating a scheme by which Maltese settlers would be sent to Palestine.

On February 17, 1919, Admiral Sir S.A. Gough Calthorpe wrote to the Governor of Malta:

"Dear Lord Methuen,

I had the opportunity at Constantinople last week, of talking to Cardinal Bourne on the question of Maltese Emigration. His Eminence, who had just arrived from Palestine, was strongly of the opinion that both the country in the vicinity of Jerusalem, and in other parts of the Holy Land, was exceptionally adapted for the purpose. He observed that the climate was very similar to that of Malta, that the land under cultivation bore a strong resemblance to the land here, and that the Maltese language had much in common with Arabic".

Cardinal Bourne was enthusiastic about the prospect of a Maltese colony somewhere in Palestine. He applauded the sobriety, thrift and industry of the people of Malta and felt that a Maltese settlement in the Holy Land would benefit Malta, Great Britain and Palestine. The Cardinal promised both Methuen and Calthorpe that on his return to England he would pursue the matter further.

Mount Carmel in Palestine had been a holy place of pilgrimage for centuries. The Maltese had known about Mount Carmel as there were Maltese priests serving some of the shrines on the slopes of that mountain. A certain priest, Father Lamb, had contacts with Maltese Catholics and he offered free land to those who would decide to settle in the area of Mount Carmel.

By 1921 Palestine had been transferred to the Colonial Office. In the meantime the British authorities had undertaken a programme of public works which involved a substantial number of workers. The Palestinian Government cabled London in January of that same year asking for arrangements to be made for the dispatch of one thousand immigrants to be given immediate employment as all available local labour had already been absorbed. Statistics show that in 1921 Palestine had absorbed 9,149 immigrants.

Maltese links with Palestine were strengthened when field Marshal Lord Plumer, an ex-Governor of Malta, was appointed High Commissioner for Palestine on August 25, 1925.

However, not all the Maltese shared the enthusiasm about Palestine which Governor Methuen, Cardinal Bourne and Admiral Calthorpe had exhibited. In February 1919, Professor Lawrence Manche' cautioned against the Palestinian Project because he felt that Palestine was then not sufficiently civilised, had an unstable population and lacked the basic comforts necessary for establishing a Maltese Colony capable of absorbing Malta’s surplus population.

What really militated against the founding of a Maltese Colony in Palestine was the emergence of Zionism which postulated the return of the Jews to that part of the world. Max Nordau, a veteran Jewish leader, urged mass Jewish emigration into Palestine. In 1918 Nordau had already warned that if the Jews of the Diaspora failed to pour in their hundreds of thousands into Palestine they, would never again be offered the chance of fulfilling their ancient dream of returning.

In 1896 Theodore Herzl had already issued his proposal for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. In 1917 Arthur Balfour, a British statesman, had issued his declaration which
vaguely envisaged a settlement in Palestine of loyal Anglophile Jews who would offer the British Empire a strategic post in the Middle East which would also safeguard the route to India and act as a bulwark against Russian ambitions in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The Palestinian project lingered for many years but it never materialised. In Malta there had never been any enthusiasm for the idea. Moreover, although the Colonial authorities spoke favour-ably about Maltese settlement in Palestine, they never offered concrete financial inducement to intending emigrants. In later years the British were to realise how burdensome their mandate in Palestine had become and they too were more than willing to wash their hands of that part of the world.

**Cyprus, Corfu, Constantinople and Smyrna**

Another important British possession in the east of the Mediterranean was the island of Cyprus. Poised strategically on the doorstep of the Levant, Cyprus was pushed into the British sphere of influence when in 1878 that island was effectively taken out of Turkish control. Benjamin Disraeli saw Cyprus as the third British outpost to maintain Britain's control over the Mediterranean. The other two strategic British possessions were Malta and Gibraltar.

Political domination of Cyprus was the first step. Colonising that island was the second. To achieve this aim London tried to entice some Maltese to settle in sparsely populated areas of Cyprus to offset the growing importance of Greek immigration into the island. The British Army in Cyprus had already given employment to a number of Maltese. Later, a prominent Maltese lawyer, Sir Adrian Dingli, was dispatched to Cyprus to study, among other items, the feasibility of sending Maltese emigrants to that island.

In an extensive memorandum written by him, Sir Adrian Dingli came out in favour of a Maltese Colony on Cyprus. Sir Adrian noted that although Cyprus was a relatively large island, its population was not large. The land and climate were similar to those in Malta. Sir Adrian also noted that the Maltese were ideally suited to settle in a British colony because they were loyal subjects and they felt no blood connection with any of the neighbouring Mediterranean nations. Maltese colonists in Cyprus would balance the number of Greek settlers. Sir Adrian wrote that an increase of the Greek population in Cyprus would bode ill for the future of Britain in that island.

By 1880 Maltese entrepreneurs had bought land on Cyprus and had engaged some of their country-men to develop it. However this initiative was soon defeated by the spread of malaria. Yet some Maltese settlers did persevere.

The possibility of planting a Maltese colony on Cyprus was kept alive for many years after Sir Adrian Dingli. In 1925 Cyprus was declared a Crown Colony and two years later a scheme was presented to the Maltese authorities by Lt. Col. Harman Grisewood. Grisewood and others were willing to offer the capital to buy land which would be settled and worked by 320 Maltese families. The Maltese Colony would support some 2,000 people. Those people would have the services of a Maltese priest and a doctor. Grisewood also suggested the presence of butchers, cooks, clerks, mechanics, draughtsmen and storekeepers. These would all be recruited from Malta.

The land on which the Maltese were to settle was known as the Margo Estate. Its former owners were Jews who had abandoned it when they had left for Palestine. Grisewood said that the Margo Estate was near a river where water was abundant. But opponents of the Grisewood scheme claimed that that water was the source of malaria which had claimed Maltese lives before.

Grisewood tried to enlist the support of the Maltese Government. He had a conference with the Prime Minister of Malta, Lord Strickland, and with the minister responsible for Emigration, Dr. A. Bartolo. He also met Mr. Henry Casolani who was the Superintendent of Emigration.
Grisewood declared that he was prepared to transfer Maltese emigrants from Malta to his Margo Estate where they were to be given free provisions, accommodation and they were to receive a payment of 12s to 14s a week. This applied to every working colonist.

Grisewood also said that after a period of thirty months, the farms on his Estate would be cultivated communally until they were all ready for cultivation, when the said portions would become the property of the colonists. Then the sale of produce would commence and repayments would be made by the colonists at the rate of 50% of net earnings.

Grisewood told his Maltese listeners that he intended to raise money in England, but he also asked for financial assistance from Lord Strickland. He envisaged such an assistance as a loan of about £220,000. Strickland naturally demurred from such a proposition.

In July 1928 three Maltese farmers left for Cyprus. They visited the Margo Estate and the impressions made on the visitors were entirely positive. As a consequence of this visit farmsteads were offered to prospective Maltese colonists on a basis of cash or easy instalments.

In August of that same year it was announced that by October 200 Maltese families would be established on the Margo Estate. These would settle there with their own capital and with financial assistance advanced to them by the Cyprus Government.

But the departure of these families never took place. Before October, the scheme had come under fire and influential people in high places declared themselves hostile to it. Many had decided that Cyprus was unfit for the Maltese because it was infested with malaria. Others asked: why emigrate to Cyprus when so many Cypriots were themselves leaving the island for North America and Australia?

On September 10, 1928, Grisewood was again in Malta. Then he complained that his scheme had become bogged down in the morass of Maltese partisan politics. He complained: "My scheme should be independent of party politics. I am the victim of misrepresentation and falsehood. Cyprus has just celebrated its jubilee of British Rule and more than 800 books are available to those who want to know about the colony. Emigration to Cyprus is no leap in the dark. Cyprus is not an island of wild beasts, malaria, usury and drought".

The idea of a Maltese Colony in Cyprus had been born in the latter half of the nineteenth century. There had been a number of false starts. The initiative had always come from private businessmen who looked on a Maltese settlement in Cyprus primarily as an experiment for making money for themselves. While much talk took place about different propositions, those who really controlled both Malta and Cyprus never involved themselves. Financial help to intending emigrants was never contemplated.

By 1931 the political situation in Cyprus began causing concern to the local Governor. The signs were already there. The Greeks were the majority on the island and they looked to Athens, not to London, for their political inspiration and loyalty. The first stirrings of the future "Enosis" were there, just as Sir Adrian Dingli had foreseen many years before.

Another Greek island of interest to the student of the history of Maltese emigration within the basin of the Mediterranean, was Corfu. The Ionian Islands, off the north-west coast of Greece, had been declared a British protectorate in 1815 and they had come under the sway of the British more or less at the same time as the Maltese Islands did. Corfu and Cephalonia were the major islands within the Ionian Group. The British wanted to entice Maltese emigrants to obtain reliable workers and also to strengthen their hold on the islands. Sir Thomas Maitland had been appointed High Commissioner for the Ionian Islands and he tried to obtain Maltese workers because he was familiar with Malta.
In 1901 there were almost one thousand people in Corfu who considered themselves as ethnic Maltese. In Cephalonia the number was 225. There were another hundred Maltese spread among the other lesser islands of the Ionian Group. Maltese emigration to these islands practically ceased when they were returned to Greece in 1864. Because of the union with Greece a number of Maltese families abandoned Corfu and settled in Cardiff, Wales. Their descent still live in that city.

The Maltese colony in Corfu did not vanish. Two villages on the island bear name a Maltese derivative: Maltezika is named after Malta and Cozzella got its name from Gozo. In Cozzella the Franciscan Sisters of Malta opened a convent and a school in 1907. Those two institutions still flourish.

In 1923 there were some 1,200 ethnic Maltese left in Corfu, but many of them spoke either Greek or the local dialect which still bore traces of the Venetian occupation of the island. Because of this Venetian connection Fascist propagandists tried, to build up an irredentist case for Corfu. Guido Puccio wrote in "Tribuna" a leading Roman newspaper, on September 12, 1923, that the Maltese element in Corfu could be used as an instrument to further Italian claims on that island.

In 1930 the Maltese in Corfu had their own priest who looked after their welfare while he kept useful contacts with the ecclesiastical and civil authorities in Malta. The priest was the Rev Spiridione Cilia. He had been born in Corfu of Maltese parents and was then the parish priest the Maltese community. In 1930 Father Cilia launched an appeal in Malta for funds to build home for the elderly who besides being old, were also destitute.

Rev. S. Cilia said that most elderly Maltese in Corfu lived on their own and received no support from their children. The sons and daughters of these old men and women were in no position to help their parents. Some of these people still held on to their British passports and therefore the Greek Government showed no interest in them. The Maltese Government sent Rev. S. Cilia a donation of £50. In October 1930 the priest wrote back to the Maltese authorities to let them know that his home for the aged was by then almost completed.

Constantinople and Smyrna were, within the Ottoman Empire which number of Maltese emigrants. These were cosmopolitan and the Maltese one small group in a very mixed population.

During the middle years of the century, Constantinople had began gates to European traders. The Ottoman empire was in decline and the Sultan depended on Christian traders to replenish his depleted coffers. Constantinople attracted small businessmen from Malta. There were also some sailors and labourers - recruited by other Europeans who had visited Malta. R. Vadala' claimed that in 1912 the Maltese in Constantinople had formed their own community.

At the time Vadala was writing most Maltese had congregated within the district known as Galata where one of the streets was named after them. They frequented the church of St. Peter in Galata and that of the Virgin Mary in Pera. Although most of the Maltese belonged to the working and merchant classes, R. Vadala men- tioned two Maltese gentlemen who were very prominent at the time. Dr. Lewis Mizzi was claimed as one of the best lawyers in Constantinople where he also edited a popular newspaper which carried the name of "The Levant Herald". The late Dr. Parnis was a legal adviser to the Sublime Porte. Vadala claimed that at one time were some 3,000 Maltese living in Constantinople. There were also Maltese priests who not not worked among their fellow countrymen but also ministered to the Italians.

Smyrna was an important seaport on the Aegean coast of Asia Minor. By the end of the First World War the Maltese population in Smyrna was estimated at about 1,800. In 1922 war broke out between the Greeks and the Turks. The victory of the Turks and the atrocious treatment given to the Europeans in Smyrna meant the effective end of the European community. The massacres perpetuated by the Young Turks made frightening head-lines in Europe's
newspapers. As the Turks advanced on Smyrna a terrible fire broke out which rendered most of the inhabitants homeless. Many Maltese lost everything and their only hope was to petition the British Consul to repatriate them to Malta.

Most of the Maltese in Smyrna had been born there and had no relatives in Malta. Some were four generations removed from the island of their ancestors. Their only link with Malta was sentimental.

On September 15, 1922, the British hospital-ship "Maine" entered Grand Harbour. She carried 407 refugees from Smyrna. Among those refugees, eighty-one were of Maltese origin. They carried little else besides the clothes they had on them. Crowds gathered on the quays to look at these refugees who had been the victims of horrible atrocities. They spoke no Maltese but they made it obvious that they were happy to be miles away from Smyrna as they gazed at the peaceful surroundings while the "Maine" dropped her anchors.

Those refugees were relatively lucky. After the attacks and the massacres, plague broke out among the miserable survivors. By the end of 1922 the Maltese authorities had housed some 1,300 refugees from Smyrna.

In 1932 the Turkish dictator, Kemal Ataturk, decreed that all foreigners had to leave Turkey. What had remained of the Maltese colonies in Constantinople and Smyrna had now been dispersed to various European and North African countries. About another 200 refugees from Turkey, penniless and with nowhere to go, were given shelter by the Maltese. The Sunday Express of July 1934 published a report about "two hundred Maltese crosses" who had been ordered to leave their homes in Turkey within one week. The report said that those Maltese Crosses had been born and bred in Turkey and spoke neither Maltese nor English, even though technically they were British subjects.

**Egypt and Libya**

For many centuries relations between Malta and North Africa had been conditioned by the legacy of mistrust and fear which had been generated by the crusades. When the Knights of St. John took possession of Malta in 1530, they made the island their last stand against the advance of the Turks. Malta and the Maltese were to be the last bulwark of the crusading spirit.

The Knights Hospitalliers of St. John defied the power of the Turks till the very end. Their final defeat came from the Christian French not from the Moslems. Napoleon Bonaparte brought to an end not only the longest surviving chivalric Order in Europe, but when he took possession of Malta in 1798, he also brought to an end the association of the Knights with the Maltese which had lasted for two hundred and sixty eight years. During their long stay in Malta the Knights of St. John had profoundly influenced the Maltese. Many Maltese manned and sailed the galleys of the Order and on numberless occasions Knights and Maltese attacked Arab and Turkish coastal towns. Maltese captured during such raids were probably the first unwilling emigrants to the unfriendly shores of North Africa.

The Knights of St. John never made their peace with the Turks. The French interlude in Malta lasted for about two years and that short period was one of insurrection and revolt against the French invaders. When Napoleon left Malta for Egypt about 2,000 Maltese left with him in what was later called La Legion Maltaise.

Eventually most of these men dispersed through-out the Levant after the defeat of Aboukir on August 1, 1798. The remnants of the Legion Maltaise could be considered as the pioneers of the Maltese settlement in Egypt.
Later on, when Egypt was drawn into the sphere of British influence, other Maltese sought employment with the British forces there. When the British besieged Alexandria in 1822 about 8,000 Maltese refugees returned home in June of that same year. When peace was restored Alexandria became an important place for Maltese settlement in Egypt. Other Maltese decided to live in Cairo, Suez, Rosetta and Port Said.

1859 was another important year in the history of Egypt and of the Mediterranean. On April 25 of that year Ferdinand de Lesseps started working on the Suez Canal and that zone was to attract thousands of workers from the European shores of the Mediterranean. Some Maltese sought their fortune in that area. Manual workers left Malta on their own initiative to find employment with the British Forces in Egypt. Most of the immigrants from Malta earned their livelihood in the construction business as masons, carpenters, smiths and glaziers. Their British employers found them useful because some Maltese knew English and they were able to pick up Arabic much faster than other European workers. The Maltese were proud of their association with the British Empire and they were also very hardworking.

The number of Maltese immigrants in Egypt went on increasing. Their close relations with other immigrants from Europe helped them to appreciate the importance of education. Though many of them had left Malta practically illiterate they were eager to learn. They sent their children to French schools because these were run by Catholic missionaries. It so happened that the sons and daughters of the original humble immigrants from Malta became accomplished linguists fluent in English, French and Arabic. Most of them also picked up Italian while they kept their own Maltese mother tongue.

This flair for languages made them a useful asset to the British authorities who very often employed the Maltese in their consular offices throughout Egypt. European companies operating in the Canal Zone found the polyglot Maltese very useful. The culture and religion of the Maltese immigrants opened for them most avenues which were available to Europeans, though it is also important to state that they were occasionally subjected to humiliation owing to racial prejudice. Their willingness to learn and speak Arabic made them acceptable to the native Egyptians, though when the hour of destiny struck in 1956 they were told to leave and go like all other foreigners.

As early as 1893 two Maltese gentlemen, G. Palmier and M. Nuzzo issued a weekly publication which carried the patriotic name of "Melita". Some four years later a second publication appeared which bore the title of "Egittu". In 1909 Mr. George J. Vella edited a weekly newspaper in Maltese which he called "Li Standard tal-Maltin" which meant that he considered his newspaper as the banner of the Maltese living in Egypt. George J. Vella was based in Cairo and from there he hoped to inspire his Maltese countrymen with intense patriotism towards their Island. Vella's newspaper ceased publication in 1912 but was resumed seven years later and survived till 1924.

The contribution of George J. Vella was immensely positive. His "Li Standard tal-Maltin" inspired the foundation of 'ne Maltese Benevolent Society, The Melita Band and The Ladies Union. It was also due to the effort made by George J. Vella that other organisations came into existence within the fold of the Maltese Communities in Egypt. Among these organisations were: The Maltese Club of Suez, The Maltese Boy Scouts, The Maltese Girl guides and The Maltese Band of Port Said.

Toni Said of Port Said founded an association for the diffusion of the Maltese language and literature. He also published a literary review called "II-Qari Malti". This review appeared at intervals and survived till 1946 when Toni Said left Egypt.

Another prominent Maltese in Egypt was Ivo Muscat Azzopardi who lived in Egypt for a number of years. In Alexandria, Mr. Ivo Muscat Azzopardi founded a Maltese literary society to foster interest in the language and history of Malta among the Maltese then living in Egypt.
In 1937 there appeared another publication called "Bulletin of the Maltese Community of Cairo". In 1943 this publication changed its name to "II Habbar Malti" and although it was at first printed in Maltese, later on there were also articles in English and in French. The editors distributed this newspaper free of charge until it ceased publication in 1953.

In 1910 The Maltese Benevolent Society of Cairo came into being through the initiative of Gj. Vella. On February 12, 1910, Adolphe Bartolo called a general meeting which resulted in the setting up of the Society. The twofold aim of the Society was to alleviate financial hardship among the Maltese and to provide help and assistance to the sick and the aged.

The idea of helping Maltese immigrants was not new. In 1880 Carmelo Cachia founded his Maltese Mutual Help of Cairo. Its first president was Professor C. Debono. The aim of this organisation was to provide financial and medical assistance to its members. It was dissolved in 1950 but it had inspired a number of ancillary bodies to come into existence for the benefit of the Maltese in Egypt.

In 1912 the Government of Malta contributed the considerable sum of £300 to be used for the benefit of those Maltese who found themselves in straitened circumstances. There had been a number of similar contributions throughout the years. A Maltese benevolent society in Alexandria received an annual grant from Malta of £40 in order to help indigent members of the local community. That community was believed to he one of the largest in Egypt in 1926. In that same year a British benevolent society offered a grant of £120 for the same purpose.

In October 1922 Dr. Ugo Abela Hyzier, President -of the Maltese Boy Scouts of Cairo wrote about his troop of fifty boys who had enrolled in March of that same year. He also wrote about the Maltese Community in Cairo and mentioned the mutual help associations, dramatic companies and band clubs which were to be found in places where the Maltese tended to congregate. R. Vadala' wrote about the La Valette band of Alexandria which actually owned its own premises. The Maltese in Alexandria frequented the church of St. Catherine where a Maltese priest administered to his own people in their own age.

Up to 1927 the various Maltese communities in Egypt had no real link between them. To provide better cohesion a Community Council was formed after an appeal which had been launched in the pages of "Li Standard tal-Maltin". In December of that year the Community Council was formed with the support of Lord Lloyd of Dolobran who was then High Commissioner in Egypt. The newspaper "II-Habbar Malti" became the Council's official organ.

In 1926 the number of Maltese living in Egypt approached the figure of 20,000. Alexandria, Cairo, Suez and Port Said, all had sizeable communities. The Maltese in Port Said had built their own church which they dedicated to Saint Eugene. The church was built of Malta stone which had been imported at the expense of the Maltese. They had their own priest, Rev. Mark Sammut. This Franciscan friar was born in Egypt and had never been to Malta. He was however, intensely proud of his Maltese heritage and was very dedicated to the Maltese community in Port Said.

The Maltese in Egypt represented all classes. They were to be found in all professions and trades. But the political base of the European presence in Egypt was not very sound.

Constitutional changes had been introduced which gave more power to the Egyptians. By 1926 Egypt was practically independent. Europeans were less secure as British power over Egyptian affairs declined. Zaghlul Pasha represented the nationalistic trend which was to appeal to all Egyptians and that trend did not take the presence of foreigners very lightly. The British Army of Occupation provided a guarantee of law and order but it could not rely on popular Egyptian support. Zaghlul Pasha made his intentions very clear to Lord Lloyd, who was at the time the British High Commissioner. Zaghlul Pasha wanted no reservations on the control of the Sudan and of the Suez Canal. He also hinted at the complete withdrawal of British troops from Egypt.
Owing to the gravity of the situation prevalent in Egypt, the battleship "Resolution" was ordered to sail from Malta to Egyptian waters. This move forced Zaghlul Pasha to resign his premiership to the Liberal leader Adly Yeghen. Some respite had been won but Europeans in Egypt must have had their presentiment that once they lost the support of British military and naval protection, they had to depend on the will of the Egyptian people. Once the transfer of real power had been made to the people of Egypt, the exodus of 1956 became inevitable. That date meant the effective end of the Maltese colonies in Egypt.

Close to Egypt lay the two Libyan provinces of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania. Maltese emigration to these parts had been governed by the same conditions that had guided the establishment of other Maltese settlements in most parts of North Africa. However, Maltese movements to Cyrenaica and Tripolitania were slower than to other places because the two provinces were under direct Turkish rule as late as 1911. Prior to that date there were probably some one thousand Maltese living in Tripoli and Benghazi.

One reason why some Maltese traders had decided to set up business in Tripoli and Benghazi was to establish contact with Saharan traders. Caravan leaders from the Sahara had shown interest in the lucrative markets of Europe and the Maltese had intended to establish contact between the Sahara and the North. The Maltese offered their boats to ship Saharan products to Malta and thence to Europe. Although the trade left good profits, the Maltese had to contend with Italians and Jews. The latter had been on the scene for ages and had their significant contacts on the shores of Africa and on those of Europe.

By the beginning of the twentieth century the colonies of the Maltese in Cyrenaica and Tripoli had already shown signs of weakness and decay. The fact that the populations of Maltese settlers in Tripoli, Benghazi and Derna remained stable for almost half a century showed that these trading centres were not flourishing. Those who were able to afford to go back to Malta did so; those who stayed lived under the threat of poverty.

In 1911 Italy felt that she had a right to join in the European scramble for Africa. Cyrenaica and Tripoli were still parts of the Ottoman Empire and Rome felt that national prestige was a valid enough reason to claim this old part of the old Roman Empire. War was declared on Turkey and within a few months a number of coastal towns were taken over by the Italians. The territory came to be known as Libia Italiana.

The coastal towns where most Maltese lived came under the occupation of Rome and many immigrants from Sicily and Calabria settled in Tripoli, Benghazi and Derna. The Italian connection brought a revival in trade to the coastal areas, but the Italian connection also brought a new hazard to the Maltese colonies in Libya. Unlike the French in the Maghreb, the Italians did not need foreign settlers in Libya because they had a surplus population in their South.

While the French had accepted the Maltese, Spaniards and Italians as immigrants who would augment the European element, particularly in Algeria, the Italians in Libya feared the foreigners as competitors. The Maltese were not only competitors but they also liked to remind the Italian authorities that the mighty British Fleet was only a few miles away harbouring in Maltese waters and that the Maltese themselves were British subjects.

The tension between Maltese and Italians got more evident when Italy and Libya were ruled by the Fascist dictatorship of Benito Mussolini. In 1924 Mussolini threatened the Maltese in Libya with deportation unless they opted for Italian citizenship. At first the threat was meant to intimidate government employees of Maltese origin who still cling to their British passports.

These employees were granted a period of three years to decide whether they wanted to take Italian citizenship or hold on to their British nationality. As the Fascist dictatorship got more severe in Italy, life in Libya for those Maltese who refused to take Italian citizenship became more intolerable. It was no wonder that the Maltese settlements in Libya did not grow under
the threat of persecution and expulsion. Such a situation lingered on till the British Army occupied most of Libya's territory during the invasion of North Africa in the Second World War.

When Italy lost the war Libya was granted independence. The Maltese settlers in Libya knew that now they had to live with the challenge of Arab nationalism. Many of them left for Europe, America and Australia. The end of the effective Maltese presence in Libya followed the pattern of what had happened in other areas of North Africa.

**Algeria and Tunisia**

Algeria was for many years the most important country for Maltese migration within the zone of the Mediterranean. Under various aspects it was also the most successful and statistics show that by the middle of the nineteenth century more than half of Malta’s emigrants had chosen Algeria as their country of residence. Although the French conquest had begun in 1830, some Maltese had found their way to the area around the city of Constantine before the French connection had began. In 1834 a French governor for North Africa had been appointed, and as the French consolidated their foothold on Algerian territory, Europeans followed the French tricolor. Among the Europeans the Maltese were one of the largest groups, being outnumbered only by Spaniards and Sicilians.

Like all newcomers, the Maltese in Algeria did at first encounter hostility from the French. Continental Europeans looked down on other Europeans who came from the islands such as the Sicilians and the Maltese. It is true to admit that most insular Europeans were poor and illiterate. Some did have a criminal record and were only too ready to carry on with their way of life in other parts of the Mediterranean where their names were not publicly known.

French official policy was dictated by sheer necessity. France was a large and prosperous country. Its population was not enormous and many French peasants were quite happy with their lot. If the French needed colonists to make their presence permanent they had to turn to other sources to obtain their manpower. The French Consul in Malta was in favour of encouraging Maltese emigrants to settle in Algeria. He believed that the Maltese showed a distinct liking for France and the French. Although the Maltese under the British, they were not politically active and the French could accept them without any fear.

Another important man who favoured Maltese emigration to North Africa in general and to Algeria in particular was the prominent French churchman, Cardinal Charles Lavigeric who had dreams of converting the Maghreb back to Christianity. Lavigerie saw North Africa in historical terms as he was professor of Church history. He founded a religious order which was commonly called "The White Fathers" with scope of spreading Christianity among the Berbers and the Arabs. Cardinal Lavigerie was archbishop of Carthage and Algiers. In 1882 Cardinal Lavigerie visited Malta. He immediately appreciated the Catholic fervour of the islanders. During his stay he talked of the Maltese as providential instruments meant to augment the Christian population of French North Africa. He saw the Maltese as loyal to France and to the Catholic Church and at the same time as being eminently useful in building some form of communication with the Arab masses.

The Maltese who crossed over to Algeria did establish a good rapport with their French rulers. Although poor and illiterate they were able to improve their lot through sheer hard work. Like their countrymen in Egypt, they realised the importance of a good education and they made sure that their offspring received that kind of education which in Malta they never got. Eventually most of their sons and daughters opted for French nationality and were among the most ardent supporters of the presence of France in that of the Western Mediterranean.

By 1847 the number of Maltese living in Algeria was calculated at 4,610. The Maltese colony in Algeria had been realised as being of some importance by that date, so much so that Maltese church leaders decided to send two priests during Lent to deliver sermons in Maltese.
In a letter written by the Governor General of Algeria on June 17, 1903, it was stated that by then there were 15,000 inhabitants who claimed Maltese origin. Most of these were small farmers, fishermen and traders. As in other parts of North Africa, the Maltese ability to speak in three or four languages helped them to get on well with the French, Spaniards, Italians and Arabs.

In 1926 the number of ethnic Maltese living in Algeria and Tunisia was tentatively calculated at about 30,000. The exact number of Maltese in was impossible to arrive at because many Maltese had opted for French nationality. By 1927 the Maltese were considered as excellent settlers who worked very hard and were honest in their dealings with others. This was the judgement given by Monsieur Emile Morinaud, a Deputy for Algiers in Paris. In a speech delivered by Morinaud on November 30, 1927, the French politician declared the Maltese as being "French at heart".

Maltese settlers in Algeria were distributed along that country's Mediterranean coast, but the most populous concentrations were to be found in Algiers, Philippeville and Bone. In 1930 Henry Casolani claimed that he had known some millionaires and wealthy industrialists among the Maltese.

In May 1927 French representatives were still arriving in Malta hoping to recruit emigrants to work on Algerian farms. These representatives were sent by the "Societe' des Fermes Francaises" which owned large estates near Bone and which expressly preferred to have Maltese migrants work for them. They invited six Maltese families, which would comprise about five or six members each, to work on one or on all of their estates.

When the French visitors contacted the Labour Office in Malta about their suggestion, the Maltese reaction was positive. The Labour Office felt that wages and conditions offered by the Society were reasonable. The French appointed a Maltese immigrant, Joseph Damato, to interview interested farmers from Malta and Gozo who wished to work on their estates. Damato said that all he looked for was work experience. No special skills were required and certainly no capital.

The most famous Maltese-Algerian was Laurent Ropa. He was born in Gozo on Christmas Day 1891. His parents, Guzeppi and Karmela left their home for Algeria when their baby was only two. Although in constant touch with his country of origin, Laurent was never to set foot on his native soil again.

The Gozitan family settled in a small village called Allelik which was not far from Bone. Life at Allelik was hard and things got worse when Guzeppi hurt himself and had to be out of work for some time. A friend who knew the family tried to help as now there were two other boys to support. Wenzu, the pet name for young Laurent, preferred his books to the farm tools and Guzeppi decided that his son Wenzu should go to school, first in Bone and then in Constantine. Disaster struck again when mother Karmela died.

During the First World War Laurent Ropa joined the Zouaves. He himself was wounded but the greatest scar was the loss on the battlefields of some of his school-mates. When the Armistice was signed in 1918, Laurent decided to stay in metropolitan France and earn his living as a teacher. It was at this time that he developed his flair for writing. He composed a number of poems and also wrote some novels. His most loved novels were: "Le chant de la noria" which was published in 1932; "Kaline" published in 1936; "Bou Ras" published 1945.

The first novel was largely autobiographical. It was an authentic description of daily life on a farm run by a Maltese immigrant family in Algeria. The novel pointed to a deep sense of Maltese identity sustained by a fervent Christian faith. The author also staunchly supported the cause of the Maltese Language and the right of that language to be considered as the official tongue of the Maltese. Between 1937 and 1938 Ropa wrote a series of articles in support of Malta's language, history and culture. On August 20, 1937, Laurent Ropa wrote: "The Maltese
who want to preserve their identity want also to safeguard their links with their mother
country. They want to remain Maltese”.

In another article he warned that it was impossible for one to be true to France unless one
acknowledged his Maltese roots. According to Laurent Ropa the very soul of the Maltese
communities in North Africa consisted in the loyalty to one’s past.

One real unfulfilled dream of Laurent Ropa was his suggestion to create a "Federation Maltaise
Universelle". In a letter to the editor of "Il-Qari Malti" of Port Said, Laurent Ropa suggested the
creation of a federation which would have included representatives from all the Maltese
communities spread throughout the world. Ropa wished to call a convention to be held in
Valletta so that Maltese leaders would meet and study how to ensure the survival of the
Maltese language among emigrants.

Laurent Ropa dearly loved his country and its language. To him the Maltese language was the
most distinctive characteristic of the Maltese people. He also felt that the Maltese language
was a good vehicle for producing good literary works and for composing poetry. According to
Laurent Ropa "Malta is a name among the most beautiful in history".

When Napoleon Bonaparte captured Malta from the Knights of St. John in 1798 he ordered the
Bay of Tunis to free all the Maltese slaves who languished in jail. At least fifty such slaves
returned to Malta. For centuries the Maltese who found themselves in Tunis probably did so
against their will. With the advent of the Napoleonic Era and the re-structuring of political
power in Europe and along the shores of the Mediterranean, the pirates of Tunis lost their
trade. The foothold gained by the French in North Africa changed the political framework of the
Maghreb and some Europeans thought, somewhat prematurely, that the Mediterranean was to
enter into another Roman Epoch. with peace reigning all along its coasts.

The Maltese were among the first to venture in their speronaras into Tunisian waters. They
traded with coastal towns and with the island of Jerba. Eventually they established settlements
not only in Tunis and on jerba but also in Susa, Monastir, Mehdia and Sfax. By 1842 there
were about 3,000 Maltese in the Regency. In less than twenty years their numbers increased
to 7,000.

An influential French politician, Paul Cambon, was well-disposed towards the Maltese and he
spoke of his preference for Maltese immigration into Tunisia. In 1882 Paul Cambon was
administering Tunisia for France. In April of that same year Paul Cambon received a Maltese
politician, M. Decesare. In the course of an interview Pau’ Cambon told Decesare that the
French approved of admitting the Maltese into Tunisia because the French considered the
Maltese as sober, industrious and thrifty. Cambon knew of the good name the Maltese enjoyed
in Algeria and he said he was happy to have the Maltese in Tunisia as well.

The French had one serious preoccupation in Tunisia. Italian immigrants had settled there in
their thousands and Italy had coveted Tunisia for a very long time. The French occupation of
Tunisia had gone down very badly with the Italians. The French wanted the Maltese to act as a
counter-balance to the Italians. British consular statistics show that by the beginning of the
twentieth century there were 15,326 Maltese living in Tunisia.

The Maltese in Tunisia worked on farms, on the railways, in the ports and in small industries.
They introduced different types of fruit trees which they had brought with them from Malta.
Moreover contact between Malta and Tunisia was constant because the small boats owned by
the Maltese, popularly known as speronaras, constantly plied the narrow waters between
Tunisia and the Maltese Islands.

Paul Cambon referred to the Maltese living in Tunisia as the "Anglo-Maltese Element". He was
grateful that such an element proved to be either loyal to France or at least was politically
neutral. In spite of rampant anti-clericalism in France, the
French allowed the Maltese complete freedom of their religion. Cardinal Lavigerie was respected. The fiery leader of French anti-clericalism, Leon Gambetta, did not hesitate to state that when French priests spread not only religion but French culture, then they were to be allowed to carry on with their work without any restraint.

After 1900 it became legally possible for foreigners to buy land in Tunisia. After that year there was a number of Maltese landowners in that country. In 1912 trade between Tunisia and Malta had risen to more than two million francs. Cultural ties were kept alive by the frequent visits by brass bands from Malta which were often invited to cross the water to help create a festive mood when the Maltese in Tunisia celebrated the feast of their parish. On April 10, 1926, a Maltese newspaper commented on a visit made by the French President to Tunisia. The newspaper claimed that the President, Emile Loubet, had eulogised the Maltese as "a model colony".

There was however one serious point of disagreement between the French and the Maltese. This concerned the problem of citizenship. The Maltese had insisted on keeping their British citizenship. The French contended that Maltese born in Tunisia were to be considered as citizens of the French Republic. In 1923 the French took their case before the International Court of Justice where Monsieur Lapradelle claimed that his Government was entitled to conscript residents in North Africa for military service even if they had foreign citizenship.

On February 7, 1923, the International Court of Justice at the Hague decided against the French who had held that conscription was a purely domestic matter. Lapradelle took the French case before the League of Nations. The British Government contended that the French had no right to impose French nationality on British subjects born in Tunisia and Morocco as these countries were merely Protectorates. In fact it became known that British subjects of Maltese origin had been handcuffed and compelled to join the French Army.

The problem concerning the status of Maltese holding British passports but living in French territories remained an open one. Such a legal and political anomaly was to reduce a number of settlers of foreign origin to the position of stateless persons.

In 1927 Joseph Damato from Sfax wanted to offer employment to discharged Dockyard workers on schemes in Tunisia as he had already offered to find work for Maltese farmers in Algeria. Damato travelled to Malta regularly and he interviewed a number of applicants. Damato preferred married men with families. If selected, these men sailed to Tunis and on disembarking they found a representative sent by Damato who introduced them to a local employer. These workers were usually put on mechanical jobs either in factories or on the railways where they were able to apply their expertise. Wages were not high but it was better than staying idle at home.

Joseph Damato and his representatives worked in collaboration with the French and the Maltese authorities. In 1929 the French and the Maltese Governments signed a Labour Contract by which an officer of the "Office Gratuit du Placement des Francais en Tunisie" was enabled to interview Maltese who were seeking work in Tunisia.

The scheme was successful and good employment was guaranteed to Maltese emigrating to Tunisia. The French also promised that Maltese workers would be given the same wages and work under the same conditions as French nationals. This kind of atmosphere prevailed until the French withdrew, Tunisia achieved its independence, and the Maltese, together with other foreign nationals, had to seek a permanent home else-where.

**France, England and Gibraltar**

For many centuries France was considered as the richest and most powerful nation which bordered on the Mediterranean. During the period 1530-1798, when Malta and the Maltese prospered under the rule of the Knights of St. John, most of the Knights were French and
France was accepted as a special patroness of the Order and of the Island. Although the French interlude between 1798-1800 left many unhappy memories among the Maltese, when the shadow of Napoleon Bonaparte vanished from the horizon of Europe the feelings of most Maltese towards France became more positive.

By the middle of the nineteenth century a number of Maltese had settled in French Mediterranean ports and some of them had ventured as far north as the French capital. Some of the original pioneers who had emigrated from Malta to the Maghreb found their way to metropolitan France. These settled in Marseilles, Bordeaux and Paris. Marseilles always had the largest Maltese community and by 1912 there were about 600 Maltese earning their living in Marseilles as stevedores, artisans and as unskilled labourers. This community kept on growing by other Maltese who had arrived directly from Malta and by those who had first gone to Tunis and Algiers and eventually found their way to Marseilles.

The number of Maltese immigrants in France increased after the signing of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. When peace was restored in Europe the French started reconstructing their devastated regions and the French Government was looking for foreign workers to help in the recovery of the country. A Maltese delegation went to Paris and signed an agreement with the French which envisaged a number of Maltese, between 700 and 1,000, who would be sent to France to work in the liberated regions which had been devastated during the war years. Wages and labour conditions were guaranteed to be the same as those offered to local labour in France.

The Maltese who decided to work in France were 624. They signed a contract for six months and when their contract expired 230 of them chose to remain permanently in France. They were offered good jobs by private firms. Eventually these men sent for their families.

The number of Maltese who emigrated to France from the signing of the Treaty of Versailles to 1929 was 4,172. Records show that 991 came back, mostly because their contract had expired. However the number of Maltese living in France at that time was much higher because of those who had left North Africa for Continental France. In 1919 Henry Casolani had paid a visit to the South of France and he met there over 1,000 Maltese. Over half of these immigrants said that they worked in the docks at the port of Marseilles.

Prior to 1921 North America was the goal of most Maltese who wished to emigrate. But in that year the First Quota Law was enacted which severely hampered the flow of emigrants to that part of the world. That law was the reason why after 1921 Maltese interest in France revived. In 1922 Mr. Henry Casolani obtained an interview with Jean Lebelle of the French Ministry of Labour to discuss the possibility of sending more Maltese emigrants to France. Lebelle agreed to recommend the Maltese because of the good impression made by those who had been given reconstruction work in the cast of the country. Lebelle assured Casolani that France would take in skilled workers from Malta, especially masons, bricklayers, carpenters and those familiar with kindred trades.

The conditions for working in France were: a contract with a French employer and a reliable proof that those who applied for a visa had a solid promise of work.

The migratory flow from Malta to France was never enormous but it stayed steady from 1919 to 1930. The slowdown was due to the international Depression which hit all industrialised nations at the time. Maltese workers in France suffered like everyone else but those living in and around Marseilles found a good friend in a priest from Gozo, Rev. Angelo Camilleri. In his work he had contacted more than 3,000 Maltese.

The work among the Maltese was not easy. Before 1928 some Maltese in Marseilles had gained unwanted notoriety because they had become involved with the underworld of that cosmopolitan city. In less than two years the situation of the Maltese was improved because of the personal interest shown by this priest in the Maltese community. Not only was he a
spiritual pastor but he was also an efficient social worker and was recognised by the French and the Maltese authorities as their official link with the Maltese immigrants in Marseilles.

Henry Casolani knew how valuable the inter-vention of Rev. Angelo Camilleri was. This is what Casolani had to say about him: "He has raised the tone of the Maltese who are now a respected, honest and monied element, an asset to Marseilles; he has placed new arrivals in lucrative work. A colony, which was formerly a thorn in the side of Malta, where repatriations and maintenance at Government expenses were of daily occurrence, is now happy and independent".

In 1929 Fr. Camilleri was cooperating with the British consul in Marseilles to make the Maltese in that city a contented community. The priest not only enlisted the help of the British representative in what was France's second largest city, but he also received help from bishop Dubourg. The bishop offered the priest the historic "Chapelle de la Croix de Malte" for the use of the Maltese.

That chapel had been built in 1621 by the Knights of Malta and the bishop thought it a proper gesture to let the Maltese use it for their own religious functions. Fr. Camilleri needed not only a place of worship for his ethnic group but he also needed a place which he could use as a centre for the Maltese. The chapel accommodated some 500 people. Alterations were made by friends of the priest with financial assistance from the Government of Malta.

On November 3, 1929, Rev. Angelo Camilleri had the satisfaction of seeing his "Chapelle de la Croix de Malte" officially inaugurated as a church for the Maltese. The facade was decked with British, Maltese and French flags. At 8.30 am Bishop Dubourg arrived to celebrate mass.

Besides Rev. Angelo Camilleri and many Maltese, there were also present Mr. Spencer Stuart Dickson, British Consul General in Marseilles and Mr. Primrose of the British Legion.

Although Great Britain was, in a political sense, the Mother Country of the Maltese, few of them had ever expressed a wish to emigrate to such a distant and cold country. Up to the First World War very few Maltese had settled in the United Kingdom. Except for the Maltese colony in Cardiff, there were no considerable concentrations of Maltese anywhere in Great Britain. There were some businessmen and a few students who lived in the United Kingdom only till they finished their business and study.

The four years of warfare between 1914 and 1918 had brought the Maltese and the British a little bit closer. A number of mixed marriages had taken place, usually between servicemen serving in Malta and local women. Some steady friendships had been struck by which the British were able to gain some insight into the Maltese way of life and the Maltese were able to distinguish between a soldier or a sailor and an ordinary Englishman.

Between 1919 and 1929, 3,354 Maltese were officially listed as having sailed to the United Kingdom, though 1,445 of these had come back in later years. However even those 1,909 who had been considered as having stayed in the United Kingdom, not all of them were to be classified as genuine emigrants. Those included wives who had left to join their husbands. Some young men had come to England to enlist in the Royal Navy or take come job with the Merchant Navy. More important still, there were those who travelled to the United Kingdom in order to be able to go on to the U.S.A. or to Canada. Indeed a number of these indirect emigrants ended up in Australia.

The Report on emigration for 1918-1920 had this to say about this particular aspect of Maltese migration: "It may seem strange that in the present unsettled state of the labour market in England, 225 Maltese emigrants should have gone to the U.K. between Armistice Day and March 31, 1920. On a small scale a certain number of Maltese have always filtered to the Mother Country. They are attracted by friends, or go to join relatives who are there, and they belong, as a rule, either to the Dockyard or Domestic classes".
By 1932 a Maltese Colony had been formed in a street adjoining the Commercial Road in London. A visitor to this area described the colony as numerous and the street in question was largely occupied by the Maltese. The visitor noted that the Maltese in that section of London organised their own social functions and lived in racial harmony with their neighbours. These included English, Jewish, German, Russian and Indian residents. The Maltese worked in the docks. Similar work was done by the Maltese living in Chatham and in Portsmouth.

A positive development meant to enhance bilateral relations between Malta and Great Britain was the appointment of Sir James D. Connolly as honorary representative of Malta in London. Connolly had been interested in Maltese emigration since 1913. In that year he visited Malta and after his return to Western Australia he had encouraged emigration to the State. When Lord Strickland was Governor of Western Australia, Connolly was his Colonial Secretary. In 1928 Sir James was the Agent General for Western Australia and he informed Strickland that he was willing to represent Malta in London. The Government of Malta was only expected to pay for Connolly's flat and staff. Sir James Connolly held his post in London between 1928 and 1932.

Gibraltar was the solitary foothold Great Britain maintained on the European mainland. It was conquered in 1713, and although Spain never gave up her claims to the promontory, the Rock remained in British hands at the entrance to the Mediterranean. Gibraltar, Malta and Cyprus were the three stepping stones by which Great Britain controlled the Mediterranean and the vital route to the Suez Canal and thence to India. When the British conquered Gibraltar the inhabitants fled and sought refuge in the town of San Roque. Their place was taken by immigrants, mostly from Morocco, Malta and the Italian islands. Later some Spaniards filtered through again and this gave the promontory a very mixed population. The Maltese and the Italians mingled with their Spanish brethren and this fusion preserved the Latin and Catholic character of the colony in spite of centuries of British occupation.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century trade with Africa and the presence of the British Fleet made Gibraltar prosperous. This prosperity attracted immigrants from neighbouring Mediterranean lands and in 1885 there were about 1,000 Maltese living on the rock. Early in the twentieth century the British undertook vast naval works to make the colony practically impregnable. The base in Gibraltar was to prove its strategic value in the two world wars. It was only to be expected that, given the common colonial bond between Malta and Gibraltar, some Maltese would be lured by the prospect of lucrative employment on the Rock.

By 1912 the total number of Maltese living in Gibraltar was not above 700. Many worked in the Dockyard and others operated businesses which were usually ancillary to the Dockyard. Some sold tobacco and alcoholic beverages. Others were porters, carters and boatmen.

However the economy of Gibraltar was not capable of absorbing a large number of immigrants from Malta. By 1912 the Maltese colony was already in decline. Eventually those who stayed on the Rock became very much involved in the economic and social life of the colony. Most of them were staunch supporters of the colony’s link with Great Britain. Unlike Maltese settlements in Moslem lands, the Maltese colony in Gibraltar continued, if not to flourish, at least to survive.

Argentina

Argentina presents a lonely exception to the review of Mediterranean and European lands which attracted Maltese emigrants. The Maltese never emigrated in significant numbers to Argentina, but Argentina and Brazil represent two pathetic efforts to establish a foothold in Latin America.

Mr. Henry Casolani, Malta's supreme spokes-man on emigration in the years 1919 - 1929, failed to realise the great potential of South America and his judgement on that continent has proved him historically wrong. Casolani's attitude to South America reflected the current prejudices of the time, when although the Maltese were urged to leave their island to save themselves and to spare their country, they were also advised to steer clear of South America.
In his review of Maltese emigration since the Armistice, Mr. Henry Casolani claimed that the republics of South America had never proved to be very attractive to Maltese emigrants.

Casolani also referred to the fiasco of 1912-1913 when some thirty families were shipped to Brazil to work on two fazendas, one was called Sanjos de Fortaleza and the other was that of Santa Eulalia. The Maltese did not stay long on the coffee plantations. No one spoke Portuguese, the food was unfamiliar and they had no one to speak up for them. There had been no serious preparation of the migrants before they left for Brazil. By the middle of 1913 practically all the Maltese had to be repatriated at the expense of the Maltese Government.

The failure of the Brazilian venture was still fresh in Maltese minds when Casolani was dismissing so lightly any idea of organised emigration to Argentina. Casolani knew that there was a section of Maltese opinion which was inclined to consider emigrating to Latin countries rather than to those within the British Empire. Emigration to non-British lands was the cry of those who opposed the Pro-Imperial faction and who wanted to support the retention of Italian as the language of Maltese culture.

While Casolani claimed that Latin America was not fit for Maltese emigrants, thousands of Europeans, particularly Germans, Italians and Poles were flocking to Argentina to build their future in a country which was to grow rich and populous.

Dr. Enrico Mizzi, leader of the Pro-Italian party, favoured Argentina because it was a Latin country with a language that was very similar to Italian. Immigration restrictions prevalent in U.S.A., Canada and Australia, made a number of Maltese contemplate emigrating to Argentina. In 1923, Dr. Joseph Howard himself was of that opinion even though in 1919 he had declared himself against emigration to South America. Naturally enough, Lord Strickland remained thoroughly opposed to emigration to countries which he classified as "foreign".

Dr. Enrico Mizzi was stoutly supported in his pro-Argentina stand by the Senator Rev. I. Panzavecchia and by Mr. Gustav Xuereb. When Mr. Henry Casolani was in London in 1922 he still expressed strong reservations about sending Maltese migrants to Argentina, but he conceded that skilled mechanics who were unemployed in Malta could find lucrative jobs with British companies in Argentina. While in London Mr. Casolani contacted Sir Brodie Henderson of the firm Livesey, Son and Henderson. The firm provided consulting engineers to most railway companies in South America.

Sir Brodie was of the opinion that in Argentina employment was slack because no great projects had been undertaken since 1914. He saw little hope for Maltese mechanics to obtain good jobs under the prevailing economic slump. Sir Brodie did promise to contact the Emigration Department in Malta should his company need workers from Malta. Still Casolani maintained that emigration to South America was not a going proposition. In his book "Awake, Malta" he stated that he had known many Maltese who had done very well for themselves in the U.S.A. and in Australia, while no similar stories ever reached him from those distant republics of South America.

In 1924 Senator A. Cassar Torreggiani went to Paris where he had a meeting with Senor T.A. Le Breton who was then the minister of Agriculture of Argentina. The Senator wrote his report which was presented to the Legislative Assembly of Malta on July 14, 1924. In that report it was stated that the Argentine Government welcomed agricultural workers who would cultivate wheat and help in the production of animal foodstuff. Educated immigrants who intended to seek clerical work, were not in demand.

Le Breton told the senator from Malta that when they arrived in Argentina, immigrants were housed at the expense of the State. State officials found work for the newly arrived immigrants who were also transported to their place of employment at the expense of the local authorities. Wages were higher than in other countries in Latin America though these tended to rise and fall according to demand and supply. Workers were expected to give eight hours of work every day, though out in the fields it was to the advantage of the workers to work as much as it was
humanly possible at that particular time. Though work was plentiful at the time of the interview, the State could give no positive guarantee against eventual unemployment.

Immigrants in Argentina were not liable to military service but their sons were not exempted. Senor Le Breton also said that his Government was willing to grant to the Maltese one square league of arable land in the province of Cacha, north of Santa Fe, where the weather was very amenable and where the means of communication by river and by rail left nothing to be desired. The minister said that his offer was on condition that at least twenty-five families would decide to emigrate. When these families arrived in Buenos Aires they would be housed in that city at the expense of local authorities. These same authorities would also provide free transportation to the allotments in Cacha.

Le Breton also assured Senator Cassar Torreggiani that in Argentina people enjoyed complete freedom of religion and that the Maltese would find no difficulty in practising their faith which, after all, was the faith of the Argentinians. Senator Cassar Torreggiani also informed the Minister that on no account would Maltese workers work with coloured people. Le Breton calmed such racial preoccupations by telling his guest that no coloured labourers were employed in Argentina.

The Report by Senator A. Cassar Torreggiani is only of historical interest. Nothing came out of it and Maltese interest in Argentina never produced any significant migratory movement to that country.

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The name of Emma Lazarus is not familiar to people who live and work in countries far from the shores of North America. One ventures to guess that there are many people now living in the USA who have never heard of this woman, yet one sonnet she wrote in 1883 has been read by millions. The sonnet is "The New Colossus" and its concluding lines are to be seen on the base supporting the Statue of Liberty where a bronze plaque was unveiled on May 5, 1903.

Emma Lazarus spoke through the great statue, addressing "the huddled masses" who were then flocking to America's golden door. When the great Empires of the Old World crumbled after the disaster of the First World War, Europe's economy was paralysed for many years and the rise of Bolshevism complicated the painful process of normalisation. Emigrants and refugees sought the security and freedom offered by the USA.

The year 1920 saw a veritable exodus from Europe. Many Europeans flocked to the industrial centres in the East and Middle West of the USA In the week preceding July 10 of that same year immigration officials on Ellis Island, New York, disclosed that during that time 13,161 aliens had been allowed into the country. More than 11,000 of these immigrants had crossed the Atlantic under incredible conditions as steerage passengers.

When that announcement had been made there were still one thousand hopeful entrants yet waiting for their turn to be inspected and finally allowed in. Most of those waiting on Ellis Island were men. The steamship "Mexico" had brought into New York harbour fourteen women and six hundred and sixty-six men. These steerage passengers had embarked from Portugal and stated that their destinations were Massachusetts and California. One immigration official said that he had never seen such a rush since the summer which preceded the outbreak of the Great War. At that time however, the official said that it was common to allow in anything between 13,000 and 15,000 a week.

On September 3, 1920, immigration authorities placed sixty more inspectors on Ellis Island to cope with the long queues which were forming. Eventually the staff on Ellis Island was increased even more and the existing buildings were extended. At one time immigrants were arriving at about 4,000 a day. Mental institutions in New York were overcrowded with unlucky aliens who had suffered serious breakdowns because of the tension brought about by their
journey and subsequent waiting. As soon as they were judged capable of travel, these unfortunate people were deported.

Maltese interest in the United States had been evident even before the advent of the twentieth century. The War of 1914-1918 had hindered emigration to all countries but once hostilities ceased and the opportunities for work decreased, the situation in Malta developed similarities with what was happening on the Continent, where millions were deserting their traditional homes to emigrate.

Prior to 1921, when the First Quota Law was passed by the American Congress, the only serious bar to Maltese emigrating to the USA was the lack of available cash. Those who had enough money to buy their tickets did so. Emigration officials in Malta at the time stated that "we are now witnessing the biggest wave of emigration that is recorded in the history of these islands. It is enough to show the eagerness with which the Maltese artisan is hurrying to what his comrades, who are already on the spot, describe as a veritable El Dorado of the working man".

From the beginning of 1920 up to April 29, there were 2,193 passports issued to intending emigrants to the USA, while 1,268 more had lodged their application. Within less than four months 3,461 Maltese had expressed their desire to leave their home and settle in the USA, particularly in Detroit.

A report on emigration from Malta published by the Government on October 28, 1920, which covered the period between April 1, and September 30, 1920, stated that 4,566 emigrants had left Malta and that 2,627 of those emigrants had indicated that they intended to go to the USA. That report also showed that before the restrictions enforced by the American Congress in May 1921, the USA was one of the easiest countries to enter and that the Maltese had intended to depart for that part of the world in larger numbers still.

The American Consulate in Malta was issuing visas to persons desiring to join members of their immediate family who were already residing in the U.S. Such authorisation applied particularly to parents, children, minor brothers and sisters and to minor grandchildren. Legislation guiding immigration in the U.S. was meant not to hinder the entry of foreigners but rather to regulate immigration. Those not allowed entry were mostly those who suffered from serious disease, or who had a criminal record or those who were entirely destitute. The American Consul was also authorised to deny entry to anybody who was either assisted financially by his own government or by some foreign association.

By 1921 it was felt that the American authorities had to make a move to check the flow of aliens into the country. Hostility to immigrants was evident, particularly in the overcrowded cities. Hardship endured by the newly arrived immigrants found publicity in the Maltese press and the British ambassador in Washington warned the Governor of Malta about the likelihood of restrictive legislation concerning the entry of immigrants into the USA. At the suggestion of the British ambassador, Maltese authorities took the precaution of restricting emigration to the U.S. to lilies who wished to join their breadwinner who already living in the U.S. and to Maltese who already been living in that country.

Mr. J. Robertson wrote a letter on July 7, 1920, which provided an insight into the situation some of the Maltese found themselves in at that time. Robertson was an immigrant and he had been born in Malta, where his father had served with Royal Army Service Corps and had settled permanently in Malta. The Maltese community in Detroit had found in Robertson Jr. a useful spokesman who defended them by publishing the following protest:

Maltese ask for Fair Play

"I am one of the oldest emigrants from the Island of Malta. I have been resident of this country for twenty-six years. I give a helping hand to the newly landed, especially my com-
patriots from Malta. Now the few old timers who have been resident in Detroit have been using all their influence and energy to create a Maltese population here and now are numbered some 6,000 and many more are coming.

I will narrate a brief incident that happened in one of our large concerns. A number of employees had committed a slight offence and they have been discharged. Some are trying to create enmity towards all Maltese by giving special orders to reject all applications made by this particular nationality and so far not one has been given employment.

Come to the YMCA on a Sunday afternoon when you can see them, 400 or 500 strong, being instructed in Americanism under the auspices of the YMCA".

Mr. J. Robertson also got in touch with the Americanisation Office which backed his protest and the Office described the Maltese as: "one of the highest types of immigrants that enter the country". The YMCA offered its hall to be used as an employment agency for the Maltese. After Robertson's letter a number of offers of Employment arrived at the agency. Two of them deserve mention:

a. Joseph F. Droste, Employment Manager of National Twist Drill and Tool Co. of 315 Ford Ave., Highland Park said:
"I see no reason why anyone should be prejudiced against your nationality. I have always found the Maltese efficient and conscientious. I can offer permanent positions at various kinds of work to quite a number of your fellow country-men, providing they have at least their first citizenship papers or have been residing in this country at least one year and have been in Detroit for at least three months, on account of the USA Alien Labor Tax laws".

b. H.H. Graham, The J. Connelly Construction Co. of 610 Lincoln Bld. told Mr. Robertson: "We can use 25/30 of the men you refer to. Send them to our job on Charles Street between Mt. Elliott Avenue and Conant. We will pay them 60c an hour and will work ten hours per day".

At the time that Mr. Robertson made his intervention on behalf of the Maltese workers in Detroit, an Imperial Press Conference was being held in Montreal, Canada, and Malta was being represented by Dr. Augustus Bartolo, who was the editor of a prominent newspaper in Malta and who, in later years, was destined to become minister responsible for emigration. Dr. A. Bartolo took up his fluent pen to defend his people. On August 11, 1920, he wrote to the "Detroit News" a letter which that newspaper published under the title: "Malta Editor Defends Race".

Bartolo referred to some stereotyped objections against the Maltese living in Detroit. These supposed defects of the Maltese were enumerated by Bartolo:

1. Some have failed to adjust themselves readily to the individual requirements of the City's dynamic life;
2. Others complain about the hard Michigan winter because their Mediterranean climate was very mild;
3. Most Maltese are very touchy and sensitive and will readily resent any unfavourable comments by outsiders;
4. The Maltese were passionately attached to their religion;
5. They were illiterate and knew no English.

Dr. Bartolo told the "Detroit News" that he rejected those objections. He wrote "I believe the Maltese are among the gentlest in character and the most obedient to the social obligations of their native or adopted countries. Learn to know them, treat them as they merit, and you will have an ideal class of settlers. Not only are they socially adaptable, they amalgamate readily with their neighbours. They are not aloof or socially reserved; they mix freely and intermarry
with people of their class. They are industrious, frugal and sober. They have large families which they rear well. Their women are accustomed to work hard".

**Conditions of Entry and the Quota System**

When Malta had sent almost three thousand of its emigrants to the USA between April 1, 1920 and March 31, 1921, that meant that almost half of the emigrant classes had deliberately chosen that country as the land of their future. Undoubtedly such preference for America would have been translated into larger numbers still had the American Congress not put a check on the numbers of aliens entering the country.

Before the legislation of May, 1921, Maltese emigrants who wished to settle in the USA had to satisfy a number of requirements:

1. Ordinary emigrants had to produce a clean Police Conduct Sheet accompanied by a satisfactory Health Certificate from a qualified doctor.
2. Those who had previously been deported from the U.S. could not apply for entry before one full year had elapsed from the date of deportation.
3. All persons over sixteen years of age had to pass a test in reading a language or a dialect. Maltese was recognised as valid for this Literacy Test. Some people were exempted from the Test:
   a. Those who were physically incapable of reading.
   b. Those who already had American citizens willing to help them. This exemption applied to fathers and grandfathers if over fifty-five years of age; wives, mothers, grandmothers; unmarried or widowed daughters.
   c. Persons who had resided continuously in the USA for five years and who had not been absent from that country for more than six months from the date of departure.
4. No emigrant would be given a visa if he tried to enter the country by reason of any offer, solicitation, promise or agreement, expressed or implied, to work in the USA.
5. Emigrants to the USA were to purchase a through transportation ticket valid for the entire journey, and on landing in an American port, they were required to be in possession of a sufficient sum to cover all travelling expenses to their final destination. They were also expected to possess a sum of money which was enough to maintain them until such time as they might become self-supporting. Such a sum varied according to the distance which the migrants intended to travel and in accordance with other conditions surrounding individual cases. In respect of landing money an amount of about fifty dollars was considered as the minimum required.
6. Persons whose tickets or passage money were offered by another person, or who were assisted by others to proceed to the USA, were to be denied entry.
7. Children under sixteen years of age who were unaccompanied, or were not going to stay with their parents, were not allowed entry except in special circumstances.
8. Maltese permanently domiciled, but temporarily absent from the USA, unless such absence exceeded the period of six months, were usually allowed entry on production of convincing proof of domicile within the meaning of the law and on production of a sworn affidavit.

Having satisfied those conditions to obtain entry through the American Golden Door, the immigrant had not only to face rampant prejudice but had also to keep his eyes open against those who were willing to make a quick dollar at the expense of these newly arrived strangers. The New York Evening Post warned in 1920, about those who watched intently the immigrants as they were released from Ellis Island in order "to mulct and exploit the innocent immigrant to the U.S. ". The newspaper complained about the practice of tipping petty officials at Immigration offices to let relatives and friends pass without due delay.

Another aspect of exploitation of immigrants was the corruption of some officials who themselves asked for exorbitant fees to issue worthless passports. Once the immigrant was on
the streets of New York he had to face greedy taxi drivers who sensed that strangers were an easy prey to them. The New York Evening Post also complained about landlords who provided accommodation at excessive charges.

One very serious charge made by that newspaper was about some people who claimed to work for banks and who pretended to help aliens to send their remittances to their dependents. According to the newspaper such people were to be found wherever a large immigrant colony existed. They were unscrupulous at fleecing the unwary. Exorbitant charges were made in order to transmit immigrant's money to his old country. Very often no such money ever reached its destination.

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Finally the newspaper referred to a recent scandal when a firm gave a fictitious Boston address and sent out thousands of letters to Italians residing in the Middle West. The letter contained a request to each immigrant to forward six dollars to cover express postage on a parcel presumably sent by relatives in Italy. The newspaper claimed that thousands of dollars were accumulated by the said bogus firm before the fraud was discovered.

The more human side of the history of emigration came out in the stories the emigrants themselves had to say about themselves. One typical case history was that of Steve Pace who related his story on November 30, 1983.

"I tried to reach America as a stowaway but was caught while the ship was still in Grand Harbour. I was seventeen then. When my father and mother realised that there was no stopping me, they decided to give me £29. In all I carried on me £40 when I finally sailed from Grand Harbour some time early in 1920. There were about eighty other men going to the USA.

I was able to read and write and I knew a little English. My companions and myself left Malta for Syracuse on the ferry and then travelled all the way by train to the French port of Cherbourg. That journey took five days. From Cherbourg we went on a ship called the "Adriatic" which carried us to New York. That crossing took nine days. In New York we were taken to Ellis Island where they fixed letters of the alphabet on us. They examined us for trachoma and our general health. The whole thing took about five hours. I think I was able to pass quickly because I knew some English and I had enough money on me.

From New York I took a train to Detroit. I wanted to go to Detroit because I knew that I had an uncle there, but I had no idea where he lived and he knew nothing about my arrival. In New York and in Detroit I was met by no one. However, as soon as I arrived in Detroit, I started looking for Maltese immigrants. After four days one of them told me where to find my uncle.

My first job was with Chrysler. I worked in the Paint Shop but this job lasted only six weeks because most of us workers were sacked. This meant I was two years out of work.

During my first two years in America I never wrote back home because I did not have the money to buy stamps with. Eventually my mother contacted the British Consul in Detroit to see what had happened to me. The Consul found me out and he gave me some stamps. I was then so hard up that I couldn't afford a pair of shoes. Most Maltese were in the same predicament. At first we were given tickets to buy our groceries, but then they stopped giving such tickets to those of us who were single.
Few Maltese had steady jobs then. Those who worked sometimes would give us ten cents to buy two eggs. We lived in a lodging house which was owned by a Maltese known to us as Pawlu ii-Zghajjar or Tiny Paul. He hailed from Qormi. Twenty-four men lived in that house. We ate spaghetti for our only meal and sometimes we were given a loaf of bread by the Salvation Army. When one of us had a cigarette, we would share it.

Winters in Michigan were much colder than in Malta. At times the temperatures stayed below zero for weeks. For one whole year we had no heating in our lodging house. Most of us were young and single and we were able to survive.

Fortunately relations between Maltese them-selves were friendly. We helped each other when we could. Some would lend money without charging any interest. The Maltese got on well with other immigrants. Except on one occasion when the Irish Gang of Fifth Street attacked the Maltese. I think the fight ended in a draw.

Next the Irish attacked the Chinese, but the Chinese were prepared for the fight and obtained an easy victory over the Irish.

I remember one fact very clearly. It was 1932. I had been waiting for hours to register for work. It was snowing very hard. After waiting for some hours someone came out of the office and said that work would be offered only to those who were American citizens. At that time I still had my British passport, so I said I was American and gave them the address of my American girl friend. I got a job.

Later I opened a grocery shop. When Prohibition was lifted I opened a Beer Garden where most of my patrons were Irish. Business was good and after the Depression I did very well. In 1935 I went back to Malta for the first time since 1920. Since then I was able to visit Malta regularly. In 1974, after fifty-four years living in the USA, I decided to retire to Malta. Since that year I have been going regularly to the USA where my son lives. In spite of the hardship endured, I am proud of my American citizenship and I am glad that I emigrated when I was only a youngster. I can say that most Maltese who lived in Detroit have done very well for themselves”.

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**First Quota Law - 1921**

The immense influx of aliens flooding most American cities was creating social, cultural and economic tensions in a country which, although it claimed to be a haven for "the homeless and tempest-tost", was not prepared to accommodate so many immigrants in so short a time. Those who had been born in the USA considered themselves as "all-American" and many of these did not appreciate the coming of the so-called "new Americans". The new arrivals gravitated towards the cities, thus aggravating the problem of over-crowding with the consequent problem of un-employment and lack of acceptable hygienic standards because no decent accommodation was available.

A spokesman for the Maltese Government had warned that the economic situation in North America was in a state of flux and he advised intending emigrants to avoid settling in the big cities where hostility to new arrivals was coming out in the open. That same source warned of impending legislation on the part of the American Government as Washington was under steady pressure to stem the tide of uncontrolled immigration.

That impending legislation became law on May 19, 1921. President Warren G. Harding approved what was then commonly called the First Quota Law or the Provisional Immigration Measure. The application of the Bill seriously affected large scale immigration. It was to bring Maltese emigration to the USA to a virtual standstill for some years.

After the Treaty of Versailles of 1919, the USA emerged as the most powerful nation on earth. Most Americans willingly acknowledged their indebtedness to the millions of immigrants who had built the nation. Since the Declaration of Independence in 1776, immigration had been a normal aspect of the American way of life and any restrictions on the admission of immigrants were meant not to control their numbers but to safeguard the health and character of an emerging nation.

It was in 1875 that Congress decided that some categories of immigrants had better not be allowed into the country. These categories included communists, prostitutes and those showing mental and serious physical defects. In 1876, the policy governing immigration was declared to be one of national interest falling within the exclusive responsibility of the Government.

Pressure from Californian interests resulted in the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 which banned the future immigration of Chinese into the USA. This Exclusion Act remained in force till 1943. Ten years after the passing of the first anti-Chinese legislation an amendment was made which required the registration of Chinese labourers already in the country. This amendment authorised the expulsion of any Chinese if after one year no certificate of registration was produced.

The enactments against the Chinese were passed because Americans on the Pacific Coast complained that the Chinese were prepared to work under inferior conditions for minimal wages and were therefore a threat to the accepted living standards of the time. Another undeclared motive was racial prejudice against Orientals who were considered as being too different from the rest and therefore unable to become full American citizens. Eventually such
discrimination based on racial bias was to be extended to immigrants coming from certain regions of Europe. Their presence on American soil was not particularly cherished by those who felt their position and privilege threatened by the new arrivals.

In 1907 the USA had received the staggering total of 1,285,349 immigrants. In that same year an Immigration Act was passed which prohibited the entry of aliens who were over sixteen years of age and were illiterate. The Literacy Test was aimed at non-European immigrants as it was then becoming fashionable to welcome certain races and bar others. Americans and Imperialist Europeans spoke menacingly about the Yellow Peril threatening to swamp the world with millions of hungry Orientals. Theodore Roosevelt, President of the USA, urged Japan not to issue passports to those Japanese who intended to emigrate to California.

Since 1894 opponents of unrestricted and non-selective immigration had banded themselves together in an influential Immigration Restriction league which clamoured for a policy based on racial selection. According to the people behind the League, the only acceptable types of immigrants were those originating from Great Britain, Scandinavia, Germany and North-Western Europe. European Latins and others were a threat the American nation because of their physical appearance, their language, culture and manners. Such foreigners were a potential danger to American democracy because they were unable to become respectable citizens. It was hard for such inferior people to respect private business and industry because many of them had been tainted with radical ideas. Particular antipathy was expressed towards immigrants from the Southern parts of Catholic Europe who were supposed to taint true Americanism with Romanism and Revolution.

The First Quota Law of May 19, 1921, was a capitulation to such bigotry. President Warren G. Harding gave in to pressure from the Immigration Restriction League when he limited the annual number of immigrants to 3% of the number of foreign-born persons of most nationalities living in the USA in 1910.

Eventually the League pressed for even stricter controls and in 1924 the Johnson-Reed Act was passed with the approval of President Calvin Coolidge. This Act drastically limited the intake of aliens. The Act also showed that America now sanctioned racial discrimination as it officially accepted the principle that not all nationalities were equal.

According to the Johnson-Reed Act only 150,000 were to be allowed in one year. A nationality was permitted to send 2% of the number of immigrants present in the USA in 1890. This was planned to allow most of the quota to go to nationalities from North and Western Europe. The South and the East of Europe were only allowed to send 20,000 immigrants per year. Only 4,000 non-Europeans were to be allowed entry. Naturalisation was denied to Orientals.

It was obvious that the Act had pushed the key census year from 1910 to 1890 because up to 1890 America still had a largely homogenous population, but after that year up to 1914 some 15,000,000 immigrants had entered the USA from the Middle East and from the South and the East of Europe. The Johnson-Reed Act deliberately chose 1890 as the key year in order to exclude the undesirable types of inferior immigrants.

Charles Darwin and his theory of evolution by natural selection had been warmly welcomed by racists in Washington and elsewhere. According to Darwin higher forms of life had developed from the lower ones and man was the highest form of all. Mankind was made of various races and not all races had progressed equally. Proponents of the Immigration Restriction League considered themselves as the acme of human perfection and they felt that America was destined to be the special reserve of superior human development.

The National Origins Law established for the first time permanent numerical restrictions upon immigration to the USA National quotas were to be based on the ethnic composition of the USA. Prospective immigrants were required to obtain a sponsor living in the country and they needed a visa from an American consulate abroad before being allowed in. Aliens considered
as ineligible for American citizenship were denied a visa and anybody caught contravening such requirements was to be deported.

The authorities in Malta were following such developments with intense interest. It became obvious that the Act of 1924 was to reduce Maltese emigration to the USA to a mere trickle.

Mr. Henry Casolani had been trying to obtain some concessions for Malta since 1922. The First Quota Law of 1921 had seriously hindered the flow of Maltese migration to the shores of America, and consequent legislation had reduced that flow to a mere trickle. Mr. Skinner, the American Consul General in London, had told Mr. Henry Casolani that the Maltese could not avail themselves of the generous quota allowed to emigrants from the United Kingdom. Instead, Mr. Skinner said, Malta had been placed with a group of miniscule countries known as "Other Europe" which was made up of Andorra, Iceland, Monaco and Liechtenstein. Under the Provisional Immigration Measure of 1921 those countries were allowed 86 emigrants to be shared between them.

The Superintendent of Emigration told Mr. Skinner that over 4,000 adult males and 900 women had emigrated from Malta to the USA during the two and a half years which had preceded the First Quota Law. Mr. Casolani also said that many other Maltese had entered the USA from other countries and the Emigration Department in Malta was unable to state exactly the numbers of such emigrants. However, although the Maltese presence in the USA was insignificant prior to 1910, the number of permanent Maltese resident in that country in 1921 was probably close to 6,000. The legislation signed by President Warren G. Harding ignored this fact.

In stark language the Maltese authorities were told that the supposed number of Maltese residing in the USA when the census of 1910 was taken up was calculated as being less than five hundred. This meant that Malta could only send fourteen emigrants each year. There was no guarantee that the fourteen emigrants which were allowed to precede to the USA would not be rejected by Immigration officers once they were examined on Ellis Island.

A large number of Maltese married men living in Detroit, New York and San Francisco, were caught unawares by the new restrictions. The insignificant quota of fourteen emigrants per year would make the chance of such families to be reunited very remote. The quota also excluded the possibility of sending unrelated emigrants to America.

The human hardship involved by such separations must have been very painful and many families must have suffered accordingly. Between 1918 and 1921, 900 Maltese women had left their Island to join their husbands and fathers in the USA. There were now a large number of wives and children, fathers and mothers, fiancées and brothers and sisters who had every right to join their loved ones who were legally living in the USA.

Americanisation Committees

While politicians passed racist laws to keep unwanted immigrants out of the USA, a campaign was launched to Americanise those who had managed to enter the country. Many of those immigrants had huddled together in ghettos where they found solace in the company of fellow countrymen. They survived in spite of a harsh environment.

The Maltese belonged to a minority group. They were found mostly in New York, Detroit and San Francisco where they tried to keep close to each other. Often they had their own priest who could be of service to them in their own language and who, very often, acted as a liaison between his group and the world outside. Since the priest was an educated cleric he was the interpreter and the scribe who wrote and read letters. He also had links with his American bishop and the church was an important means of communication between the Maltese and the Americans. Maltese priests were able to seek the support of the National Catholic Welfare
Conference in the USA to obtain help for their people and to press for the relaxation of the Immigration laws passed by Congress in 1921 and 1924.

American Catholics encouraged ethnic Catholics to assimilate. Efforts at assimilation were organised by the "Americanization Committees". Such Committees provided volunteers to teach the English language and to introduce immigrants to the American way of life. Immigrants hailing from countries disturbed by Bolshevism were taught to appreciate democracy and to cultivate a patriotic feeling for their adopted land.

The "Americanisers" were trained to seek out trouble makers and those tainted by European revolutionaries in order to convert them, or at least, isolate them. Foreigners were expected to revere the principle of Free Enterprise, the right of business to flourish without too much interference and the freedom of speech and conscience. Finally, the "Americanisers" were to teach the foreigners the basic ideas concerning personal hygiene.

The industrial city of Detroit had the largest Maltese colony which by 1924 probably counted some 5,000 members. Most of the men worked in the car industry. The Americanization Committee of Detroit established a Maltese Information Bureau which printed a circular letter in Maltese. The letter contained important information on many matters which would interest those who had just arrived in the city. The Bureau was under the direction of a Maltese immigrant, Mr. Ed Camilleri. This gentleman was active in his community and in 1927 he was given the responsibility to help in the process of Americanizing the Maltese by giving them all the help they needed to assimilate. Mr. Camilleri wrote the circular letter and in it he stated that the Americanisation Committee of Detroit was chiefly concerned with the process of adjusting peoples of an alien race to the requirements of the American environment.

The newspaper "Detroit News" of November 3, 1922, carried a report on the work of Americanisers among the Maltese immigrants living in Detroit. According to the report the women who attended the Catholic church of the Holy Trinity had set up a Trinity Club which was carrying on Americanization work among the Maltese, all of whom were Catholic. The women of Trinity Club began sponsoring social functions meant to bring Maltese closer to American Catholics. The first of such activities was held in November when a dance was organised in the Knights of Equity Hall which was situated at the intersection of Fort Street with Second Boulevard.

In that same hall social activities were held in which American functions alternated with Maltese ones. Many Maltese were thus introduced to American friends. The "Detroit News" mentioned the fact that American Catholics were very willing to help the Maltese. Committees were set up to meet newcomers from Malta and to invite them to their socials.

Meanwhile immigration officials at various ports of entry began enforcing President Harding's restrictive measures, thus causing untold hard-ship to many people who had just arrived in American waters. About 1,500 Italian migrants were marooned on steamers arriving at New York because Italy's quota had already been exhausted by May 28. That was only nine days after the First Quota Law had become effective.

There was one story involving Italy and Malta which, although distressing, ended on a happy note. The "Daily News" of New York reported on November 7, on an Italian pianist who was detained on Ellis Island because of his youngest son who was born in Malta. The pianist was a certain Cesare de Lancellotti. Because of his talent Cesare was able to free not only himself, but likewise his wife, his daughter and his son Edward from the fetters of immigration legalities. He celebrated his release from Ellis Island feasting at the house of his other son Louis at 340, 116th Street, when legally, he and his family should have been deported.

Edward, the youngest son, was the bone of contention. The youngster had been born in Malta. The quota for Malta under the new law had been exhausted when the de Lancellotti family arrived. According to the law, Edward could not be admitted and under section 18 of the
Immigration Law, the rest of the family had to be sent away with the boy as "accompanying aliens".

But Cesare, like the great Roman warrior of old, determined to win the battle. The report went on: "Polite as Chesterfield, in perfect English, he told of his conquests. His agile fingers at the piano had won over the Palace of Malta, including members of the British Royal Family. He conquered Ellis Island too. A musical genius must enjoy exemption from the Immigration Law".

Not all emigrants from Malta were musical celebrities. Seven years after the enactment of President Harding there were two hundred and eight families still waiting their turn to join their men in the USA. These families represented the total number of five hundred and twenty-four persons.

In June 1928 the American Consul in Valletta received a telegram from Washington directing him to revise the waiting list in order to give priority to unmarried children under twenty-one years of age and to wives of Maltese men already legally domiciled in the USA. In the meantime, many such dependants in Malta were subsisting on handfuls given to them by local charities when in Detroit alone, there were only thirty-eight Maltese women to every one thousand men.

Mr. Henry Casolani channelled all his efforts at easing this great moral problem which was destroying so many marriages through enforced separation. The Superintendent of Emigration was helped by successive American Consuls residing in Malta and by influential contacts he had in Great Britain and in the USA. Eventually the Maltese were allowed to share Britain's quota when that quota was not fully used. This meant that at first some sixty Maltese were allowed to proceed to the USA but eventually this figure was raised to ninety-six until in 1925 the annual intake from Malta was permitted to go up to two hundred.

In 1929 there were some relaxations which greatly increased the British quota. The share of that quota allowed to Malta was then three hundred and eighty. Eventually, by 1930 the total of Maltese immigrants had gone up to five hundred and forty per year. However, in that same year, the number of intending emigrants who wished to settle in the USA was no less than two thousand.

The efforts of Mr. Henry Casolani to obtain some concessions for the relatives stranded in Malta were greatly seconded by Monsignor George Caruana who in 1921 had become bishop of Puerto Rico and by Mr. Bruce Mohler. Bishop Caruana was born in Sliema, Malta and had arrived in the USA in 1910. He had worked in parishes with Italian and Maltese immigrants and in 1923 he had told the American Bishops' Conference held in Washington of the hardships caused to the Maltese by the Immigration Restrictions of 1921.

Mr. Bruce Mohler was the director of the Bureau of Immigration of the National Catholic Welfare Council of the USA. He had contacted a prominent Congressman, Mr. P.H. Kelley, who used his influence to obtain some reprieve for the Maltese. Both Bishop George Caruana and Mr. Bruce Mohler were in constant touch with Mr. Henry Casolani. In his book published in 1927, Mr. Casolani described the two men as great friends of the Maltese migrants and he acknowledged their help in making it possible for his Department of Emigration to share the quota allowed to the British.

The Maltese in Detroit

A prominent Maltese within the community in Detroit since 1920 was the Rev. Michael Borg who had arrived in that city to work among the Maltese in December 1920. The Maltese greeted their priest with enthusiasm. The "Detroit News" of November 13 had already received the news from Malta that a priest was going to Detroit to be put in charge of the Maltese living in that city. Under the heading: "Native Comes to Countrymen Here" the newspaper reproduced a photograph of the thirty-four-year-old priest who had seen active service during
the Great War and who was due to arrive shortly in New York from Cherbourg on the ship "Olympic".

The Rev. Michael Borg was to be installed as the first pastor of a Maltese ethnic parish in Detroit. He had arrived in the USA from his own parish of St. Lawrence in Vittoriosa, Malta, where he himself had been born. The bishop of Malta had agreed to send Father Borg to Detroit as the Maltese in that city had expressed their desire to have a priest of their own. When he arrived in Detroit, he said Mass in the Knights of Equity Hall where he preached in Maltese. After Mass a meeting was arranged at the head-quarters of the Detroit Maltese Association, 434 Michigan Avenue.

The bishop of Detroit, Mgr. Michael J. Gallagher D.D. had agreed to the appointment of the Rev. Michael Borg to work among the Maltese on a permanent basis. The priest from Vittoriosa was to hold the position of pastor of the Maltese parish in Detroit for seven years. Bernice Stewart wrote about the new pastor on December 12, 1920: "Father Borg is a quiet smiling man in his early thirties, very gentle and concerned about his people and very interested in the city in which he finds himself. He knows so little about the secular side of our industrial life that it is difficult to see how he will be able to give his parishioners the advice about material ways and means they so patently need".

Although Father Borg was a newcomer to the American way of life he was not unaware of the trials which beset anybody trying to start a new life in a foreign country. Moreover a number of his parishioners were poor and lived in unhealthy lodging houses. He also knew that in his community men heavily outnumbered women and created an imbalance in the social and moral state of his parish. In January 1921 he wrote a warning to a Maltese newspaper: "Tell the Maltese not to come over here at the present because there are many out of work ... next March or April will be a good time to come".

A similar advice had been given on November 26, 1920, by a certain Antonio Agius who was then the assistant secretary of the Maltese Association of Detroit. Mr. Agius had warned that work in Detroit was very slack at that time and he thought it inadvisable for intending emigrants to leave their home at that time.

According to Bernice Stewart, Maltese men often wanted their wives and children with them even though at that time they were out of work. The public welfare department of Detroit was helping the unemployed to alleviate their problems, but she thought it unwise to send for dependants when money simply was not available. She cautioned her readers that most Maltese in Detroit at the time were a problem to the city.

Bernice Stewart noticed that in 1920 the Maltese had already banded themselves together in an association and that they had rented rooms at 434 Michigan Avenue which served as a meeting place for their association. It was in those rooms that the Maltese held their meetings, presented plays and organised musical entertain-ment. Bernice Stewart wrote that some time before, the Maltese had put on Shakespearian plays in Maltese. This was a marked improvement from former days when most Maltese men had nowhere to go and therefore they wasted their time in walking up and down the streets, gazing into windows stacked with products which they knew they could not afford.

Less than a month after his arrival Father Michael Borg called a general meeting of all his parishioners. During that meeting he gave an account of the money collected and also said that more cash was needed if the Maltese in Detroit wanted to build their own church as many ethnic Catholics had already done. Those who attended the meeting accepted with enthusiasm the priest's appeal for a Maltese church in North America.

Present at that meeting was the Rev. Doyle who was then the chancellor of Bishop Gallagher. He was there to represent American church authorities. The chancellor stated that if the Maltese wished to build a church of their own in Detroit, it was necessary for them to achieve
unity of mind and purpose. Rev. Doyle reminded the Maltese that his bishop had already helped them by letting them use the Knights of Equity Hall. He also assured his listeners that Bishop Gallagher was willing to help the Maltese to the limits if his powers. It seemed that the chancellor was not unaware of some dissident voices within the Maltese community because his intervention ended on an ominous note. He warned those present at the meeting that no club was to be greater than the parish.

Another prominent guest at the meeting called by the Maltese pastor, was Mr. Thompson who had been mayor of Detroit. Mr. Thompson still possessed considerable influence both in Catholic and in political circles. He was also a practical man who was liked by the Maltese. The fact that Mr. Thompson was himself a Catholic endeared him to the Maltese who put him in charge of the scheme for building a Maltese church. It was the opinion of the ex-mayor that Father Borg was a very hard-working priest.

That important meeting, called by the Maltese priest on January 23, 1921, ended on a positive note. The parishioners liked their pastor and the priest was in good standing with the Detroit diocesan authorities. Mr. Thompson was an asset to the community because of his valuable contacts. At that meeting it was also announced that the Society of Saint Vincent de Paule was ready to proceed with welfare work among the needy of the Maltese parish.

Father Borg knew that his was no affluent congregation and he must have had some hesitation in asking for contributions from people who found it quite difficult to survive. The plan to build a church was ambitious and eventually it was going to create dissensions by those who were quite willing to be counted as members of the parish but who did not cherish the idea of contributing from their own pockets.

The Maltese pastor had to cultivate his relations with Bishop Gallagher who was then the highest church authority in the whole diocese. Bishop Gallagher liked having the Maltese living within his territorial boundaries as they strengthened the numbers of Catholics living in the area. Moreover, the Maltese had already earned for themselves the reputation of being strong and steadfast in their faith. The bishop was willing to help the Maltese community, but the presence of his chancellor at the meeting of January 23, 1921, showed that his was to be the final word in whatever Catholics planned to do in Detroit. The warning delivered by Rev. Doyle about the clubs was to be seen in the perspective of the bishop's overall jurisdiction.

The clubs referred to by Rev. Doyle were the secular centres of gravity of the Detroit Maltese community. The priest was welcome in such premises but he exercised no authority as he did within his church. As Bernice Stewart noted, in 1920 there was already functioning a Maltese Association. This association had come into existence before the advent of Father Borg.

The Maltese Association of Detroit had began to consider itself as the secular authority, capable of speaking in the name of the community. In 1920 the Association had an erudite secretary in the person of Mr. Paul T. Olivier.

Mr. P. T. Olivier had been living in the USA since 1909 and had originally settled in San Francisco where he studied law. He later moved to Michigan where he practised as an attorney. In 1920 he was also a notary public for the county of Wayne. He was also deputy collector and inspector in the U.S. Customs Service for the port of Detroit. It was obvious that both Borg and Mr. P.T. Olivier had to cooperate if there was to be harmony within the Maltese community.

During Lent of 1921, the Rev. Michael Borg organised a mission for the Maltese. He invited two other Maltese priests to Detroit, the Rev. George Caruana, who was soon to be made bishop of Puerto Rico and whose prominence was a great asset to the Maltese, and the Rev. James Baldacchino, who was a Capuchin friar working in New York. The three priests had known each other for some time and their work among the Maltese immigrants had caught the attention of James L. Devlin of the "Detroit News".
Devlin wrote on March 20, 1921: "In order to accommodate the immense number of worshippers, additional services are being held daily. Salvatore Pulis Felice erected an altar, helped by artisans many of whom are out of work. The altar is in simple Roman style and furnished in old ivory".

Some five months after the mission had been concluded the Maltese in Detroit heard that their friend the Rev. George Caruana was to be consecrated bishop of Puerto Rico. The consecration took place in Rome on August 5, 1921. After his consecration the new bishop left Rome for Malta where he stayed till November 13. He was back in Puerto Rico on January 25, 1922 and remained stationed on that island for three years.

Before taking up residence in Puerto Rico, Bishop Caruana had been in contact with Detroit and it seemed that his friend Father Borg was thinking of leaving Detroit to take up the duties of secretary to the new bishop as soon as a substitute from Malta was found. Father Borg never took up his new appointment, but his friendship with Mgr. Caruana lasted for many years.

When Bishop Caruana visited Detroit he was met by many Maltese. He said Mass and delivered a sermon in Maltese. The choirs of Holy Trinity and Holy Rosary churches, under the baton of Professor R. Magnam, sang during the Mass and rendered the occasion more memorable by the Greororian music which had been selected by the Professor himself. Father Borg presented Bishop Caruana with a golden pectoral cross on behalf of the Maltese community of Detroit.

The pastor had taken up residence at 1267 Baker Street. He still served his community at the Knights of Equity Hall which formerly was a Grace Episcopal church. Two years after the arrival of Father Borg, the site on which the Hall stood was put up for sale and the Maltese were hoping for a better church before they were told to leave the place. According to the "Michigan Catholic" of November 14, 1922, the Maltese were intending to collect 200,000 dollars to achieve their wish. Pledges were made payable to Bishop Gallagher and sent to Father Borg at his residence in Baker Street or at the Maltese American Printing Company which was situated at 1402, Third Street.

Maltese Publications and Dissent

It was at the Maltese American Printing Company that the first weekly Maltese newspaper came to light. This was the official organ of the Maltese American Association and it carried its name in Maltese: "II Maltese American". The first number came out on March 10, 1922, and was sold at five cents. It was bilingual, in Maltese and in English, and the editor declared that it was his intention to provide the Maltese Ethnic Community with a voice of its own just as other communities in Detroit had their own newspapers. The "II Maltese American" contained news about the Maltese in Michigan and in the rest of the country. It also printed news from Malta and a short novel. There was also religious information and instruction and some advice on good behaviour.

The man who was behind "II-Maltese American" was Mr. Joseph P. Attard. He was the editor of the Maltese publication and he was also the founder of the Maltese Association of Detroit. Mr. Attard had organised food distribution to the needy members of the Maltese colony before the Rev. Michael Borg had arrived in Detroit in 1920. Together with the secretary of the Maltese Association, Mr. P.T. Olivier, the founder and editor saw himself as the very pillar of the community.

However, while the Association founded by Mr. Attard prospered, the venture into the world of newspapers was not very fortunate. Mr. Attard's publication lasted only a few months as the last her came out on November 5. The Maltese ethnic group did not number more than five thousand at that time and the number of Maltese unable to read English must have been considerable. Those who were able to read Maltese did not always bother to buy their ethnic newspaper.
Although the "II Malti-American" did publish notices of religious activities in the church and there must have been some misunderstanding between the editor and the pastor. Mr. Attard considered himself as the civil spokesman for the Maltese community and at times he and Father Borg did not see eye to eye. The priest was very much committed to the project of buying or building a new church for the Maltese, as the church which was on loan to them had been put up sale. Later on this important issue was to drive a wedge between Mr. Attard and his pastor and division was to become evident within the community when some thought that the Maltese were not in a financial position to buy or build a new church, as Mr. Attard was claiming, or ask for contributions for the project as the pastor was then doing.

Such difference of opinion did not in any way hamper the religious unity of the Maltese parish. Officially it was recognised by American church authorities as "St. Paul Maltese Parish". By March 10, 1922, the Rev. Michael Borg had performed seventy-four baptisms, seven weddings, and registered twenty-one deaths. The pastor said daily Mass at 9.00am and on Sundays and holidays he celebrated an early Mass at 5.00am and a later one at 9.00am. On Saturdays he was available for confessions in Maltese for three hours, from 3.00pm to 6.00pm.

The Knights of Equity Hall served the Maltese community as their church. Under the hall there was a basement which Father Borg named as "Domus Melitensis" or "Maltese House". Social activities were held in the "Domus" while other organisations held their meetings in the basement. That basement was also used as a theatre and in April 1922 the "Melita Dramatic Company" presented there a number of plays and sketches. On April 8, 1922, that Company carried the following programme:

- in Maltese:
  - Culhatt ghal basement
tad-Domus Melitensis.
  Il Cumpannija Filodrammatica "Melita"
tipprezenta
  It-Tebgha fil-familja.
  Dramm sociali bi 3 atti.
  Farsa brilliantissima.
  Cuncert cbir canzonisticu.

- In English:
  - Calling everybody to the basement of Domus Melitensis.
  The "Melita" Dramatic Company presents
  A Stain on the Family's Name. Social Play in 3 acts.
  A witty comic sketch.
  Song Festival.

The programme looked ambitious enough and Bernice Stewart did write in 1920 that Maltese actors even ventured to offer to their audience some of Shakespeare's plays translated into Maltese. Later on the Domus Melitensis housed the Detroit String Orchestra, The Maltese Band, The Melita Athletic Club, The Maltese United Club, The Melita Football Team and the popular Sons of Malta F.C.

All these bodies were constituted by the Maltese immigrants and their activities showed that the Maltese colony in Detroit, in spite of its limitations, was very active. The pastor was supported by many of his people when he said that a new church with a new centre attached to it would bolster the community and help to preserve its identity.

On May 27, 1922, the Rev. Michael Borg initiated a new drive for collecting more money for the church project. Up to that time the parish had agreed that a new church would be the best solution for a Maltese Centre. But it was at this particular moment that a different proposition
was made by the priest himself. An old church in Fort and Plum Street came up for sale. Since there were not sufficient funds to start work on a new church, Father Borg thought it was a better idea to buy this old church. But Mr. Attard disagreed with the pastor and in the "II Malti-American" of June 3, Mr. Attard told his readers not to support their pastor because the priest was disregarding the wishes of the Maltese community when he opted for an old church.

On February 23, 1924 Father Borg officially announced that he was buying the old church. He considered the building to be in a sound condition because it had a new roof put on only the year before. The church was heated by steam and it had a basement which was larger than the "Domus Melitensis". The church seated eight hundred worshippers and was situated close to the area inhabited by the Maltese. The owners were asking for forty thousand dollars with a down payment of twelve thousand.

The Maltese eventually bought that church, but hostility to the pastor never completely died down. Attard's newspaper never approved of the transaction and anybody who did not like either the church or its pastor availed himself of the "II Malti-American" to say so. Eventually, the Maltese in Detroit had allowed a certain amount of anti-clericalism to seep into their ranks.

At this time the Maltese in Malta were seriously divided into two opposing camps: Reformists and Anti-Reformists. The apparent reason for such a divide was the Language Question. That was a thorny problem caused by the ancient supremacy of the Italian language in Maltese culture. Pro-British politicians were clamouring for the supremacy of English instead.

Under the banner of Reform there were those who not only opposed the Pro-Italian Party, but also harboured Leftist tendencies and clashed seriously with the Catholic hierarchy in Malta. The newspaper edited by Mr. Attard, "II Malti-American" was a completely orthodox publication but its political sympathies lay with the Reformist elements in Malta. When Mr. Attard asked Juan Mamo to be his correspondent in Malta, the Rev. M. Borg must have had his suspicions because the author of "Ulied in-Nanna Venut fl-America" was a well-known Socialist. Juan Mamo was then popularising his Radical political creed and in a letter dated April 8, 1922, to the "II Malti-American" he decried the political situation in Malta.

Father Borg wrote a letter in Italian to the editor of "II Malti-American" which pointed to an obvious rift between priest and editor and that rift was not solely due to lack of agreement on the Church Building Fund. The pastor warned Mr. Attard not to take his inspiration from what other newspapers were printing in Malta and thus reflect the polarisation which was causing deep divisions among the population of Malta. He warned that if Mr. Attard persisted in reflecting certain ideas imported from Malta no parishioner of his would buy his newspaper.

The priest also complained that very often religious notices in the "II Malti-American" were not reproduced correctly. He insisted that Church notices carried by the newspaper should be signed by himself. If the editor failed to make such a reference Father Borg threatened to complain about this publicly in church. He went a step further; he put a notice by the church door in which he repeated his complaints about the "II Malti-American". This notice brought out a public reaction from Mr. Attard.

Mr. Attard protested in the name of the Maltese Association and asked the priest to remove that notice if he wanted to safeguard the unity of the parish. The clash undermined the financial situation of Attard's newspaper. As from June 17, 1922, the "II Malti-American" ceased to be the official organ of the Maltese Association, and Attard complained that many Maltese were leaving him.

On May 28, 1922, Mr. Attard admitted in a meeting of the Maltese Association that the organisation's membership had gone down to a mere three hundred. Other speakers suggested that the Association should stay out of the dispute between Mr. Attard and Father Borg. They also wanted to have no connection whatsoever with the newspaper "II Malti-American".
Other members deplored the fact that the voice of the Maltese in Detroit was no longer one. They felt that there were very urgent matters which called for the attention of the Association. They urged the parish and the Association to work together to alleviate the hardship suffered by the Maltese who were out of work.

"Il Malti-American" ceased publication on November 1922. It had survived for eight months. Its place was taken by another weekly publication which was sold on Saturdays. The first number appeared on November 11, 1922, and it bore the title in Maltese: "L'Ecu Malti fl'America" (The Maltese Echo in America). The editor proclaimed that his aim was to bring useful knowledge and information to the Maltese worker in Detroit and to help in the search for a solution to the rift which was tearing apart the Maltese community in Detroit. The editor also hoped that his style would raise the standard of journalistic etiquette which had been allowed to sink to a low ebb by the now defunct "II Malti-American". The editor also declared that he was in favour of the Church Building Fund and that he wanted to defend the Catholic heritage of the Maltese living in Detroit and to help his readers in their process of Americanisation.

"L'Ecu Malti fl'America" of December 16, 1922, commemorated the two years since Father Borg had been in America. The editor informed his readers that their pastor had had his photograph taken and that Father Borg was willing to distribute a copy of his picture to all his parishioners on Sunday, December 24, 1922, in the morning. In that same issue the newspaper published the programme the parish had prepared for Christmas, 1922:

Midnight Mass.
1.30am-5.30am Dancing Party in the basement.
6.00am Tombola (Kino Party) in aid of the Church Building Fund.
Men - 50 cents. Women - free.
Protestants not allowed in.

A further note added that the programme was drawn in such a way as to keep men and young people off the streets at Christmas Night. Before such activities were held many chose to loiter around and sometimes got into trouble.

The editor of the "L'Ecu Malti fl'America" was Frank Borg. At first the newspaper was printed at the printing press which had belonged to the Maltese Association of Mr. Joseph P. Attard, but in July 1923 John Maistre bought the printing press. After ten months Frank Borg resigned because of differences with the owner of the printing press. John Maistre was opposed to the parish priest and Frank Borg decided to leave him and join the pastor in trying to publish another newspaper for the Maltese. On November 24, 1923, John Maistre wrote in the "L'Ecu Malti fl'America" that although he was Maltese he decided not to have anything to do with the pastor of the Maltese parish in Detroit because the priest had labelled Maistre as a Freemason and an Anti-Clerical. In effect this sounded the death-knell of the second Maltese publication in Detroit.

"L'Ecu Malti fl'America" ceased publication in March 1924. A distinguished contributor to its pages was an Augustinian friar, Father Aurelio Ciantar who had been in Detroit since 1921. In December 1923 Father Ciantar had received orders to leave Detroit and proceed to New York. Before he left Detroit he tried to mediate between the opposing factions led by Father Borg on one side and Joseph Attard and John Maistre on the other.

In January 1924 the Rev. Michael Borg and Frank Borg brought out another newspaper which they named "Malta Press". Again the "Malta Press" was short lived but it served its purpose to carry on with the feud between the two Borgs on one side and Attard and Maistre on the other.

In a letter to the editor of the "L'Ecu Malti fl'America" which appeared on December 8, 1923, the Rev. A. Ciantar confessed that he had done all he could to heal the rift within the Maltese community, but now that he had been told to leave Detroit he was severing his connection.
with the community. Joseph P. Attard was sorry to see Ciantar leave and he described him as "a patriot who could have done a lot of good to the Maltese if he had been allowed". Attard also said that he was losing a friend and the loss was being felt by most Maltese who used to approach Father Ciantar rather than go to their parish priest. Attard suggested that the Maltese who liked Father Ciantar should contribute a donation which would be offered to him before his departure from Detroit. When Father Ciantar heard of Attard's suggestion he made it clear that he would refuse any donation offered to him.

The "Malta Press" appeared on January 5, 1924. Only a few numbers were published and the lack of general support for one Maltese newspaper meant that the community was left without one single strong voice which could have commanded any attention from the world outside. Petty parochial polemics and squabbles were not unknown in small ethnic communities encircled by the great American way of life. The Maltese had their differences within a community which did not exceed a total of 5,000 people. However they had no choice but to seek security from each other and gather around their church and pastor. The parish organised picnics which were significant events for people who had few friends outside their ethnic group.

### Activities within the Maltese Community

On August 21, 1922, the parish organised an outing to Bob-lo Island. There they had a football match which was followed by a tug-of-war. They also had sack races when fat men and fat women provided their hilarious version of running. Others preferred to go for a swim while others danced to the tunes of a hurriedly improvised orchestra. Most participants were Maltese but they had some American and Mexican friends with them. The party had left Detroit at 8.30am from Bates Street. Tickets cost 50 cents each.

Another excursion was organised on Ascension Day, 1923. This time the destination was Sugar Island. There were about six hundred people in all, most of them members of various Maltese organisations in Detroit. The soccer team of the "Sons of Malta" were given a silver trophy for their performance during the season.

The parish also published its own bulletin which gave detailed information about the functions and activities held in the church and in the basement. In Christmas 1922 some Maltese immigrants, inspired by nostalgia about the way they used to celebrate Christmas back at home, decided to set up the traditional crib. This crib was put up inside the church and those who saw it described it as beautiful and artistic.

As the community settled down it was felt that a Maltese doctor would be a great asset. The Armenians and the Poles had doctors who spoke their language, why not the Maltese? In a letter to the "II Malti-American fl-America" of October 7, 1922, a correspondent suggested that the Maltese Government and the Church in Malta should select a doctor and send him to practise among the Maltese in Detroit and support him financially. The writer suggested that every parish in Malta should contribute $25 towards this aim. This should bring in the total of $1,700. The writer also suggested that every diocesan priest in Malta would be invited to give up a day's stipend so as to help in augmenting that total.

It is hard to say if that suggestion was meant to be taken seriously. Most Maltese in Malta thought of their friends in the USA as well off and loaded with cash. The last thing they would have dreamt of was to support their friends in America! Moreover an annual income of more than $1,700 in 1922 would have meant an uncontrolled exodus of Malta's medical men, eager to enjoy the comforts of an American way of life. In Malta, that suggestion was nicknamed an "Americanata" or an American joke.

Malta's own Superintendent of Emigration, Henry Casolani, was more practical. He had always held that a priest and a doctor were two indispensable men for the success of any Maltese colony abroad. At that time the majority of Maltese migrants were unable to speak English and a priest and a doctor who could communicate with the Maltese in their own language would be
a valuable asset not only to Detroit but to any Maltese community in any part of the globe. When Henry Casolani read the letter which had appeared in the Maltese newspaper of Detroit, he wrote back to the editor and asked two very pertinent questions:

1. Can the Maltese in Detroit guarantee a fixed salary?
2. Are Maltese medical degrees recognised by State authorities?

The answer to both questions was in the negative. It was stated that if a Maltese doctor emigrated to Michigan he had to start life from scratch like any other immigrant. When it was rumoured that there was the possibility that the Government of Malta was contemplating sending a doctor with a fixed salary paid by the Maltese Government, some Maltese in Detroit had already alerted their relatives and friends who were in the medical profession and encouraged them to apply for the job.

Such manoeuvres came to an end when Casolani made public the correspondence he had with the authorities for the State of Michigan concerning the qualifications of aliens who applied to work as doctors in that State. The State of Michigan put down three conditions before an alien doctor was given the permission to practise in the State:

1. He must be examined by the Board of Registration.
2. His degree must be from a university which was recognised as having the same level as that of the University of the State of Michigan.
3. He must have studied English for at least three years.

Only if an applicant satisfied the second and the third conditions would he be examined by the Board of Registration. The Board sat in June in Arm Arbor and in October in Lansing.

One particular aspect of Maltese life in Detroit was the managing of migrants' money. When in Malta few of the migrants had any worry what to do with surplus cash. They simply did not have it. In Detroit, the People's Bank was the favourite financial institution with the Maltese living in that city. One Maltese newspaper carried advertisements encouraging its readers to put their money in the People's Bank which it described as a solid and reliable institution.

The Maltese American Finance Corporation was an ethnic body which showed a certain degree of sophistication. It was situated in the building which housed the First National Bank. On November 25, 1922, this Corporation had a meeting called by the secretary, Mr. Anthony Vella, who explained the running of the organisation and distributed copies of its rules to those who attended the meeting. The minutes taken by Mr. Vella showed that then the Corporation had 541 shareholders. Another Maltese, Mr. Charles Camilleri, was the treasurer of the Corporation. In his report, Mr. Camilleri wrote that the Corporation was doing well and that its transactions had been showing a commendable profit.

The Maltese American Finance Corporation dealt in land contracts which were guaranteed by the U.S. Government. A special service to the Maltese immigrant was rendered by the Corporation when the immigrant decided to go back to Malta, either for an extended stay or to retire there. The immigrant was able to leave all his assets with the Corporation to be looked after by experts.

With more money to spend, most immigrants started eating in restaurants. Moreover, most Maltese men were either single or else had their wives still living in Malta and therefore they had to cook their meals themselves, unless they decided to eat out. There was one particular restaurant patronised mainly by the Maltese. This was a place with an unusual name: "So Different Restaurant". It was situated at 972, Michigan Avenue, corner with Fifth Street. The "II Malti-American" of May 22, 1922, claimed that this restaurant offered excellent food taken in the company of other Maltese. The advertisement was carried in Maltese and English:

- In Maltese:
Later on the Maltese opened their own eating places. One such place was given the patriotic name of "Melita Lunch". This was followed by the "Melita Bakery" which was to be found at 2511 Fifth Street. The bakery was especially popular with the Maltese in Detroit because it offered special bread baked in Maltese style.

Other Maltese tried to run small businesses. Grech and Brincat opened a thriving shop in Howard Street which bore the name of "General Grocers". John Vella opened his School of Dancing. This school was at 1355 Howard Street. In July 15, 1922, Vella claimed that he taught dancing in Maltese and American styles. Anthony De Guara was a tailor and he also cleaned and pressed clothes at Sixth Street and Porter Street. De Guara changed his name slightly to make it look more impressive, but his advertisements made it clear that he was Maltese and that he hoped that his countrymen would patronise his shop.

Some Maltese immigrants did alter or change their family names in an attempt to sound thoroughly American. William Farrugia changed his name into Farr. He was a watch repairer at 1385, Trumbull Avenue, Highland Park. Maltese surnames went through a complete metamorphosis. Camilleri became Miller and Mizzi was changed into Mitchell. Others changed their names completely or adopted Anglo-Saxon names. This they did under the pressure to Americanise themselves. It must be said however, that the majority of Maltese living in Detroit and in other American cities respected their origins and proudly retained their family names.

Most Maltese Americans came from a working class background, but in the late twenties, Detroit was attracting men and women from other social strata as well. The "Malta Daily Chronicle" of March 10, 1927, referred to a certain Maltese lady who had emigrated to Detroit in 1926. Before she left Malta this anonymous lady was a well known person in the higher echelons of Maltese society. On February 13, 1927, she attended a lecture at the Orchestra Hall in Detroit.

The lecture was on Malta and the Maltese. It was delivered by Mr. Newman who also illustrated his talk by a film he himself had shot while he was on a visit to Malta. The impressions made by the talk and the film on the audience were recorded by the lady in question to Mr. Henry Casolani who passed her letter to Maltese newspapers.

In her letter, the writer said that the Orchestra Hall was one of the largest cinemas in the city of Detroit and that only activities which were bound to attract large audiences were held there. On February 13, 1927, one such activity took place. Most men and women present were Maltese settlers who had flocked to the Orchestra Hall to hear Mr. Newman and see familiar scenes recorded for them on film. The film showed magnificent views of the historic cathedral of St. John's in Valletta. Also shown were the various palaces which housed the famous Knights of St. John during their long sojourn in Malta.

Mr. Newman also showed various shots of Strada Reale, the main street of the Maltese capital, Valletta. In Strada Reale, the lady recognised the politician Enrico Mizzi, passing in front of the Court House completely unaware of Mr. Newman's camera. Other views of the eastern side of Grand Harbour brought tears to those migrants from Cottonera who had worked in the Dockyard before they left their country.
There were also some pretty girls who posed for Mr. Newman. One of them was so shy that she kept lowering her eyes every moment that the camera was aimed at her. Her companion tried to keep serious but at the end she burst out laughing.

1926 was an important year for American Catholics because the International Eucharistic Congress was held in Chicago in that year. The Maltese representative was Bishop Michael Gonzi of Gozo. While in the USA Bishop Gonzi visited a number of Maltese communities both in the USA and in Canada. The Rev. Michael Borg, the pastor of St. Paul's Maltese Parish in Detroit, organised a mission and he also invited another Maltese priest, Father Michael Z. Cefai, to preach to the Maltese in preparation for the International Congress.

The visit to Detroit by Mgr. Gonzi was awaited with eagerness. He arrived on June 26,1926. Many Maltese from Michigan, Ohio and Canada converged on the Maltese church to meet the first ever Maltese bishop to visit them as a representative of the Maltese Church. The Rev. Michael Borg welcomed Mgr. Gonzi. Bishop and pastor had known each other as they were born in the same town of Vittoriosa. More than 3,000 migrants greeted their distinguished visitor as he arrived at the railway station from New York.

Two little girls spread roses in the path of the bishop as he walked from the station to his car. Soon after his arrival in the parish the bishop confirmed two hundred children and adults. After the confirmation a reception was held in the Knights of Columbus Hall. The mayor of Detroit, John W. Smith, welcomed the distinguished guest as did Mr. William Devlin of the Detroit Council of the Knights of Columbus.

On June 27, a Grand Concert was held in honour of the Bishop of Gozo. Many of the musicians were Maltese. A one-act play was performed in Maltese.

The visit by Mgr. Gonzi to the Maltese in Detroit was an outstanding success. The pastor felt proud that he was able to show to his important visitor how well organised St. Paul's Maltese parish was. Yet early in 1927 Father Borg lost his parish and was replaced by the Rev. Michael Z. Cefai. His replacement was sudden and unexpected. He had had his disagreements with a number of parishioners, especially with Joseph Attard and John Maistre, but most parishioners liked him.

Although the Rev. Michael Borg had to leave his parish which he served for more than six years as its first pastor, he stayed in Michigan and never lost contact with his community. In 1928 he was working in the parish of St. Paul in Grosse Pointe Farms. At the same time he used to offer his services to the church of St. Ambrose in Detroit. Father Borg died in Detroit on April 18, 1963, when he was seventy-seven years of age.

The final point about the Maltese community in Detroit between the two World Wars refers to the complicated world of politics. At that time the scare of Bolshevism was running through America and the Maltese community had been touched by it. The case of Sacco and Vanzetti, two Italian immigrants, was the talking point of most discussions. The two men, one a shoemaker and the other a fishmonger, were accused of a double murder. They were also suspected of harbouring Radical political beliefs. They were executed in 1927, but many believed them innocent as they denied the charges against them up to their last breath.

One Maltese from Detroit who caught the public eye because of his Socialist leanings was Joseph Borg who had emigrated from Hamrun, Malta, and arrived in Detroit in 1922. Like most of his countrymen in Detroit, Joseph Borg found his first job with Ford's Motor Company. It was on the shop floor that Joseph Borg met other European Socialists and was converted to their creed. He soon gained a reputation for his eloquence and for his dedication to the cause of the rights of the working class and his name began appearing in American newspapers not only in the Middle West but also on the East and West coasts.
In 1932 the city of Detroit was going through intense industrial unrest and at one particular demonstration four workers were killed and more than fifty wounded when a crowd of some four thousand unemployed staged a demonstration outside the Ford factory at Dearborn. The reaction of the police was ferocious. Despite the inflammatory placards carried by some of the demonstrators, their sole intention was to send a small deputation to seek an interview with Mr. Ford.

Unemployed workers throughout the country numbering some 25,000 organised a hunger march to the city of Washington. The march was called the "Bonus Army". The marchers were dispersed as they approached Washington, but Joseph Borg, who was one of the organisers of the Bonus Army, was one of the few who escaped control and managed to encamp on the grounds of the White House.

In 1932 Joseph Borg was in California where he was imprisoned because he was accused of spreading seditious propaganda. When other Socialists heard of Borg's imprisonment they organised protest meetings in many industrial towns and cities in order to demand his release. As soon as the Socialist from Malta regained his freedom, he was again in trouble, this time in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The steel workers of Pittsburgh were on strike and Joseph Borg was again in the news because he helped to organise that strike. One newspaper of the time described him as "a storming petrel of industrial unrest on the eastern seabord of the USA".

Wherever there was industrial agitation Joseph Borg's name was frequently featured in the American press. Very often he was simply referred to as the Socialist. During the textile strike he was chosen by the strikers as their spokesman. He was also one of a delegation chosen to enter into arbitration with President Roosevelt's committee to settle the textile dispute.

He travelled to San Francisco to make a broadcast on behalf of the textile strikers. However, as the USA slowly recovered from the Depression and prosperity came back to most workers of the American nation, the voice of Joseph Borg, the Socialist leader from Detroit, became less strident as he slowly disappeared from the public stage.

The Maltese in New York

Although the Maltese in New York City were not as numerous as those in Detroit, their first settlements in that city were older. The American writer, Jean Piper, wrote about the Maltese colony in New York. According to Jean Piper the first Maltese known to have settled in New York was a certain Carmelo Caruana who was also known as "The Merchant Prince". Caruana was born in Malta in 1808 and when only twenty-one years old he set foot in New York as an energetic entrepreneur.

Carmelo Caruana's motives for arriving in New York were purely commercial, but it was probable that he had an eye for beautiful girls and was also very ambitious. The young entrepreneur from Malta met a certain Miss Coxe whose father was attached to the American diplomatic service. Caruana and Coxe got married and they made New York their permanent home. Caruana died in New York in 1893 when he was in his eight-fifth year. Jean Piper claimed that Carmelo's son, John Coxe Caruana was living in Woodhaven, Long Island, in August 1925.

Jean Piper referred to another prominent Maltese immigrant in New York. This was Dr. Lorenzo Ullo who emigrated to Brooklyn in 1873. When he arrived in New York, Dr. Ullo carried with him a letter of introduction to General Sherman and to Chief Justice Davis. Dr. Ullo established himself in New York as a lawyer and as the years went by he cultivated very influential connections in the city. In fact he became a renowned Admiralty lawyer.
The first wife of Dr. Ullo was from Malta, but when he became a widower he married a girl from New York. The second wife was named Monica, and her brother, George Ryan, was a member of the New York City Board of Education. According to Jean Piper, Monica Ryan Ullo lived in Jackson Heights, N.Y., after the death of her husband. A daughter of Dr. Ullo was still living in 1925. She was born in Malta of his first wife. In 1925 this daughter was living in St. George's Hotel on Clark Street.

In an article bearing the date of August 16, 1925, Jean Piper wrote about "the quaint life of a famed little Mediterranean Isle which was transplanted in New York by industrious Maltese who had settled in the city". Jean Piper was referring to the Maltese in New York, particularly those living in Brooklyn whom she knew very well. She interviewed a few of them and claimed to have spoken to many of the immigrants from Malta whom she met on the streets of Brooklyn. Jean Piper thought that in 1925 there were some 2,000 Maltese living in Brooklyn. She also met Maltese scattered from the Bronx to Bay Ridge, wedged as they were between Jews and Italians. Jean Piper wrote that there were Maltese families in Flatbush and out in Long Island. In Manhattan the Maltese mixed freely with the polyglot communities which lived between Fourteenth and Twenty-Third Streets, between Seventh and Eight Avenues. There were also a few living near Times Square.

The Maltese colony in the Bronx gravitated towards the church of St. Simon on 183rd Street and Valentine Avenue. There they found a Maltese priest who worked among immigrants who spoke Maltese, English and Italian. The priest was the Rev. Elias Vella of the Carmelite Order who had arrived in New York in 1919 when he was thirty-four years old. He spent thirteen years working in the Bronx and was held in high esteem by those who knew him. He was recalled to Malta in 1932.

Another priest working among the Maltese was the Rev. Nazzareno Formosa who was born in Gozo in 1901. He went to New York in 1927 and was stationed at Sacred Heart church on East 33rd Street. For ten years he mingled freely with the Maltese in Manhattan, Brooklyn and Astoria and was chaplain to many associations formed within the Maltese community in New York. He died on July 22, 1937 at Columbus Hospital. At his funeral there were about eight hundred mourners.

The impressions made by the Maltese on Jean Piper were very positive. Her judgement was objective because she was an American observer with no special reason for hiding the defects of the Maltese living in New York. According to what she wrote, she knew very few Maltese who willingly lived on charity. Most Maltese impressed her as being industrious, thrifty, sober and peaceful. They preferred to stay out of industrial agitation. The Maltese were eager first to obtain American citizenship, then they worked hard to put a roof over their heads and to be reunited with their families.

A well-known Maltese at the time was Mr. Alphonse Bonavia who was a contractor in the painting business. He employed a number of Maltese. Bonavia lived in Astoria, N.Y., and one of his major contracts was the painting of the house of the Travelers Insurance Company on Remsen Street. Alphonse's brother, Angelo, married a Maltese, Miss Josephine Debono on June 12, 1926. The marriage was significant in that it was recorded by most newspapers circulating in New York State because the Bonavia family was very well known in business circles.

Mr. M. Busuttil lived with his family in Manhattan. After the Great War he emigrated to New York. He brought to America his love for the delicate Maltese lace. Jean Piper noted: "Stored away in his house are many fine pieces of Maltese lace and there is no danger of having the wrong thing foisted on you there 5 for the Maltese are noted for their honesty as well as for their extreme courtesy".

The Maltese in New York took on varied jobs. Paul Cassar had a group of donkeys which he worked at the Luna Park on Coney Island. The donkeys carried passengers on what was supposed to be a mountain trail. Paul loved his donkeys and there was no danger of his
maltreating them. Jean Piper described Paul Cassar as "very calm, brown-eyed, with a kind face". In 1925 Paul Cassar had been thirteen years on Coney Island. He had been with the American Army in France where he took care of the Army's horses.

The last Maltese to be mentioned by Jean Piper was perhaps destined to be the most famous: Joseph Spurin Calleia who had arrived in New York in 1919. He settled in Brooklyn where he sold pianos and where he soon became district manager of his firm. In 1925 Jean Piper described Joseph S. Calleia as "an outstanding Maltese tenor who established an enviable reputation when he made his debut in the Town Hall last winter when he starred in "The Broken Wing". Eventually Joseph Calleia became known as a film actor not as a singer. In 1935 he was given the role of gangster Tony Mako in the play "Small Miracle". His brilliant performance earned him a two year contract with Metro-Goldwyn-Meyer thus providing him with a chance to make a name for himself in the very competitive world of film making.

Joseph Calleia enjoyed a string of successes, but he did not like the idea of being tied down by contracts. He preferred to be a freelance. As a freelance he starred in the film "Algiers" with Hedy Lamarr and Charles Boyer. His performance as Police Inspector won him the Critics' Award in the USA.

Calleia was a talented film actor. In spite of his international acclaim he never ignored his roots. Among his many friends he counted Mgr. George Caruana, bishop of Puerto Rico, and Mr. Joseph E. Doublet who was very active among the Maltese in New York. Calleia was a member of the Maltese Benevolent Society founded by his friend Doublet. At the first anniversary of the Society in 1935 Calleia was pressed by the ladies to sing for them a popular Maltese song. He obliged by singing a funny song which every Maltese knows as it forms part of the popular folklore of their Island:

- 0 lilek tal-gallerija,
  Idhol gewwa ahseb dnubietek!
  Hutek koroh kolha izewwgu,
  Int sabieha hadd ma riedek.

- Listen you girl at the balcony,
  Get inside and ponder on your sins!
  Your sisters, though ugly, got married,
  While you, though beautiful, stay single.

February 20, 1936, the Maltese held a Dommerr at the Cornish Arms Hotel, New York, to pay tribute to Joseph Calleia. According to Joseph E. Doublet, editor of The Maltese journal, the Maltese community wanted to pay tribute to a beloved son of Malta who had successfully placed for the first time in history the little island's name map of the Movie World. Joseph Calleia was to show his patriotism during the Second War when he worked very hard with his friend Doublet to raise money and collect clothes and food for the Malta Relief Fund. At sixty-five years of age he left the USA and retired to Malta he lived till he passed away in 1975.

A lesser celebrity than Joseph Calleia was an immigrant from the village of Zebbug, Malta, who had emigrated in 1885. He was Joseph Muscat whose fame reached Malta from the USA at the beginning of the twentieth century. The news-paper "Risorgimento" of September 1901 mentioned Joseph Muscat as "a famous Maltese tenor who for many years has been living in America, where he is a noted celebrity". According to "Risorgimento" an American newspaper called "The New Democrat" of August 10, 1901, reproduced a picture of tenor Muscat with an article about his life.

Joseph Muscat visited Malta in August 1925. He had been in the USA for about forty years. Newspaper reports of the time refer to him as a tenor of a high calibre with a brilliant career in America. Besides singing, Muscat had opened a Singing Academy in Cleveland, Ohio.
It seems that Muscat also interested himself in astrology. He had a special interest in President William McKinley as that Republican politician had been governor of the State of Ohio where Muscat had been living. Muscat claimed that he had predicted a violent end to the life of President McKinley. In fact McKinley was shot by Leon Czolgosz on September 6 and he died of his wounds on September 14, 1901.

Reference has already been made to another prominent Maltese living in New York: Joseph Edward Doublet. Joseph E. Doublet was born in Msida, Malta, on February 13, 1901. He decided to leave Malta for the USA when he was only nineteen. By that age he had already acquired a good education which was to be a great asset to him and to those who sought his advice and aid. Joseph Edward Doublet arrived in New York on June 24, 1920, after a journey which lasted twenty-one days. His first job on American soil was with the Pennsylvania Rail Road. His good command of the English language helped him to advance until he was put in charge of thousands of workers, most of them refugees from war-torn Europe.

In spite of a difficult employment situation Doublet managed to find jobs for many immigrants from Malta. In 1921 he provided work for two hundred and fifteen Maltese. When the Great Depression set in more than six hundred Maltese sought help from him. In 1920 he had rented a large house with fifteen rooms in Jersey City to lodge immigrants he himself had sponsored. Doublet continued to sponsor immigrants from Malta and provide accommodation for them till 1950.

In thirty years Doublet had sponsored about 2,000 Maltese. Although many of these immigrants eventually settled in New York City and State, others were helped to settle in New Jersey, Detroit and San Francisco.

A close collaborator in the philanthropic field was Mgr. George Caruana. Years before this good priest was elevated to the see of Puerto Rico, he had worked hand in hand with Doublet. The two men collected money, food and clothing for needy Maltese. This collaboration lasted till the death of Bishop Caruana in 1951. Together they had founded the "Malta Society of New York" with Father Caruana as its first president and Joseph Doublet as the first overseer of the Maltese Community in New York.

Another creation of Joseph Doublet was the "Maltese Benevolent Society" which he established in 1930. Although Doublet himself was to live to a ripe old age, his Society fortunately outlived him. When asked the reason for the Society, Doublet said that he meant it to preserve natural human pride in case of sickness. This he proposed to do by helping to pay doctors' bills and to provide a decent Christian burial for the members of the Society.

Another significant contribution community in New York was the newspaper founded by Joseph Doublet. "The Maltese Journal" appeared in June 1935. Its original name was "The Maltese Benevolent Journal" and was at first distributed free to Maltese living in New York, Detroit, San Francisco, Philadelphia and Toronto. The journal was a successful venture in that it reached many Maltese both inside and outside North America, attained a high standard of journalistic quality and survived for eleven years. Doublet was keen on accurate reporting especially during the war years 1940-1944. His responsible account of Malta's ordeal under continuous Nazi bombing earned the sympathy not only of his Maltese readers but of many others; and this helped Doublet in launching his Malta Relief Fund which was instrumental in alleviating the terrible hardship which the Maltese in Malta had to undergo during the war years.

"The Maltese Journal" survived till November 1946. Doublet gave up his publication very reluctantly but it became very onerous on him as the newspaper depended on him completely. The office of "The Maltese Journal" served as a place for free legal aid to many troubled Maltese. He helped about a hundred and twenty cases, mostly concerned with domestic problems. Although he had never studied law formally, he realised the utility of legal knowledge when he got to know of a Maltese who had been given a life sentence and of whose innocence he was convinced. Not only did Doublet study law but he was able to win the
freedom for that unfortunate man. Later Doublet served for twelve years as Assistant Domestic Court Judge.

During a long and active life, Joseph Edward Doublet made many influential friends. Such contacts were applied to make Malta and the Maltese known and respected throughout the USA. In 1939, Cardinal Hayes, Alfred Smith, Governor of New York, and Mr. Grover A. Whalen, commissioner of the 1939 World Fair in New York, visited Doublet at his own house where he showed the three important men his 'Melitensia' library which contained two hundred books, a collection of historical minutes dating from the time of the Knights of St. John in Malta, a coin and stamp collection and other items related to the history and culture of the Maltese. Cardinal, Governor, and Commissioner were greatly impressed and they encouraged Doublet to organise an exhibition to show the American public his unique collections and thus to publicise his country of origin.

Doublet accepted the suggestion and an exhibition was held on the second floor of the British Empire Building in Radio City, New York. The exhibition remained open for six weeks.

Joseph Edward Doublet died at the age of eighty-six in Huntingdon, N.Y. Although all but nineteen of his years were lived in the USA, he retained his love for his country of origin and he expressed his patriotism in concrete ways by helping his countrymen living in the U.S.A. and by providing significant help for the Maltese in Malta during their siege of 1940-1944. Undoubtedly he remains one of the most prominent figures in the history of Maltese emigration to the USA.

**Clubs, Visitors and Activities in NY**

Mr. Mason Mitchell was a very popular American Consul stationed in Malta in the twenties. In January 1923, the Consul received a letter from the USA signed by Dr. William Hornaday who was the director of the Zoological Park of York. Dr. Hornaday told Mr. Mason Mitchell that his son-in-law had engaged a worker from Malta in 1922. The worker, whose name had never been recorded, had done excellent work in decorating the house of the son-in-law and Dr. Hornaday described him as a conscientious man who spoke excellent English.

Dr. William Hornaday had kept in touch with the worker from Malta. After the Maltese immigrant had finished his job at the house, he had found work in an iron foundry where he worked as a moulder. Unfortunately, an accident happened in which the immigrant suffered horrible burns and had to stay in hospital for more than three months. By the time Dr. Hornaday was writing his letter, the Maltese worker had fully recovered and he had sent for his family to join him in New York.

Mr. Mason Mitchell was very willing to publicise favourable comments on the Maltese, particularly by fellow Americans. It was precisely at this time that the American Consul was helping the Maltese Government to obtain some respite from the harsh impositions made by the First Quota Law of 1921. The fact that the Maltese did manage to enlarge their quota was in no small measure due to the support given by him. The wife of the Consul happened to be a very popular lady in Malta's social circles and the Mitchells were welcome guests at most social gatherings.

It was with great consternation that the Maltese public learned of the attempt on the life of Mr. Mitchell on December 12, 1922. On that fateful day, the American Consul was walking towards the Upper Barracca Gardens in Valletta, when an assailant shot at him from very close range. Fortunately, the bullet passed through Mr. Mitchell's coat and caused only a flesh wound above the Consul's hip.

The Consul's attacker was a frustrated emigrant who had returned from the USA. His name was Lorenzo Bonello and he hailed from the village of Birkirkara. It transpired that Bonello had served in the American Army during the War of 1914-1918 and had been dishonourably
discharged because he had disobeyed superior orders. On his return to Malta, Bonello had expected to receive a pension for the period he had served in the American Army. His claim had been rejected and he felt that Mr. Mitchell was responsible for this rejection.

Fortunately Mr. Mitchell recovered from his superficial wound and he and his wife were visited by many well wishers who expressed their deep regret for what had happened to the Consul. When the Mitchells went back to the USA they left behind them many friends. It was with deep regret that Mr. Mitchell's friends learned of his death in USA on June 16, 1930.

Among the many clubs active between the two world wars, the Maltese Club of New York in Astoria was very popular with immigrants who had just landed in the USA. In 1931 this Club introduced the commemoration of Malta's National Day on September 8. In that year the lifting of the Great Siege of 1565 on September 8, was remembered. Six hundred Maltese took part in the celebration. There were two special guests: the Rev. Joseph Demarco who was pastor at St. Rosalie church and later at St. Leo's and the Rev. Elias Vella from the Bronx and who had been interviewed by Jean Piper in 1925.

The two priests presented flags to the Club on this occasion. Father Demarco presented the American flag whereas Father Vella presented the Red and White flag of Malta. The orchestra of the Club provided the music. The premises were ably decorated by Joseph Azzopardi who hailed from the town of Vittoriosa which itself was the headquarters of the Knights of St. John and where the lifting of the Great Siege of 1565 took place.

Joseph Azzopardi not only was artistically minded but he knew the history of Malta very well. Those who admired his decorations stated that ... "his knowledge of old armour and weapons of the type used in the Great Siege is a valuable asset. Our ballroom resembled the Palace Armoury in miniature".

The Maltese in New York were fortunate in having among them a very cultured gentleman who was an immigrant like themselves. Mr. Charles S. Frendo had left Malta in 1915 after having finished his law studies in Malta. He first settled in the Bronx and worked for some of the major banks in New York. Seven years after his arrival in New York he decided to return to Malta but was back in the USA in 1926. He then took journalism as his career and was a regular contributor to the "New York Herald Tribune" and to the "New York World". Mr. Frendo was conversant in five languages and in 1935 he was working as a reader for the scenario department of M.G.M. in New York.

On November 10, 1929, the "Herald Tribune" published an article written by Mr. Frendo which was meant to familiarise the American public with the island of Malta. The article went under the caption: "Historic Malta As British Naval Base". In that article Mr. Frendo gave a comprehensive historical account of Malta which he described as rich in milestones of history. He also dwelt on the strategic importance of the Island to the British Empire. The article was illustrated by fine photographs of Malta's Grand Harbour.

Bishop Michael Gonzi of Gozo, who was in North America in 1926, made it a point to visit the Maltese in New York. He was accompanied by his friend Monsignor P. Galea. While the bishop felt it his duty to visit the Maltese immigrants living in Detroit, New York and Toronto, the Monsignor had more time on his hands, and he decided to write a book on what he had seen and heard during his trip to North America. Mgr. Galea arrived in New York on June 16, 1926, on the passenger ship "Martha Washington".

In his book Galea commented on immigration procedure: "It is no easy matter to disembark in New York. We had to undergo various medical checks while we were still on board. Those who showed certificates that they had already undergone the required tests were ordered to submit to those tests again. Women with long hair were inspected rigorously and had their hair disinfected. In spite of the fact that we had our passports in order we were interrogated at length. One of our party was detained because someone suspected him of planning to stay in
the USA. He was left on Ellis Island and was only released when strong representations were made on his behalf by influential clergymen in New York. Such tedious process reminds me of what an American Senator once said; that it was easier to enter heaven than the U.S. Somebody once remarked that if Saint Paul himself were to apply for a visa, the immigration authorities would not grant him that".

New York was worth the trouble. Mgr. Galea was impressed by so many people, reputed to be over eight million, who lived and worked in that city. Every seventh New Yorker possessed a car and these cruised along the streets at the incredible speed of twenty-five miles an hour. There were times when Galea did not think that he would survive that kind of fast going.

The good priest published his book about his trip to America in Maltese under the title: "X’Rajt u Xi Smajt". Translated this means "What I Saw and Heard". Among the things which disturbed the author was moral licentiousness. Divorce was common and easily given by courts whose legal advisers were far too liberal. Parental control in 1926 was weak. Galea was shocked to learn that children over sixteen could leave their parents and live on their own. He thought that such a false pride in an exaggerated form of personal freedom was bound to undermine the American family and ultimately the nation.

The American girl did not escape the puritanical sanctions of the clerical observer. Girls were much too free and they went out of their homes unattended. Some took on regular jobs and went to work every day just as men do in other parts of the world. Moreover their skirts were too short as was their hair. Some girls cut their hair so short, that were it not for their make-up, one would think they did not belong to the gentle sex. The most frightening thing however was, that some bare-faced girls dared go out into the streets wearing short pants! Others would even dare take out small mirrors and do their faces on trains and on buses in the presence of gentlemen. This they did without being in the least embarrassed.

The book on what P. Galea "saw and heard" in America in 1926 is important for two reasons: it gives a human insight into everyday life in New York and it also points to the many culture shocks Maltese and other aliens had to undergo when they tried to start their new life in a heterogenous society like the American one. Foreign women found the challenge more difficult than their men did. Many of them decided to stay at home rather than cross the Atlantic and make the effort of taking on a new way of life.

Single men in America did not find it easy to approach American girls. The men found it easier to gather in clubs with other men who understood them and spoke the same language. The love of soccer brought many Maltese and other Europeans together. In 1930 two Maltese clubs in Brooklyn joined hands and formed one Maltese soccer team. The first club was the Maltese Union Football Club of Brooklyn which had previously won the Eastern District Open Soccer Cup Com-petition "B" Division. The other club was the Melita Athletic Club. This amalgamation brought about the Melita Union Football Club and was registered in an Open Cup League which was recognised by the U.S. Football Association.

In September 20, 1931, the newly formed team, affectionately called by its supporters simply as the "Melita" played against the League champions of the Cosmopolitan District at Ulmer Park in Brooklyn. The match ended with a victory for the "Melita" against the Italian defenders with the resounding result of nine goals against three. One Maltese spectator wrote back to his friends in Malta: "The continuous and vociferous cheering of the "Melita" supporters was unparalleled in any previous encounter. An interesting preliminary match between the Maltese and the Spaniards ended with a Maltese victory with the result of three scores against one".

Towards the end of 1931 the "Melita Union Football Club" had two teams, the White and the Green. The two teams had been recognised by the Brooklyn League. 1931 ended on a very positive note for the Maltese team. One correspondent wrote on November 26: "While baseball still ranks as the principal sport in the U.S., soccer football is fast gaining adherents and our
countrymen in the USA are giving their share in making popular this game". In that same year the "Melita" were leading the Brooklyn League with a margin of four points.

**California**

Towards the end of the nineteenth century a few Maltese had found their way to the Pacific Coast of the USA. The report issued by the Emigration Committee of Malta on November 26, 1910, claimed that the Maltese in California numbered about two hundred. One member of that Committee, Dr. Charles Mattei, wrote that by 1911 he had helped five hundred emigrants to settle in North America, most of whom had told him that their final destination was to be California.

Applicants who had received financial help from the V. Bugeja Fund between 1909 and 1911 had numbered about sixty-six men. Some of these intending emigrants had applied to emigrate to California.

Two eminent members on the Emigration Committee, Professor Lawrence Manche' and Dr. Charles Mattei, were both strongly in favour of encouraging Maltese to settle in California. Mattei preferred the Golden State because that State was then going through a period of robust development where jobs outnumbered workers, particularly on the railroads. In 1910 there were Maltese employed by the North Pacific Railway at four dollars a day. Dr. Mattei had been to California to see for himself and on one of his visits he said he met some sixty Maltese who had been in the State since 1900. These men also said that since they set foot in California they had never been out of work.

The Royal Commission of 1911 had favoured emigration to British possessions within the Empire. The Commissioners however, mentioned California as one favourable exception to this rule and wrote encouragingly about prospects for intending Maltese emigrants to that part of the world. Most Maltese preferred San Francisco where they settled in the areas of San Bruno and Butcherstown. In 1911 the Maltese population there was estimated at about two hundred.

In 1914 the Maltese community in and around San Francisco welcomed a Maltese priest to work there on a permanent basis. This was the Rev. Andrew Azzopardi who soon organised his people into an ethnic parish. In 1915 the archbishop of San Francisco bought a hall which had been built in 1874, and gave it to the Maltese to use as their own church. The hall was situated in the Bay View District. Eventually, the Maltese pastor also offered his services to other immigrants living in the area, especially to the Italians.

After the retirement of the Rev. A. Azzopardi in 1919, another Maltese priest took over the running of the parish. This was the Rev. Theophilus Cachia who had been living previously in a nearby parish. Both priests belonged to the Maltese Franciscans.

Father Cachia modified and enlarged the hall. On February 12, 1922, the hall was consecrated as a church by the archbishop of San Francisco and was given the official title of St. Paul of the Shipwreck Maltese Church. The parish was situated at 1509, Oakdale Avenue.

"The Monitor" was the official organ of the archdiocese of San Francisco and on January 4, 1919, the editor published the obituary of a Maltese Jesuit who had died at the beginning of that year. The priest was the Rev. Vincent A. Testa who had been pastor of the Mission Church of Santa Clara. Father Testa was born in Malta in 1841 and emigrated to the USA when he was in his twenty-third year. He did his studies in Woodstock, Maryland, and was ordained in the USA in 1874. He taught for twenty years in Saint Ignatius University in San Francisco. He died in Santa Clara and "The Monitor" described him as "one of the best known and most highly respected priests in California".
By the late twenties the Maltese population in and around San Francisco was about 5,000. When, during the Depression, emigration from Malta to the USA not only dwindled but also a number of Maltese decided to return to their country, the Maltese in California stood their own and were not as badly hit as their countrymen in Detroit and New York. According to Mr. Francis Grech, who was responsible for the Maltese Club of San Francisco, the Maltese in California were in a stable condition, even if some were out of work. That same club was busy with philanthropic work in the Maltese community. Mr. Grech claimed that the Maltese mixed well with other people, some men had married American women and most of them had decided to opt for American citizenship.

Mr. Grech was himself a highly intelligent emigrant who had done his studies in engineering before he left for the U.S.A. He had worked on the Golden Gate Bridge and had been officially commanded for his work. He was also very active within his ethnic community. He had opened the Maltese Club of San Francisco on February 1, 1930. The Club was first located in a spacious hall on 1648 Oakdale Avenue. An Inauguration Ball was held on opening day. Mr. Grech himself served as the first president.

According to Mr. Grech, on the day the Club was inaugurated, most Maltese living in the Bay Area wanted to get inside. It was not possible for everybody to be accommodated and many had to be turned back.

In his opening speech the President regretted the fact that some people had to be turned back but he assured his hearers that his association was willing to cooperate fully with local authorities to help further the welfare of the Maltese living in the Bay Area. Mr. Grech also reminded those present of the importance of learning English if they wanted to be successful. He promised to organise classes so that those willing to learn English would be given the opportunity to do so. The President concluded his speech by auguring a bright future for the Club.

In less than five years the Maltese Club of San Francisco had seven hundred and fifty enrolled members thus making it the major Maltese organisation in the area. The Club worked in cooperation with the Parish, and although Mr. Grech and Father Cachia did have their differences, they always put the well-being of their community above every other consideration.

In October 1930, eight months after the opening of the Club, a Maltese Band was set up. The bandmen, twenty-five of them, posed for their official photograph, resplendent in their new uniforms. The director of the Band was Mr. Charles Fenech. When the bandmaster presented his first public performance, Father Cachia, the pastor of the Maltese parish, presented him with a Maltese flag. According to an observer from New York who happened to be visiting the Maltese community in San Francisco, the new band was the pride of the Maltese living in California. In March 1940 the Maltese Band celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the creation of the Parish. That same year was also the tenth anniversary of the Band and it was thought fitting to commemorate the two events.

Charles Fenech wrote that the Maltese Band was popular with the Maltese and with the Americans. It was being invited for municipal, State and County engagements. In later years Maestro Fenech also set up a String Orchestra which played a number of hits which were in demand at the time.

Besides the Band and the Orchestra, the members of the Maltese Club decided to organise a dramatic company which they named as "Vittoria". The director was Frank Cutajar. Plays like "Othello" were produced in Maltese translations because Frank Cutajar thought that there were many good dramatic companies in the area which were capable of presenting theatrical works in English. Only his "Vittoria" was able to give good entertainment in Maltese. Mr. F. Cutajar was also of the opinion that while integration was necessary there was no reason why the Maltese should lose their language and their identity.
In 1930 Mr. Joseph Borg wrote a special play which dealt with the victory of the Maltese over the Turks in 1565. When the Club of San Francisco held its festivities on Malta's National Day, September 8, the play written by Joseph Borg formed an added attraction. The company "Vittoria" also presented three more plays in Maltese:

Pagliacciu
Il Kuncert ta' Teatrin
Il Prinioli Misteriusi

Mr. P.P. Vella was asked to give a lecture on the significance of the victory of 1565. When the talk was over, the curtain was raised and a panorama of the Grand Harbour appeared. That scene was ably painted by Mr. Lawrence Camilleri. Then a boy dressed as a Knight of Malta, appeared on the stage to hoist a Maltese flag. This was greeted by a tremendous applause. Next followed the mystic prayer by the poet Dun Karm which was later to be adopted as the National Anthem of Malta: "Lil Din 1-Art Helwa" which in English could be rendered as "To this Fair Land". The prayer was sung by the children's choir under the baton of Maestro Charles Fenech. The boys in the choir were dressed as Knights of Malta whereas the girls were in the traditional colours, white and red.

Miss Esther Sherry sang her solo part which was enthusiastically received. She was asked to sing the "prayer" again and again. Twelve tableaux vivants were presented. Three of these were received with great applause. The three depicted:

- "Triumphant Malta Saluting the Blessed Virgin" with Miss Esther Sherry singing the Ave Maria accompanied by Mr. Charles Scicluna as violinist and Mrs. C. Frendo on the piano.
- "La Valette Exhorting Malta" was presented by Emmanuel Falzon helped by his troupe called "Int Sabieha 0 Malta taghna". (You are so fair, Our Malta).
- "Malta Mourning the Brave" which came as an epilogue to the raising of the Great Siege and the subsequent Christian victory of September 8, 1565.

In November 1930, Mr. F. Grech, president of the Maltese Club of San Francisco, wrote to Malta to complain about the fact that his Club received no official recognition from the Maltese Government even though they did what they could to publicise Malta. He also mentioned the fact that his members had contributed a substantial sum towards the Malta War Memorial for Children. This they had done in spite of the hard times which were being experienced by most people living in America. Mr. Grech reminded his readers in Malta that Maltese immigrants living in the USA were working people who had to strive hard to earn their living.

Mr. Grech also said that he and his members offered their assistance to those Maltese who arrived in San Francisco. He also pointed out that it was the policy of his Club to teach the children of Maltese migrants something about their culture and history. This they did by getting together on special occasions which were dear to the Maltese in Malta. Finally Mr. F. Grech mentioned the activities which were being done by the "Vittoria" dramatic company, the Band and the String Orchestra and by their soccer team. He hoped to open a small lending library which would make available books in English and Maltese, to those who wished to find good books. The library would also help to combat illiteracy which was such a major drawback hindering the progress of a number of Maltese.

The Great Depression

Between the years 1919 and 1921, the Maltese had expressed their attraction to the Golden Door of America by emigrating in their thousands to that prosperous part of the New World. On May 19, 1921, President Warren G. Harding signed his Quota Law and that disturbed the easy flow of migration from Malta's shores to those of the USA. Although the restrictions were initially very severe, constant representations by the Maltese authorities did eventually manage to obtain some relief especially for those members of families which were caught unawares by that piece of legislation.
The quota system was not the only obstacle to the flow of migration to the USA. After the great economic expansion which followed the First World War, the American economy was showing signs of stagnation and decay. Protectionism was barring the entry of American products into foreign markets and by 1929 there was concern about the serious disparity between a strong production and a weak consumption. America was producing more than could be consumed.

The crash of the Stock Market in 1929 led to a serious crisis in the banking system. Depositors lost their savings and workers lost their jobs. Some thirteen million Americans, nearly one worker in three, lost their jobs. City dwellers were in terrible distress. Many of these were immigrants who had decided to flee hunger and starvation in their countries, only to be faced with the same destiny in the land of opportunity.

Immigrants suffered because they were new to the country and had few contacts which would offer help and protection. Maltese newspapers of the period printed stories of hardship about immigrants having to wait for hours in interminable bread lines.

By 1930 emigration from Malta to the USA had been practically halted except for a few migrants who wished to join their families. Later on, Malta was experiencing a migration in reverse when a number of migrants from Detroit and New York returned home.

These returned emigrants were broken men. They had returned to seek the security of their families and friends rather than face the rigours of the Great Depression. One commentator writing in a Maltese newspaper in 1932 put down his feelings in stark language: "The tide is swelling and it would not be long before we are called upon to give accommodation and provide work for many of our people returning from America". One of those who came back was Cesare Lancellotti who in 1921 had managed to beat immigration restrictions by his gift of piano playing. Cesare and his family were not able to beat the Depression and decided to leave America.

The Maltese living in Detroit and New York fared badly. They were city people with no jobs. Some societies organised help for the unemployed. They collected money for food and to provide the destitute with clothing. Joseph Azzopardi of New York said that his Club in Astoria was distributing food to needy Maltese, but he complained that the Depression had cast a general gloom over the whole city of New York. The recent kidnapping of the Lindbergh baby, Charles Augustus, did not help to relieve that mood.

In October 1930 a new Consular Policy was adopted which gave American representatives abroad the power to refuse applications for visas on two main grounds: First, if an alien disclosed that he made previous arrangements to get a job. This was against Contract Labor Law which refused immigrants sponsored by associations. Second, if an applicant was considered to be a potential charge on the State.

Intending emigrants who applied for a visa had to deposit $400 to their credit in an American bank. Wives and children who wished to join their husbands and fathers had to provide satisfactory evidence that their relatives in America were in fact employed and had to indicate their wages or salaries.

The Consul also expected to see all bank documents which showed what amount of dollars was deposited by those Maltese who intended to send for their dependents in Malta.

At the time the new Consular Policy came into effect there were 455 men, 91 women and 46 children waiting to join their relatives in the USA. The rate of returning emigrants from the USA was high. Within the ten year period, April 1, 1921, and March 31, 1931, there were 2,891 Maltese who had emigrated to the USA. Of these 2,188 came back, most of them beaten by the Depression.
Canada a "Terra Clausa"

In 1930 Mr. Henry Casolani, Malta's chief spokesman on emigration, complained that Canada was a "terra clausa" or a prohibited land, to the Maltese. While that country agreed to accept immigrants from Great Britain and Southern Europe, many obstacles were then being placed in the path of those Maltese who wished to emigrate to Canada.

Yet interest among Maltese intending emigrants had been shown in Canada from the nineteenth century. Dr. Charles Mattei of the Emigration Committee had visited that country on various occasions and in 1912 he travelled across that land on a mission sponsored by the Government of Malta. He said that he had met a number of Maltese workers who had entered Canada before the turn of the century. In his report drawn after his trip to Canada, Dr. Mattei thought that Canada offered good opportunities to the Maltese migrant. He advised against settling in Toronto but he thought prospects were good in Saskatchewan, Alberta, Manitoba and especially in British Columbia.

The Malta Emigration Committee had stated that British Columbia was highly suitable for those Maltese who wished to emigrate to Canada because of the equitable weather and because of the sparse population on Canada's Pacific Coast. Thousands of Maltese could find employment in the lumber industry because wages were good and the opportunities for work were plentiful.

Prior to 1914 small nuclei of Maltese communities were in existence in Toronto, Windsor, Winnipeg and Vancouver. The Maltese in Winnipeg had organised themselves into a Protective Society which helped to keep them united by offering friendship through bringing Maltese together particularly in social functions.

In 1913 contacts had been established by the Malta Emigration Committee with two prominent Canadians who were in Malta in April of that same year. The two men were Mgr. Joseph M. Emard, bishop of Valleyfield, and the Rev. Philip Cosgrain who was the director of the Catholic Immigration Association of Canada. Father Cosgrain was familiar with Malta and the Maltese as he had served for some years in Malta with the British Army. It was during his time in Malta that he had made many friends and even learned to speak the language of the Maltese.

Emard and Cosgrain had promised the Maltese Government that they would help to make emigration to Canada easier for the Maltese. More important perhaps, they promised that their representatives would meet arrivals from Malta as they disembarked at ports in Quebec. Cosgrain was hopeful that he would obtain funds from his Association to help those who did not have enough money for their journey from Malta to Canada.

After the signing of the Armistice the migratory movement from Malta towards Canada began gaining momentum. Between 1918 and 1920 the number of Maltese emigrants who had chosen Canada as their destination was 611. These declared that Winnipeg, Toronto and British Columbia were their final destinations. More than 40% of these emigrants were classified as unskilled and illiterate.

The inability of the average emigrant to read was to prove to be a serious hindrance. In July 1919 the Literacy Test was imposed on all persons entering Canada. Naturally such an imposition was bound to reduce the rate of immigrants entering the country. The Literacy Test applied to all immigrants who were fifteen years and older, but those who had been in Canada before 1919 were exempted. Also exempted were wives and children of persons who were considered as legally admissible.

In that same year when the Literacy Test came into force, nineteen immigrants were held at Canadian ports. Father Cosgrain made representations on their behalf and eventually all but two were allowed in. After that incident Cosgrain requested that pamphlets containing information about Canadian Immigration Laws should be quickly dispatched to the authorities
in Malta so as to avoid future delays and hardships. Copies of these regulations were sent to the Governor from Ottawa on November 13, 1919.

Another restraining condition meant to regulate the flow of immigrants into Canada was imposed towards the end of 1920. This consisted in the need of possessing landing money before being admitted into Canada. A foreigner entering the country between January 1 and March 31, had to show that he had 250 dollars for himself plus 125 dollars for his wife and 50 dollars for each child between five years and eighteen. The only exceptions to this rule were those immigrants who had been specially authorised to enter Canada and who had been provided with special cards by the Canadian authorities.

**Cosgrain and the Quebec Scheme**

Since 1920 Cosgrain had been working on a scheme meant to encourage a Maltese settlement in the French speaking province of Quebec. Dr. Augustus Bartolo was a Maltese politician who in future years was to become minister for emigration. He was also the editor of an influential Maltese daily newspaper which was printed in English. Dr. Bartolo and his newspaper were very much in favour of emigration to Canada because that country was part of the British Empire.

In 1920 an Imperial Press Conference was being held in Ottawa and Dr. Bartolo was to be the Maltese representative. On his way to Ottawa Dr. Bartolo stopped in London where he had a discussion with Colonel L.S. Amery who was then the Colonial Under-Secretary. Amery contacted the Canadians about Maltese immigration and he assured Bartolo that there was no discrimination in Canada against the Maltese on grounds of nationality. During the same visit to London, Dr. Bartolo called at the Canadian Emigration Office and there he conferred with the Superintendent, Colonelj. Obed Smith, who was very interested in attracting Maltese emigrants to Canada. Obed Smith told Dr. Bartolo that the Canadians preferred farm workers. The Colonel also stated that during July and August between fifty and a hundred Maltese were passing through England every week on their way to Canada and the U.S.A.

Amery and Obed Smith informed Bartolo about the scheme Cosgrain was working on, by which it was intended to settle a number of Maltese immigrants in Quebec province. In 1920 Cosgrain had submitted a memorandum to the authorities of Quebec under the title:

"Memorandum respectfully submitted to the Minister of Colonisation of the Province of Quebec by the Abbé Philippe Cosgrain, C.M.C, Director of the Catholic Immigration Association of Canada on a proposed settlement of Maltese immigrants in the Province of Quebec".

In 1919 Cosgrain had already met a few hundred Maltese who had arrived in Quebec in the summer of that year. He himself had gone to the place where they had disembarked to meet them. He wrote to the Malta Emigration Committee about these arrivals from Malta: "I saw them when they arrived and they seemed to me to be a remarkably clean, strong and healthy looking lot of men. They were, for the most part, artisans and farm labourers and were going to Ontario to join some of their compatriots who had settled there before the war. None of them appeared to have experienced any difficulty in finding immediate employment. This fact is a good sign, for it shows that the Maltese have already acquired the reputation of being industrious. The Maltese possess the essential qualifications which go to make good settlers for they are industrious, sober, have large families, are excellent Catholics and their women are accustomed to hard work".

In December 1920 Cosgrain wrote to the Maltese authorities and assured them that the Province of 1 Quebec was willing to welcome settlers from Malta. Cosgrain suggested that the Maltese should send a representative to Quebec to examine the conditions prevailing in the province. The Catholic Immigration Association agreed to defray half the expenses incurred by the representative. Cosgrain said that the Association preferred men and women with large
families to settle on the land. The Maltese would give a much needed boost to the population of Quebec and would also strengthen the Catholic element in the land.

The Canadians were willing to help, but in Malta there was no enthusiasm for the scheme. When the Superintendent of Emigration in Malta, Henry Casolani, was in London in 1922, he almost entirely ignored Cosgrain’s scheme. Casolani tried to excuse his lack of initiative by noting that "it would be presumptions on my part to embark on a discussion of this important question without a definite mandate and within the brief time at my disposal".

Casolani did in fact mention the Quebec Scheme in a discussion he had with Lt. Colonel P. Pelletier who was then the Agent General for Quebec in London. Pelletier was a Quebecois himself and he knew Cosgrain very well. Pelletier expressed his wish to see considerable numbers of Maltese settle in Quebec rather than in Ontario or in other English speaking regions of Canada.

Pelletier thought that the authorities in Quebec should prepare farms for the Maltese, with one or two acres of land and with some buildings to provide shelter for the settlers. But Casolani refused the suggestion by the somewhat trite objection that "only a man who is Canadian born can stand the rigid and hard conditions of the forest country of Quebec".

A very serious offer backed by the highest authorities in Quebec was allowed to come to nothing. The only consolation Casolani was able to offer was that "in regard to Canada, we have only for the present, to mark time". He did have enough time to mark. Canadians were reluctant to admit Maltese to Ontario and to the cities. Only some twenty-three years after Cosgrain's offer, was there to be some relaxation regarding the entry of Maltese into Canada.

**Conditions of Entry into Canada**

Between April 1, 1920, and March 31, 1921, the number of known emigrants from Malta was established at 6,186. Of these 147 had decided to settle in Canada. During that same period, 2,768 had gone to the U.S.A., while 1,458 had opted for North Africa. Canada had taken the smallest amount of Maltese emigrants. The Emigration Office in Malta did not encourage intending migrants to seek entry into Canada unless they had been already offered work on farms in Ontario or in Manitoba. Besides the Literacy Test, the condition that migrants to Canada had to carry on them the necessary landing money, was enough to deter many from going there.

Those 147 emigrants to Canada had satisfied the conditions. They carried each a valid passport and a letter of approval from the Department of Immigration and Colonisation in Ottawa. By 1920 the Immigration Act required three important conditions to let permanent settlers into Canada:

1. A good conduct certificate from the Police.
2. A good health certificate.
3. A declaration stating that they had been passed by the Emigration Committee and that they fulfilled all the requirements of the Immigration Act, 1919.

Since 1919 all entrants into Canada who were 15 years of age and over had to submit to the Literacy Test. This meant that they had to satisfy immigration officials that they were able to read at least in their own language or dialect. Maltese was recognised as one of these languages.

An order in Council of 1921 reiterated the need for immigrants to carry on them sufficient landing money, but the same Order admitted a few exceptions to the rule. Exempted were: persons having Canadian passports or showing that they had Canadian domicile. Also exempted were those who had been promised jobs or were going to live on farms. Women
who were to work as domestic servants and wives who had their husbands in Canada did not have to show landing money. Also exempted were those who showed letters proving that they had relatives in Canada willing to help them. This also applied to children who were joining their parents. The same applied to parents wishing to join their children and to brothers and sisters who wished to join the rest of the family.

In addition to landing money an emigrant had to have a ticket or a sum of money which was considered sufficient to purchase a ticket for transportation for him and for those accompanying him to the final destination. More important still was the warning that no immigrant was permitted to land in Canada unless he had travelled by a continuous journey from Malta upon a through ticket purchased in Malta or prepaid in Canada.

Passports for Canada had to be presented within one year from the date of issue. Shipping agents often required a landing card from the Department of Immigration and Colonisation in Ottawa or from the Superintendent of Emigration for Canada in London before they issued a contract ticket. The agents insisted on having this card to ensure that they were not held responsible for passengers who on their arrival in a Canadian port were certified as unfit for entry into the country.

Such conditions for entry applied to all those who wished to emigrate to Canada, irrespective of nationality or race. It is true that the Literacy Test was introduced to hamper the free entry of Asians into the country, but since a Maltese who could read in his own language was considered as eligible for entry, no Maltese felt that the Literacy Test was discriminatory.

Dr. Augustus Bartolo toured Canada in 1920 as Malta's representative at the Imperial Press Conference. The eloquent lawyer was also a convinced Loyalist and his exhuberant Imperialism sounded like sweet music to Canadian ears.

On August 27, 1920, Dr. Bartolo was in Vancouver, B.C. He was asked by the President of the Vancouver Club, Mr. Long, to address his members. Bartolo's speech was widely reported throughout British Columbia. Three days later Mr. Long sent a telegram to Malta. Among other things Mr. Long's telegram stated: "Carried away by his impassioned and wonderful oratory, by his splendid sentiments and thrilling, patriotic, peroration. The audience accorded Dr. Bartolo a remarkable tribute in a repeated outburst of rousing cheers lasting several minutes. References to Malta thrilled the audience, firing everyone with enthusiasm. The audience fell under the spell of his oratory. Henceforth the name of Malta will acquire a new significance."

Malta and the Maltese needed all the positive publicity they could get from important and influential Canadian quarters. It seemed at that time that not all Canadians were enthusiastic about the entry of some types of aliens into their country.

British Columbia in particular was very sensitive of its Anglo-Saxon heritage and there was a marked aversion to newcomers who were not distinctly British. The province, like all the other provinces, clamoured for new settlers, but was selective about who should be encouraged to share the nation's bounty. Maltese newspapers, like the, one owned by Dr. Augustus Bartolo, wrote copiously on Canada's need to increase its population. A number of Maltese were very willing to emigrate to Canada and Dr. Bartolo encouraged them to do so.

There was one difficulty which was obvious but few dared to air it openly. To Canadian eyes the immigrants from the Mediterranean island of Malta were positively alien in race, culture and religion. In spite of their belonging to the same British Empire, the Maltese were not Anglo-Saxon. In spite of his intense pride in the Empire Dr. Bartolo realised this. After all he was Maltese, spoke English with a foreign accent, and had family and blood connections not with Canada but with the neighbouring island of Sicily.

One important speaker at the Imperial Press Conference in Ottawa was the Premier of Ontario, the Hon. E.C. Drury. According to Drury, Canada needed both capital and men and those men
were to be of British extraction and ideals. When Drury told his listeners that in his province of Ontario there was room for five times its actual population, he also implied that it was his wish that his province should retain its Anglo-Saxon character.

This point must have made its impact on the mind of Dr. Bartolo who knew that the Canadians did not classify him or the Maltese as British in the ethnic meaning of the term. The Conference had to be told in clear terms the kind of immigrants Canada was asking for. Drury's message was made more specific by his Provincial Minister of Agriculture, the Hon. M. Manning, who declared that the Ontario government was about to launch an intensive campaign in England to attract settlers from that country. Mr. Manning said that the Government and the Press in England should see to it that the tide of emigration from England to Canada flowed unhindered.

Six years after the Imperial Press Conference had been convened in Ottawa, the Vice-President in charge of colonisation, agriculture and natural resources of Canada, Mr. W.D. Robb sent a message to English newspapers in which he stated that he needed 350,000 men every year to assist in the development of gold, zinc, bauxite and copper mines.

Mr. Robb also said that the pulp and paper industry was seriously undermanned. The same situation prevailed in the field of hydro-electric power. Mr. Robb appealed for British immigrants. His appeal ended with a personal warning: "Unless we can get British settlers we shall be forced to go to Europe, because our work must be done and our population must be increased".

Drury, Manning and Robb knew that they had a serious problem on their hands. Towards the last three months of 1920 Canada was losing people because more persons were leaving than coming in.

Italians and East Europeans were returning to their countries of origin to participate in the reconstruction of Europe. Poles and Lithuanians were inspired by the independence acquired by their countries and were leaving Canada in droves. From Montreal over 200,000 foreign workers left for Europe after they had accumulated enough capital to start their own businesses in their own countries.

From the English-speaking provinces came the news that the economy was slowing because there were not enough workers. The construction of railways, the running of mines and expansion of the building industry were being delayed because manpower was short. Millions of dollars were lost in the preparation and stocking of camps which were not operational because no one was able to obtain sufficient workers.

Fort William, Ontario, reported in October 1920, that operations on the new pulp paper mill as well as ship building plans on new Government vessels, were being greatly hampered by the scarcity of labour. The mill-builders were asking for 2,000 men on their works. They had tried unsuccessfully to lure unskilled men by offering anything between eight and ten dollars a day.

The loss of immigrants was being felt by the Atlantic provinces. In the West immigration was kept on a more regular pattern because of new arrivals who crossed the border from the U.S.A., immigrants from Great Britain who preferred British Columbia, and the constant flow of immigrants from the Far East. Figures for July 1920 showed a total of 12,178 person who entered Canada from ports and another 4,300 who had crossed the border. The British remained the most numerous of all the newcomers. Some 30% of the British immigrants had stated that they intended to settle on farms, while the rest were mechanics and labourers.

In January 1922 Colonel J.S. Dennis, Chief Commissioner of Colonisation and Development of the Canadian Pacific Railway, was in England trying to recruit workers. On January 23, he was the guest speaker of the Canadian Club of Great Britain. The Colonel followed the official trend
in Canadian immigration policy when he told his listeners that Canada and the C.P.R. preferred people who were British by birth and tradition.

Col. Dennis expected Great Britain to provide Canada with all the workers and settlers which were then needed. Only through a sustained programme of migration from the Mother Country could the Empire be assured of Canada's complete loyalty to the Crown. The speaker also said that between 1922 and 1932 it was the intention of Canada to increase its population by ten million. Preferably these new Canadians were to be agriculturists of British stock. It was imperative, Dennis said, that the Anglo-Saxon element should maintain its preponderance in the complexion of Canada's population.

Great Britain was not in a position to furnish Canada with all the immigrants that were needed. Immigration from Great Britain and from Europe kept falling. Figures published in Ottawa for the year ending in March 1922 showed that the total number of immigrants for that period was lower than the prediction which had been made by Dennis. The number of entrants was 90,000. This meant a total 39% lower than that of the previous year and the British intake was only 39,000. Ottawa must have noted that while immigration from Great Britain and Europe was decreasing, that from the Far East was on the increase.

The Status of Maltese Immigrants

Responsible Canadian politicians did understand that it was unrealistic to rely solely on immigrants from Great Britain when Canada was not attracting enough attention even in Europe. Speaking in Ottawa in November 1921, Mr. M.T.A. Crear, leader of the National Progressive Party, said that he saw the need of a wider immigration policy to bring in people who would help expand old settlements and create new ones. Mr. Crear referred to the stagnation caused by a significant national debt. He added that more immigrants, even if they were not British, would increase the population, expand the national economy and provide more traffic and business for the railways.

Intending migrants knew that Canada's economy was not flourishing. In December 1920, in Toronto alone, there were 18,000 workers out of their jobs and half of these were war veterans. In that same month a delegation of returned servicemen went to Ottawa to urge the Government to grant an unemployment allowance. They claimed twelve dollars a week for single men and a grant of something between twenty-three and thirty dollars for married men, according to the number of children they had. The delegation insisted that the unemployment situation in Toronto and in other cities was disquietening.

The winter of 1920 was a harsh one and the weather was not the only tribulation people had to put up with. The Maltese community was feeling the pinch. Silvio Lanzon, a Maltese immigrant living in Toronto, wrote a letter on December 16, 1920:

"We are settling for an unlimited period of great industrial and financial depression. Overproduction has caused the unloading of immense products for which there is no outlet. The Canadian consumer does not have the money to buy and the high rate of exchange is keeping all foreign buyers off these shores. Production has come to a standstill and the factories are closing down ."

Unemployment and an immigration policy largely based on racial prejudice were not conducive to a just attitude towards people who had a lot to contribute to Canada's development, even if they were not British. But Canadian legislation was slowly moving towards exclusion of those races considered as not desirable. In 1910 a new immigration act excluded three classes of undesirable immigrants. These three classes of foreigners were supposed to pose a threat to Canada's civilisation:

1. Those physically, mentally or morally unfit.
2. Those belonging to nationalities unlikely to assimilate and who consequently prevent the building up of a united nation composed of people of similar customs and ideals.
3. Those who from their mode of life and occupations are likely to crowd into urban centres and bring about a state of congestion which might result in unemployment and a lowering of the standard of Canadian life.

The aim of this act was to exclude those who were not British in race, language and appearance. The act meant to exclude all foreigners who not only looked different but also acted differently. Asian and Mediterranean peoples were considered as undesirables not only because of their race, language and appearance, but also because they normally preferred to settle in cities where they joined others who looked and behaved like themselves. The legislators of 1910 had admitted that clauses 2 and 3 were specifically designed to discourage the entry into Canada of immigrants from Asia and Southern Europe.

Three years after the passing of the act, six Maltese men experienced the hostile application of the law. In July 1913 these men arrived at the port of Seattle, in Washington State, U.S.A. They belonged to the crew of the steamship "Dunblane". On July 15, they presented themselves at the Canadian border with the intention of going to Vancouver in British Columbia. The Maltese carried British passports with them but the Canadian immigration officials refused them entry for two reasons: first, the Maltese had not arrived in Canada directly from their country of origin. Second, the men looked distinctly like Italians and therefore could not be British. During such confrontations with the immigration officials it was often quoted to those seeking entry that Canada was to stay a white man's country at any cost and a British country if possible.

Although Dr. Bartolo had gone to Canada in 1920 and there declared to his hosts how British and loyal the Maltese were, his Canadian hosts were not impressed. On April 12, 1922, the Governor General acted on a recommendation of the Acting Minister of Immigration and Colonisation. As from that date no immigrant of any Asian race was permitted to land in Canada unless he had in his own right the sum of 250 dollars.

Such an exclusive attitude on the part of the Canadians had its effect on Maltese emigration to that part of the British Empire. By 1922 emigration from Malta to Canada was at a very low ebb. The requirement of 1922, expecting an Asian immigrant to carry with him the sum of 250 dollars, was extended to the Maltese. That was a prohibitive sum and the intention was to make it financially impossible for undesirable aliens to contemplate approaching the coasts of Canada. If the migrant had with him his wife and children then that sum had to be enlarged in order to provide extra money for them as well.

The landing money was one significant obstacle in the way of those Maltese who wished to emigrate to Canada. There were the other standard requirements which applied to all those who sought entry into the country. Shipping agents would not issue a ticket unless the intending emigrant already had in his possession a landing permit issued from Ottawa or London. As if such restrictions were not stringent enough, no one was presented with a landing permit unless he was classified as an experienced farm worker with sufficient capital and proceeding to an assured job on a farm.

In 1922 the Canadian representative in London for the ministry of immigration had told Mr. Henry Casolani that his superiors thought that the Maltese were physically unfit to face the cold of Canada and therefore their entry, like that of Southern Europeans and North Africans, was not encouraged. Mr. Casolani thought that the Maltese were as hardy as any other European race because they lived on an island which was exposed to all winds. Mr. Casolani also retorted that the Maltese were of pure European stock, born within the British Empire and proud of their Imperial connection. Mr. Casolani felt that his race was physically and morally equal to any people from the Northern parts of Europe.
Casolani's spirited plea for the acceptance of Maltese immigrants by Canadian authorities did not lack conviction nor eloquence. He wrote to the Canadian representative in London: "The Maltese are hardy and strong, they are clean and honest workers. Their English education is based on the usual high standards. Their historical and geographical books are English and their loyalty to England and to the idea of Empire has become a by-word. Thousands took part with the British or Canadian Armies in the Great War and hundreds fell at Jutland and in other naval battles".

Casolani also enlisted the prestigious London newspaper "The Times" to help him impress important people in Great Britain, Canada and Australia, with the suitability and fitness of the Maltese migrant. On May 24, 1922, "The Times" carried an interview with Mr. Casolani. In that interview Casolani said that emigration was a vital issue to the Maltese. He also said that the newly elected Prime Minister of Malta, Senator Joseph Howard, was himself completely convinced of the need to ease the pressure of over-population and high unemployment because Howard himself had been president of the Malta Emigration Committee.

"The Times" said that Malta was now a self-governing colony within the British Empire. The Maltese Government had appointed a minister for emigration in the person of Colonel William Savona. Savona had been a distinguished gunner who fought in France and in Turkey and knew how to handle and bring out the good qualities in men.

The interview carried by "The Times" concluded that the Maltese were natural emigrants. Moreover, under Minister Savona, only the fit and suitable were allowed to emigrate. Casolani assured his readers, British, Australian or Canadian, that the Maltese Government was preparing those who intended to settle abroad in order to be ready for life and work in foreign countries. Maltese prospective emigrants were healthy farmers, agriculturists or artisans who had never meddled with politics.

On March 5, 1920, the Governor of Malta, Lord Plumer, had complained to the Canadians about the treatment meted out to a number of Maltese emigrants who had been refused entry into Canada. Plumer's letter of protest read: "The refusal of the Canadian Government to allow emigration of Maltese to Canada, except in cases where there is already domicile, creates a serious situation as Canada and Australia have been the countries most favoured by emigrants in the past. If both are now to be closed to Maltese settlers, it will be necessary to devise means for settlements in other non-British countries".

The Governor had arrived in Malta soon after the anti-British riots of June 7, 1919. His approach to the Canadians was meant as an oblique hint that their unfriendly attitude to the Maltese not only created unnecessary human suffering and inconvenience but also bitter feelings. Such a situation was not helped by the refusal of Canada and Australia to accept immigrants from Malta. Lord Plumer knew that there was still a latent anti-British feeling in Malta and he feared that racial discrimination by British countries against the Maltese would help those who wished to see Malta separated from the British Crown.

The cases of discrimination Plumer had complained about concerned twelve men who had arrived in Canada via Italy. They had left Malta after having satisfied all the requirements imposed by Canadian immigration policy.

On January 11, 1920, the twelve emigrants from Malta were in Naples. Just before they embarked on their ship which was to take them to Canada a telegram was received which stated that no Maltese were to be allowed to proceed to Canada. The twelve men were taken under escort. Some of these men had decided to go to Canada because they had made friends with Canadian soldiers in France during the war. Others had been on active service with the Royal Navy.

Another group of Maltese emigrants bound for Canada had left Malta in November of that same year. They arrived in Naples and embarked without any problem for their final destination.
However, when the Maltese were on Ellis Island, New York, the Canadian representative blocked their way and the American authorities had to deport them back to Malta. Eight of these men had made their statements about their forced return home. Lord Plumer felt that those statements revealed an unusually harsh attitude of the Canadian officials towards those emigrants from Malta.

**Individual Cases of Hardship**

Emmanuel Xuereb, 29 years old, was the first migrant to make his statement. He had left Malta on December 18, 1919, with the intention of settling in Canada. He arrived at Naples and embarked for New York on the, Italian vessel s.s. "Regina d'Italia". Xuereb had previously served with the Royal Malta Artillery, was able to read and write and was a telegraphist by profession. Once he arrived in New York he was detained for three days on board his ship and was eventually allowed to disembark on Ellis Island where he was detained for a further period of two days. Subsequently Xuereb was transferred to another Italian ship, the s.s. "Pesaro" where he was kept in close confinement and under guard for another three days. No explanation was ever given for this treatment and he was never allowed to contact the British consul. Eventually Xuereb was sent back to Italy, his passage being paid by the Italian shipping company which had brought him from Naples to New York. Xuereb had to pay for the rest of his voyage from Naples to Malta.

Spiridione Degiorgio, 23 years of age, left Malta for Naples on November 29, 1919. He crossed the Atlantic on the ship which was to bring Xuereb back to Europe. Degiorgio had a brother in Toronto who had gone down to New York to meet his brother Spiridione. Degiorgio described himself as literate, had had a small business in Malta and was an assistant fitter by trade. On landing in New York Degiorgio was sent to Ellis Island where he was kept for a full month. He lived in a large room with 500 other detainees who were kept under strict surveillance. Degiorgio also claimed that in the ground floor of the same block where he was being kept, there were a number of suspected Bolsheviks who were being kept there.

Degiorgio stated that during his detention he was never allowed to take any exercise. His own brother made many attempts to have him released from Ellis Island. The brother contacted the British consul and showed the consul that his brother’s papers were all in order. The consul disclaimed all responsibility by saying that immigration was completely out of his jurisdiction. On January 24, 1920, Degiorgio was placed on the same ship which had brought him to New York and sent back to Naples. Again, Degiorgio had to pay his fare from Naples to Malta.

The deportation of G.B. Farrugia was even more pathetic. Farrugia was 40 years old and he had left Malta with his friend Emmanuel Xuereb. Farrugia was illiterate, but he was returning to Canada where he had lived in Brentford for seven years. He was a mechanic by trade. During the War he had volunteered to go to the front. He had left Canada to be at the bedside of his dying mother. While in Malta he had sent his wife and children to Canada to settle in Brentford. Farrugia was going back to Brentford on a Canadian passport, but his passport did not prevent his deportation. When he eventually got back to Malta his wife and children were on their way to Brentford.

The fourth statement was that of Victor Attard who was only fifteen. Victor was an orphan and had been adopted when he was a child by Francesco and Maria Cauchi. Francesco had been living in Toronto since 1916 and Victor, accompanied by Maria, left Malta to join Francesco. Victor and Maria travelled on the same day as Emmanuel Xuereb and G.B. Farrugia did.

On arriving in New York Victor and Maria were transferred to Ellis Eland where they received the same treatment as Xuereb and Farrugia. Maria protested that she was joining her husband and that Victor was their adopted child. She was not believed and was told that she and Victor could not continue their journey to Toronto. They were sent back to Malta.
Like Victor, Joseph Galea was of the same age. He too was on his way to join his father who was then living in Toronto. When Joseph's father failed to meet his son in New York, he feared that his son had been lost in New York. Instead, Joseph was being detained on Ellis Island and he had asked to contact his father but his wish had been denied. Neither was he allowed to contact the British consul. One concession made to the lad was that he was allowed to take a short walk.

All these statements were signed by those who made them. They also declared that they had all been passed by the Maltese Emigration authorities. The Canadian Agent on Ellis Island sent his reply to Lord Plumer in a letter which bore the date of June 11, 1920.

The Canadian Agent said that Emmanuel Xuereb had described himself as a photographer and when he disembarked on Ellis Island he had only 51 dollars on him. Xuereb claimed that he was going to his friend, a certain Giuseppe Galea. The Canadian Agent did not think that Xuereb had enough money on him to start a photographic business on his own and since he had no close relatives in Canada, the Agent decided that if Xuereb were allowed to proceed to Canada he would be a charge on the State.

Spiridione Degiorgio claimed that he was a machinist. He had only 40 dollars on him and was unable to provide an address of someone known to him in Toronto. The Canadian Agent thought that Degiorgio looked poorly. He had spent three days in Ellis Island Hospital.

G.B. Farrugia described himself as a labourer. According to the Canadian Agent, Farrugia had presented no evidence to prove that he had left Canada for the purpose of a visit, nor had he expressed his intention of returning to Brentford with his family. Farrugia's family had arrived in the port of New York on January 29, 1920, on the s.s. "Giuseppe Verdi". Farrugia had been sent to Malta two days before his family arrived.

The saga of the Farrugia family did have a positive finale. The husband was back in Canada on May 14, 1920, having arrived on the s.s. "Royal George". The wife and four children were allowed to enter Canada and settle in Brentford once they got medical clearance.

As for Victor Attard, Maria Cauchi and Joseph Galea, the Canadian Agent said that their case was unfortunate and what happened was more due to misunderstanding than to a severe application of the law. The Canadian Agent said that they should have lodged an appeal and he was sure that they would have received a more considerate hearing. The Canadian Agent did say that Maria and Victor had only 50 dollars between them. They also failed to produce any real evidence to show the actual existence of Francesco Cauchi at Toronto or his ability and willingness to support them. Nor did Maria produce any legal document to prove that Victor had been legally adopted. However the Agent did admit that Maria had shown him her husband's address which was 48, Nelson Street, Toronto.

The Canadian Agent on Ellis Island also complained to Lord Plumer that none of the Maltese emigrants carried tickets which showed their final destination in Canada. He claimed that such an omission on the part of the migrants rendered them ineligible for admission into Canada under the provisions of the Privy Council Order number twenty-three.

The Canadian Agent also said at the time the two groups of Maltese had arrived on Ellis Island, conditions of labour in Canada were difficult and unemployment was serious. Such a critical situation merited reliable guarantees that those who entered Canada had sufficient support promised to them by persons already legally resident in Canada. The Agent claimed that in the majority of cases the passengers were going to persons in Canada who were not legally bound to assist them should such a need arise.

It was also stated that the money carried by the Maltese was not substantial and was not enough for them when they came to pay for travel, accommodation, clothing and food. The
Canadian authorities felt that the Maltese were likely to become public-charges and this justified their exclusion.

As to the treatment given to the Maltese during their detention on Ellis Island, the Canadian Agent said that no one of those in question took advantage of his right to protest. There was no record to show that anyone had put a request in writing to see the British consul in New York. However, the Canadian Agent did point out that appeals concerning immigration rested only with the Department of Immigration and Colonisation at Ottawa.

It was also pointed out that it was common custom to put all excluded immigrants under guard both on Ellis Island and on board the ship which had carried them across the Atlantic. As for congestion on Ellis Island the Canadian Agent said that the Americans did not run that place on the lines of a luxury hotel. It was not possible to give each person a room for himself. As for sending telegrams, it was stated that on the island there were two offices run by their respective telegraph companies and that any of the detained passengers could have made a request to use such facilities.

From the report sent to Lord Plumer by the Canadian Agent on Ellis Island it was possible to deduce that in 1920 the Maltese authorities were not fully familiar with the stringent conditions governing the entry of foreigners into Canadian territory. Much pain could have been avoided if the men in the Emigration Department knew not only the rules but also their mode of application. If the Maltese had a representative in New York he could have handled all cases not only of those immigrants who sought entry into the U.S.A. but also those who intended to go further north to Canada. Such a representative could have himself lodged appeals on behalf of the Maltese and made sure that their requests were formally accepted in writing.

On April 29, 1920, the secretary of the Department of Immigration and Colonisation in Ottawa issued a statement under the signature of Mr. F.C. Blair, concerning the immigration of Maltese. The statement said:

"I think the present attitude of the Department towards immigration from Malta should not be changed. Owing to conditions in Canada and the class of labour supplied by Malta, it is not advisable to encourage immigration from that Colony. Malta supplies practically nothing but skilled and common labour. We can never hope to get any amount of agricultural labour from Malta. The immigrants to Canada from Malta of the past decade have settled almost entirely in our cities.

It would be unfortunate if the people of Malta should conclude that they are excluded from Canada solely on the ground that they are Maltese. This, of course, would be incorrect. While we do not encourage, we do not exclude those who comply fully with the Immigration Regulations in effect at the time of arrival. A few Maltese are still coming to Canada and are being admitted, but while conditions remain as at present, and while plenty of skilled workers to meet any existing demand in Canada can be secured from the Mother Country, it would be unwise to change our policy with regard to immigration from Malta".

Canadian indifference to Malta was an embarrassment to the Colonial administration in Malta. After the riots of June 7, 1919, Lord Plumer was trying to create a more positive picture of the British Empire and of the supposedly enormous advantage which the Maltese were to reap because they belonged to an Empire of which Canada was one of the most prominent members. Lord Plumer was trying hard to refute the accusation made by anti-British politicians in Malta that the governments of Canada and Australia did not consider the Maltese as desirable immigrants.

Lord Plumer contacted the High Commissioner for Canada in London, Mr. H.J. Read. He wrote to him a letter which bore the date of January 5, 1920. The Governor enquired whether the objections to immigrants from Malta extended equally to all parts of Canada or whether they were limited to particular places such as Toronto. Lord Plumer was asking frankly if the Maltese
were specifically singled out as an undesirable group. He also asked Mr. Read if the objections against the Maltese were of temporary or permanent nature.

Mr. Read answered Lord Plumer on February 27, 1920. The Canadian High Commissioner claimed that the Maltese were not singled out for any special restrictions. Read claimed that those Maltese who complied fully with the regulations set down by the Department of Immigration and Colonisation would be admitted even if the present labour conditions in Canada did not encourage the arrival in the country of skilled and unskilled immigrants. Read wrote that the majority of Maltese who entered Canada were unskilled and did not seem to be willing to accept employment outside the cities. Canada, according to the High Commissioner, was discouraging similar immigration from other countries.

On February 28, Lord Plumer received a further note concerning the objections to the entry of Maltese in Canada. The note came directly from Ottawa. The note said: "In further reference to the matter of Maltese immigrants, it is not intended to put up any absolute barrier against the Maltese nor yet has this been done. Some months ago, however, complaints were received of Maltese arriving in Toronto and other parts unable to find employment, and the investigation which was made showed that in most cases these had travelled via an American port and had not been examined carefully to see that they complied with Canadian law at the port of arrival. In the interest, therefore, of the Maltese, as well as for the protection of the country, we had to take steps to curtail the movement as quickly as possible. It is always to be understood that any person who complies fully with the regulations, will be admitted no matter how much the Government may discourage the immigration of certain classes".

The Doors Remain Shut

The Report on the working of the Emigration Office for 1921 stated that the prospects for Maltese emigrants to Canada were not bright. The Canadians insisted that they wanted men willing and capable of felling trees and taming the forests. Such people had to carry sufficient capital with them. Preferably, they were to have relatives or friends already settled in the area they were going to. The report concluded that such requirements effectively excluded the Maltese. The Report also commented on the climatic conditions prevailing over most of Canada and said that the arctic winters there prevented work being done during the cold months.

Many Maltese thought that if they had to go to North America, then the American States provided a better proposition. The Report cited states like Louisiana, Arkansas, Texas, Tennessee, and Alabama as zones where working prospects were bright, foreigners welcomed and wages higher than in Canada. California was still a very prosperous place and the Maltese who had settled there were mostly engaged in market gardening and earning good money.

In his book "Awake, Malta", Henry Casolani stated that up to 1921 the Maltese enjoyed full freedom of entry into Canada. The truth was that after that year it became more difficult for Maltese to settle there. The objections mentioned by Mr. Read in 1920 could have been easily levelled against any ethnic group. In the ten years following the Armistice thousands of aliens were allowed in without too much fuss. Casolani could never explain the discrimination against the Maltese.

In 1923 Ottawa issued a Privy Council Order which indicated the categories of British subjects which were to be allowed to enter Canada. That Order specifically left the Maltese out while it opened the door to British subjects who hailed from Great Britain, Ireland, Newfoundland, New Zealand, Australia and the Union of South Africa.

The Maltese were classified as aliens. This exclusion was made in spite of the fact that Malta was a European island within the British Empire and had acquired self-government in 1921. Canada would only accept two categories of Maltese: those who were 'bona fide' agriculturists and female domestic servants. These two classes were not very visible in Malta, though the Emigration Department did put forward a few men who were considered as agriculturists. Even
these were rejected on the grounds that Maltese tended to stray from the land and drift towards large cities in Canada and in the U.S.A. Those who managed to sail to Canada "were mercilessly stopped at every port and one by one found their way back to Malta".

Writing in 1930, Henry Casolani complained that the Maltese alone seemed to fall victims to Canada's exclusion order. He wrote: "All Britishers, thousands of Italians and other European nationals are welcome. The Maltese alone are excluded".

Statistics show that after 1923 emigration to Canada became a mere trickle and Canada became effectively a "terra clausa" to the Maltese. Between 1926 and 1927 only thirty-seven Maltese were allowed entry and many of those were women and children who were joining the heads of their families.

By 1929 the regulation concerning landing money had been removed. Migrants, besides being in possession of a ticket which would take them to their final destination, were expected to have enough money to enable them to meet their expenses during the period between their arrival and their first job. The Maltese authorities suggested that those who were eligible to go to Canada should carry at least £20 on them. It was also made known that the Canadian authorities would not allow an immigrant to enter the country if it was known that his fare had been paid-in part or in full by a charitable organisation or out of public money.

In 1929 some slight changes had been introduced concerning the entry of foreigners into Canada. Such changes were due to the improvement in the field of employment. In order to be allowed to enter the country as permanent residents persons had to belong to one of six categories:

1. a "bona fide" agriculturist who intended to follow his occupation in Canada and had sufficient financial means to start farming on his own.
2. a "bona fide" farm labourer entering Canada to follow that occupation with reasonable assurance of employment.
3. a female domestic servant entering Canada to follow that occupation with reasonable assurance of employment.
4. wife or child under eighteen of any person legally admitted to Canada and resident there, who was in a position to care for his dependants.
5. any person who had satisfied the Minister in Canada that his labour or service was required.
6. the father or mother, the unmarried son or daughter eighteen years of age or over, the unmarried brother or sister of any person legally admitted to and resident in Canada who had satisfied the Minister in Canada of his willingness and ability to receive and care for such a relative.

The Emigration Department in Malta suggested that migrants proceeding to Canada should book their passage from ports in the United Kingdom. The Department also warned that because of the Privy Council Orders governing the entry of Maltese into Canada, it was found in practice almost impossible to operate the six points referred to. Only wives and children of Maltese already resident in Canada were assured of having their applications favourably considered.

In order to save unnecessary embarrassment the Emigration Department was not issuing passports to intending emigrants of whatever class unless a landing permit from the Department of Colonisation in Ottawa was produced or other arrangements had been previously made with a Canadian Immigration officer in Europe.

The six categories of admissible people referred to Europeans only. Not all Europeans were equal either. The most welcome type of immigrant was the one who hailed from the British Isles. Continental immigrants were to be considered when there were not enough men and women of British stock available. Even the Continentals were not considered as forming one
homogenous class. There were those who were "Preferred" and those who were officially classified to as "Non-Preferred".

Men and women who had the great fortune of being "Preferred" in Canadian eyes came from France, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Finland and Scandinavia. The lower types who fell into the category of "Non-Preferred" were those who came from Southern Europe. These were to be admitted only when there was no one of the superior categories willing to take vacant jobs. Moreover the "Non-Preferred" would only be allowed in if they were willing to work on the land and had a promise of work when they filled in their application to enter Canada.

Even Canada was not able to maintain such blatantly racial attitudes for ever. In August 1930 the distinction between "Preferred" and "NonPreferred" was deleted at least in theory. Henceforth all immigrants from any country had to produce proof that they were "bona fide" agriculturists with capital if they wanted to be given their visa. The annual report of the Emigration Department showed to what a low ebb was Maltese emigration to Canada reduced during the period of 1930-1931. At that particular time Canada allowed the total of fifteen Maltese to settle as permanent residents. Those fifteen migrants were ten men, three wives with two children.

In fact the total number of Maltese settlers in Canada was never significant. It is hard to comprehend the determination of the Canadian Department of Immigration and Colonisation to keep the Maltese out when their presence in the country was hardly noticeable. During the ten years between April 1, 1921 and March 31, 1931, the total number of Maltese who entered Canada was 631. Of these 335 went back to Malta, leaving a balance of 296 for ten years, or less than 30 Maltese immigrants for every year between 1921 and 1931.

If later years are examined the influx of Maltese into Canada becomes almost invisible. For 1932 and 1933 the grand total of Maltese who entered Canada was made up of six immigrants. Of these three went back to Malta. The only comment Mr. Hugh Arrigo, the successor of Mr. Henry Casolani, was able to make in his report was that as long as the regulations requiring migrants to Canada to be agriculturists with capital remained in force, no improvement in the flow of Maltese to Canada was to be expected.

In fact later reports on the working of the Emigration Department left Canada out. In the report for 1936-1937 it was stated that a satisfactory revival in world migration was being felt as the effect of the Depression were slowly disappearing. The report claimed that migration to the receiving countries reflected the improvement being made in the economic conditions of those countries to which Maltese emigration was traditionally directed.

If there was an improvement, that improvement was not noticeable in the number of Maltese who entered Canada during the period 1936-1937. According to official statistics furnished by the Emigration Department, the total of Maltese who went to Canada at that time was One.

**Maltese in Toronto**

Although Canada's coolness towards the Maltese militated against any significant inflow of settlers into that country, yet small colonies of Maltese were to be found in Toronto, Montreal, Windsor, Winnipeg, Edmonton and in the province of British Columbia. The Maltese in Winnipeg and in the Far West were among the first to organise themselves as ethnic communities. However, by the late 1920's these communities had ceased to grow and eventually lost many of their members because of lack of employment and the fact that few men had their families with them. Some went back to Malta, others crossed over the border into the neighbouring U.S.A. and the rest drifted towards cosmopolitan Toronto.

As had happened in Detroit soon after the first wave of Maltese immigration into that city, the Maltese living in Toronto felt that their religion was not only a valid bond which held them
together but it also served as a bridge to help them foster communication with their Canadian co-religionists.

In 1916 a Maltese priest, Father Fortunatus Mizzi from Valletta of the Capuchin Order, was visiting Toronto. His visit had followed that of a Jesuit, Fr. Tabone, who had been in Toronto some months before. The Maltese in Toronto did not have a resident Maltese priest and the presence of Fr. Fortunatus, even if a temporary one, was greatly appreciated. Fr. Fortunatus had been received by the archbishop of Toronto, Mgr. Neil McNeil, and was asked to write a memorandum on the needs of the Maltese community in Toronto. That memorandum was composed on July 5, 1916, and it provides a true insight into the Maltese community in that city.

According to Fr. Fortunatus the Maltese in Toronto in 1916 numbered some 200 people. About eighty of these lived in West Toronto, while about seventy were in the vicinity of Mount Carmel church. What was left were scattered in various parts of the city. The community was made of fourteen families with about twenty-seven children, but the priest had spoken to various men who were expecting the arrival of their wives and children. There were single men who had arranged for their Maltese brides to join them. The women within the Maltese community were fifteen.

During the summer of 1916 there were enough jobs and most men said they were employed. The men worked as architects, electricians, carpenters, stone-masons and labourers. Some of the women were hired to sew. In 1913 the Maltese had suffered great misery because of the hard time they had gone through when there was no work available. Even in 1916, when the situation had visibly improved, "the immigrants of every nationality whatever find themselves here in a very miserable state. They are packed in houses, sleeping four or even more in the same room in the midst of disorder and want of cleanliness".

Most Maltese avoided being involved in brawls and in any kind of disorderly behaviour, but lonely men tended to move into areas where they were liable to find undesirable company. Some Maltese visited by Fr. Fortunatus lived very economically in order to save money and send it home to their families, "for they undoubtedly send home twenty-five and thirty dollars, and even more, every month".

The writing of Fr. Fortunatus points to some of the problems which faced the Maltese in Toronto in 1916. Most Maltese spoke only their own tongue and therefore found it very laborious to communicate with the world around them. This language problem would be solved if a priest from Malta, who was fluent in English, would take up permanent residence among his countrymen living in Toronto. The priest would be ideal to act as a liaison between the Maltese on one hand and the civil and religious authorities of Toronto on the other.

Men outnumbered women; moreover many of the men were married but were separated from their wives and children. The Maltese were mostly working class, yet they were generous and they contributed, from what they had, to the local church. Fr. Fortunatus noted that "they went to confession with the aid of an interpreter. They never missed Mass merely in order to avoid paying their dues. One man, Mr. Azzopardi, collected 300 dollars for the diocesan seminary".

Archbishop McNeil was told that a permanent pastor who spoke Maltese would be a great asset to the Maltese community. In spite of their small number and their meagre financial resources, the Maltese had told Fr. Fortunatus that they were willing to raise 600 dollars a year to support their pastor. A Maltese priest capable of speaking both his own language and English could serve a Canadian parish also, as the Maltese wanted to mix with Canadians "for once they have decided to stay in this country, they would rather become Canadians altogether".

The first permanent Maltese pastor of the Maltese living in Toronto was to be the Rev. Alphonse Cauchi who hailed from Valletta as Fr. Fortunatus did. He arrived in Toronto in 1925
when he was forty-five years old. He was a learned Augustinian friar who had obtained a double doctorate and had made a name for himself in intellectual circles when he taught in Rome for six years between 1914 and 1920. From Rome Father Cauchi went to Philadelphia to take a teaching post. It was in Philadelphia that he learned about the needs of his countrymen living in Toronto.

After his first visit Father Cauchi did not stay in Toronto, but he did keep in touch with the Maltese community. His first visit had been very successful and for the next three years he visited Toronto regularly.

In July 1926 bishop Michael Gonzi of Gozo, Malta, paid a visit to the Maltese in North America and Toronto was one of his stops. While in Toronto, Mgr. Gonzi was told of the pressing social and religious needs of the Maltese community. The bishop had already seen the good work being done by Maltese priests among immigrants from Malta and who had now settled in New York and Detroit.

On August 5 of that same year, another prominent Maltese prelate stopped at Toronto. He was Monsignor P. Gauci. In a letter written by him at the time of his stay in Toronto he let it be known that "the last Maltese priest to stay in Toronto was in March last year. I gave a mission. The colony consists of nearly 300 souls, most of them from Mellieha. They are mostly labourers of good behaviour. Everyone speaks well of them". Gauci's impression seems to tally with that of Fortunatus twelve years before.

One of the Maltese who had welcomed Mgr. P. Gauci was a certain John B. Cutayar Grey who had emigrated to Toronto some years before. This gentleman wrote to Malta to say that Gauci's visit had filled the hearts of the Maltese with pride and joy. He also said that two newspapers, the "Mail and Empire" and the "Daily Star", gave extensive publicity to Gauci's visit and both carried lengthy reports on the large meeting held at the Circolo Colombo, in St. Patrick's Street.

In his speech, Mgr. Gauci urged his listeners to be faithful to God and to Canada. He also appealed to the Maltese and to the Italians not to give up their respective languages. At the same time he reminded them of their duty to be loyal to Canada and to the British Empire.

Mr. Cutayar Gray noted that the occasion at the Circolo Colombo was a memorable one. Although the Maltese community was very small, the visit by Mgr. Gauci had aroused great interest in the city. The Torontonians began asking questions about the Maltese. They also wanted to know more about the priest who was able to address a gathering made of Maltese, Italians and Canadians in their own languages.

The Rev. Alphonse Cauchi was able to take permanent residence in Toronto in 1928. In that year Archbishop Neil McNeil appointed him as pastor of the Maltese community. The memorandum written in 1916 by Fr. Fortunatus bore its fruit fourteen years later. Father Cauchi started working from the church of St. John the Baptist on Dundas Str. and Gore Vale Avenue. He said Mass for the Maltese, organised their outings, acted as their welfare officer, wrote their letters and was very often called to act as their interpreter. He was also told of the wish of his flock to build a Maltese church. Both Archbishop McNeil and the civil authorities regarded Rev. Cauchi as the "de facto" spokesman for the Maltese living in Toronto's Junction.

Soon after taking his post as pastor, Father Cauchi was issuing a regular parish bulletin which he edited in English and Maltese. The first number of that bulletin contained an article under the title: "The Pearl of the Mediterranean". The article gave a general description of Malta. The writer was a Maltese Sister of Mercy who was then living and working in Jamaica.

In the same issue there was a portrait of Father Cauchi. A few biographical notes gave the information that the new pastor had been in Rome where he was professor of Canon Law at St.
Monica's College. A short article in Maltese was about the Catholic priesthood and was titled: "X'inhua s-Sacerdot?".

The bulletin gave a description of Father Cauchi's installation as parish priest of the Maltese. The report claimed that about 700 people filled St. Patrick's Hall in McCaul Street where they heard a Maltese reading an address of welcome to the archbishop. In that address the archbishop was told that that was a great day for the Maltese in Toronto when they welcomed a priest from their country to work among them. The presence of a Maltese priest would help the Maltese to hold on to that faith which was given to their forefathers by Saint Paul himself. The Maltese brought to Canada their faith which their ancestors had defended with their own lives. The address ended with a pledge of loyalty by the Maltese community to the Catholic hierarchy in their country of adoption.

The first challenge facing the new pastor was the building of a church for his Maltese community. The archbishop gave his consent but progress was slow as the times were very hard because of the Depression. Eventually the basement of the new church took shape and in 1930 Archbishop McNeil blessed the basement which was then used as a place of worship. That basement was the beginning of Toronto's Maltese National Parish dedicated to Saint Paul.

The name of the Rev. Alphonse Cauchi became synonymous with the history of the Maltese community in Toronto. He worked hard and was greatly respected. He died on October 2, 1943 when he was in his 64th year. His funeral was on October 5 and holy Mass was celebrated Archbishop James McGuigan of Toronto. The funeral oration was delivered by the Rev. J. Ryan. A final farewell in Maltese was delivered by the Rev. Louis Micallef who had travelled from Detroit to pay his last respects. More than fifty priests took part in the funeral which was watched and attended by nearly every Maltese in Toronto. Father Louis Micallef was in Toronto in 194He when he preached a mission to the Maltese. He died soon afterwards on April 3rd.

**Activities within the Ethnic Community**

The presence of the Rev. Alphonse Cauchi amidst the Maltese ethnic community in Toronto inspired his flock with the idea of imitating what other Catholic immigrants had been doing all over the North American continent. They wanted build their own church and to start a Society which would encourage social and cultural activities. Father Cauchi was capable of bringing together a number of his parishioners to form a nucleus what was eventually to develop into a prominent ethnic body officially called the Maltese-Canadian Society of Toronto. It was to the great, merit of Father Cauchi and his faith parishioners that both the Maltese Parish of Paul and the Maltese-Canadian Society were to prove to be two very useful and permanent fixtures in the history of the Maltese presence Toronto.

Other Maltese societies had been formed in North Africa and elsewhere, wherever a Maltese community of a sizeable proportion was to found, but Cauchi and his helpers had build on solid foundations and their work endures to this day.

Father Cauchi not only led his parish but he encouraged every initiative which originated from his people. On the other hand his parishioners wanted to express their confidence in him to show how much they appreciated his leadership. In 1925, when Cauchi had come up from Philadelphia to visit Toronto, members of the Society had taken part in religious functions which had been organised for them in the church of St. Patrick. Eventually, the Society, which traced its roots to 1922, accepted a constitution in 1927. That constitution helped it to survive rough times and to retain the confidence of the Maltese community.

Parish and Society were born within the lap of the same community. They were different aspects of the same ethnic soul. The founding members of the Society were eager to see work begin on the Maltese church. They supported their pastor when he bought a plot of land in West Toronto within the area which Torontonians called the Junction.
In 1934 the city of Toronto celebrated the first one hundred years from its foundation. Many organisations presented their floats but the one presented by the Maltese-Canadian Society was judged the best and given the first prize. Although the Maltese community was really miniscule, it had shown that it was capable of encouraging talent.

In later years Parish and Society were to cooperate to alleviate some of the hardships which were being endured by the Maltese in their own island during the Second World War. Generous donations flowed from Toronto to Malta and this strengthened the links between Malta and Canada. When eventually the Allies came out victorious over their enemies, Canada praised the courage and endurance of the Maltese and finally dropped all the reservations which had been put against the entry of Maltese into Canada.

Toronto's Maltese population in 1939 barely reached the one thousand mark, but during the years immediately following the victory of the Allies, the Maltese in Toronto were to swell their ranks with thousands of new arrivals.

When recalling the names of some of the best known Maltese in Toronto, John N. Giordimaine is one of the first to spring to mind. John was born in Malta in 1898 and emigrated to Canada soon after the signing of the Armistice. He was to make a name for himself and for the Maltese in Toronto as a magician and entertainer. John settled in Toronto and was to make that city his home till the last. It was in 1930 when John turned his attention to the art of magic. He delighted children and adults alike. Some Canadian newspapers referred to the man from Malta as "Canada's Prime Minister of Magic".

According to the "Toronto Star" of March 1, 1930, the magicians of that city, both professionals and amateurs, had banded themselves together to form a society. They also expressed their desire to have John Giordimaine as their first president.

In 1939 Giordimaine went down to New York for the World's Fair. His shows in that metropolis earned him the title of "Maltese Houdini" and local newspapers described him as one of Canada's most popular entertainers. Reporters said that Giordimaine was well equipped with a number of novel, clean, humorous and mystifying tricks. One of them even suggested that it was silly of New York's Fathers not to have consulted the magician from Malta on the ways of how to chase the Depression away from the shores of North America.

During the years of the Second World War the "Merry Magician" toured Canadian and American cities to help send food, clothing, medicine and money to his countrymen in far away Malta. Giordimaine also toured camps and military hospitals in Ontario with the Toronto Masquers to entertain soldiers.

John Giordimaine was a popular man who helped to make his countrymen in Canada known and respected. He died in Toronto on January 19, 1974.

Far from the busy streets of Toronto, in Edmonton, Alberta, two other Maltese immigrants had seen their names in print. Joseph and Salvatore Gauci had built a miniature Palestine as it was in the time of Our Lord. This was in 1925. Joseph had visited the Holy Land when he was in the Royal Navy and had served in the Mediterranean for more than two years.

Salvatore was the younger. During the First War he had worked as a carpenter in the Naval Dockyard in Malta. When the two brothers left Malta for Canada, they settled in Edmonton and during their spare time they created a monumental work which faithfully reproduced the Holy Land with episodes in the life of Jesus Christ.

Joseph and Salvatore had been interviewed by a correspondent of the "Montreal Daily Star" in July, 1925. According to the report published in that newspaper, the reproduction of Palestine by the Gauci brothers contained sixty million pieces some of which were so small that a microscope was required to place them in their appropriate position. The brothers told their
interviewer that it had taken them years of meticulous work and research and infinite patience to finish their project.

The whole reproduction was forty feet by eighteen. It contained cities, lakes, rivers, roads and bridges. The country was peopled by 900 figures. There were also diminutive trees with fruit on them. The miracles of Christ were all shown. The Praying in the Garden of Gethsemane and the Crucifixion on Calvary were shown in the minutest detail.

Salvatore was the mechanical mind behind the enterprise. He made the figures move by installing forty-four motors which not only provided movements for most of the 900 figures, but also provided light inside the tiny houses. According to the "Montreal Daily Star" it was all very artistic and realistic.

The brothers told their interviewer that people had come to their place in Edmonton from various provinces in Canada and also from the U.S.A. A New York syndicate had made the Gauci brothers an offer of a large sum of money which would have made them financially independent for life. The brothers refused to sell. They declared that their aim was to have their model of the Holy Land serve as an education medium for those who wanted to know more about Jesus and the land he lived in.

Charles Ellul Baldacchino emigrated to Canada with his young family in 1927. Charles knew Canada years before he had decided to emigrate because he used to travel to North America with his father who was then a tobacco merchant.

Charles and his family settled in Toronto. He became a member of the Maltese Canadian Society of Toronto and became a close friend of Father Cauchi and he worked hard to provide the priest with a decent rectory to live in. Charles was interested in drama and when the Melita Dramatic Company was formed he was producing and directing a number of plays most of which were in Maltese.

Away from the stage, another Charles left his mark on the Maltese Canadian community. Charles Formosa was born in Malta in 1911. He emigrated to North Africa where he received a good education and became fluent in five languages. But Formosa felt that the boxing career had brighter prospects and before he was twenty-one he was already a flyweight champion. Because of his small stature he became known as Charles "Kid" Formosa.

In 1933 Charles emigrated to Canada and settled in the province of Quebec. In Montreal he became a professional boxer and in that same year a local newspaper called "La Patrie" wrote about him saying that he had never suffered a defeat to date. Within three years Formosa had fought in Ottawa, where he defeated Bobby Leitham, and in New York.

Another well-known Maltese immigrant was Dr. Anthony Cefai. Originally, Dr. Cefai settled in Detroit where his brother was parish priest of the Maltese community. Dr. Cefai was not only popular in Detroit but became known in Windsor, Canada, where he worked among the Maltese living in that city.

The Maltese communities in Windsor and London, Ontario, were never very large, and they felt the strong pull exercised over them by the much larger community living across the water in Detroit. Many Maltese living in Windsor commuted daily to Detroit where they had their jobs, mostly in the car industry. Ties between Windsor and Detroit were many and it was natural for Dr. Cefai to visit the Maltese in Windsor regularly.

In 1937 Dr. Cefai was appointed as first assistant at operations in the Metropolitan General Hospital of Windsor. This made him move from Detroit to Windsor and the Maltese living in that city, numbering about two hundred, felt very happy that they had their own doctor living in their midst. They also felt proud that a Maltese immigrant had been offered such a responsible job.
Another appointment was offered by the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Cefai was asked to give his services to the Children's Hospital where he eventually dedicated himself to pediatrics. In later years, at the University of Illinois, he ventured into the field of child psychiatry. Dr. Cefai died at Wichita Falls Hospital in 1986.

John Farrugia was another Maltese Canadian whose name appeared in the newspapers just before the declaration of hostilities in 1939. John had been in Canada since 1913 when he was eighteen years old. He settled in Edmonton, Alberta, where he joined the Maltese community already settled in that city some years back. At that time John thought that there were about a hundred Maltese in Edmonton, but by the time his story appeared in the newspapers, John felt that he was the sole survivor.

John worked with the Swift Canadian Company. He stayed with that Company for all his working years, except for a brief spell when he was granted leave of absence during the First World War when he joined the Canadian Army and saw active service in France.

During the war years John found himself in England for some time and there he met Miss Lilian McLachlan who was to be his future wife. When the war was over John and Lilian went to Edmonton and in 1920 they got married. Three years later their son Donald, was born.

In November 1939, John found himself on active service again when he joined the Edmonton Regiment with the 49th battalion. On November 30, the "Edmonton Journal" carried an interview with John. He said he was proud to be called again to serve his adopted country and that he was ready to go into action as a combatant. John told the reporter of the "Edmonton Journal" that when he decided to settle in Alberta in 1913, he did so because at that time so many young men from Malta thought that that was the thing to do. He said he remembered the time when many young unemployed men wished to find work in Canada. They preferred Winnipeg, Edmonton and Vancouver, though a few did stop in Toronto where they stayed for good. John thought that his marriage in Edmonton was the reason why he never thought of leaving the place.

Up to the outbreak of the Second World War, the Maltese in Canada were a tiny community largely ignored by the rest of the population. Henry Casolani, writing in 1930, could not say with any certainty what was the number of the Maltese living in Canada at that time. He did say that between 1920 and 1930 those who had actually emigrated from Malta to Canada numbered 1,317. Of these 328 had eventually returned back home. Casolani thought that by the time he was writing there may have been about two thousand Maltese living in Canada.

By 1923 emigration from Malta to Canada had dwindled almost to insignificant proportions because of various restrictions imposed on the Maltese by the Canadian authorities. These restrictions were so subtle that Casolani himself was bound to admit that it was very difficult for him to understand what were the actual rules governing the entry of Maltese in Canada. The Canadians refused to consider the Maltese as British subjects.

The Maltese were aliens, but while other aliens, like the Italians, were being allowed in, it seemed that the Maltese were being barred precisely because of their nationality.

Casolani felt that the Canadians misunderstood the Maltese. He urged the appointment of a Maltese representative in Ottawa who would be backed by the Imperial Authorities. Although such a representative was eventually sent to Australia, in Canada there was no one to speak up for the Maltese.

Between 1921 and 1931 the Maltese population in Canada was being augmented by some thirty new intakes a year. Later this figure tended to become smaller still. The doors of Canada remained shut to the Maltese until after the end of the Second World War. As happened with other nations within the Empire, the heroic stand taken by the Maltese during three years of savage bombardment, aroused the admiration of the Canadian nation and all prejudices were
swept away. Although Canada never became the major receiving country for Maltese emigrants, thousands decided to start a new life in that country.

From 1946 onwards, a significant movement of Maltese migrants towards the shores of Canada took place. The Canadians never had any reason to regret their decision to open the doors of their country to the emigrants from Malta. The decision to allow unrestricted movement of Maltese to Canada probably profited Canada more than it did Malta.

**Australia: The Initial Hurdles**

In spite of its isolated position Australia became involved in Europe's war when Great Britain found itself embroiled in that conflict in 1914. Most Australians felt that it was their loyal duty to support the Empire and almost half a million volunteered to fight for the Crown. Many of these saw active service on the fronts and left a lasting impression of their bravery. The heroic action of the Anzacs at Gallipoli in 1915 is now part of the saga of that war.

Many Australian soldiers wounded during the Gallipoli campaign were transferred to Malta to be tended at local hospitals. Others succumbed to their wounds and were buried in military cemeteries where 1276 Anzacs still rest. A few of the survivors married Maltese girls. These Maltese-Australian families and the memories of those who had found rest and hospitality among the Maltese helped to forge lasting links between the Maltese and the Australians.

Mr. William (Billy) Hughes was the Prime Minister of Australia during much of the time of the War. He wanted to introduce conscription throughout the States but that idea was vigorously opposed by many, including the influential Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne, Dr. Daniel Mannix. Mr. Hughes put conscription to a referendum in 1916 and again in 1917, but the majority of the voters did not support him.

Although conscription was a domestic issue, that divisive argument had echoes which resounded on Maltese ears. Australian Labour leaders had nourished suspicion against aliens who were considered as competitors for jobs and a threat to Australian standards. Conscription made these suspicions darker still because it was rumoured that, while Mr. Hughes wanted to ship Australian boys to the war fronts in Europe, foreigners were being brought in to replace them. As the war dragged on the ideal of loyalty to the Empire lost a little of its lustre. The trade unions kept their hostility to conscription and to the introduction of cheap labour.

**Immigrants and Conscription**

In 1916 an unhappy incident took place which showed how far tempers had risen on the conscription issue and on immigration. A number of unsuspecting emigrants from Malta were to provide an excuse for those who opposed conscription to vent their feelings against Prime Minister Hughes, conscription and the immigration of aliens.

At a sitting of the Council of Government in Valletta on January 13, 1917, the Acting lieutenant Governor and Chief Secretary, Mr. E. Bonavia, said that on August 18, 1916, 98 emigrants had left Valletta for Sydney on the s.s. Arabia. The migrants on that ship were mostly labourers and farmhands. Their departure was wholly regular as they possessed valid passports and had paid for their passage. They were all travelling independently and had no ties or contracts with any organised scheme of emigration. This group arrived safely and were allowed to travel to their final destination in Australia without any difficulty.

Mr. Bonavia continued to say that on September 12, 1916, another party of 206 Maltese left for Sydney on the French steamer "Gange". These, by an unfortunate coincidence, arrived in Australian waters at the same time as Prime Minister Hughes was conducting very forcefully his campaign in favour of conscription. The opponents of Hughes saw the arrival of the Maltese as part of an evil scheme concocted by Hughes and his supporters with the support of the
Maltese authorities to introduce cheap labour into Australia at a time when Hughes wanted to send Australian men to the fronts.

The captain of the "Gange" was told to steer clear of Australian ports and to slow his speed so that he would approach Melbourne sometime around October 30 when the referendum on conscription would be over by two days. But when the "Gange" arrived in Melbourne the Maltese were not given permission to land. Eventually they were taken to the French island of New Caledonia where they were kept for six months. Even when they were returned to Sydney their harassment was not over because they were transferred to an old ship where they were kept till employment was found for them.

Mr. Bonavia knew of the current unrest in Australia. At the same sitting he admitted that..."there has been for some time past a good deal of unrest in Australia in the matter of importation of labour and a strong public feeling has all along existed against any newcomers who could, with or without reason, be regarded with suspicion as people who were willing to work long hours for low wages. They were not looked upon with any friendly eye by the Labour Unions".

While there were Australians who did not support the idea of encouraging immigration from Malta, there were Maltese politicians who opposed sending migrants to that country. One such politician was Dr. Enrico Mizzi who felt that the Maltese should be spared the humiliation of going to a foreign country like Australia which was hostile to aliens. In another sitting of the Council of Government held on January 20, 1917, Dr. Mizzi asked for information about those Australian newspapers which were spreading a virulent campaign against the entry of immigrants from Malta.

The Sydney Daily Telegraph of October 16, 1916, carried an official statement meant to counterbalance the scurrilous nature of the attacks made on the Maltese living in various parts of Australia. That statement was published by Mr. Holmer and Mr. Wade. The two gentlemen stated that long before 1916 small groups of immigrants from Malta had been arriving in Australia and these migrants had never created problems within the areas where they were living. Those who were now trying to alarm the nation against the Maltese invasion were attacking the unfortunate Maltese in order to hit at Prime Minister Hughes.

The statement said that the Maltese in Australia had gained entry into the country in a legal manner. They paid their fare and settled in Australia of their own free will. On settling down they sought membership of their respective unions, paid their dues and worked at established rates and under union conditions. Holmer and Wade made reference to those numerous Australian soldiers who had found solace and care in Maltese hospitals. They also said in their statement that Maltese living in Australia had written back to their relatives at home telling them of the high wages they were earning and praising the freedom and the good standard of living prevalent in Australia.

The statement by Holmer and Wade condemned the unfounded allegations made against the Maltese. The opponents of conscription were also opposing Maltese immigration when the two issues were completely separate. The Anti-Compulsionists claimed that the Maltese had been brought to Australia under contract for employment on Government railway construction or on other State enterprises. This allegation had already been denied the day it was made by both Federal and State governments.

The statement also declared that the Maltese were in no sense coloured labour. The Maltese were a European race and loyal to the British Empire. During the Battle of Jutland in May of that same year many Maltese had given up their lives for the victory of the Empire. The statement also said that while some quarters in Australia were fanning the flames of racism against the Maltese, those gallant British subjects were giving their loyal service to the effort of winning the war not only in the North Sea but also in the Mediterranean and on the European mainland.
The statement of October 16, 1916, said that since the Maltese were proud of their British citizenship, they were only too willing to give their share to defeat the Kaiser. They were prepared to do this whether they lived in Malta or in Australia. Moreover, there was no question of the Maltese swamping the empty spaces of Australia. The total population of Malta was less than a quarter of a million and the Maltese who were willing to emigrate probably numbered about 10,000. Only a part of this figure would choose to emigrate to Australia since many Maltese had opted to settle in other parts of the world, particularly in North America.

The statement issued over the signature of Holmer and Wade reminded Australians that Mr. Hughes had already requested the Imperial authorities not to issue passports during the war to intending migrants of military age. Hughes's wish did not apply to Maltese only but to citizens of the United Kingdom and all the British Dominions. Consequently, Holmer and Wade claimed that those who opposed the entry of Maltese immigrants because they also opposed conscription were doing a disservice to Australia, to Malta and to the Empire.

In spite of such a statement carried by one of the most influential newspapers in Australia, and the official intervention of Federal and State authorities, public opinion in Australia during the War remained hostile to Maltese immigration. The incident of the "Gange" had been a great humiliation. The Maltese Government was not able to do much to help the migrants caught between the opposing factions of Australian politics. Malta was not an independent country and the Maltese had no representative in Australia to speak up for them. Mr. Casolani, writing six years after the fiasco, could only say that most of the Maltese on the "Gange" were "of poor quality and mostly unskilled".

By 1919 Australia had stopped the entry of Maltese except for wives and dependent children of Maltese nationals who were permanently settled there.

**Selection, Nomination and Quota**

The end of the First World War pointed to a tentative return to normality and the Australian economy was picking up again. Most Europeans wished to settle in North America, but Australia needed new blood to replace the men who had been lost during the war and also to expand its economy. The population had to increase. By 1920 Australia adopted a more relaxed attitude to immigration even if those migrants were not classified as British. The Australians were then willing to admit three categories of Maltese immigrants:

1. Wives and dependent children of Maltese already living in Australia.
2. Maltese who had been formerly living in Australia.
3. Holders of Australian passports who could be re-admitted without restrictions and needed no special authority.

In addition to these three classes a special quota was established to admit others who enjoyed good health and were at least able to communicate in English. The quota was established at 260 persons per year because it was calculated that that was the average number of Maltese who had arrived in Australia each year between 1912 and 1914. Moreover, Maltese immigrants were exempted from a dictation test if they carried a declaration from the Maltese authorities that they had been found to be sufficiently acquainted with the English language.

The quota system was not what the Maltese had hoped for but it was a move towards the relaxation of the rigid system under which only those who had immediate relatives in Australia were permitted into the country. The quota of 260 immigrants each year had conditions attached to it. Only small groups of about twenty or thirty immigrants were to be allowed entry in a single month and those migrants were not to disembark at the same port of entry at one time. This discreet policy was meant to avoid publicity and allay suspicions in quarters which were still actively hostile to the Maltese.
It was also strongly recommended that on arrival the Maltese should not walk the streets in groups or loiter in any given area. They were advised not to speak their language aloud and to do everything they could to avoid attracting attention. They were urged to seek employment in the country and avoid the towns at any cost.

Between April 1, 1920, and March 31, 1921, the number of Maltese who stated their wish to emigrate to Australia was 278. Even before President Harding of the U.S.A. had passed the first Quota Law of 1921 which seriously impeded the flow of Maltese migration to the U.S.A., Australia was then already being considered as one of the most favoured lands by Maltese emigrants especially those who originated from Gozo and the northern parts of Malta.

In 1921 official Government sources in Malta had declared Australia as the land for the Maltese who hailed from the villages because land in Australia was plentiful, the wages attractive and the cost of living very reasonable. Queensland was considered as the ideal State for Maltese emigrants who wished to work not in factories but on the land. It was suggested that migrants should seek employment with a landowner and work for him. Union wages paid to those who worked on sugar plantations in Queensland in 1921 were 17s 6d for an eight hour shift while food was provided by the employers at 23s 6d a week.

The Emigration authorities in Malta provided information concerning work and wages in various States. They also had to work out a periodical report and send it to the Director of Migration and Settlement in London. Migrants who presented themselves for admission into Australia had to be over eighteen years and not over forty-nine. Domiciled and former residents were exempted from the Colloquial Test. In order to acquire domicile one had to reside in Australia for a period or periods in the aggregate of not less than five years.

The Australians had already given the concession to allow in wives, and children under eighteen, but other members of the family such as parents and sisters of Maltese already resident in Australia had to acquire a special permit from the Home and Territories Department in Melbourne.

Another interesting development in the field of emigration to Australia was the extension of the scheme by which assisted passages were made available to emigrants from Malta. The scheme had been in operation for a number of years and migrants from the United Kingdom were enabled to travel to Australia by receiving financial aid to defray their expenses. In 1921 the scheme was extended to migrants from Malta. If a migrant was nominated by a relative already resident in Australia he was able to qualify for an assisted passage.

Mr. Henry Casolani had worked hard to have this scheme also apply to the Maltese. It was for this reason that he had strongly objected when the Maltese were classified as aliens and not as British subjects.

The assisted passage scheme functioned in this way: the nominator had to pay two thirds of the passage fare. Any migrant of twelve years or more was considered as an adult and therefore his nominator had to agree to pay two thirds of a full passage. The ticket was generally obtained from the Orient Line Company. The nominator's duties towards his nominees did not simply consist in making good the greater part of the money which had to be paid for the trip to Australia. He also had to give a guarantee that he would adequately provide for the maintenance of those he had volunteered to help to bring to Australia.

The nomination had to be lodged with the Director of Labour and Immigration of the State in which the nominator was residing. The nomination was then sent to the Director of Migration and Settlement in London who then would send the nomination to the Emigration Office in Malta. The nominees would then be informed that they had been selected to emigrate to Australia and were told to submit themselves to a medical examination to ensure that they satisfied the requirements set down by the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1901.
If the nominated person happened to be a son or a daughter under the age of twelve the consent of one of the parents was necessary. If the person nominated was married he was to provide a signed declaration from his wife that she did not object to his departure. He was also asked to declare that once he settled in Australia he would send for his wife and children. The wife's consent was to be handed in to the Emigration Office on a prescribed form in which the wife was to declare that she was satisfied that the proper provisions had been made for her and for her children until the time they were able to join the husband in Australia.

Finally, the nominated person had to leave Malta not later than a month from the issue of his papers. Besides the certificate concerning his good health the migrant had to carry with him another certificate issued by the police which stated that his conduct record was clean. Both certificates were valid for one month.

The Casolani Mission to London

A significant event in the history of Maltese emigration, particularly to Australia, took place in the Spring of 1922. On May 10 of that same year, Henry Casolani, the Superintendent of emigration, was commissioned by the Government of Malta, to go to London in order to establish official contacts with the representatives of Australia, Canada, and the U.S.A. The scope of the visit was to help ease the flow of migration to those countries and try to remove some of the obstacles which impeded that flow. Casolani was especially briefed by his minister, William Savona, to do all he could to establish emigration to Australia on a satisfactory basis.

The day after he arrived in London, Casolani went to Australia House where he had a conference with Mr. L. Shepherd who was the Official Secretary and with Mr. Percy Hunter who was the Director of Migration and Settlement. During the conference Casolani insisted on the complete abolition of the quota system which he condemned as discriminatory against the Maltese. As British subjects the Maltese expected to enter Australia by right. Casolani also claimed for the Maltese the right to share in the benefits normally allotted to emigrants who hailed from the United Kingdom. These benefits included financial assistance for travelling purposes and also the eligibility for any future Land Settlement schemes in Australia. Casolani also wanted the right for the Maltese Government to use, for the benefit of Malta's intending migrants, the unexpended balances of the quota in respect of the year 1920 and 1921.

This final request about the unused quotas met with no unsurmountable objections from the Australians. By April 18, 1922, the yearly quota of 260 was already exhausted. On May 13, one day after the conference at Australia House had ended, Mr. Casolani was told that the yearly quota could be extended to 393 persons. This figure included the places which had been left vacant during the previous two years.

The conference of May 11 had one lasting achievement for Malta. Casolani's mission to London made Mr. Percy Hunter realise how just the representations of the Maltese were and he promised to pursue the Maltese case with the Australian Federal Government on his return to Australia. Mr. Hunter knew that the power of decision making was in Australia.

On June 2, 1922, Mr. Hunter wrote to Mr. Casolani a memorandum in which it was stated:

a. That Australia House now had a clear picture of how the Emigration Office in Valletta functioned and in what manner prospective emigrants were examined and selected.

b. That the Australians were satisfied that the Maltese who had settled in Australia were successful immigrants.

c. That the scheme for assisted passages would work very well.

d. That the Migration and Settlement Office in London was not in a position to take final decisions regarding the unrestricted entry of Maltese into Australia. However Mr. Hunter promised to make the wishes of the Maltese known in Australia.
The fact that now the Director of the Australian Office of Migration and Settlement in London was won over to the Maltese side was a great achievement for Mr. Casolani. It is understandable that Malta's Superintendent of Emigration was proud of this when he wrote: "I am glad to be in a position to state positively that Mr. Hunter's views are very favourable to our migrants and this, coupled with his undisputed and instinctive knowledge of migration problems and his personal influence with the authorities, will doubtless go a long way towards the attainment of the object we have in view".

During his short stay in London Mr. Casolani contacted a number of influential people, among whom Sir James Mitchell who in 1922 was the Premier of Western Australia. Sir James said that his vast State was very thinly populated an large areas had no permanent inhabitants. If the warning to "populate or perish" was valid for Australia as a whole it was doubly so for the western section of the Commonwealth. The Premier told Mr. Casolani that Western Australia needed immediately 100,000 white workers to help the economic development of his State.

Casolani wrote about his meeting with Sir James as "most pleasant and interesting". The meeting took place at the Hotel Victoria in London on May 18. The man who made this meeting possible was Sir James Connolly, a prominent politician from Western Australia who was a personal friend of Sir Gerald Strickland and who had visited Malta in 1913. Since the time of his visit Sir James Connolly had advocated Maltese emigration to Western Australia.

Connolly had briefed his Premier about Malta's pressing need to find outlets for its overpopulation. Casolani suggested sending navvies to work on Western Australia's new roads and railroads. Maltese had already been successful in Queensland and in New South Wales. Casolani saw no reason why they should not be also successful in Western Australia. Casolani dwelt on the good qualities of the Maltese worker - a hardy, frugal and industrious man, imbued with a deep love for his family. His numerous family left him no time to take part in any industrial unrest.

The poor education of the Maltese migrant was an obstacle which even an optimist like Casolani could not ignore. He admitted this to Sir James Mitchell, but he assured the Premier of Western Australia that although most Maltese only spoke their own language they were able to pick up English when they settled in a country where that language was universally spoken. In spite of the language handicap, the Maltese shared with their brothers and sisters in England, Scotland and Wales, their love for King and Empire.

Sir James must have been impressed with such an outburst of loyalty, but he wanted more practical information. He wanted to know the average height and size of the men from Malta. Casolani reassured Sir James that the men who were selected as migrants to Australia were stalwart workers comparable in physique to the average Englishman or Scandinavian. As for the physical fitness of the Maltese Sir James could ask for the opinion of his friend Connolly who had been to Malta in 1913 and was able to see for himself.

The Premier of Western Australia was also told that the Maltese villagers were born and bred on the land and all of them had a working knowledge of agriculture. They were also the only peasants of White stock who were expert in the cultivation of cotton. Casolani thought that the Maltese experience could be a valuable asset to a future cotton industry in Australia.

Sir James was also told that the Maltese had a good reputation for cultivating potatoes and their product was exported to various countries in Europe. It was also discreetly suggested to the representatives of Western Australia that they should encourage the immigration of Maltese girls. That part of Australia needed young women of child-bearing age. In Malta women outnumbered men, and besides the project of encouraging procreation Maltese females could be employed as governesses, housekeepers, cooks, maids and nurses.

The Western Australians also enquired about the possibility of sending Maltese fishermen to their State to help develop the fishing industry. Casolani thought that that was a distinct
possibility and he promised to contact the Department of Fisheries in Malta to find out how many fishermen were willing to emigrate.

Casolani made a positive impact on Sir James Mitchell. The premier expressed himself favourable to Maltese emigration to his State. However, Sir James did sound a note of caution when he said that the subject of immigration was a Federal matter but he promised to use his influence with the Federal Prime Minister.

J. McWhae and Opposition to the Maltese

Not all the Australians Casolani spoke with were in favour of encouraging Maltese emigration to Australia. Mr. John McWhae was the Agent General for the State of Victoria. He had represented Melbourne in the State parliament for twelve years and had been a prominent figure in Victorian Politics for a number of years. McWhae not only upheld vigorously the White Australia Policy but he also believed that White meant British and British meant exactly what it said: a person born in Great Britain of parents who were of British stock.

McWhae told Casolani that the Maltese were not British and since they were of alien and foreign origin their entry into Australia should be stopped. McWhae reminded Casolani that he had left a very comfortable home in Victoria to go to London to insist on keeping Australia British in the full sense of the term and to do all he could to bar the entry of foreigners. McWhae told Casolani that the present population of Australia was either Australian-born or else made up of immigrants who had been born in the British Isles. Men and women of British stock made up 96% of Australia's population and McWhae intended to keep the complexion of Australia as British as possible.

In 1925 Mr. McWhae was back in Australia more determined than ever in his opposition to foreign immigration. In that same year Casolani complained about xenophobic bigots who were waging a campaign in Australia to keep the Maltese out and send home those who had managed to enter under the pretext that they were British. The anti-Maltese campaign was most strident in the Melbourne press.

Casolani noticed that since Mr. John McWhae had returned to Victoria from London there had been in that State "a recrudescence in a most virulent form of the protests against the advent of the Maltese". Casolani did not say that McWhae was actually conducting the campaign against the Maltese but he did note that such adverse propaganda was being stimulated by McWhae's presence and by his comments and speeches and by those of others who spoke like him.

Casolani also suspected that the anti-Maltese propaganda was being controlled and financed by what he called "astute agents" who maintained a high level of hostility against the Maltese in order to keep the Australian labour market free from those who were not of Anglo-Saxon origin.

McWhae was an outspoken politician whose exclusive views on future demographic development were shared by many Australians in all States, particularly among those close to the feelings of the working classes. Foreign workers were not liked for many reasons, especially because foreigners tended to be more hardworking, more disciplined and could survive under harsh conditions and low wages. Foreigners tended to be careful with their money. They bought their houses and in some suburbs the presence of those who had immigrated from foreign parts of the world was made obvious by the high standards shown in the quality of their houses.

During his mission in London in 1922 Casolani tried to establish useful contacts. His failure to convince McWhae did not deter him from trying to win friends for the cause of the Maltese immigrant in Australia. Casolani obtained interviews with Mr. A.H. Ashbolt of Tasmania, Sir
Edward Lucas of South Australia, Sir Timothy Coghlan of New South Wales and Mr. J.A. Filhelly of Queensland.

Mr. Edmund Jowett of the Country Party received Mr. Casolani on May 19, 1922. Casolani described Jowett as an Australian magnate and a very influential politician who represented Queensland in the Federal Parliament. In one of his speeches Mr. Jowett had expressed forceful views on immigration which did not greatly differ from those held by McWhae.

Jowett had declared that he was only in favour of those immigrants who were of British blood and that he opposed the admission of any foreigners. However, Jowett had been to Malta and he was a friend of the Maltese politician Sir Gerald Strickland. Strickland had held important positions and had been Governor of the Leeward Islands, Tasmania, Western Australia and New South Wales. In 1927 he was to become Prime Minister of Malta.

Casolani left a good impression on Jowett who admitted that he was inclined to consider the Maltese not as foreigners. Jowett thought that the people of the Maltese Islands were similar to those of the Channel Islands whose speech was different from that of mainland Britain but who were British all the same. Maltese had settled in Queensland since the nineteenth century and Jowett felt that they had given a solid contribution to his State.

Casolani had carried out his mission in London single-handed. His island had gained self-government the year before and he showed that Maltese civil servants were capable of working for the good of their people. The Maltese Government was seriously hampered in working for the good of the Maltese people because of the thousands of workers who had been laid off during the previous three years. At that time the only possible solution to ease the pressure of over-population and unemployment was emigration. Entry into the U.S.A. had been seriously hindered since 1921 and Canada remained distant and aloof. Casolani was historically right when he felt that the best overseas outlet for the Maltese migrant was Australia.

The Mission to London conducted by Casolani was an important breakthrough in the history of Maltese emigration. The Superintendent of Emigration spoke and pleaded not only with Australians, but with anybody he considered as potentially capable of helping to absorb the unemployed people of Malta. Casolani spoke in the name of a colony whose only importance at the time was its strategic position in the centre of the Mediterranean. The civil needs of the Maltese could only be considered as subordinate to those of the British Fleet.

The Rev. William C. Bonett

One very valid conclusion arrived at by Mr. Henry Casolani after having accomplished his mission to London in 1922 was the pressing need for representatives of the Maltese Government to live and work in countries where considerable colonies of Maltese immigrants were to be found. The problem was that Malta was not an independent country and it was difficult to find the proper persons who would be also acceptable to the authorities where the Maltese had settled.

One possible solution to this problem was to appoint priests who were already working in areas of Maltese immigration as unofficial spokesmen for the Maltese. The priests could also keep in touch with the Maltese Government and enrol the support of the local Catholic Church in favour of the Maltese.

The Rev. William Bonett was one of these priests who while he worked as a minister of religion very often acted as a representative of the Maltese living in Sydney. Bonett was born in Gibraltar on February 12, 1884. He was born of Constantine and Concetta nee Chircop, both of whom were Maltese immigrants living in Gibraltar. William received his early education in that British colony, and like most educated Maltese he was fluent in at least three languages: Maltese, Italian and English. The Bonett family had returned to Malta in 1904.
In 1916 William Bonett decided to emigrate to Australia. Although there was a war going on and the sea was not the safest place to be on, Bonett left on the ship "Osterley" which he described on the back of a postcard he sent to his family as "a very fine ship". He arrived in Sydney on September 18, 1916. Six days before Australian papers had printed stories about the hapless Maltese caught on board the ship "Gange". When he learned about the story Bonett left for Melbourne.

In Melbourne Bonett asked for an interview with Prime Minister William Hughes who admitted that the cause of the Maltese on the "Gange" was a just one. Father Bonett insisted that the Maltese should not be sent back to Malta as they had done nothing wrong. In a letter he wrote at the time Bonett felt that he had saved the Maltese from being deported. Although he wrote his letter in Italian, when he came to describe the way Mr. Hughes received him he changed into English and described the Prime Minister as "very very nice and friendly".

The part played by Bonett in solving the affair of the "Gange" did not go unnoticed. In a letter to another Maltese priest in Malta, G. de Piro, he wrote:

"During the three months I have been in Lewisham, I have met several priests from all parts of Australia. As soon as I tell them who I am, they all say: We hear so much about you, Father. The Maltese priest who saved his countrymen".

Again, to emphasise his point, Bonett departed from his Italian and wrote the final sentences in English.

Soon after his arrival in Sydney Bonett realised that the Maltese colony in that city was beset by many problems, the most serious of which was neglect. The Maltese authorities worked hard to be able to send the emigrants to Sydney, but once they arrived in the receiving country they were left on their own. In November he wrote to Malta to see if it was possible to obtain more Maltese priests.

His contact in Malta was Mgr. G. de Piro who was then working hard to set up a society of priests and brothers who would in future volunteer to work among Maltese emigrants. In a letter written in June 1917 Bonett urged de Piro to send more priests to Australia as the need there was very pressing. The letter was written in Italian with English and Maltese interpolations.

It seemed that he had encountered some opposition to his ministry from a few Maltese. There were a few who did not like the presence of the priest among them and who had every interest to keep Bonett away.

Although Father Bonett is never specific in his letters, it comes out clearly from his correspondence that at least two Maltese had created a lot of trouble for him. He complained to de Piro:

"I suffered in silence from two evil men who call themselves Maltese. I had to endure patiently a satanic persecution from the two Maltese who had been in Australia for about five years. They did everything, possible to destroy me. They made false reports about me to the Australian Government; three times they told lies about me to the archbishop. They threw mud at my face. Mud at me, 1 who am the most respected by the Australians because of my excellent conduct when I give the best example to all. Thank God those satanic falsehoods came to nothing as my priestly character emerged purified and embellished. I did not take legal action against those two who smeared my name only because the archbishop asked me not to do."

Prudence on the part of Father Bonett did not allow him to mention the two Maltese who had caused him so much trouble, nor does he specify what they actually said or did to him. The
two men had been in Australia sometime before 1916 and therefore were not among those who had arrived on the "Gange".

The mud thrown at Bonett did not stick. Although he normally corresponded in Italian he did reproduce in English the exact words the archbishop of Sydney used when he heard of the accusations made: "Do not worry, Father Bonett, we are fully satisfied with your behaviour, and if we had a good idea of your character, we have a better one now."

When Bonett set foot on Australian soil he was a young priest of 32 years of age. His intervention on behalf of the migrants who had arrived on the "Gange" greatly enhanced his prestige and his good education made it possible for him to establish important contacts with civil and ecclesiastical authorities. At Lewisham he worked as an assistant parish priest and he was also chaplain to Lewisham Hospital which he described as one of the best in the world. That hospital had connections with Malta, as the sister-in-charge, Mother Francis Xavier, had been to Malta when her Congregation, popularly known by the Maltese as the Blue Sisters, were taking charge of another hospital in Malta.

Although his clash with the two unnamed persons must have soured his relations with some of the Maltese, Father Bonett never ignored the needs of the Maltese and Gozitans. Many of them lived in the area known as Wooloomooloo and knew him by the Maltese apppellative of Dun Gulierm or Father Willie. He was an energetic priest and during his initial years in Sydney his patience must have worn somewhat thin with some of his countrymen who did not agree with everything he did or proposed to do.

In a letter written in June 1917 Bonett's condemnation of some of the Maltese living in Sydney was very vehement. He was addressing Mgr. de Piro and he wanted to impress his friend with the urgent need of sending more priests to Australia. His fervour to convince de Piro might have made him exaggerate the attitude of some of the Maltese and Gozitans then living in Sydney. Bonett wrote to de Piro:

"Our Maltese 'gentlemen' ignore their religious duties. The situation is desperate. May it please the Lord that all Maltese depart from Australia as soon as possible. The Maltese in Australia have made a very bad name for themselves. I am sure that those who have come here are the worst type that could have arrived from Malta".

Again Bonett was writing in Italian but to emphasise his point he changed into the Maltese vernacular: "Hallini, ahiar, ghax jech nibda ma niekaf katt". (I had better stop, otherwise I will never stop).

Bonett did not stop. He spared neither Gozitan nor Maltese: "Shame on the parish priests of Gozo for the type of Gozitans they send us. I have suffered so many humiliations because of them. They carry their possessions in those accursed flour-bags with those blue letters printed on them".

Then Bonett turned his fury on the Maltese: "If the Gozitans who have arrived in Australia are so backward, the sort of Maltese living in Australia are even worse. Their way of life is intolerable. We in Australia do not need these people, nor do we want them. I felt very happy when I suggested to the Australian authorities that they should suspend the entry of the Maltese".

Bonett was unjustly harsh in his complete condemnation of all immigrants who hailed from the Maltese Islands. In later years he was to mature and his approach was to be more constructive.

However, even in 1917, he was capable of offering a very sound suggestion. He urged the authorities in Malta to set up an organisation to prepare intending migrants for life in a foreign country. Bonett was against haphazard emigration and did not want his own country to get a
bad name because of the type of emigrants sent overseas. That was why in 1917 he exclaimed that if all the Maltese were to leave Australia they would do that country a favour.

Bonett also suspected that most of the Maltese immigrants he knew were not interested in learning about the Australian way of life and they despised the good advice given to them by those who knew better. Bonett told de Piro that what he had written were hard facts. Young priests should not stay in Malta but should go and serve the Maltese who were living abroad, especially those in Australia. In fact Father Bonett had given the example and he was to work among the Maltese in New South Wales till his last breath.

**Maltese Visitors to Australia**

For a number of years Bonett had to toil, practically alone, to improve the lot of the Maltese immigrant in New South Wales. In 1922 he founded the Melita Social Club which had its premises at no. 8, William Street, Sydney. Three years later the founder welcomed a distinguished Maltese lawyer and politician, Dr. A. Bartolo who had long been interested in Maltese emigration to English speaking countries within the Empire. In 1927 Bartolo was to serve under Lord Strickland as minister responsible for emigration.

Bartolo was in Australia on September 1st, 1925. He paid a visit to Canberra which was then being built as the nation's federal capital. Unfortunately Bartolo arrived at a time when work was at a standstill because the area had been ravaged by mighty floods which had brought havoc and destruction through the valley of the Murrumbidgee river.

The reason for Bartolo's visit to Australia was to attend the Empire Press Conference which started on September 29. Lord Strickland had asked his colleague Bartolo to enquire about the state of the Maltese in Australia and it was for this reason that he wished to meet the Rev. Bonett and the members of the Melita Social Club.

The distinguished visitor from Malta was welcomed at the Melita by Bonett on September 12. That date happened to be the third annual reunion of the Club. There were about 300 people present, most of them Maltese. Later on Bartolo said that the Maltese immigrants he met at the Melita Social Club were people able to hold their place among the working class anywhere in the world. He was impressed by the way they dressed, by their manners and by their general attitude.

Bonett, the founder of the Club, gave a speech in honour of Bartolo. In his speech Bonett said that he had founded the Club for "the social, intellectual and moral betterment of our people". That epoch also showed a significant change in the attitude of Father Bonett from that expressed in 1917. Eight years had worked a marked difference. Bonett assured Bartolo that "we never regretted the day we landed in this great Commonwealth, the best country on God’s earth. Our people have done well in Australia. We pay our taxes, we are law-abiding citizens. We love Australia first".

The founder and members of the Club offered a gift to Bartolo. He was given a pair of Australian cuff links made up of a miniature map of Australia within a boomerang. Bartolo was also given a golden pen. The president of the Melita, Mr. Paul Grech, aided by his secretary, Mr. M. Bezzina, told their visitor that when Father Bonett had started the Club they had to raise the sum of $250 to pay as rent. Eventually they bought two billiard tables for $600 and also secured the service of a piano player. They had spent another $100 to acquire the necessary furniture. According to the president the Club's yearly income amounted to $500 a year. The money came from direct contributions and from those players who used their billiard tables.

As a footnote to Bartolo's visit to the Melita Social Club it was noted that the Maltese in Sydney, unlike those in other areas, enjoyed the fruit of a good leadership provided by Father Bonett. One person told Bartolo that the priest was idolised by the Maltese.
Within eight years Father Bonett had achieved important and significant results within his community. The Maltese had a centre which provided social and cultural activities. They had their own priest who looked after them and acted as a vital link between them and the Australian authorities. Yet in 1925 he had only four more years to live, even though he was still in the prime of life.

Three years after the visit by Bartolo another prominent Maltese visited Australia. He was Mgr. Paolo Gauci who went to Australia as Malta's representative at the International Eucharistic Congress held in Sydney between September 5 and 9. Gauci wrote a pamphlet about his visit to Australia and that booklet is another interesting source about the Maltese in Australia in 1928.

Gauci left Naples for Sydney on board the "Orama" with 600 passengers who were mostly English-speaking. There were also many emigrants on board, mostly Maltese and Italians. The Pope's Legate, Cardinal Cerretti, was also on the ship and when he was told that the emigrants on board were mostly Catholic he went to speak to them and said Mass for them.

The "Orama" made a favourable impression on Gauci. He called her "un palazzo galleggiante" or a floating palace. The monsignor was a prominent person in Malta and had shown keen interest in the welfare of emigrants as he had been a member on the Board of Emigration and a senator representing the clergy in the Maltese Parliament. Whenever the "Orama" entered a port of call, Gauci contacted the Maltese community. This he did in Port Said, Fremantle and Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney.

At Fremantle Gauci said that they had to undergo a rigorous medical check-up. He arrived in Perth on August 20 and was received by Bishop Clune who himself had been to Malta in 1913. Perth impressed Gauci as "a city which is experiencing a magnificent growth in the construction of buildings and in the expansion of trade".

Gauci was in Melbourne on August 27, and his comments on that city were: "Melbourne is a very big city, well planned, beautiful and clean. The streets are long, with public and private buildings which compare well with those of any modern city".

On August 30, 1928, the "Orama" finally entered the harbour of Sydney. Gauci was present when the cathedral of St. Mary's was opened again to the public after it had been extended. Cardinal Cerretti opened the main door with a golden key. Sydney impressed Gauci with its size and the quick pace of its life. He thought that the people of Sydney were friendly and frank and their general behaviour was like that of Europeans. The streets could hardly cope with the traffic because there were many private cars while blue and yellow taxis were to be seen in their hundreds. Gauci calculated that in the State of New South Wales there were about 180,000 private cars.

In his correspondence Gauci stated: "Sydney is the marvellous city of a marvellous country. It is more so now during the magnificent celebrations for the Eucharistic Congress. I have come across and have been approached by many of our countrymen settled here and I hope, during my stay, to be able to do something for their spiritual welfare".

In another letter Gauci wrote: "Everybody here speaks well of the Maltese both from a religious as well as from the labour aspect. When I arrived here, many with Fr. Bonett came aboard the "Orama" with the Maltese flag to welcome us. Afterwards they gave me an evening at the Melita Social Club. We are now about to have a week's mission. They also took part in the procession of the Eucharistic Congress with the Maltese Flag and were cheered all along the way. I am going from here to Melbourne, then to Adelaide, then to Broken Hill. I will look after the spiritual needs of our fellow countrymen who are so much in need of a Maltese priest".
An interested eye-witness of what was going on in Sydney at the time was Mr. Paul Attard who lived at 190, Bourke Road. Mr. Attard was an articulate observer who had been living in Australia for some time. He also kept a regular correspondence with his contacts in Malta, particularly with Mr. Henry Casolani. His correspondence with Mr. Casolani is very relevant to the situation of the Maltese immigrants in New South Wales. On September 12, 1928, Mr. Attard wrote the following letter to Malta’s Superintendent of Emigration:

"Dear Mr. Casolani,

The Eucharistic Congress concluded on Sunday 9th September with an impressive ceremony in which over three quarters of a million people of every denomination witnessed Cardinal Cerretti imparting the benediction. The participation of the Maltese in the procession was a splendid idea and Fr. Bonett, who was the organiser, deserves every credit for the success. The white and red banner of Malta was so proudly and prominently carried, with over a hundred Maltese marching behind it in the most orderly manner.

A few weeks before the Congress Fr. Bonett called a meeting at the Club and a committee was formed to organise the participation of the Maltese in the procession. Among those present were Dr. Mattei and Mgr. Gauci. A photo was taken."

Fortunately the photograph referred to by Mr. Attard has survived and is reproduced in this book. Bonett utilised to the full the visit to Sydney by Mgr. Gauci. He knew that the distinguished prelate from Malta had a lot of influence in Maltese politics and with the Church authorities. He invited Gauci to a meeting at the Melita Social Club to discuss the needs of the Maltese in Australia. That meeting took place on September 23, 1928. At that meeting Gauci took an active part and the proceedings were recorded by Mr. E. Castaldi. Dr. Mattei was also present.

Mgr. Gauci asked those present to tell him in clear terms what they expected from the Maltese Government so that he could present their suggestions as a Senator and as a member on the Board of Emigration. It was generally agreed that the Maltese urgently needed a representative of the Maltese Government to live and work in Australia and to act as their spokesman with the Australian authorities. Most of those present felt that Captain Henry Curmi was the ideal candidate for that office.

The discussion then turned on the actual situation of the Maltese in Australia, on their relations with the Australian authorities, the conditions of work then available and whether it was then prudent to encourage further emigration from Malta to Australia.

That last point generated arguments for and against further emigration to Australia. Present at the meeting were some who had already petitioned Dr. A. Bartolo, the Maltese minister responsible for emigration, to restrict the numbers of Maltese emigrating to Australia because of the adverse economic conditions then prevalent in the country. It seemed that the majority favoured those who had asked Bartolo to discourage further emigration to Australia because jobs were hard to come by.

Father Bonett and Mr. P. Attard contested this statement and while they admitted that employment in the cities was slack there were plenty of jobs awaiting those who were prepared to move out to the country. But Gauci intervened when he thought that the kind of people who were unemployed in the cities were not fit to work in the country.

The meeting ended with a repeated call for a permanent Maltese representative in Australia and for more Maltese priests to be sent to Australia to work among the Maltese immigrants.

The meeting organised by Bonett did have one lasting effect. Less than six months after September 23, 1928, Captain Henry Curmi was on his way to Australia to take up his post as the official representative of the Maltese Government in Australia. The other request to send
more priests did not produce immediate results. Indeed, less than six weeks after the meeting held in William Street, Sydney, the Maltese in that city were mourning the loss of their beloved Father William Bonett.

In October Fr. Bonett complained about an ailment he felt in his throat. In 1917 he had been operated on and had his tonsils removed. He had to stay at Lewisham hospital for three weeks. He was now back in the same hospital which he had served as a chaplain. At first the doctors did not diagnose anything serious, but his throat turned septic and he was anointed by his friend Mgr. H.M. MacDermott of Leichhardt where Bonett had served as an assistant.

At twelve o'clock, November 9, Mgr. MacDermott recited the Angelus with his patient. When Bonett and MacDermott had finished their prayers Bonett looked at his friend and addressed him in a firm voice: "Now let me go, I am dying". As Mgr. MacDermott pronounced the last rites Fr. William Bonett expired.

Mgr. MacDermott described his assistant as "a perfect priest, a credit to his native land, to his seminary and to his professors". At his funeral Mass, the preacher, the Rev. P. Dunleavy, paid tribute to the memory of Bonett who, Dunleavy said, had answered God's call to go and teach all nations. Bonett had obeyed the call and for twelve years he laboured in Australia where conditions were not always ideal. He spent his last seven years in Leichhardt among many immigrants from his own native Malta, from Italy and from other nations as well.

Mr. Paul Attard was one of the many Maltese who went to Bonett's funeral. He was present at the solemn High Mass which was held at St. Fiacre's Church. Dr. Sheehan, co-adjutor to the archbishop of Sydney, was present. Father William Bonett was forty-four years old when he passed away on November 9, 1928. He was buried the next day at Rockwood cemetery. The funeral consisted of about twenty cars, half of which were occupied by Maltese.

The visits by Dr. A. Bartolo and Mgr. P. Gauci had helped to consolidate the bond of brotherhood between the Maltese in Australia and those who had remained in their native islands. The hard pioneering work done by Bonett was acknowledged by both Bartolo and Gauci. It was also a fortunate coincidence that the two visitors had been prominent men involved in the plans to further develop Maltese emigration to Australia.

When Bartolo became Minister for Emigration and Labour under the Strickland administration in 1927, he was ideally suited to understand the needs of Maltese living abroad and he himself had visited Maltese living in Canada and in Australia.

Test Case in South Australia

When Bartolo was in Australia in 1925 he had been told of political agitation in South Australia in which some Maltese had found themselves embroiled. Bartolo was in Adelaide on October 16, 1925. He was met at the railway station by five Maltese who proudly displayed their red and white cockades. Bartolo stayed at the South Australian Hotel. On the same day he arrived at his hotel he called at the Maltese Club in Hindley Street where he met about fifty Maltese, most of them still in their working clothes. The men aired their problems which were being caused by hostile elements in South Australia.

On October 19, the Maltese in Adelaide entertained Bartolo to a splendid dinner which included, among other specialities, Lamb Cutlets Valletta and Ice Malta. Bartolo promised to meet the premier of South Australia to complain about some hostile and discriminatory acts which had been perpetrated against the Maltese in Adelaide.

On December 28, 1924, a serious riot had broken out in Adelaide when a number of navvies held a meeting to protest against continued immigration of aliens into South Australia. Bartolo was told that at one time the crowd numbered some 500 men. There was also a counter-
meeting called by aliens who were protesting against those who were objecting to the presence of foreign workers in Adelaide. The police had to intervene and it was then made known that among the foreigners who had been arrested there were some from Malta.

The bogey of Southern Europeans coming to Australia with their starving millions to take over the country had been raised not only in Adelaide but also in Melbourne, Sydney and Perth. The Returned Soldiers and Sailors League insisted that Australian and British ex-servicemen were to be given priority when they sought employment. Only when these had been given their jobs were foreigners to be allowed to work.

The Maltese considered themselves British. Many had seen active service with the British during the war of 1914-1918. They protested against such unfair treatment which considered them capable of taking up arms to defend the Empire but unworthy to obtain decent jobs. A Maltese immigrant, Mr. Edgar Grech, sought an interview with the premier of South Australia, the Hon. John Gunn. The interview lasted twenty-five minutes. Mr. Grech complained about irresponsible press attacks on the Maltese community. Mr. Gunn assured Mr. Grech that he had always considered the Maltese as equal to the British and to the Australians. He also said that the Maltese in Adelaide enjoyed his fullest confidence. He also reminded Mr. Grech that in 1924 there were over 160 Maltese who, directly or indirectly, employed with the local government.

Bartolo also met John Gunn. The premier was accompanied by his Minister for Works and by the Director of Labour Bureau. The meeting was cordial and Bartolo was of the opinion that his initiative had helped not only to clear misunderstandings about the British status of the Maltese but also helped to obtain employment for the Maltese who were then out of work.

Bartolo visited the Legislative Assembly in Adelaide. The premier, John Gunn, let the Speaker know that a distinguished visitor from Malta, who was the Deputy Leader of the Maltese Opposition, was present in the gallery. Bartolo was conducted to the dais by Gunn himself and by the Leader of the South Australia Opposition, Sir Henry Barwell. Bartolo was given a seat on the floor of the House.

On October 25, 1925, Bartolo was at St. Francis Xavier Hall where about one hundred Maltese had gathered. The archbishop of Adelaide, Mgr. Spence, sent his delegate for the meeting, Fr. Getzemayer. Bartolo spoke first in Maltese. Fr. Getzemayer rose to speak and assured Bartolo that the archbishop would welcome a Maltese priest in Adelaide with open arms. Getzemayer also promised that the same hall would be put at the disposal of the Maltese where they could organise parties and dances, meet their Maltese and Australian friends, and organise any function they wished. Getzemayer also promised that he was willing to offer his services to the Maltese community whenever they needed him to contact higher authority. Bartolo thanked his host and appealed to the Maltese to keep in touch with Getzemayer.

The interventions of Dr. Bartolo on behalf of the Maltese immigrants in Australia were numerous. When in 1929 he had knighthood conferred on him, eighty-five cane-cutters from Mackay, Queensland, sent him a telegram in which the men prayed God to grant him a long life in order to continue the good work he was doing on behalf of Maltese emigrants throughout the world.

Senator Achilles Samut

In 1926 another Maltese politician went to Australia as Malta’s delegate to the Empire Parliamentary Association. He was Senator Achilles Samut of the Constitutional Party. He left Malta on August 8, 1926, accompanying thirty emigrants. When Samut arrived in Fremantle he saluted the thousands of Maltese who had settled in Australia and forcefully repeated the legitimate claim of the Maltese to British citizenship and status.
A number of Maltese in Malta and Australia considered Samut as being too much of a Loyalist. Not all the Maltese in Australia were enthusiastic about his visit because they suspected that the Senator was using the Australian platform to enhance his party's prestige at the expense of those who did not support his views in Malta.

Samut's speeches did not fail to show where his political affiliations were. According to Samut the Maltese were as British as the English, Scots and the Welsh. Samut kept on repeating his arguments in favour of the British character of the Maltese, but the "Age" of September 15, failed to be moved by the Loyalist expressions of the visitor from Malta. That newspaper decided that the Maltese were aliens in the light of the White Australia Policy. However, that newspaper did admit that Samut's people were also British subjects and therefore should not be entirely barred from entering Australia.

When the Senator arrived in Sydney he created problems for the Maltese in that city. The Melita Social Club had made it a point to invite to its premises those Maltese who happened to be visiting Sydney. Dr. Bartolo and Mgr. Gauci had been warmly welcomed there. However, the current president of the Club, Mr. Joe Gatt, indicated that politically he was very much at odds with the Senator and that he felt that he would oppose any formal welcome extended to Samut. Eventually a compromise was reached and Samut was invited to a social evening.

Although his presence in Australia proved somewhat divisive, Senator Samut did his share to improve the image of his countrymen then living in various Australian States. He made an important contribution to Maltese emigration to Australia when he wrote to the Hon. Earle Page, who in 1926, was the Acting Prime Minister of the Australian Commonwealth.

On October 20, 1926, Senator Samut wrote to Earle Page to ask for the inclusion of the Maltese in the scheme which provided financial assistance to husbands already settled in Australia and who wished to bring over their wives and children. Samut's letter ran as follows:

"Dear Mr. Page,

I desire to bring to your attention the following matter which affects the people of Malta and trust that your Government will see its way to give its most sympathetic consideration.

As you are aware Malta is a British dependancy and its people are most loyal to the Empire.

During my travels through the Commonwealth I have come into contact with many of my countrymen who have now established themselves here, but regret to have found that many of them are here without their wives and families as their means are not sufficient to enable them to pay the full fares to bring them to Australia.

I understand that your Government arranges for concession fares for wives and families of persons of British nationality from Great Britain and other parts of the Empire.

I feel that the people of Malta might he included in this arrangement. If your Government could see its way to agree thereto it would be a matter which would earn the deep gratitude of the Government and people of Malta, and I am sure would increase their attachment to the Empire, of which the Commonwealth forms such a wealthy part in comparison with the little island of Malta, which is the only self-governing dominion of the Empire where the struggle for livelihood is intense through over-population.

As the number of Maltese in Australia who would be affected by the suggested concession is very small, I sincerely trust that your Government will be able to see its way to agree thereto".

In less than four weeks Samut received a favourable answer from Melbourne. On November 18, 1926, the Hon. Earle Page wrote:
"Dear Senator Samut,

With reference to our conversation on the subject, I desire to inform you that the Commonwealth Government has now discussed the measure of assistance which may be extended to Maltese migrating to this country.

A decision has been arrived at to the effect that Maltese residents in Australia who produce evidence satisfactory to the Minister of Migration that they are likely to remain here, may nominate their wives and a contribution towards the cost of passages of such wives to the extent of $8.50 will be paid by the Commonwealth Government on arrival provided that the assisted migrant furnishes a satisfactory medical certificate on landing in Australia".

Senator Samut sent a telegram to Dr. Ugo Mifsud, who was then the Prime Minister of Malta, to inform him of the favourable decision arrived at. Dr. Mifsud read the telegram at the sitting of the Senate on November 24, 1926. Senator Samut was back in Malta on December 18.

**Maltese in the Limelight**

In his memorandum to Earle Page, Senator Samut had stated that while in Australia, he had met many Maltese who had established themselves there. Although the Maltese in 1926 were numerically less than 2,000, yet a few of them had already acquired either a position for themselves or else had made a tidy fortune.

"The Evening News" of September 22, 1920, carried a story about a Maltese planter who had passed away a few days before. The planter was Alan Anthony who had found himself in Queensland before the end of the century. In 1890 he left Queensland for New Guinea and settled at a place some sixty miles inland from Port Moresby. He worked at his plantation for more than thirty years until 1920, when he had a tragic accident. Alan was resting on his balcony when he fell and injured his spine. He was carried on a stretcher to the coast but he died at sea while being taken to Queensland. Before he died Alan stated that he had amassed a fortune of some $60,000. In his will he left much of his money for the benefit of soldiers who had lost their sight while on service.

Four months after the death of Alan Anthony, another Maltese had made headlines, this time in Sydney. Mr. Alphonse Vassallo died on January 11, 1921. Twenty years before Vassallo had arrived in New South Wales and established his residence at 87, George Street, Sydney. He got his first job with the Dominion Iron and Steel Company. A few years later Vassallo opened his own Alphonse Hotel and he was managing another by the name of King George Hotel. He also ran the Unique Theatre until that building was destroyed by fire. Vassallo was also a prominent businessman in the Boston Market.

Alphonse Vassallo was married to Ella Fortune of Sydney and they had three sons and four daughters. He died suddenly at his home in Sydney when he was in his fifty-fourth year. His funeral was reported by most Sydney newspapers which described him as one of the prominent citizens of that city.

Joseph Caruana was another well-known Maltese in Sydney. During the First World War he occupied the position of an official interpreter for the Government of New South Wales. He had his office at 91, Riley Street and many Maltese sought his services there. Caruana had written to the New Zealand Government to have the Maltese Language recognised by that country as a tongue spoken by a European group. This Caruana did in order to have Maltese emigrants going to New Zealand exempted from the Literacy Test. At the beginning of 1919 Caruana had returned to Malta and was living in Sliema.

The death of Vincent Palmier in April 1923 was also reported in the Australian Press. Palmier had been born in Msida, Malta, and had emigrated to Australia before the outbreak of the First
Great War. His father was a school teacher and he gave Vincent a good education. Not only was Palmier very literate, but he spoke very good English and knew shorthand. Luqa Catania, an emigrant from Naxxar, Malta, knew Palmier very well. Interviewed on January 4, 1984, Catania said that he had arrived in Sydney in June 1914.

In Sydney Catania met Palmier who agreed to accompany him to Innisfail in Queensland, to seek employment in the cane-fields. Palmier taught Catania how to read and write and eventually Catania was able to write letters in Maltese for his mates. Unfortunately, Palmier's education served him very little in Innisfail and his constitution was not tough enough for the hard work in the cane-fields. He was given the job of greasing the wheels of the trucks which carried the cane to the mills.

When the War broke out Palmier joined the Australian Expeditionary Force. He went to Egypt with that Force and fought at the Dardanelles. He was in France and was involved in heavy fighting on the French fronts. He suffered severely from shell-shock and had to be sent to a nursing home in Sydney. Catania kept in touch with his sick friend, but Palmier never recovered.

The destiny of Luqa Catania was to be quite different. At Innisfail he worked on a shift basis, thus making it possible to obtain a second job. The money was quite sufficient because within six months he was able to pay his father and other workers who had lent him some money.

Catania said that while in Australia he was never laid off, not even for one single day. The cane inspector liked the 18-year-old lad from Naxxar and in 1915 Catania was made the leader of a Maltese gang of cane cutters. There were eighteen men on that gang and the Maltese worked side by side with Australians, Greeks, Italians, Germans and Slavs.

Since there was a war going on Catania was told to enlist, but his boss intervened, claiming that work could not go on without the young man from Malta. In later years Catania and some of his mates leased land to work it but in 1918 a cyclone devastated their property. Eventually Luqa Catania returned to Malta. He passed away in his own native village of Naxxar when he was in his eighty-eighth year.

**Eyes of the Maltese on Australia**

In a statement of policy made in Maita's Parliament in 1921, it was said that Australia was then the most suitable, if not the only, country to which the flow of Maltese emigration should be directed.

In a sitting of the Legislative Assembly held on May 5, 1922, the minister responsible for emigration, Col. Savona, explained that the Maltese Government greatly favoured the idea of directing emigrants from Malta to the vast empty spaces of the Australian Commonwealth. Savona informed the Legislative Assembly that Mr. Henry Casolani was to go to London to discuss further emigration to Australia.

The Sydney Daily Mail of June 18, 1923, published an article under the caption: "Eyes of Maltese on Australia". In that article it was stated that the vastness of practically empty Australia was not only the envy of Asian neighbours but was also attracting the attention of many people all over the world. The newspaper found out that from the comparative obscurity of Malta came the suggestion of forming a society based in Malta and in Australia, made of capitalists from England, Australia and Malta. Wealthy investors in the three countries intended to buy large tracts of land in unoccupied areas to settle Maltese workers who would colonise those areas which had not hitherto attracted settlers from the United Kingdom. The newspaper felt that "the importation of Maltese labour would be a far more profitable and desirable scheme than the flooding of the North with Sir Sidney Kidman’s Chinese".
The news that more Maltese were to be sent to Australia created no unbounded enthusiasm among the Australians. The unemployment situation, often referred to as "a war inheritance", was serious. Many Maltese immigrants did not wish to see more of their countrymen coming to Australia to compete with them for elusive work. In Sydney the Maltese living in and around Wooloomooloo were going through a rough time. In December 1920, the Rev. Gribble said that in that area some 2,000 newly arrived men were stranded with nothing to do and very little to eat. Gribble belonged to a Church movement which was then assisting immigrants and those Australians who had returned to civilian life after the war was over.

Mr. Charlton, leader of the Labour Party, had suggested the breaking up of large estates in order to settle on them qualified unemployed men. Michael Vassallo, a Maltese immigrant living in Sydney at that time, wrote back to Malta to say that many Maltese in New South Wales were lonely and penniless. Vassallo wrote that it was difficult to find a good job and impossible to work if one did not possess a union card. He also noted that the Unions did not like to issue such cards to aliens. Vassallo ended his letter by advising his readers against going to Australia in 1922.

Mr. Joseph Dingli, a Maltese who had been in Australia since he was eleven years old, kept a general store at 112, Riley Street. Many Maltese from the Wooloomooloo area considered him their spokesman. On November 5, 1922, Dingli wrote to the Premier of New South Wales, Sir George Fuller, about a Maltese immigrant who had had two days work in fifteen months. Dingli claimed that his friend used to go to the Labour Bureau every day. Eventually he was given a job with the Water Bureau. When he got there he produced his union card but was refused work.

Various letters were published in the Sydney press about hardship suffered by many Maltese immigrants. The result of such publicity was not to mobilise public opinion in favour of those who were unfortunate, but to restrict the entry of such people into the country.

Another intervention by Joseph Dingli was not very prudent. In a letter to Sir George Fuller, Dingli claimed that the authorities in Malta were inducing large numbers to emigrate to Australia because those emigrants were being fooled into believing that work in Australia was abundant. The Sydney Morning Herald of November 4, 1922, carried a sensational heading: "Maltese coming to Australia - Premier takes action". In that article Sir George Fuller claimed that Joseph Dingli had told him that hundreds of men in Malta had sold their homes and furniture in order to raise sufficient money to pay for their passage to Australia.

By the time Mr. Henry Casolani had written back to most Australian national newspapers to calm the fears of those who expected thousands of hungry Maltese to converge on the cities of Australia, the harm had been done. Casolani rightly complained about adverse statements and prejudiced reports that were being then circulated throughout the country, especially in New South Wales. He said that Dingli’s reports were inaccurate because the numbers of Maltese intending to emigrate to Australia were never very high. Those whose applications to emigrate to Australia had been approved were going to stay with relatives or friends who had already established themselves in Australia or had assured employment. Casolani also claimed that his critics in Malta had accused him of skimming the Island of its cream, leaving only the wastrels behind.

Wooloomooloo and its surrounding area was a commercial zone highly favoured by unskilled Maltese and other immigrants, mostly from Mediterranean lands. On November 29, 1927, the Sydney Morning Herald noted that an Australian standing at no.2 East Circular Quay might have been pardoned for wondering if he had not suddenly been transported to the region of the Mediterranean because the wharfside hummed with the soft sibilants of Southern Europe. Another correspondent noted that in that particular area if someone wished to find a Maltese all he had to do was to take a tram to Wooloomooloo or to Surry Hills.
The harbour area of Sydney was popular with the Maltese who back home had worked on the quays of Grand Harbour which were, in better times, humming with life generated by the British Fleet and many merchant vessels. Such migrants originated mostly from the area around the Dockyard known as Cottonera. In that particular area known also as the Three Cities made up of Vittoriosa, Senglea and Cospicua, many workers earned their living as stevedores and it was natural for such migrants to seek work on the quays once they set foot in Australia.

Maltese from the industrial area, as distinct from those who came from rural zones and from Gozo, did notice some similarity between the way of life they had left behind them and the action going on around the Sydney quays. They were used to that type of hard work and the long hours. They were also familiar with foreign workers whom they met while loading and unloading ships from many parts of the world and most of them knew some English because of their connection with the British Fleet. Whether they were called stevedores or "wharfies" did not matter to them.

There were Maltese living in Woolloomooloo in the beginning of the twentieth century. They were mostly single men, or else married with their families left at home in Malta. After the First World War their numbers increased and some of these immigrants decided to send for their wives and children. But single men still predominated and by 1927 there were complaints about too many single men from Malta who were living in Woolloomooloo. These were cramming the available boarding-houses and sometimes earning a bad reputation for themselves and for the Maltese community.

It seems that it was not only the "wharfies" of Woolloomooloo who had been singled out for criticism at the time. Robert Pace was an educated Maltese who had emigrated to Australia in 1914, accompanied by his wife and five children. Robert enjoyed permanent Government employment and because he spoke very good English he was able to mix freely with most Australians. However, in 1921, Robert decided to leave Australia and opt for Tunisia. In a letter signed by him on January 1, 1922, he gave his reasons for doing so:

"I say it loud - we cannot live in Australia; they had made it too hot for us. No man with a principle would live for any length of time under conditions which were most humiliating.

It is by no means a pleasure to be hearing all the time unpleasant reflections concerning Malta and the Maltese.

Had I wanted, I could easily have changed my skin, but I preferred to remain a Maltese, a decision which meant the ruin of at least one of my children.

Painful incidents which the Maltese had to endure during the conscription campaign:

In public meetings the name of Malta was boo-hoed and whistled.

In some newspapers the Maltese were described as 'me wants works'.

You cannot live anywhere. Go where you wish, sooner or later, you get insulted, worse than this you get called a Maltese!"

It is possible that Robert Pace was more sensitive about racism than most other Maltese because he was able to see and feel the oppression obtained by such unfair attitudes. Luckily, many of the Maltese were unable to realise how widespread the hostility was, either because they lived in closely knit communities or else because their lack of the English language mercifully spared them the meaning of what was being printed and spoken about them.

**Dusky Immigrants**
Even the great champion of Australia, Sir Gerald Strickland, complained in 1922 that Australian Labour wanted to exclude the Maltese because they feared that the Maltese would make cheap workers. But Strickland did not give up. If the Australians did not like Maltese men, why not send to them Maltese women? Strickland suggested that young girls from Malta should be sent to convents in Australia where they would be cared for and trained in the Australian way of cooking and for domestic service.

Strickland’s suggestion was ignored. Racial prejudice did not distinguish between the sexes. The readers of the "Truth" of May 29, 1922, were regaled by a masterpiece of arrogance when that newspaper carried an article about the Maltese under the title of "Dusky Immigrants”.

"Recently it was announced that a batch of immigrants for the land, in the shape of Maltese, had arrived. To begin with, Malta is the last place in the world to get agricultural immigrants from, for the writer's impression of it is a tiny island peopled by a race that lives mostly in a state of squalor. Beggars throng the streets and apparently one half of the population lives on the charity of the other. Even if the Maltese were expert agriculturists (and they are decidedly not), their encouragement is a matter for deep consideration.

During the war an attempt was made to import Maltese to replace Australians who were fighting on the other side of the world. It was the arrogant 'Little Digger' who denied any harmful intention, yet men who were undoubtedly white were carrying their swags past huge encampments of Maltese, not far from Cootamundra, who were employed on deviation works, driven from city employment because they would not be coerced by jingoistic conscriptionists bled by W.M. Hughes, while dusky interlopers swarmed into the country, although not able to speak the language, and nurtured from birth in customs and surroundings that might preclude them from becoming fit associates for the people of this country. Mr. Hughes keeps a sharp eye on the immigration policy, and it is reasonable to recall his attitude during the war - as a warning.

Instead of importing such 'requirements' an extensive move in deporting them might be made with profit to the working classes. The most astounding aspect of the question is that the papers flagrantly announce the arrival of a batch of Maltese immigrants who are to be put on the land, and a still more astonishing thing will be that they will be settled comfortably, while thousands of native-born tramp fruitlessly from town to town looking for work”.

The xenophobia behind this base attack was not shared by all Australians, but those who shared it carried political clout. The Maltese were specifically singled out because they were aliens without a nation capable of defending them. The Maltese were foreigners in race, language, culture and religion. Their country of origin was a colony. They had no political strength because their government was not independent and they had no one to speak for them in Australia. The "Truth" picked the most fragile ethnic foreign minority for its attack.

Even Sir Gerald Strickland had to admit in the Maltese House of Representatives that that newspaper had disgraced Australian journalism. Yet, he knew that the attack of May 29, 1922, was not the only virulent denigration of the Maltese in Australia even if that particular issue seemed to be intent "to poison the wells of public opinion against the Maltese as a race".

Dr. Augustus Bartolo read a statement to the House by one of the leading journalists in Australia. The statement signed by Mr. Geofffrey, said that the accusation published by the "Truth" had caused a public outcry of indignation throughout Australia because it was felt that that newspaper had unjustly singled out the Maltese for its own political ends as being unwanted in Australia.

The "Truth" was not the only Australian publication to throw mud at the Maltese. The Sydney Daily Mail of February 8, 1923, printed on its front page an eye-catching heading with the words:
"Maltese Get Work - Australians Don't"

Again the Maltese were described as foreigners who somehow managed to find employment and hold on to their jobs, while Australian and British workers lost theirs. Reference was also made to one hundred Australian and British workers on railway construction in New South Wales who had been dismissed because of lack of funds. The Maltese however, instead of being dismissed, were transferred to other gangs as horse-drivers. The newspaper said this could not go on, because the Maltese were foreigners and should never be preferred to Australians or to the British. Moreover, the workers from Malta were very young lads, probably less than twenty years old who worked very hard to save about £100 and their go back to Malta.

Mr. Henry Casolani, in his capacity as Superintendent of Emigration, was dismayed by the Australians' refusal to accept the Maltese as their British brothers. It seemed to him that in spite of the good work done by his visit to London in 192 he had failed to convince the Australians that the Maltese were British and therefore a good investment for Australia. On April 5, 1923 Casolani rebutted the accusations brought forward by unsympathetic newspapers. His answer to the critics of the Maltese appeared in the "British Australasian" which was a leading Australia publication in London.

In his answer Casolani claimed that since the Armistice in 1918 about 1,000 Maltese had gone to Australia and less than 200 had come back. The Maltese expected equal treatment with the Australians and with immigrants from the United Kingdom. Casolani also claimed that when employers fired workers but kept the Maltese, that showed that the Maltese were doing a better job.

**Tensions in South Australia**

Hallie Hogg was an Australian lady who in 1923 was spending a holiday in Malta. She regretted the unfair treatment given to the Maltese by some of her country's newspapers. She also said that some editors in her country were not doing their duty very well. The lady claimed that in 1916 a friend of hers had employed Maltese gangers on the construction of a railway line and said that her friend was very satisfied with the work done by the Maltese. The only drawback her friend had mentioned was that an interpreter had to be employed because the Maltese knew no English. Sydney was not the only city in Australia where the presence of Maltese workers aroused anger and jealousy. Vincent Callus had been in Adelaide for some time when in March 1926 he wrote back home to state that as far as he knew no Maltese were out of work there. But "The News" of January 19, 1926, had complained about the preference shown by some employers towards Maltese workers in Adelaide. A certain correspondent, Mr. A. Turner, wrote: "There are several men working at the Mitcham station. Maltese seem to get the preference over the Australians. The policy seems to be Maltese first, returned soldiers last".

If there had ever been any preference shown towards the immigrants from Malta living in Adelaide, that preference soon came to an end. In July 1927 serious industrial trouble occurred and demonstrations were organised by disgruntled workers which soon degenerated into riots. In Victoria Square demonstrators threw stones at the police and one police inspector was knocked down. Nineteen demonstrators were arrested, but others grouped again in the main street, close to the police station. Troopers rode up and down the footpath in order to break up the crowd which quickly reformed, shouting defiance and abuse at the police.

About one hundred policemen charged the crowd. One angry demonstrator attempted to slash a trooper with a knife but he wounded the horse instead. The strikers proceeded to the Trades Hall but the police soon rushed in and forcibly removed the protesters from the steps of the Hall amidst the booing and jeering of the crowd.
Local Labour Party supporters were agitating against the newly elected premier, Mr. Butler. Butler was a Liberal who had replaced Mr. Hill who was supported by Labour.

Some Maltese had joined the demonstration against Mr. Butler. They objected to Mr. Butler's withdrawal of the grant of 10s 6d per week which they had been getting to help them pay their boarding expenses. Mr. Hill had allowed the grant but he had not permitted the Maltese to register at the Labour Exchange. Butler stopped the grant but allowed the Maltese to register for work.

Labour Party officials at Adelaide had strenuously objected to the registration of unemployed Maltese as this put the foreign Maltese on an equal footing with the Australians. It seems that while the Maltese welcomed the decision to allow them to register for work they wanted to retain the original grant given to them. The leader of the Adelaide unemployed Maltese sought an interview with Mr. Butler and during their conversation the leader made it clear that it was the intention of the Maltese to go on agitating till they got what they wanted. On his part, Mr. Butler told the Maltese spokesman that he would make representations to the Federal Government to have all the Maltese in South Australia deported if they persisted in their negative attitude.

The leader of the Adelaide unemployed Maltese was a certain Ignatius Sciberras, a coppersmith by trade, who had arrived in Australia in 1926. When Mr. Butler suggested that the Maltese should seek employment out in the country since the city of Adelaide held little prospects for employment, the irate Sciberras retorted that he would instruct his men to sit for meals in the best restaurants and refuse to pay their bills. They would invite arrest and Mr. Butler would have to provide food and accommodation in Adelaide's jail for the Maltese.

On December 1, 1927, Ignatius Sciberras sent a telegram to the newly-elected Prime Minister of Malta, Sir Gerald Strickland, informing him that the Government of South Australia was denying the Maltese the right to live. Sciberras claimed that about two hundred Maltese were on the edge of starvation. The leader of the Adelaide unemployed Maltese asked Lord Strickland to notify the press in Malta how serious unemployment was in South Australia and he also asked the Government of Malta to intervene on behalf of the Maltese.

Lord Strickland lost no time in contacting Premier Butler about the complaints which had been raised by Ignatius Sciberras. Mr. Butler assured Lord Strickland that the trouble was of a passing nature and that the situation was getting better. According to Mr. Butler the situation in South Australia was not any worse than in other parts of the country. The Maltese were being treated in the same way as Australian workers were being treated. Mr. Butler did suggest to Lord Strickland that for the time being it was advisable to send only those emigrants who had assured jobs.

Ignatius Sciberras was not the only Maltese who had been accused of Socialist tendencies. In September 1926, the port authorities at Adelaide had refused landing permission to another Maltese left-winger who had arrived from England. Joseph Mifsud arrived in Adelaide on board the "Moreton Bay" accompanied by his wife and child. Fremantle had already refused Mr. Mifsud permission to land because some passengers had noted that he had been spreading Bolshevik sedition. They complained to the captain and purser, especially after Mifsud had refused to stand up while "God Save the King" was being played.

Joseph Mifsud had travelled to Australia from England where he had settled. While in that country he married a girl from Devonshire. Some sections of the Australian press jumped on the Mifsud case to put all the Maltese into an unfavourable light. However, the Emigration Department in Malta denied that Joseph Mifsud had anything to do with them because he, his wife and child, were travelling as English passengers.

In July 1927, industrial unrest erupted in Queensland. A strike had been declared on the South Johnstone mill and what was supposed to be peaceful picketing soon degenerated into
violence. Reports from the area indicated that violence was rampant and that one group of strikers was fighting another because of mutual bad feelings.

The Sun of July 15, carried a sensational story under the headline: "Three Maltese beaten up by Strikers". Pictures showed four burly men chasing a small Maltese across a paddock. The unfortunate man looked bruised and battered. The writer urged the Queensland authorities to intervene because the situation at South Johnstone was deteriorating. The article mentioned "the callous attack by big bodies of strikers on Maltese who were dragged from the train and cruelly beaten up". The article also mentioned the attack made on three Maltese while they were on the way to South Johnstone.

That section of Maltese public opinion which had always opposed emigration to Australia did not fail to capitalise on such disgraceful incidents involving Maltese immigrants in New South Wales, South Australia and Queensland. The newspaper "Malta" was the organ of those who never reconciled themselves to the Imperial connection and saw the scheme which envisaged large scale emigration to Australia as another attempt to strengthen a distant outpost of the British Empire at the expense of the Maltese. On August 30, 1927, the "Malta" commented on the bad news which was arriving from various parts of Australia concerning Maltese working in that country. The newspaper wrote that the Australians harboured an instinctive dislike for the Maltese. The Australians would only admit the Maltese if they agreed to settle in areas unfit for Europeans because they were unhealthy, distant or very dangerous.

Towards a Permanent Presence

The Italianate newspaper "Malta" repeated the accusation which the Anti-Imperial party in Malta had sustained for a number of years: "la grande maggioranza degli australiani e ad essi decisamente ostile" which meant that according to that source the great majority of Australians were definitely hostile to the Maltese.

On September 15, 1927, the same source dealt with the harsh treatment meted out to some Maltese workers in Australia. The "Malta" censored other Maltese newspapers for encouraging immigration to distant Australia and accused them of preferring Australia because that country was British, and dismissed such publications as only fit to be read by soldiers in their barracks. Such an attack went under the heading "Le brutalita' australiane". According to the "Malta" foreigners were certainly not liked very much in Australia. This hostility did not originate from the language handicap but came from the ridiculous feeling the Australians had that anything that was not British must be inferior. This was especially true of those races which were not of Anglo-Saxon stock.

According to the "Malta" one of the Imperialist newspapers which should be read only in military barracks was "The Daily Malta Chronicle". That newspaper dismissed the criticism carried by the "Malta" as "a most atrociously false account of the alleged maltreatment of Maltese in Australia containing the deliberate lie that the Australians are by instinct bitterly hostile to the Maltese. This is a policy which links the Maltese with Italian migrants as victims of Australian hostility".

Although some Australians tried to keep aliens from the shores of their island, all agreed that their country was very thinly populated. Some uttered the grave warning that Australians had to populate their country or else perish. To the north lay the regions of Asia with their teeming millions. Chinese and Japanese had found their way to the gold mines in New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia. Others had landed on the inhospitable shores of the Northern Territory while Pacific islanders had been imported to work on the sugar-cane plantations in Queensland.

Populations and Immigration
If public opinion shuddered at the possibility of Asians entering the virgin spaces of Australia, spokesmen for the trade unions not only objected to Asians but to all races except those originating from Great Britain. This policy was adhered to even at the expense of abandoning huge tracts of national territory and leaving them unexplored.

In September 1920, the Federal Prime Minister of Australia, Mr. Hughes, declared to the House that the most vital part of Australian immigration policy remained the preservation of Australia for Europeans. In an interview given by Lord Northcliffe in Sydney in October 1921, that gentleman stated that Australia needed to boost its population by fifteen million at the earliest moment. Lord Northcliffe insisted that those millions could be obtained and Australia could carry them.

The thesis sustained by Lord Northcliffe was that fifteen million inhabitants were urgently needed to keep Australia safe from possible invasion from the north. Those millions were also indispensable if the country was to remain white. Lord Northcliffe was of the opinion that the United Kingdom could provide Australia with 250,000 immigrants each year for a long time to come.

Prime Minister Hughes agreed with Northcliffe. In February 1922 Hughes urged the Australian Natives' Association of Victoria to lend its influence to the policy of promoting immigration. When it was suggested to Mr. Hughes that Australia should open its doors to Asians he replied that the idea was impossible.

In July 1922, the High Commissioner for Australia in Great Britain, Sir Joseph Cook, made his country's intention towards population and immigration very clear: "I think the Australian view in regard to immigration is now fairly well known to the world. We want a greater population. We make the condition that it should be of a white race which can take a worthy part in building up our Australian Commonwealth. We welcome especially the British settlers, but welcome also suitable European immigrants, provided always that they are of the type to develop our empty areas. It would not be in the interest of emigrants to come to swell our city populations".

In April 1926, Mr. Bruce, who was then the Federal Prime Minister of Australia, delivered a momentous speech in Sydney in which he announced that he was to appoint a Migration and Development Commission. Mr. Bruce wanted this Commission to examine all State Government schemes in connection with the Migration Agreement in order to determine whether such schemes were in the interest of Australia and how they were to function so that each State could comfortably absorb the newcomers. The Commission would advise on the whole question of migration and the national development and utilisation of resources. Mr. Bruce declared that a national stock-taking was essential.

The Prime Minister urged all Australians to accept the view that a greater population was in the interest of everyone and that such an increase was impossible unless more immigrants were allowed in. He also promised that preference would be given to men and women of British stock. Mr. Bruce reminded his people that a greater population would expand the internal markets and enable the country to maintain and improve the standard of living of everyone.

"Believing in a vigorous policy of migration" said Mr. Bruce, "I am against the indiscriminate introduction of people not readily absorbable. We owe a three-fold debt: to Australia, to the Empire and to the migrant. Our duty to Australia is not to lower the standard of life; our duty to the Empire is to promote the settlement of British stock so as to help to solve Britain's unemployment problem; and our duty to the migrant is effective absorption".

Did this line of policy include the Maltese or were they to be excluded as people difficult to integrate into the Australian demographic fabric? Malta's supporters in the Empire saw no difficulty whatsoever: the Maltese were Europeans and British. This enthusiasm was not matched by the Australian side. The "Manchester Guardian" of August 14, 1925, commented...
on what the Australians meant when they said that they wanted to keep their country white. Who was white? The English newspaper provided a blunt exposition of Australian thinking on the subject of race: "The average Australian of whatever class does in effect limit the term 'white' to British stock, allows American and Canadian, tolerates Scandinavian, Dane or French, but is doubtful about Central Europe and is satisfied that Southern Europeans are coloured".

When the Australians described the Maltese as aliens that meant that they were not the type of immigrant they wanted. The term "alien" euphemistically demoted any group to the classification of being inferior and unwanted. Mr. Casolani complained in 1925 that financed malevolence was using a certain section within the Labour Movement and Press to smear the name of Malta. He said that the intention was to convince Australians that the Maltese were unacceptable according to the conditions laid down by the White Australia Policy.

Official declarations coming from Government sources considered the Maltese as Europeans and British, but popular thinking tended to point to a different direction. Mr. Bruce himself had said that "many people overlooked the fact that Malta was a part of the British Empire and that the Maltese were European not Asiatic and that they sprung from a white Caucasian race thousands of years ago".

Even Mr. Charlton, leader of the Labour Party, could not think of any particular objection against the Maltese. In April 1925 he said: "I desire to say in regard to Maltese immigrants, that we have nothing against them as a race. They come from a portion of the British Empire and the Maltese who have come to this country, in whatever occupation they have been employed, have at least proved to be good unionists and from that point of view we have no complaint to make of them".

The Maltese Government had made representations to the Australian authorities about newspapers reports which insisted on classifying the Maltese as aliens. On October 25, 1926, the Minister for Home and Territories, Senator T.W. Glasgow, denied that the Maltese were being treated as aliens on entering Australia. The senator claimed that there was no objection to Maltese immigrants because they were members of the British community. Glasgow did admit that, his Government had adopted a few minor safeguards when it came to receiving immigrants from Malta, and he said that such precautions had beenresorted to in order to shield the Maltese from elements seeking adverse publicity.

The precautions Glasgow referred to consisted in allowing only twenty Maltese to land in any given port in one month. Senator Glasgow thought it a prudent idea to keep the numbers of Maltese immigrants low because the Maltese spoke very little English; also, the Australian Government wanted to make sure that immigrants from Malta did not become charges on public funds.

Senator Glasgow also reminded the Maltese authorities that Australia had exempted immigrants from Malta from paying the £40 capital deposit which was vigorously imposed on all aliens. Glasgow thought that only those immigrants who were considered as British were allowed such a significant exemption. Senator Glasgow was also of the opinion that in spite of various difficulties encountered by the Maltese in Australia, most Maltese he knew were doing very well.

Certainly, one of the Maltese who did very well for himself was a certain Mr. Zammit who died in Sydney in 1927 and when his will became known he was one of the wealthiest men in New South Wales.

In Malta, Zammit started life as a bumboatman, plying the busy waters of the Grand Harbour with fresh provisions for the Royal Navy. Eventually Zammit was given an exclusive contract to furnish H.M.S. Encounter. Subsequently he became a canteen contractor. When Zammit emigrated to Australia he settled in Sydney and became a very successful businessman. At the time of his death it was revealed that the ex-bum-boatman from Malta had left £23,000 in
hard cash. It was estimated that with the vast stock he had, his war bonds and other securities, his estate was worth a quarter of a million pounds.

**Transport Difficulties**

The claim of the Maltese to be considered British suffered from two major weaknesses: their inability to speak English and the fact that they often arrived in Australian ports in foreign ships with other aliens on board. Imperialist sources in Malta complained that Maltese immigrants disembarked in Australia from the same ships as the Italians and other foreigners. Moreover, the ships which carried Maltese immigrants to Australia were very often Italian. This system, some thought, helped to strengthen the misconception that the Maltese were Southern Europeans and that Malta could be associated with lesser islands such as Pantelleria. Those same Imperialist sources felt that the Maltese Islands should be associated with the Channel Islands and not with foreign islands in the Mediterranean.

In 1925, the Maltese Government proposed a bill which would make it mandatory for Maltese emigrants to travel on British ships. The Italians reacted by insisting that if the Orient Line wished to carry third class passengers from Naples to Australia, their steamers had to make an Italian port their point of departure. Eventually the Maltese had to admit that Italian shipping companies were capable of providing a reliable service to Australia. Two Italian ships, the s.s. Palermo and the s.s. Re d'Italia, had in 1924, sailed directly from Valletta to Australia. The second ship had been used as a hospital ship during the war and was a frequent visitor to Malta.

When the Maltese on the s.s. Palermo arrived in Australia they spontaneously handed over to the captain a declaration in which they said that they wished to inform the company "Navigazione Generale Italiana" that they had been well served with food while the conditions on board were very comfortable. The declaration carried the signatories of thirty-five Maltese emigrants who had boarded the s.s. Palermo on October 23, 1924.

Not all travellers from Malta to Australia had been so favourably impressed before. Various letters of complaints have survived. An anonymous passenger from Malta wrote about his problems on September 2, 1920. His letter was written in imperfect English:

"I beg to give you few information of the bad treatment that are being met with the Maltese in foreign land and I expect that you will he kind enough to gather the essential of it and make up an article through which you advise the Officer in charge of the Emigration Committee to investigate the shipping agents and to check their lies.

All the accommodations, help, etc. that these rascals promise to the emigrants in foreign countries is a mere fantasy. At Syracuse, Mr. L.A. an emigrant that had in hands the instructions of the Shipping Company, did not succeed to satisfy our fellow countrymen for the simple reason that he is a toolmaker by profession and not an expert agent.

Another agent offered a stable for the Maltese emigrants where to lodge in. When a protest was made, he said that owing to the numerous Italian emigrants, he was not in a position to find a good place for them and the straw and the hay that covered the floor of the stable was paid at his own expense. Those who had the money could rest in hotels. Others had to rest in shady streets".

"The Daily News" of Perth echoed a number of complaints raised by a group of fourteen Maltese emigrants who had come all the way from Naples to Fremantle on the Italian ship "Raconigi". That ship had dropped anchor on June 26, 1922, and the Maltese passengers declared that they wanted to carry on with their journey to Sydney by train because they were not satisfied with living conditions on board.
Some of them complained to "The Daily News" about food and accommodation which, according to what they said, were perhaps acceptable to foreigners like the Italians, but not to British people like the Maltese. The Maltese said that the "Racconigi" was not a passenger ship, but a cargo vessel which had taken on board a number of Italian emigrants. The engines kept breaking down and this prolonged the journey by eight more days.

That part of the trip from Colombo to Fremantle was especially slow and the food got worse. The menu consisted of macaroni, boiled French beans and meat. For breakfast they were served with weak coffee with sugar but without milk. They were given dry biscuits.

The disgruntled Maltese told the reporter of "The Daily News" that they protested to the ship's captain. They said the water tasted badly and that they had to go to the kitchen to get their own food because no tables were provided. There were no chairs and they had either to squat on the floor or else go on deck and sit on the hatches.

Their complaints were not even considered. The first mate told them that if they did not like their victuals they were free to leave them where they were. At first the Maltese did just that. However, when their hunger got worse, they had to eat what they were given.

A Question of Numbers

When the original passengers from the 'Racconigi' eventually arrived in Sydney, they must have heard about the consternation that was then gripping Australia about the supposed invasion of the country by the Maltese. Those who believed in such scares did not know the real facts. In 1921 the total population of the Maltese islands stood at 212,253. Even if all the men, women and children living in Malta and Gozo decided to make an exodus and leave for the shores of distant Australia, those thousands could have been absorbed without difficulty. Casolani, in his report stated that out of that total, Maltese males amounted to 102,745. Young males, between the ages of 14 and 40 amounted to 42,548. It was usually from such an age bracket that emigrants originated.

Casolani was right when he wrote that only about half of that young male category would, consider the likelihood of emigrating. The other half saw no valid reason whatsoever for leaving their native land. Casolani reasoned that Malta in 1921, carried a potential of some 20,000 emigrants. Even that figure had to be halved as not all emigrants preferred Australia. In fact many opted for the U.S.A., Canada or the European possessions in North Africa.

Casolani wrote with statistics in hand. For those who feared the swamping of Australia by the Maltese, Casolani produced the following figures:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Migrants for Australia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1922-'23</td>
<td>406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923-'24</td>
<td>470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924-'25</td>
<td>692</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Casolani does not mention the numbers of returned migrants. He does say however that apart from those who perhaps had entered Australia through some other country, in March 1922, the total of Maltese in all Australian States was 1,784. That figure hardly suggested that the Maltese were planning a takeover of the Commonwealth.

That Report was published in 1924. A year later a young priest from Gozo, 29 year old Angelo Camilleri, arrived in Queensland. His home village was Nadur, but he had been ordained in Algeria where he had worked among Maltese immigrants in that country and was helping other European settlers as well.
From Queensland Father Camilleri decided to go to Melbourne. In that city he did sterling work among Maltese migrants until he had to retire in 1934 because of ill health. Fortunately he kept up a regular correspondence with Mr. Henry Casolani who greatly appreciated his work and who acknowledged Camilleri as a priest who was doing the work of a social worker among the Maltese community in Melbourne.

Soon after his arrival in Melbourne, the Rev. Angelo Camilleri addressed two letters to the Emigration Office in Malta. In a letter written on April 21, 1926, he congratulated Casolani for his interventions on behalf of the Maltese which helped to redress some misconceptions the Australians had about the Maltese. Father Camilleri also thought that most firms in Victoria found no objection in offering work to the Maltese and, at the time he was writing, he knew of no Maltese out of work. Indeed some of them were working till midnight.

In another letter written by Camilleri on July 6, 1926, he told Casolani: "The Maltese at present are all employed, except those who do not want to work but to play. There is a great demand for workers and I am glad to tell you that the Maltese are preferred to others, a proof of this being that at the Albion quarry, the employees are all Maltese and only four are Englishmen. There are about 200 Maltese in the quarry".

Father Camilleri also referred to a statement made on June 9, 1926, by Professor G.L. Wood of the Faculty of Commerce at Melbourne University. Wood was reported to have said that the Maltese had given the greatest satisfaction in various spheres of employment in Australia.

In that same year, according to Father Camilleri, the Hotel Menzies had fifteen Maltese on the staff. It was in the summer of that same year that the hotel received Senator Achilles Samut as its distinguished guest. The senator met the Maltese employed there.

The Scotch Hotel employed twelve Maltese; there were others working in different hotels in Melbourne. Camilleri said he knew of thirty Maltese employed with the Gas Works and many were working on the construction of railroads. He mentioned one Maltese he had met who had been for just one week in Australia. In Malta, this immigrant worked at the Dockyard as an apprentice. The priest helped him get a job as a boiler maker and he was earning $24 a month.

Father Camilleri had some original ideas of his own. He suggested the setting up of a tile factory, which when open, was to be the first factory of its kind in Australia. The experiment was successfully made and a number of Maltese were employed there. Another idea of his was the setting up of an Orange Flower Water Manufacturing Company. Father Camilleri remained silent about the outcome of this venture, but in a letter written on November 11, 1926, he ended by saying that all the Maltese in Melbourne were doing well except for a hard core, made of some twenty men, who should have never been allowed to emigrate.

In July 1931, Father Camilleri was mentioned in the Melbourne Herald because of the help he had given to a Maltese worker, Francesco Grech. Grech had had a serious accident while at work when a wall crashed on him on July 13. Grech had injured his spine and fractured a leg. For days doctors despaired of his life. Father Camilleri visited regularly the injured man at the Melbourne Hospital, while relatives took care of Grech's two young boys aged four and two.

The Melbourne Herald of July 21, said that Grech had arrived in Australia six years before when he was thirty-three years of age. He had had a distinguished career on service ships during the Great War and was decorated with the British War Medal and the Mercantile Marine Medal. These medals were awarded to Grech because in 1918, his ship, the "Mabel Bird", was torpedoed in the English Channel and Grech spent seven long hours in icy waters supporting his mates until they were picked up by a trawler late in the afternoon.

Men like Grech had every reason to speak highly of the work done by Father Camilleri among the Maltese living and working in Melbourne. Unfortunately Father Camilleri had to leave...
Australia in 1934 because of failing health. He retired to his native village of Nadur where he died. At the time of his departure someone wrote to the Maltese authorities to say that many times Father Camilleri had acted as an interpreter for his Maltese brethren, especially when they needed to borrow money to buy a house or a farm.

**Quota Abolished**

Between the years 1919 and 1923, the entry of Maltese into Australia was regulated by the quota system. That quota allowed 260 immigrants each year and those immigrants were to be allowed in batches of no more than twenty in the same month. The quota did allow more immigrants in if they belonged to special categories such as those migrants who had immediate relatives in Australia and the re-entry of those who had been legally in the country before.

When Malta gained self-government in 1921 various representations were made to have the quota system removed as this was considered discriminatory. On November 23, 1923, the quota was abolished. Henceforth, the conditions regulating the entry of Maltese into Australia were mainly those requiring a clean bill of health and a declaration from the police stating that the intending migrant was of good character.

Illiterates were also eligible if they obtained a special Commonwealth permit which was obtainable by relatives or friends in Australia who had already guaranteed work for the applicant. Those who had no one to nominate them were expected to pass a colloquial test in English and to have a minimum of $10 on disembarking.

Measures were also taken not to allow British consuls in North Africa to issue passports for Australia to Maltese living in that area without previously informing the Governor of Malta. This was intended to stop the unregulated flow of Maltese who went to North Africa with the intention of emigrating to Australia and thus avoiding the procedure of being examined by the Maltese authorities.

Another source of concern to Maltese and Australian authorities was the number of Maltese stowaways found on ships bound to Australia from North African ports. On August 17, 1926, eleven stowaways were discovered at Port Said on the s.s. Ormuz. On September 29, twenty-one men were found on board the ship "Ville de Verdun".

The removal of the quota system caused no great exodus from Malta to Australia. While it was true that by 1927 the number of Maltese in Australia was somewhere near the 3,000 mark, there was still some reluctance from the Australian side to allow unhindered migration from Malta. The "safeguard" adopted by Prime Minister Bruce and strongly defended by Senator Glasgow, was made to impose an unofficial quota. Casolani, in his report for the year 1926, called the safeguard repellent and discriminatory.

In the introduction to his book entitled: "L-Emigrazzjoni.tal-Maltin", Casolani complained that it was still an arduous task for him to persuade Australians that the Maltese were not the type of immigrants which some Labourinspired newspapers had made them appear to be. In that book Casolani expanded his own theory on why the Maltese migrant was on a par with his British brother and therefore deserved the same rights as those migrants who originated from Great Britain. Australia had to be convinced that the Maltese were not aliens but British.

The book referred to what was written by Casolani in 1927. In it the author stated that the Maltese migrant was a British-born subject who was also a European living in a self-governing island within the British Empire. His ethnic origins were pure. His physical condition was sound and he was as healthy as the Irish and other similar races.
According to Casolani most Maltese who emigrated to Australia sought work on the land. The majority preferred Queensland and many were toiling in the sugar-cane plantations and contributing to the prosperity of the State. Only a few preferred the cities and these entered Australia when emigration from Malta was haphazard and uncontrolled. Australians who objected to immigrants from Malta should remember that many Maltese had given their loyal service to the Crown during the war years.

No financial subsidy was given to intending emigrants from Malta; they travelled with their own money. Casolani was very insistent on refusing any financial help to those who wished to emigrate. His objections to any aid in terms of hard cash have to be understood against the background of his own time; otherwise they would make very unconvincing reading. This was Casolani's case against any financial assistance to migrants:

"If left to himself the Maltese of the emigrant class will work wonders. There is no limit to his own resourcefulness, for besides brawn, he possesses brains. He is thrifty and will live on a crust, and by the sweat of his brow will build a fortune. Let him feel that you are behind him and he will become stagnant, unproductive and a nuisance to the nearest British consul. In the end he will contrive to obtain subsistence and repatriation at Government's expense".

The emigrant leaving Malta did not leave home without any money in his pocket. Casolani himself claimed that he made sure that those who were given passports had enough funds to travel to their ultimate destination. He also claimed that he had known an emigrant who had £5,000 to his credit.

The Maltese, according to Casolani, were natural emigrants. Migration came naturally to them because they lived on two very small islands and had contact with the outside world from time immemorial. Since the British had taken possession of the Maltese islands in the early part of the nineteenth century, the Maltese had settled in various continents.

Assimilation was no great problem to the Maltese. In England, France and in the U.S.A. they were hardly distinguishable from the local people. Casolani thought that returned emigrants from Australia talked and behaved in a manner that was more Australian than Maltese. The Maltese mixed well. Maltese young men had no objection to marrying Australian girls and the children born of such mixed marriages were thoroughly Australian.

The Maltese, like the Boers and the French Canadians, spoke and wrote in their own language. Many learnt English in their country of adoption and their children usually spoke only English. Religion was a major force in the life of the Maltese. Their lives were orderly and frugal and they were very attached to their children. They worked hard and spent very little. This was the reason, according to Casolani, that in 1927, there were a number of Maltese in Australia who had amassed considerable wealth.

Politics were not a great preoccupation with the Maltese living outside their native land. They were hard workers and did not like going on strike. Casolani said that he knew of no Maltese in Australia who created political agitation. Maltese prefer to settle permanently when they emigrate to Australia. If they send money back home they do this while their dependants are still separated from them. When they can afford to send for their families the money they earn remains in Australia.

In 1927 Casolani wrote that no Maltese then living in Australia had been accused of burglary, begging, or loitering. He did not know then of any Maltese who had been imprisoned.

**Education Emigration and Representation**

The above was the case put in defence of the Maltese Emigrant by Henry Casolani in his book: "L-Emigrazzjoni tal-Maltin" which was published in 1927. Casolani had to retire before he saw
many of his arguments accepted by countries like Canada and Australia. That book pointed to an extraordinary vision of the basic conditions necessary to develop a sound policy towards any future migratory movement from Malta. In his book, Casolani insisted on three basic needs: First, educate prospective emigrants. Second, appoint an official representative empowered to speak and act officially in the name of the Government of Malta. Third, encourage priests to accompany departing emigrants and to settle permanently in areas inhabited by the Maltese.

Education was intended to make the Maltese literate and capable of expressing themselves in good English. Casolani suggested that ex-servicemen should be encouraged to teach that language. Better still, why not acquire some teachers from England? Evening classes had been held between 1919 and 1921 and the attendance was calculated to have been about 400 students for every year. Only a few managed to get over the final examination and Casolani did not think that the system worked. He complained that what was hurriedly learnt was hurriedly forgotten.

Emigrants from Malta had shown that since the Armistice in 1918, they had invariably opted for English-speaking countries. Thousands had settled in Detroit, New York, San Francisco and other parts of North America. Emigrants in Detroit and New York had created no problem for the local inhabitants as most of those who went to those cities had been men discharged from the Dockyard. These were able to read and write English because of the contact with English people they had while they worked in Malta.

The Maltese in Australia were different. Most of those emigrants originated from Gozo and the rural areas in the north of Malta. These were people who worked on the land. Their education was practically nonexistent. Casolani was himself involved in the creation of the evening classes in 1919 and he realised what an impossible task it was to teach illiterate grown-ups to read and write in a language that was not their own. Casolani was right when he said that a sound education was to begin from the primary schools and that such an education was to be made compulsory and free. To Casolani technical education and the English language held the key to any success.

That was very bold thinking for 1927. Rather than waste time on purely speculative subjects, Casolani wished that every curriculum should include the trades which would prove useful to life in a foreign country. He had in mind carpentry, painting, plastering and other affiliated trades needed in the building industry. He suggested holding public lectures on health, personal hygiene, gardening and general knowledge. To those who had spent their years at school memorising facts and figures he suggested that they should have extra lessons on farming and on market-gardening.

Preparing emigrants for life overseas was the first step. It was necessary to keep in touch with them and see how they were doing. The Government of Malta was not able to follow closely what was going on in various parts of Australia because of the great distance involved and the difficulty in communication. Casolani knew that by the time he heard of some adverse publicity suffered by the Maltese in some publications and the time it took for his reply to be seen in print, sometimes three or four months elapsed. The Maltese needed a representative who lived in Australia and kept himself well informed about what was happening within the Maltese community.

The Church was invited to help by sending Maltese priests to areas were there was a concentration of Maltese. Casolani felt that religion was very important to the Maltese and the priest could fulfil his double duty as a leader and spokesman in religious and civil matters. Most Maltese had full confidence in their clergy and if the priest was fluent in English, the Australians would listen to him. Moreover, the Catholic Church in Australia possessed significant prestige and the Maltese priest would establish contact with his Australian superiors. The Catholic Church in Australia could speak out for the Maltese in all the States and the local parish-priests could help the Maltese to find jobs.
Maltese Catholics were urged to join Catholic societies in order to lessen their sense of loneliness and to acquire new friends who could offer useful contacts. Such friends could also write to the newspapers to defend the Maltese. In spite of what had been written in the past by biased reporters, Casolani felt that most Australians were willing to give a fair deal to those who deserved it.

The Maltese Church was eventually to respond to Casolani’s suggestion and a number of priests were to accompany Maltese emigrants as chaplains on the ships taking them to Australia. Many stayed with them and gave their people sterling service. The question of appointing an official representative to live in Australia was also tackled by Lord Strickland’s government. On February 22, 1928, Lord Strickland informed the Maltese Legislative Assembly that his administration had decided to send a Maltese representative to Australia to help co-ordinate and organise the position of Maltese migrants living in that country. The appointment was made on an experimental basis for two years.

Lord Strickland also said that it was his intention to appoint sub-agents for the Maltese Government in the principal capitals of the Australian States. These were to keep in touch with Maltese settlers and to help them find work under good conditions.

**Intervention by F.J. Corder**

Before a representative was officially nominated, the Maltese in Australia had found a good friend in the person of Mr. F. J. Corder, an Australian lawyer who was also a Roman Catholic. Corder agreed to champion the cause of the Maltese in his country. In a speech recorded by "The Advocate", Corder appealed to Australians to make an effort to get to know the Maltese better.

The reasons put forward by Mr. Corder why the Maltese deserved a fair deal were that Malta was an important British possession in the Mediterranean and that it was an island extremely rich in culture and history.

Corder reminded the Australians that the Maltese and the Australians were allies during the Great War and many Australians were nursed in Maltese hospitals. Others were resting for ever in Maltese cemeteries. Corder said that the Maltese saw themselves as thoroughly European and that they travelled a lot. Malta served as a bulwark for Christendom for many years and in 1565 the Maltese saved Europe and the Mediterranean from Turkish domination. The Island’s history became intertwined with the history of the greatest among the Crusading Orders, the Knights of St. John. The Maltese freely joined the British Empire and were loyal to the Crown.

Corder felt that the Catholic Church in Australia was not doing enough for Maltese Catholics. He thought that the Maltese needed all the help Australian Catholics could offer. Maltese immigration would help increase the Catholic population of Australia. Eventually the name of Mr. Corder was to reappear in the history of the Maltese presence in Australia and his interest in the Maltese community would be greatly appreciated by the Maltese themselves.

When Mr. Corder delivered his speech in 1928, the rate of migrants returning from Australia was on the increase. Stories were circulated in some sections of the Maltese press that the economic situation in Australia was deteriorating. Anti-Imperialist newspapers like "Malta" and its companion published in Maltese under the title: "II-Haddiem Cattolicu Ruman" which when translated meant "The Roman Catholic Worker", referred to stories reported by the organ of the Australian Labour Party, "The Workers' Weekly".

One story concerned the Maltese in New Zealand who, it was rumoured, were asking to be repatriated because they said that the information given to them about the job prospects in that country did not tally with the actual situation. Work was very scarce and accommodation practically not available.
From Melbourne stories were being circulated about British immigrants who went to cat in restaurants and then declared that they had no money to pay with. "II-Haddiem" strongly urged Maltese emigrants intending to go to Australia to drop the idea and opt for North Africa or Argentina where work was abundant and where the Maltese were not subjected to racial injustice.

Yet, not everybody in Malta was prepared to accept such a condemnation of life in Australia. One Maltese observer wrote on January 3, 1928: "While so many English and Maltese are starving in Australia, how is it that so many thousands of Italians go and do not starve?"

Perhaps the truth lay somewhere else. Mr. Paul Attard of Sydney made a comment to one of the major newspapers in that city: "It appears that some alarming statements are being published in connection with the ill-treatment of Maltese by Australians. These are made by inexperienced individuals. All Maltese in New South Wales, are in good health, and although there are a few unemployed, none is in distress, molested or ill-treated".

However, the Report for 1928-1929, published by the Department of Emigration, produced some statistics which showed that not all was going well with the Maltese in Australia. The number of emigrants for 1928-1928 was:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Migrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.A</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The numbers of emigrants who went to the U.S.A. surpassed those who went to Australia by 85 persons. This was a time when the economic slump in the U.S.A. was more severe than that in Australia and hardship in American cities was more pronounced. Why was it that more Maltese preferred to go to America rather than to Australia? What was the reason for a higher percentage of migrants returning from Australia?

The numbers of returnees from Australia for the same period was 233, leaving a net flow of migrants of only 19 persons. In spite of the removal of the quota, the Maltese not only were not flocking to Australia but the rate of returnees was unacceptably high.

While the rate of returnees from Australia was 92% that of returnees from the U.S.A. was 21%. Could the reason behind all this be the feeling that Maltese in Australia were sensing that they were not wanted?

The Acting Minister of Migration in Malta was at the time Mr. Robert Hamilton. The minister was a great admirer of Australia and he himself eventually went to live there. Hamilton knew that his department was sending emigrants who had undergone strict tests and he could not decry those who came back as misfits or mere adventurers. The conditions of entry into Australia in 1928 ensured a screening of candidates which only allowed in those who were judged as capable of making their permanent home in Australia. Therefore a wastage of about 92% did raise disturbing queries from the Maltese side.

Travelling conditions to Australia had made significant changes and these were for the better. In 1928 the Maltese Government had convinced British ship companies to make regular calls at Malta to provide direct links with Australia. Migrants were urged to travel on British ships even if fares were higher. The Emigration Department also advised intending emigrants that it was to their advantage to use British ships because they would arrive in Australian ports together with other British migrants.
Maltese migrants were also warned that if they failed to depart on their set date and if their delay continued for a period of four months or more, they had to present themselves again at the Emigration Office to have their papers revised.

Returns of all sailings were transmitted every month to the Director of Migration and Settlement in Australia House, London. Moreover, the Superintendent of Emigration retained the power to suspend the departure of a fully qualified migrant until he was satisfied that the migrant was likely to settle permanently in Australia.

**Captain Henry Curmi**

When the Maltese Government had decided to send an official representative to Australia, Lord Strickland communicated with the Australian Federal Prime Minister, Mr. S.M. Bruce. That communication was sent to Australia on September 4, 1928, and the Maltese Government received a reply dated November 20, in which Mr. Bruce stated that he had no objection to such an appointment and that it was his belief that a Maltese representative in Australia would be an advantage to both countries.

The appointment of Captain Henry Curmi as Malta’s representative in Australia came into effect on January 1, 1929. He left Malta on March 4, but prior to his departure, notices were distributed throughout Malta and Gozo to let interested people know that Curmi was willing to meet anyone before he left for his new post. More than two thousand of these notices were affixed in various localities and parish priests were asked to tell their congregations about this. In fact Curmi received 118 enquiries, 74 from Malta and 44 from Gozo. Most of these enquiries, 52 from Malta. and 11 from Gozo, referred to cases of neglect of families by migrants who were living in Australia. Curmi said that more than 95% of such cases of, neglect originated from migrants who had settled in the cities. At the time of his appointment Curmi thought that there were some 4,001 Maltese in Australia.

Captain Curmi left Malta for London. On March 12, 1929, the new representative of Malta gave an interview to "The Times" in which he stated that his major aim was to strengthen the ties between Malta and Australia and that he wished to improve the trade relations between the two countries. Curmi felt that he was the official spokesman for the Maltese living in Australia and that it was his duty to visit them and help them organise themselves.

"The Times" was told that most Maltese in Australia lived on the land. Curmi did not favour group settlements nor was he happy about the fact that in some areas Maltese tended to congregate together. Curmi told his reporter that "the ideal was not to provide relief but to encourage achievement of the Christian ideal of independence".

The Australian Press Association in London was handed a statement by Captain Curmi which was distributed to some 300 newspapers in Australia. Besides repeating what had already been printed in "The Times" Curmi added that his appointment showed the seriousness of the Maltese Government vis-a-vis the situation of the Maltese community in Australia. Curmi also said that since 1921, when Malta had gained the right to self-rule, it became imperative for the Maltese living abroad to receive the respect they deserved.

In his interview Captain Curmi stated categorically that in his official capacity as the Commissioner of Malta in Australia he wished to give a fair exposition of the Maltese to the Australians to redress the harm which had already been done by unfriendly elements within the Australian Press. Curmi left no doubt whatsoever that his people saw themselves as a Christian and European nation, proud of their heritage which went back to the time when St. Paul was shipwrecked on Maltese shores. To defend such a heritage the Maltese fought the Turks and Napoleon. During the Great War of 1914-1918, 25,000 Maltese volunteered and many of those saw active service with the armies of Great Britain, U.S.A., Canada, Australia and France.
His own personal record made Captain Curmi an ideal person to represent Malta in a British country. Born in 1890, he entered the civil service in 1908 and two years later he joined the King's Own Malta Regiment. He was mobilised in 1914. In 1915 he was transferred to the Royal Malta Artillery and in that same year he was at Gallipoli with the Anzacs. In 1916 he proceeded to Egypt and was mentioned in dispatches. Besides his military career, Curmi was a polished civil servant with a thorough knowledge of migrants and migration.

But Captain Curini was not willing to rest on his laurels. He saw his new position as one capable of consolidating the relations between Malta and Australia. Migration was one instrument of achieving such an aim. Trade was another. On the matter of trade Curmi said:

"We are already buyers of Australian produce at the rate of 35s/40s per head. Much can be done to increase the purchase of Australian produce by Malta. I can see, for example, that Australian wheat of the Purple Straw, can probably supply the daily need of the baker in Malta and would, with advantage, replace South American and even some North American varieties, whilst giving more work for Maltese mills. In the same way, fattened meat from Australia, with improved refrigeration, should replace lean Roumanian and North African stock".

Captain Curmi touched Australian soil on May 30, 1929. His first stop was Western Australia. In Perth he laid a wreath at the State War Memorial in King's Park. He was accompanied by a Maltese priest, the Rev. Raphael Pace who had arrived in Australia in 1913. When interviewed by "The Western Australian" Curmi pointed to the significance of his first official gesture in Australia as the representative of the Maltese Government: "I have laid this wreath because I thought that the people of Malta would wish my first public act on reaching Australia to be one of homage and reverence to the memory of Australians who died during the Great War, many of whose remains are enshrined in Malta. As a brother in arms at Anzac, I always felt it a duty, when in Malta, to conduct Australian visitors to the places where the remains of Anzacs are interned".

Malta's representative presented his credentials to the Federal Prime Minister, J.H. Scullin. By 1930 Scullin had already made it known that his administration wanted to cut immigration by half. The labour market in Australia was deeply disturbed by the Great Depression and it was thought unwise to admit more workers seeking fewer jobs. The Italianate newspaper "Malta" of December 10, 1929, had reported that newly arrived immigrants in Australia spent a long time seeking work. Often they were offered "blackleg" work which meant low wages, insecurity and the enmity of the Australian Labour Movement.

Moreover, the "Malta" never reconciled itself to the sending of a representative to Australia at public expense. In an article published on December 13, it stated: "Let us not for the moment, however, leave Captain Curmi to continue, at our expense, to study Australia, make journeys, deliver speeches, attend luncheons and dinners. What use is Captain Curmi? The Australians want to keep the Maltese out."

Prime Minister Scullin decided to make great cuts in expenditure. He reduced the entry of aliens by half in order to stem the tide of soaring unemployment. This measure did not at first involve the Maltese but the Australian Government did suspend the agreement by which Australia was bound to provide 35,000,000 to help U.K. citizens pay their passage to Australia. At that time however, there was no restriction against the Maltese who wished to proceed with their own money.

Captain Curini was keeping the Maltese Government informed with the economies which were being introduced by Scullin. In a statement made to the Legislative Assembly in Valletta, the Hon. R. Hamilton advised that during 1930 no passports would be issued to those wishing to emigrate to Australia unless they had relatives in that country or had assured work prior to their departure. Again no emigrant was to be allowed to depart unless provided with a Commonwealth permit to land in Australia. Mr. Hamilton also stated that less than half of
those who had applied to emigrate to Australia were allowed to do so. Hamilton's statement was made on December 9, 1929.

Unfortunately, Curmi's mission, which had began under the best of auspices, had to be terminated only a few months after he had began his oh. The Depression and the opposition to his status by some Maltese politicians were not the only problems Curmi had to contend with. Less than a year after his arrival in Australia on May 30, 1929, Curmi had to resign because of ill health. That was a great blow to those who had campaigned so vigorously for so long to have an official Maltese representative living in Australia.

After the departure of Captain Curmi, Lord Strickland had asked Mr. H.W. Potts to carry on with the work Curmi had to leave unfinished. Mr. Potts was an Australian who knew the Maltese very well. But Potts died suddenly in 1931 and his place was taken by Mr. F.J. Corder. Corder's association with the Maltese was a very fortunate one. He stayed at his job till June 1936 when Captain Curmi was able to return to his post and to work as Malta's Commissioner till his retirement in 1952.