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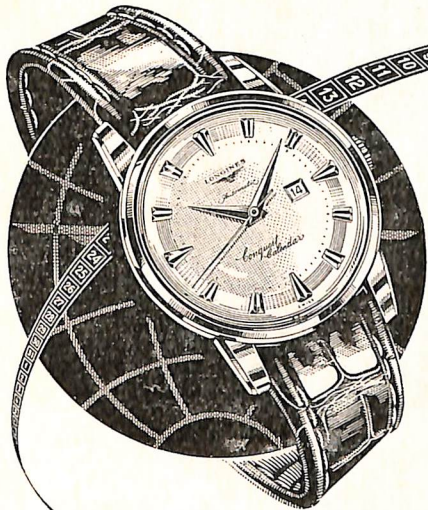


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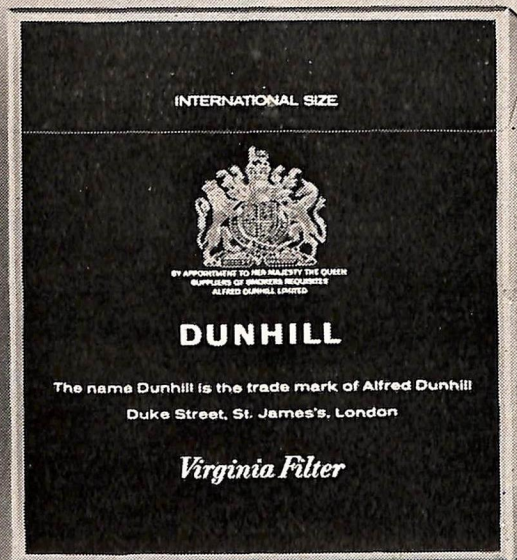
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MANOEL THEATRE

I MARTIRI

A NEW OPERA IN THREE ACTS

by

V. M. PELLEGRINI

Music by

CARMELO PACE

GALA PREMIER

Under the distinguished patronages of
HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR GENERAL
HIS HON. THE PRIME MINISTER
HIS GRACE THE METROPOLITAN ARCHBISHOP

on

SATURDAY, 14th OCTOBER, 1967 at 8.30. p.m.

SUBSEQUENT PERFORMANCES

on

SUNDAY, 15th OCTOBER, 1967 at 6.00. p.m.
SATURDAY, 21st OCTOBER, 1967 at 7.30 p.m.
SUNDAY, 22nd OCTOBER, 1967 at 6.00. p.m.



CARMELO PACE

Carmelo Pace

Dr. V.M. Pellegrini's connection with the theatre can be traced as far back as 1925. When he was still in his teens he joined a group of Opera enthusiasts and just for one shilling he was able to go to the Royal Opera House every Sunday and enjoy the always popular matinee sessions of the Opera Season

At that time he was studying music with Maestro Giuseppe Caruana, an intimate friend of his father, the latter being also a conscientious musician and a double bass player of no small merit.

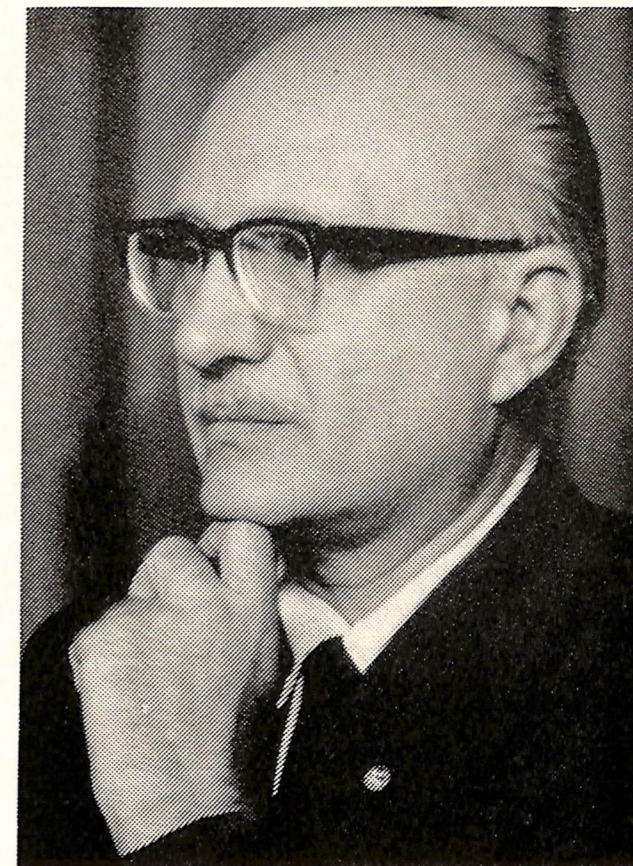
Dr. Pellegrini's ambition, immediately prior to his university days, was a musical career; he dedicated most of his time to practising on the piano, cultivating a rich baritone voice and composing waltzes and tangos. But all this was a passing mood as he soon found stronger inspiration in Poetry. Having passed the Matriculation examination he began a three year course in literature and afterwards read law at the Malta University.

The passion for the theatre, though, did not abate; he assiduously read librettos and plays, and never missed an opportunity of frequenting the theatre whenever a local or a foreign company performed in any of Malta's theatres.

Later he began to write for the theatre and when in 1953 he staged "La Predestinata" at the Manoel, he achieved that merited success he had so longed for. This was followed by a series of radioplays written and produced by him; for the Malta Drama League he wrote in less than fifteen days that stupendous drama "Il Matri tal-Golgota", he translated in Maltese "The Mime of Bernardette", which he produced at the Radio City Opera House, and was also responsible for other drama activities.

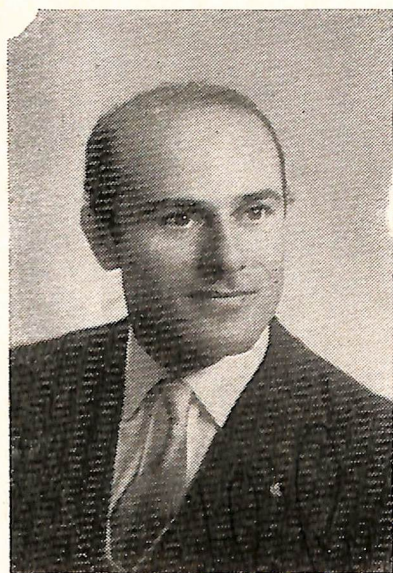
When he was appointed a member of the Manoel Theatre Management Committee he dedicated himself to the revival of this Theatre's activities, and now he comes to the fore again as a librettist and "opera" producer.

The enthusiasm with which Dr. Pellegrini dedicates himself in all things pertaining to the theatre is a guarantee for further successes. "I Martiri" in particular, though a very hard nut to crack, has been moulded by him with verve and a passionate touch. It now remains to see how this new venture will meet the general public's appreciation. In all events, whatever the result, it should be noted that true to his motto "non nobis sed patriae" Dr. V.M. Pellegrini has spared no effort to enhance Malta's prestige, and for this, at least, everyone should be grateful to him.



Dr. V. M. PELLEGRINI

V.M. Pellegrini



Conductor
JOSEPH SAMMUT

Maestro Joseph Sammut has during the last few years imposed himself on all musical activities of a certain importance. His patience in instructing the Members of his Orchestra and his fine conducting have earned him universal admiration.

The British Council Concerts are indeed major achievements and his other various activities, such as conducting the "Chorus Melitensis", various operas, and other musical activities show his versatility and his dynamic temperament.

No other praise fits him better as a climax to his career than the public declaration to Bliss, when the latter extolled the fine playing of the Orchestra, being conducted by him, as rehearsed by Maestro Sammut.



Instructor and Prompter
ANTON MUSCAT AZZOPARDI

Maestro Anton Muscat Azzopardi O.S.J. is rarely seen and spoken about, because generally his work does not shine under the hectic lights on stage, but burns vividly near the foot lights as prompter of artists and ensembles.

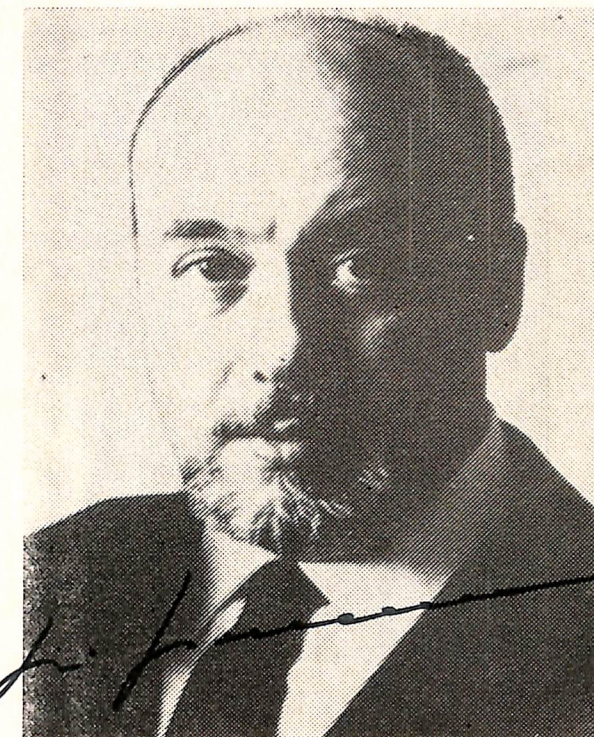
Without his patient teaching and tedious rehearsing Maestro Pace's opera ventures would be a hundred fold more difficult to realise considering the months of preparation needed for such an effort; it is during these months that Maestro Muscat Azzopardi shows his worth.

He is also responsible for conducting various Village Bands among which "L'Isle Adam" of Rabat, "St. Andrea" of Luqa and "The Queen's Own" of Senglea.

Chevalier Em. Vin. Cremona is today an international figure. Malta's Postage Stamps designed by him are an asset both to the Artist and to our Island. His paintings are to be found today in various countries, and lately, one of his best was hung in the United Nations Headquarters.

He has enriched Churches, decorated Public Buildings, produced numerous paintings for private houses, designed book covers and was also responsible for various scenographic creations.

"La Predestinata" in collaboration with the Author Chev. Dr. V. M. Pellegrini and Chev. Maestro Carmelo Pace was one of his major successes, and now the same trio are again responsible for "I Martiri". In his enthusiasm Chev. Cremona is still young, and a very bright future lies before him.



Scenography
CHEV. EM. VIN CREMONA



Choreography
MYRIAM MUSCAT MANDUCA



Costume research and selection
MARIA PISANI

Anton Muscat Azzopardi

Me Maria Pisani

I MARTIRI

The story presented by Dr. Pellegrini is a major episode in the history of Malta — the rising of the Maltese against the French from within the walls of beleaguered Valletta; that unfortunate conspiracy headed by Dun Mikiel Scerri and a few others which ended with their being shot by the French on January 17, 1799.

ACT I

Scene: The Palace Square in Valletta

Out of this single episode Dr. Pellegrini has created a tense drama which cannot but move to tears all those who feel nobly and are true patriots at heart. In the first act the poet gives us also a folkloristic background which makes the opening scene look like a pageant. In fact this opening is in itself grandiose, with the Palace square full of people from all walks of life celebrating "Liberty Day" as decreed by General Vaubois. Against this background the principal actors weave their plot and interspersed with their conversation, we witness a minstrel who extols Napoleon's praises: a "contradanza" danced by country people dressed in their variegated costumes: a wedding procession in true Maltese style, with the "haddara", musicians, and others. These are followed by a platoon of Maltese soldiers, the six Maltese cadets who were to go to France to be enrolled in the Naval Academy, the members of the Commission of Government, Bishop Labini with other members of the clergy and finally the French Generals preceded by the heroes of Lodi and Arcola.

ACT II

Scene: A room in Marchese Vincenzo De Piro's House in Valletta

The Second Act shows us the conspirators, enthusiastically preparing their plot to oust the French out of Valletta and thus bring to a victorious end the uprising of the Maltese against the French; the love story, of which in the first act the poet has given us only a glimpse, now bursts in full bloom and the act comes to a conclusion with a majestic hymn to the Almighty beseeching divine help for the achievement of success. But God decreed otherwise.

ACT III

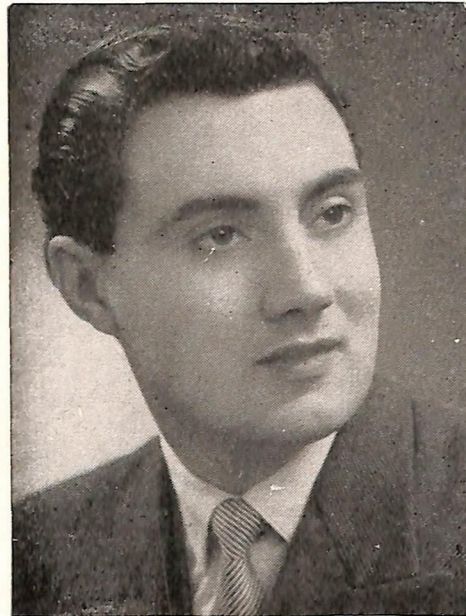
Scene 1: The trial at Fort St. Elmo

The plot having failed, the conspirators are now on trial.

As true patriots, excluding the treacherous Satariano, all admit to have taken part in the plot and are therefore condemned to be shot on the ironically called "Liberty Square".

Scene 2: The Palace Square in Valletta

The libretto ends with the martyrdom of these patriots and a note of serenity and courage is infused by Dun Mikiel Scerri's last words to his compatriots, who, inspired by such burning fire of love, extol God and ask again for divine help to achieve victory.



JOE FENECH



HILDA MALLIA TABONE



PIO ZAMMIT



ANDREW SAPIANO

*Condiamentu
Gadde*

*Best wishes
Hilda Mallia Tabone*

*Pio Zammit
Andrew Sapiano*

5

I MARTIRI

Il-ġrajja ta' din l-Opra tibda bl-aqwa briju. Qeghdin fil-Pjazza l-Kbira, issa msejha "Pjazza tal-Liberta": il-jum huwa l-14 ta' Lulju 1798, il-poplu qiegħed jibgħarad u jifrah għax heles mit-tirannija u bil-kant ta' l-Innu Rivolużżjonarju "La Marseillaise" qiegħed jiccelebra l-Festa tal-Liberta'. L-aqwa nies tal-pajjiż qegħdin hemm u fosthom il-Professor ta' l-Universita' Dun Mikiel Scerri, il-kurunell Guliermu Lorenzi, l-ispizjar Michelangelo Pisani, Don Miju "ta' Nurata" u hafna oħrajn. Dawn ukoll qegħdin jifirhu, iżda mhux bl-istess fiduċja tal-poplu, għax ta' nies bil-għaqal u ta' esperjenza jafu li mhux kull ma jleqq hu deheb.

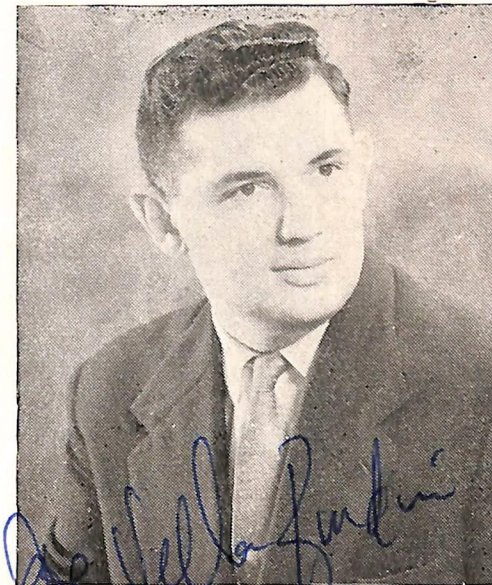
Wara hafna evviva Napuljun, Evviva l-Francizi u x'naf jien, il-persunagġi tagħna f'mument ta' patrijottizmu jgħajtu huma wkoll, iżda l-għajta tagħhom hija ta' Viva Malta, Viva l-Assemblea Nazzjonali, u l-poplu jaqleb f'daqqa waħda għal gibda ta' demmu u għajjat: "ejja niżfnu l-kontradanza" u b'hekk l-Awtur irnexxielu jdahhal l-ewwel sfond folkloristiku ta' din l-opra.

Naraw għalhekk fl-isfilata, ġejja minn San Gwann, fejn ikun sar iż-żwieġ ta' tlett koppji, bil-haddara u d-daqqaqa, plutun tal-Kaċċaturi Maltin, kbarat tal-pajjiż, fosthom il-Membri tal-Kummissjoni tal-Gvern, is-sitt kadetti Maltin, li kellhom imorru jistudjaw fl-akkademja Navali fi Franza, membri tal-Knisja, bl-Eċċellenza Tiegħu l-Isqof Iabini, plutuni ta' suldati Francizi u fl-ahharnett l-Istat magġur Franciż.

Fit-Tieni att naraw li ż-żejt beda tiela f'wiċċ l-ilma u l-poplu mgħakkes ma sabx il-frott ta' dik il-liberta' lilu mwielda. Il-Markiż Vincenzo DePiro u l-Kontessina Grazjulla Theuma Castelletti, li iktar minn l-oħrajn qegħdin ibagħtu l-persekuzzjoni jiddeċidu li jizzewġu u Dun Mikiel naturalment ikun l-ewwel wieħed li jberikhom. F'dar il-Markiż kienet nibtet konfoffa kontra l-Francizi u kollox kien miexi harir. Jasal saċċattant l-Uffiċjal Peralta bl-ahbarijiet li dawk tal-konfoffa kienu qegħdin jistennew. Dikment Dun Mikiel u Lorenzi jaqtaw li jsejhu seduta urġenti u x'hin johorġu nsibu okkażjoni għal dwet: iehor bejn Vincenzo u Grazjulla. X'hin jasl u il-kongurati l-komplott jixgħel bl-entusjażmu u naraw lil kulhadd lest għat-taqbida. Dun Mikiel jizzihajr lill-Mulej u flimkien mal-kongurati jinseġ it-tiffir tiegħu u jitolbu l-għajna tant mehtieġa f'ċirkostanzi bħal dawn.

It-tielet att jiftaħ b'dik l-ispeċi ta' Gazzetta ambulanti msejha "il-Banditur", dak il-bniedem ċioe' li dari kien jieqaf fil-Pjazez u fuq iz-zuntier tal-Knejjes biex ibandi l-ahbarijiet, iżda l-ahbarijiet din id-darba ma huma xejn sbieħ, addio liberta' fraternita', u ugwaljanza. Issa qegħdin fi stat ta' Assedju u ċittadini jinsabu mgħedda, għal kull xejn, bil-fuċilazzjoni. Il-konfoffa falliet u hafna mill-kongurati nqabdu u ser jiġu proċessati. L-ewwel kwadru difatti jur: na l-proċes; f'wahda mis-swali tal-Forti Sant'Elemo u naturalment billi hadd mill-kongurati ma kien jixbah lit-traditur Satarjano, kollha kemm huma idabbru sentenza tal-mewt, bil-fuċilazzjoni.

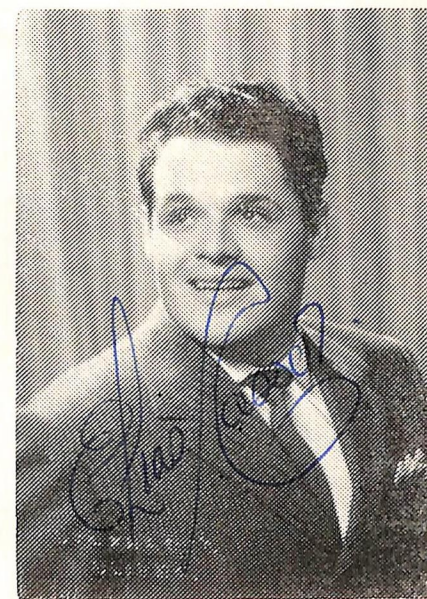
It-tieni kwadru ta' l-ahhar att jerġa' jgħibna fil-Pjazza il-Kbira, il-jum huwa is-17 ta' Jannar 1799 u l-poplu mbikkem u liebes l-iswed **bhala sinjal ta' niket jersaq hiemed** biex jgħati l-ahhar tislina lill-qalbiena Maltin li kienu ser iċarċeru demmhom għal fidwa tagħhom. Iżda Dun Mikiel Scerri ma hu xejn imdejjaq, jaf li qeda dmiru u jaf liema premju qiegħad jistennieh. Ifarrag għalhekk lil shabu, ibierek lill-poplu u bla ma' jhalli lill-għadu jgħattilu għa'nejh, jiffronta sidru u jaqa' mtertaq mill-balal ta' l-azzarini. Mal-mewt ta' dawn il-Martiri, in-niket u d-dwejjaq jgħalbu, il-poplu irsa jhoss jigrri go demmu entusjażmu ġdid u kuraġġ liema bħalu, inehhi minn fuqu il-mantelli suwed biex jgħatti bihom il-kadavri tal-qa'biena hutu, u jinfexx fl-Innu ta' tama li nkunu ga smajna fil-final tat-tieni att; iżda issa bhala Apoteosi ta' glorja lill-Martiri ta' ġensna, u bhala rahan tar-Rebħa li kellha tkun ta' Malta u tal-Maltin.



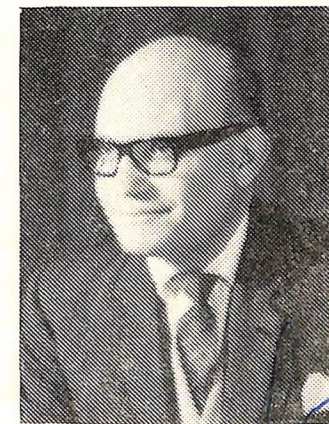
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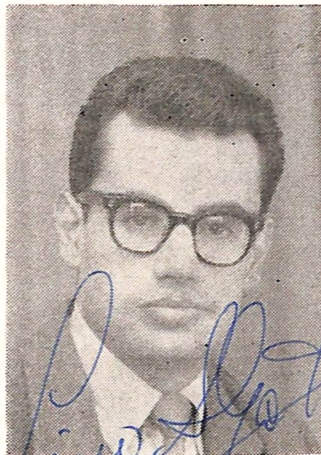


Stage Manager
LINO DEBONO PORTANIER



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John Vella Bondin



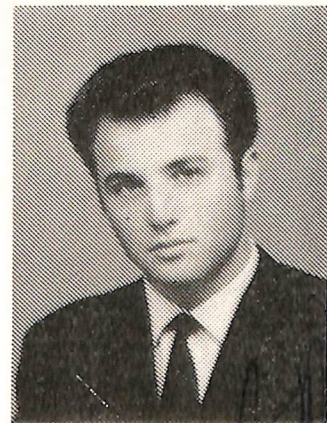
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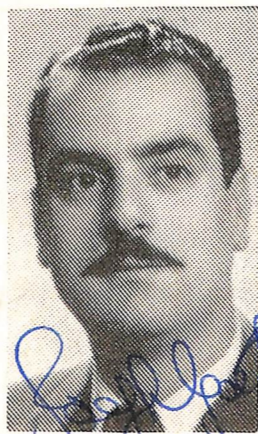
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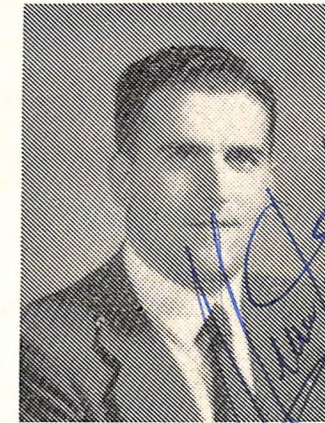
JOSEPH GATT

Joseph Gatt



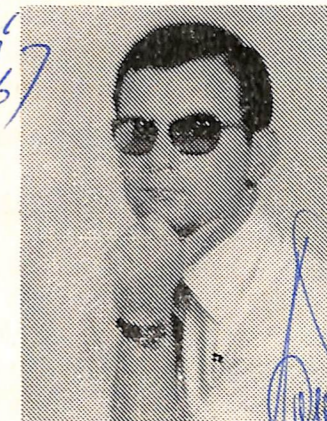
JOE DEGABRIELE

*Paolo
21/10/67*



ANDREW CIANTAR ST. JOHN

Andrew Ciantar St. John

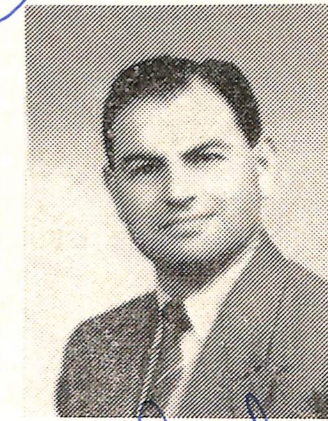


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Paul Cassar

I MARTIRI

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I MARTIRI

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