

17 - 21 APRIL 1980

MALTA INTERNATIONAL BOOK FAIR

A Souvenir

Prepared and printed by Interprint Ltd.

Dr. Philip Muscat, the Minister of Education, when delivering his opening speech to the crowd which thronged the historic building of the Mediterranean Conference Centre, on the occasion of the Second Malta International Book Fair, referred to the Fair as "young but healthy forward-looking". The number of distinguished personalities present, together with the participants and the members of the press agreed fully. The response, in both the quantity and the quality, augers well for the future and fully justifies the Education Ministry's initiative. The full text of the Minister's speech ran as follows:—

Just over a year ago, on the 15th of March, 1979, on the eve of the most important event in the history of these islands, I had the honour to address a similar gathering at the Auberge de Baviere. The occasion was the inauguration of the first Malta International Book Fair which was one of my Ministry's contributions towards the celebration of the arrival of a new era in our history. In the words of our Prime Minister the inauguration of that Fair was to be seen as proof of the Government's efforts "to promote the intellectual development of our young nation the better to fulfil its new and important role".

Compared with other international book fairs this is one of the youngest. When the Organising Committee, which I had set up, started the preparatory work for the first edition they were very much aware that their task was not an easy one. Even after the applications by participants started pouring in — and they came from major publishers and booksellers in Europe, North Africa, the Middle East and other countries further afield — I must confess we were still a little apprehensive of the final outcome.

Our first Fair was however an outstanding success. The response by local and foreign participants was most encouraging and during the four days of the Fair the Auberge de Baviere became a veritable hub of activity. Many of the commercial and cultural contacts established, the projects and joint ventures started during the hectic days of the Fair were to continue and bear fruit in the weeks and months that followed. The response of the public — some 15,000 visitors in four days — provided ample proof, if proof were needed, that with its geographical and cultural

assets, Malta was an ideal place for such an international gathering.

This encouraging response urged my Ministry to take two decisions. Originally, we had intended to hold the second edition of the Fair in 1981. By the time the Fair had closed its doors, we were convinced that two years was too long a period of time to wait. The Malta International Book Fair had, almost overnight, established itself as an important event in the cultural calendar of Malta and the Mediterranean. I, therefore, gave my approval and encouragement to the preparations for the holding of the second International Book Fair in 1980.

The other decision concerned the change of venue. More spacious premises and even better facilities would be needed if the momentum of growth was to be maintained. The choice was an obvious one for by then we were in a position to offer just the right premises for the Fair.

This splendid and historical Centre in which we are meeting this morning was until recently a dilapidated relic of a 16th century building. It had once housed the hospital of the Order of St. John and was, in its day, one of the Order's most widely known and famous institutions in Europe. The restoration works have preserved the architectural beauty of the original while providing our country with a modern and fully equipped conference centre. This building has thus been given a new lease of life. In it my Ministry has already held two other exhibitions which have attracted considerable attention. The first of these was on New Horizons in Maltese Education. Through it we tried to make the public aware of the new and exciting opportunities in the wide field of educational

provision from pre-school to university. Another exhibition was held to conclude the many activities of The International Year of the Child. We brought to Malta an exhibition of stamps issued during 1979 in over one hundred countries to commemorate the International Year of the Child. The response was such an overwhelming one — 17,000 visitors including hundreds of philatelists visited the exhibition



during two weeks — that my Ministry has decided to mount the complete collection as a permanent exhibition. Thus restored to its pristine glory the old building of the Sacra Infermeria is being fully utilised for the benefit of Malta and the Mediterranean region as a whole.

This harmonious blend of old and new is, I think, the most appropriate setting for the holding of a Book Fair. Indeed, it is symbolic of the world of books itself. Since the Renaissance, book fairs have made a great contribution to the diffusion of books and therefore of culture, from country to country and across continents. Over the centuries, the growing importance of the printed word and its expansion to meet an ever increasing reader-

ship in the humanities, the sciences and technology as well as for leisure has brought about dramatic changes in methods of production. In our times we have seen the rapid development and the phenomenal spread of new and sophisticated means for the gathering, storage, retrieval and transmission of information. Instead of retreating in the face of a potential threat, the publishing world has bravely harn-

essed the power of the computer to continue to make the fullest use of technological advances, the better to adapt itself to a constantly changing world.

It is indeed remarkable that in these times of rapid technological change the intrinsic importance of the printed word as the repository of human knowledge and as one of the main channels of communication has essentially remained unchanged.

This theme of old and new is also of special relevance to the holding of an International Book Fair in Malta. The rich cultural heritage of these islands is often the cause of wonder among the many thousands of visitors who come to our shores from much bigger and affluent countries. Almost inevitably Malta has a

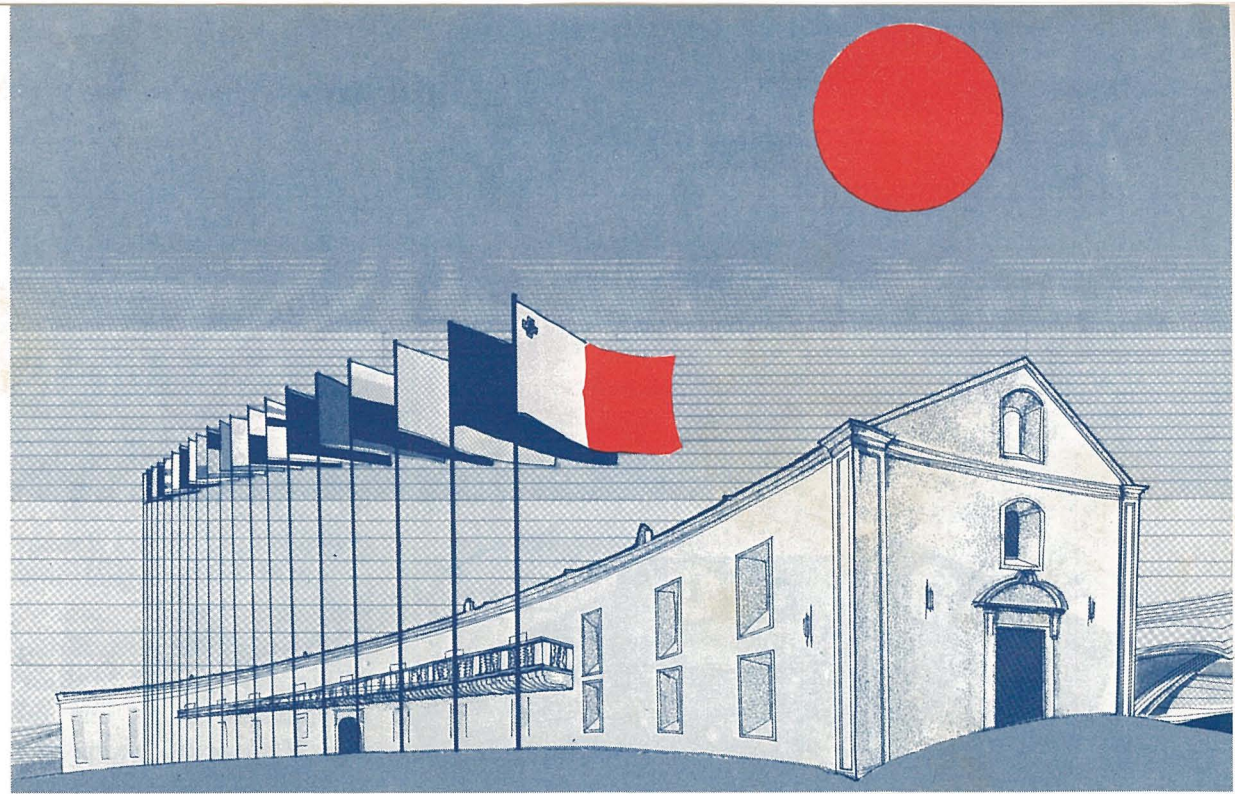
magic way of transforming a holiday in the sun into a cultural pilgrimage.

It is not my intention, this morning, to dwell on the cultural history of Malta; a brief mention of the major milestones will be enough. Malta's cultural antecedents can be traced back to pre-historic times as can be seen by the awe inspiring megalithic monuments that have survived. The close association with Rome in the days of the Roman Empire preceded the arrival of Christianity in 60 A.D. Scholars and historians continue to this day in their researches to find out more about the period of Arab rule during the Middle Ages. Malta shared fully in the European revival of culture with the arrival of the rule of the Order of the Knights. The period of the Order was followed by the long period of British domination and influence.

Each of these periods, in its particular way, has left its mark on our way of life. That is why, it has rightly been said, that in Malta cultures meet in a way that is unique to the whole Mediterranean and Europe. However, it must be made clear that today's Malta is not merely an island museum of things past.

The emergence of a true national identity, and the long march towards our freedom from foreign domination, has coincided with a period of intense activity in the creative arts in general and in the field of Maltese Literature in particular. More books in Maltese have been written and published during these last years than during any other period in our history. The publishing trade and the printing industry in Malta is steadily becoming one of our major industries to cater for the local and overseas markets.

(continued on back page)



A YOUNG BOOK FAIR



MERLIN



Merlin Library Ltd are one of the leading wholesale book distributors on the island. They represent a number of publishers in the mass market field, among which are Ladybird, Cassell, Purnell and Macdonald Educational. They are also exclusive distributors for the W.H. Smith Distribu-

tors, who are themselves among the leading suppliers of books in the U.K. Merlin Library are actively involved in the book bargain market and are the only booksellers on the island who publish remainder lists and catalogues. Through this they are doing a great service

to the local book reading public.

As dealers in the text-book market, Merlin are suppliers to many schools, colleges and libraries.

Merlin Library publish books mainly for children and their publications include a number of humorous short stories as well as adventure stories which are locally orientated. During the last months, Merlin published the first three of a series of five workbooks for primary level. Their list also includes co-editions with Ladybird and

this year three more titles will be added to the Maltese Ladybird range.

Merlin Library also operate two retail outlets and have

now opened the first Penguin Bookshop on the island, incorporated in their shop at 57 Old Bakery Street, Valletta.

merlin library ltd.

Mountbatten Str.,
Blata l-Bajda Tel: 625838

57, Old Bakery Str.,
Valletta Tel: 603112

gulf Publishing Ltd.

Book Publishers and Distributors ■ Importers and Exporters of Publications

Gulf Publishing Company is rated as one of the leading publishing houses in Malta today. Since the company was established it has maintained its ambitious programme of production, a host of publications of all kinds, dealing with a wide range of subjects from leisure reading to educational, technical, cultural, and books of general interest.

Gulf books, which are published in Maltese, Arabic and other languages, are noted for their high quality of printing, binding and attractive cover design for which top artists are engaged. Their children's books in particular, and

those intended for students of Arabic, are meticulously designed with a variety of layouts and profusely illustrated with vividly coloured pictures to match the text. The sale of their popular novels has increased considerably and, conse-



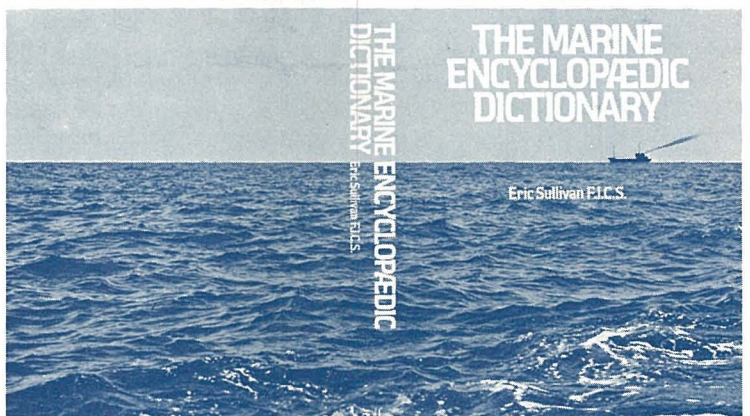
quently, new authors have been discovered and introduced to the mass of Maltese reading public.

Perhaps the most successful achievement of Gulf Publishing has been their series of publications in Arabic and other languages dealing with education and other specialized subjects aimed at the export trade. Their newest and latest contribution in this field "The Marine Encyclopaedic Dictionary" by Eric Sullivan

F.I.C.S. is a reference manual of world-wide importance and of particular interest to all those con-

nected with the shipping industry.

A full range programme of similar volumes, dictionaries, encyclopedias, technical and study books, intended for local and overseas readers, is now in preparation. The overall production of Gulf's publications is in the hands of experts whose main objective is to foster the book trade in the Maltese Islands by producing books of very high standard by well-known authors, and to meet the ever increasing demands of both the local market and those of the vast Arab world.



BOOKS MOVE FASTER with

AIRMALTA



MEDITERRANEAN PUBLISHING COMPANY



The Mediterranean Publishing Company (formerly Malta Publishing Co.) was established in September 1976 between three parties, Malta, Libya and the Italian Rizzoli Group.

The object of the Company is to promote the world-wide economic diffusion of Arab, European and other cultures, art, science and literature through the publication and distribution of books and other printed matter.



Joseph Grima M.P. Managing Director

All partners hold equal interests and exercise equal rights. Through an Editorial Board, which represents all the parties making up the company, publishing programmes and related ventures are decided upon from time to time. These publishing programmes require the unanimous approval of the Board of Directors.

The Mediterranean Publishing Company has embarked upon many interesting publishing ventures, amongst them the twenty volume four-colour series entitled *Guarda e Scopri* which was translated into Arabic and distributed throughout the Middle East by the Popular Establishment for Printing, Distribution and Advertising of Tripoli. This attractive and sophisticated publication, profusely illustrated and dealing with the animal kingdom, proved to be an instant hit with children and their daddies and has been exhibited in various Book Fairs all over the world.

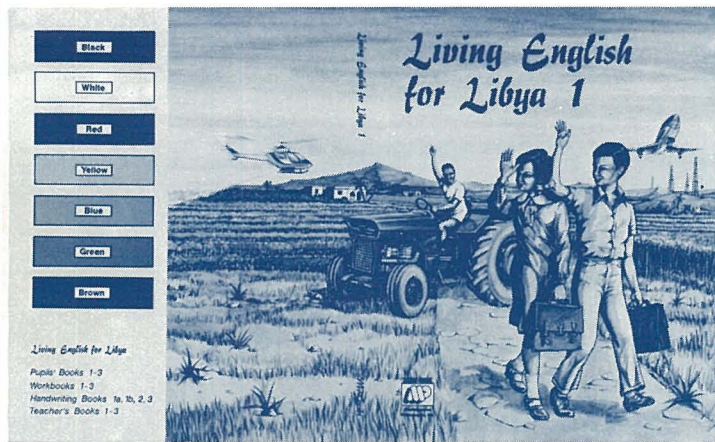
Another attractive publication published earlier on this year is Ahmed Talaat's *Grammatika Gharbija*, designed for Maltese school

children who are learning the Arabic language.

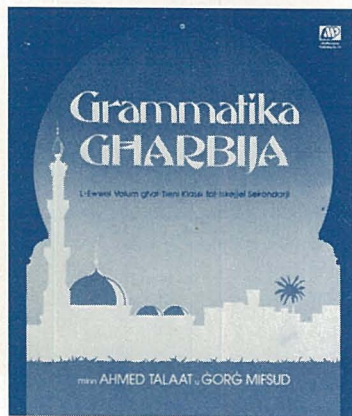
A new Publication planned to appear on the international market in the near future is *Practical Arabic*, a publication intended to assist business men, travellers, embassy staffs, representatives from the commercial sectors and other people connected with the Arab world. It will contain a good number of technical words, covering a number of fields, which are found in the every day Arabic language. A Maltese version, entitled *Il-Qofol ta' l-Gharbi Mithaddet* will also be published. Dr Ahmed Talaat wrote the original book in English whilst Gorg Mallia was responsible for the Maltese translation.

Another publication in hand is a study of the history and language of Malta in Arabic. Through this new publication the many thousands of Arab travellers visiting the island would learn and appreciate more Malta's cultural heritage. This is claimed to be the first publication of the kind on Malta in Arabic.

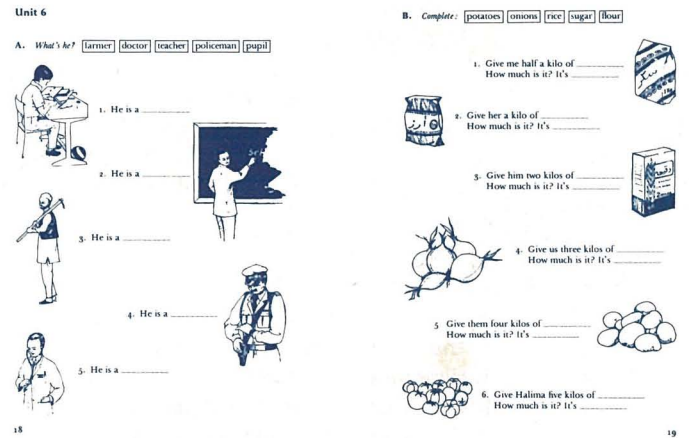
The Mediterranean Publishing Company is meantime proceeding with its publishing programme of English language textbooks, covering all the stages of education in the Libyan Arab Jamaheriya. This contracted series consists of sixty-five titles. Four books comprising two handwriting books, a workbook and a primary English Reader were delivered in January whilst the second set of four is planned to be completed this year. The current year's publishing programme consists of around one million books, half of which will be reprints. In the meantime



The open cover of *Living English for Libya Book 1*, produced by Mediterranean Publishing Co.; one of a contracted series of 65 titles.



Ahmed Talaat's *Grammatika Gharbija*

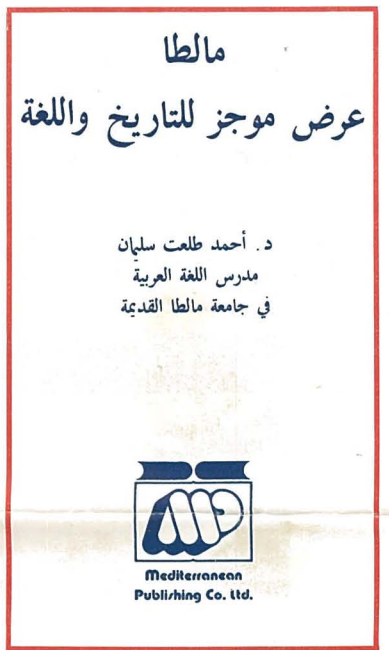


A double-page spread from Mediterranean Publishing Co.'s *Workbook One*.

the company is endeavouring to secure more contracted work from several Arab countries.

The Mediterranean Publishing Company provides a practical example of Malta's declared policy of acting as a bridge linking Europe to the Arab mainland.

European technological know how, together with Arab enterprise meet in Malta, from where knowledge and culture emanates through printed works and is distributed throughout the world.



The title page from a book dealing with the history and culture of Malta, claimed to be the first of its kind.

Trade Enquiries
34E Archbishop Str. Valletta
Telex: 532 Mapuca
Tel: 620300, 25820



A consignment of educational textbooks published by the Mediterranean Publishing Co. being loaded onto containers for export.

EARLY PRINTING IN MALTA

Pompeo de Fiore, a Sicilian Knight of the Order of St John, set up the first printing press in Malta in June 1642, after having been given permission to do so by Grand Master Lascaris. It was understood that de Fiore would monopolise printing in Malta for at least twenty years. Mgr. Gori Pannellini, the Inquisitor of the time, was appointed official censor, second only to the Grand Master himself. The Bishop of Malta, Mgr. Balaguer Camarasa strongly objected to his exclusion from the rights of censorship and in 1643 Rome was forced to decree that the Inquisitor was the only censor. This made Grand Master Lascaris feel victimised. He took offence and as a result the development of printing in Malta ended abruptly.

An attempt in 1698-99 by the Order of St John to obtain a censorship ruling in its favour failed when Grand Master Perellos refused to accept the plan proposed, by which his signature would be given a status inferior to those of the Inquisitor and the Bishop.

It was Grand Master Pinto who, in 1746, finally acquired equality of censorship. He was allowed to sign on the same line as the other two censors and thus the road was opened for the development of the press in Malta.

The new Government Press took nine years to start functioning. In 1756 the Sicilian printer Don Nicolo' Capace was engaged as manager, with another Sicilian,

Giuseppe d'Angelo, as machine-operator. On 5 June, 1756, the printing-office was opened to the public and work started after the blessing of the premises on 28 June. This *Stamperia di Sua Altezza Serenissima* was situated near the steps leading down to what today is known as Neptune's Court in the President's Palace.

A few of the many works printed at this time were Count Gianantonio Ciantar's *Malta Illustrata* (2 volumes, 1772, 1780), Grand Master de Rohan's *Code of Laws* (1782) and Chev. de St Priest's *Malte par un Voyageur Francais* (1971).

The volume of work at the Press increased and by 1772 as many as ten workers were em-

ployed. Censorship was of course, constantly exercised, with all books being reviewed by the Advocate General before they were printed. This system continued until the so-called abolition of censorship by the French Government in Malta, following a request dated 26 June, 1798.

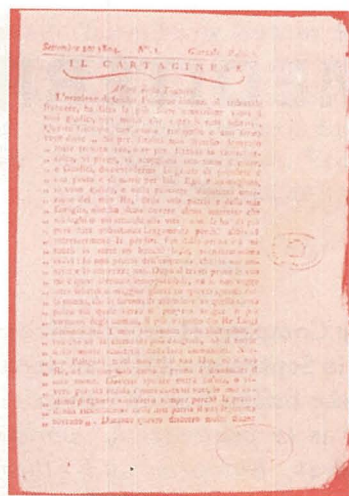
The first Maltese newspaper, the *Journal de Malte*, was also published in 1798. Its aim being propaganda for the Napoleonic cause, it was considered to be Government property, with each issue running at five hundred copies. It was printed in two columns, one in French and the other an Italian translation. This newspaper, however, lasted no longer than its tenth issue, dated 26 September, 1798, 24 days after the Maltese uprising against the French.

Some commentators mention the possibility of there having been another newspaper at the time, the *Malta Libera*, but there is no real proof of this.

Since work for the press was steadily increasing, on 6 August, 1798 engineer Fay was entrusted with the responsibility of transferring the press to the larger building which had formerly housed the chancellory of the Order.

On 29 August, 1798, the local French Government Commission passed regulations, mostly dealing with finances, for the running of the printing press.

The freedom of the press ended with the *Journal de Malte* in the blockade of September,



The first issue of the political journal *Il Cartaginese*.



Frontispiece of *Della descrizione di Malta* by Gio. Francesco Abela.



Another page from Abela's publication.

1798. Two almanacs for the years 1799 and 1800 seem to have been the only output of the Maltese press in the following years.

The post-1800 British Government in Malta kept an almost exclusive monopoly on all printing. Applications for privately owned printing presses were refused and offenders punished. Censorship was also quite harsh. Manuscripts were only accepted for printing if they did not censure the British Government or any person in private or public life. Furthermore, they could not contain religious arguments. Nevertheless, works printed abroad were allowed to enter Malta without examination of their contents.

In the meantime, Maltese patriots such as George Mitrovich were trying to win back what he called "a moderate freedom of the Press and not an absolute freedom which could degenerate into immorality or bring about offences to religion."

Between 1800 and 1836 the following newspapers were published:

- (1) *Foglio d'Avvisi*, published in Italian between 8 October, 1803 and 12 April, 1804 (14 issues);
- (2) *L'Argo*, in Italian, published between 23 April, 1804 and 4 September, 1804 (9 issues);
- (3) *Il Cartaginese*, also in Italian, published between 20 September, 1804 and 25 October, 1810 (133 issues);
- (4) *Il Giornale di Malta*, published between 20 September, 1804 and 25 October, 1813 (94 issues);

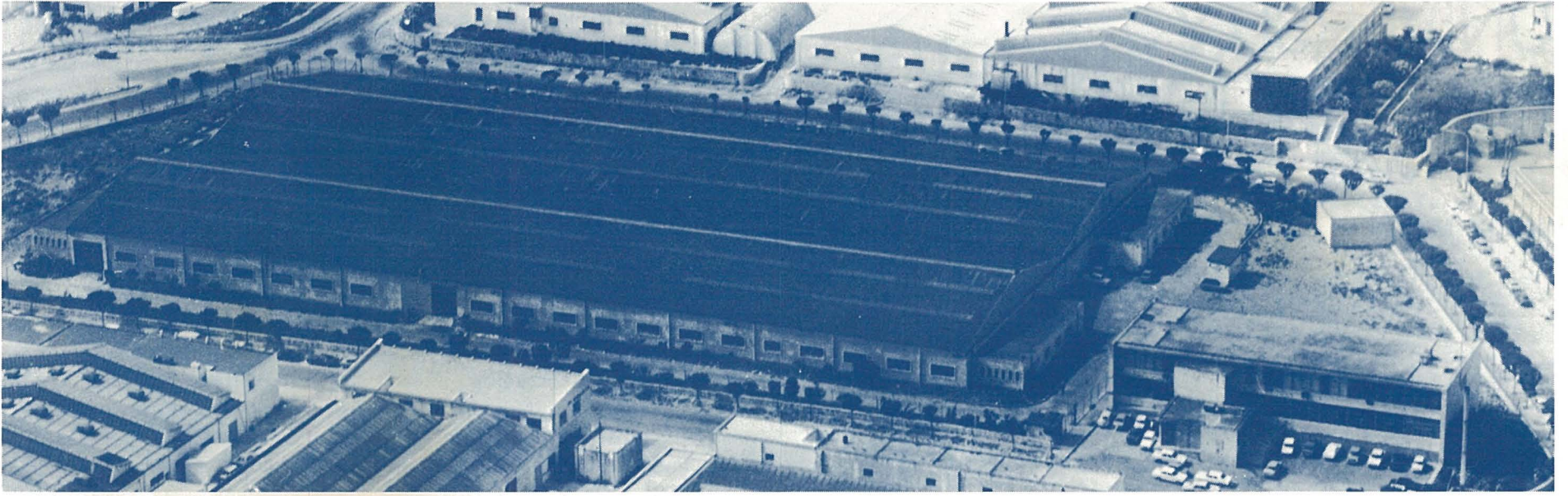
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Grand Master Jean Paul Lascaris



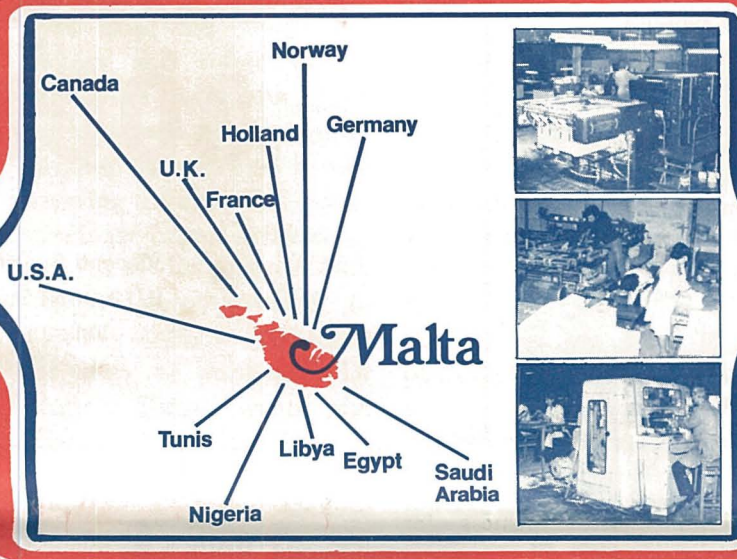
A late 18th century printing press.



Interprint is housed in a 100,000 square foot modern factory at the Marsa Industrial Estate on the island of Malta. Equipped with modern machinery the company exports all its products.

A number of internationally known publishers make use of the facilities offered by Interprint and they find this competitive reliable and of high standard.

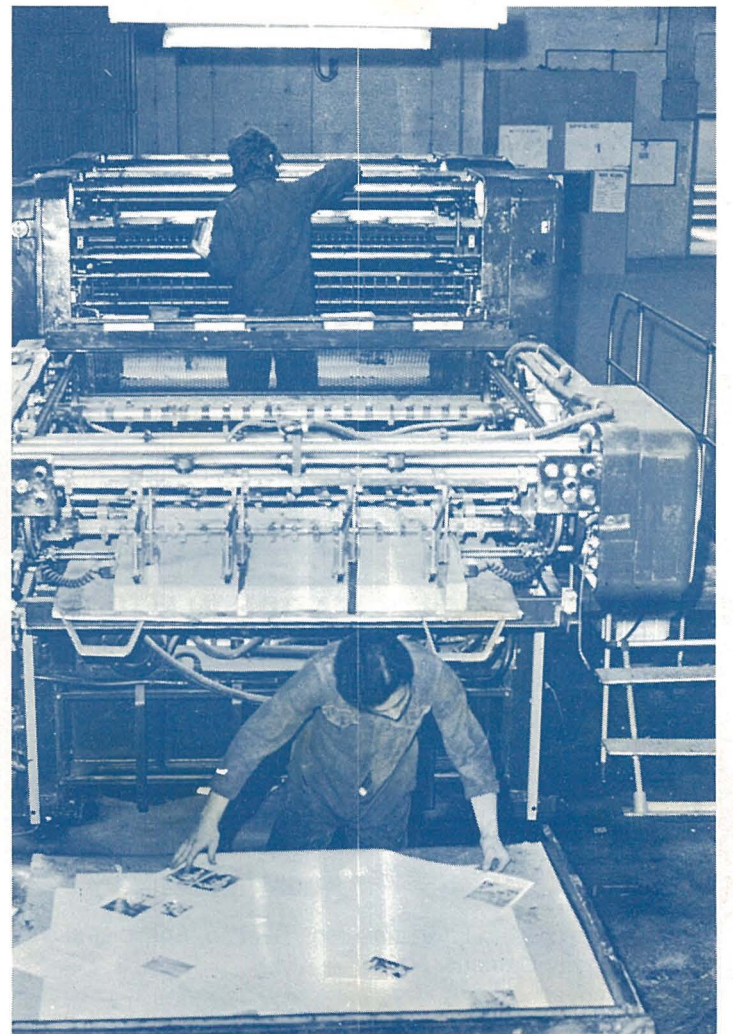
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INTERPRINT LTD.



This Lumitype 540 keyboard is one of the four which together with 2 mono-photo keyboards turn out weekly 2000 book pages of typesetting. Processing is done automatically to ensure a diamond sharp image in either positive or negative film form. (Typesetting is also sold as a separate service).



A Crabtree Sovereign two-colour machine — all printing at Interprint is done offset and the company specialises in short to medium run books. Extensive facilities are also available for all kinds of limp and cased binding. Taking an average 3-quad sheets per book, the company has a production capacity of 100,000 books per week.

**BOOKS MOVE
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AIR MALTA

UNIVERSITY PUBLICATIONS

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Tel. 36451

In 1953, the University availed itself of funds offered from overseas sources to publish a series of books intended for adult education. Further additions followed in 1955, 1962, 1964 and as recently as 1975. These publications cover a range of subjects and include books in Maltese Folklore, Social Principles and History of Civilisation.

Following this series, further funds were obtained from U.K. sources to compile and publish a catalogue of the unique collection of the manuscripts of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem. The ample material indexed in these volumes was previously available only to a small group of dedicated historians who paid regular visits to the island in pursuance of their research interests. The documents reflect the religious, political, diplomatic and military history of the Hospitallers. The published volumes have given a new impetus to students, historians and archivists in making further studies in this richly documented period of the history of the Mediterranean region.

The list of publications includes a historical series, a number of volumes on the Maltese language, a comparative dictionary of Maltese proverbs, volumes of economical and social studies, law publications and a recent illustrated volume of the Flora of the Maltese Islands.

Some books published by University Publications

CATALOGUE OF THE RECORDS OF THE ORDER OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM

THE STRUCTURE OF MALTESE

A Study in Mixed Grammar and Vocabulary (Aquilina J.)
1959 — pp X + 358

MALTESE LINGUISTIC SURVEYS

(Aquilina J.)
1976 — pp viii + 216

A COMPARATIVE DICTIONARY OF MALTESE PROVERBS

(Aquilina J.)
1972 — pp liii + 694

A FLORA OF THE MALTESE ISLANDS

(Haslam S.M.; Sell P.D.; Wolseley P.A.)
1977 — pp lxxi + 560

WORKERS' PARTICIPATION IN MALTA - ISSUES AND OPINIONS

(Kester G.)
1974 — pp iv + 231

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE TEACHING STAFF OF THE UNIVERSITY

(Saydon P.P.)
1966 — pp ii + 130

Full List available from: Publications Section, Administration Building, University Campus, Msida.

The need for a bookshop in Malta, which catered for a selection of books dealing with controversial subjects has long been felt. Traditionally, such books were not carried in stock but ordered by request. Other selections dealing with Social-Politics, Economics and Philosophical works, especially of Marxist orientation were taboo.

From the very beginning Progressive Books imported such books, especially from the Soviet Union. Our firm introduced Lenin's Collected Works into Malta in 1974. According to UNESCO, V. I. Lenin is the most widely read author and his books hold first place in the world for the number of translations into other languages.

these volumes are sold annually.

Today Progressive Books carry the largest selections of books dealing with the following subjects.

Political Science, Economics, Philosophy, Classical and modern Literature, Sociology, Anthropology, Psychology, Psychiatry, Law, History, Education, Feminist writings, Women's Lib,

PROGRESSIVE BOOKS

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The fact that people of varying social status, different political convictions and party affiliation, turn to Lenin's work is not dictated by sheer academic interest. They find in Lenin's ideological and theoretical heritage the answer to the most acute political, social, economical, national and moral-ethical problems that confront Mankind so uncompromisingly in the atomic and cybernetic age. Progressive Books can confirm this as thousands of

Art, Drama, International Affairs, Business and Management, Mathematics, Technology and Languages.

Publications from Progress Publishers (Moscow), Penguin, Fontana, Lawrence and Wishart, Quartet, Writers and Readers, Wildwood House, all from the U.K., International Publishers (U.S.A) and many other firms.

The demand for such books was so great that soon the Bookshop transferred from a small room in an obscure area of Valletta, to its present premises in one of the busiest commercial side streets in Valletta.

Progressive Books are still not satisfied with the success achieved so far, and are still determined to make the bookshop the most intellectual centre for books in Malta.

Today Progressive Books is one of Malta's leading booksellers, Importers and Distributors.

Fly **AIR MALTA** 

to the
GULF



MIDSEA BOOKS LTD was founded in 1975 to provide a specialized service for distinguished writers and scholars who want to publish scholarly material on Malta. Its main objective is to advance to every part of the world knowledge about this middle part of the Mediterranean, of which Malta has always been the centre of various social activities: religious, political and cultural.

Malta has, in fact, been regarded as a depository of the past Mediterranean civilizations, whose remains in other countries have long been obliterated by advances of technology. Here, the Phoenician, The Roman, the Moslem and the Christian is intermingled in a way that has made Malta and its people the centre of anthropologists' research. Their discoveries are of great Mediterranean interest and students of both western and eastern civilizations are finding in their books, published by MIDSEA a source of cultural wealth and an advancement of knowledge. MIDSEA's series on Maltese Social Studies include:

1. *Hal Millieri*. A Maltese Casale, Its Churches & Paintings by Dr. A. Luttrell, lecturer on Mediaeval periods.
2. *Early Relations between Malta and U.S.A.* by Dr. P. Cassar, author of *Medical history of Malta*.
3. *Colonial Politics in an Island Fortress: The Maltese Experiment* by Dr. H. Frendo,
4. *The Nobles of Malta* by Dr. J. Montalto.

5. *The Jews of Malta in Early Medieval Times* by Dr. G. Wettinger, Senior Lecturer in the Dept of History at the Old Univ. of Malta.

6. *An Economic History of Malta* by Prof. S. Busuttil.

7. *Moslem Malta* by John Barnard.

8. *Focus on Maltese Culture* by Prof. Jos. Aquilina.

Midsea Books also publishes a biannual journal for the Faculty of Arts of the Old University of Malta on Mediterranean Studies. Articles in it are in either of three languages; English, French and Arabic but each is accompanied by a synopsis in two of the languages that are not used in the main article. Contributors are usually scholars and personalities with experience of the Mediterranean situation.

For the consumption of the tourist, who wants a better perspective of Malta and Maltese affairs, Midsea Books also issues two annual publications. *Malta, A Handbook to the Republic*, edited by the well known English author Sean

O'Callaghan: and *Top Ten Tales of Malta*, a collection of the best ten stories on Malta, edited by Victor Lewis.

The most popular of all the Midsea Publications is perhaps *Heritage*, the encyclopaedia of Maltese culture and civilization, which is being issued in monthly parts. It is very heavily illustrated and it is aimed for the vast masses who have little time to get involved in the more scholarly works mentioned above. When complete it will run into six volumes and will cover all the period of historical Malta from prehistory to modern times.

Midsea Books Ltd. is also represented by other publishing firms in London, Ontario, New York and Melbourne.



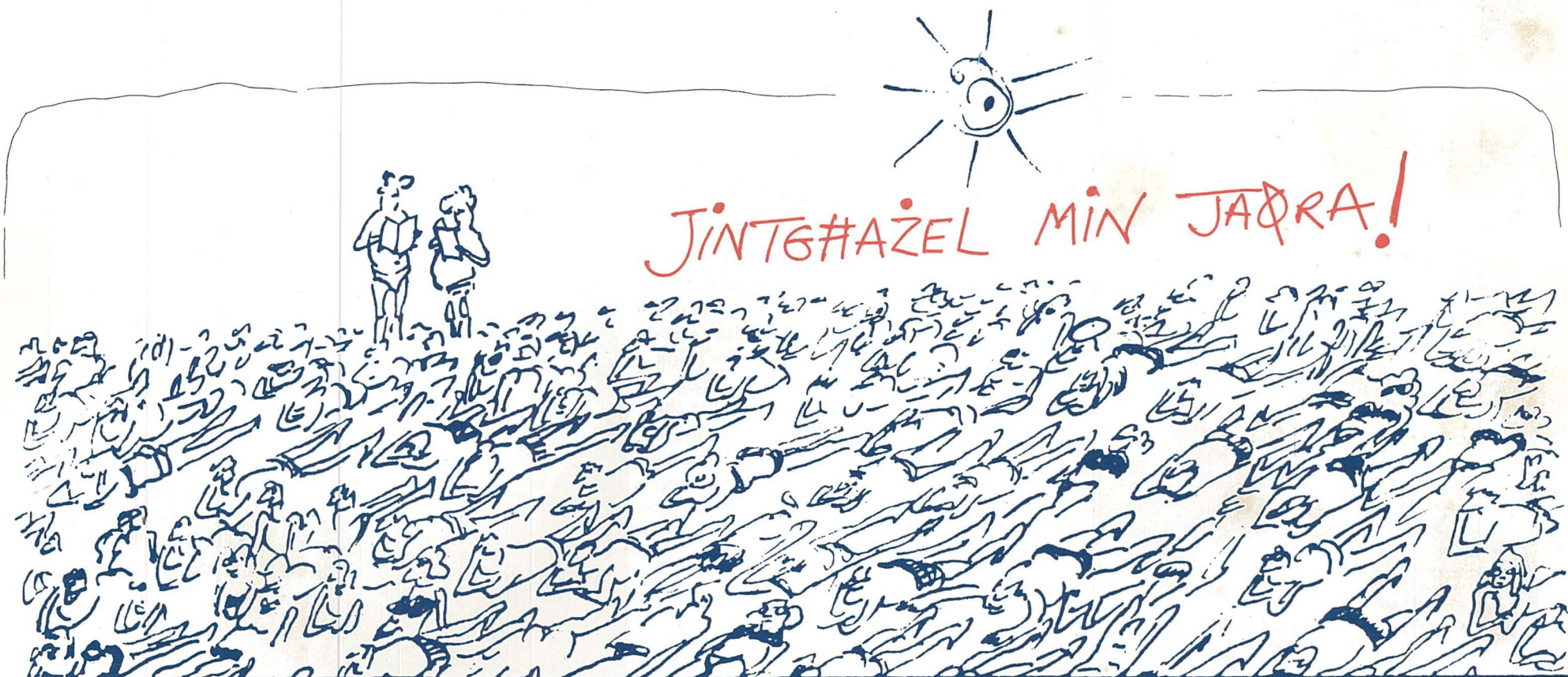
Distinguished personalities visiting the K.K.M./Midsea Books Ltd. stand.

KLABB KOTBA MALTIN is the only publishing house in Malta which publishes regularly books in Maltese. It was founded in 1970 by Mr. Pawlu Mizzi, B.A. with the aim of promoting the Maltese book and of diffusing it into as many Maltese homes as possible.



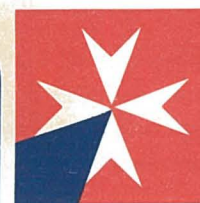
The whole idea originated at the Library of the Malta College of Art, Science and Technology: today the New University, where Mr. P. Mizzi was acting as assistant librarian. There, as in other Public Libraries the collection of books in Maltese was very poor and this fact worried members of the Maltese Literary Movement particularly Dr. O. Friggieri, Mario Azzopardi and Franz Sammut who supported Mr. Mizzi's initiative and helped him in the organization of the Klabb. The Klabb Kotba Maltin started its publishing activities in April 1971 with the publication of Franz Sammut's first novel 'Il-Gagga'. It was a success. All cultural quarters, both civil and religious, welcomed the Klabb's varied publications, which as some local newspapers claimed, boosted the interest of the

general public in Maltese readership. Many, in fact, began to accept Mr. Mizzi's belief that the real intellectual emancipation of the Maltese people lay, like that of other people in other countries, in the continuous cultivation of reading habits in the vernacular. The Klabb Kotba Maltin to-day spread its activities in other publishing fields. It started a series of educational books called *Taghlim Ghal Kulhadd*, a graded series for junior readers called *Qari Ghaz-Zghar* and another series on specialized subjects called *Kotba Speċjali*. This latter series included Maltese works of reference such as dictionaries, biographies, history books and encyclopaedias. During the last seven years it circulated more than a quarter of a million copies in some 150 different titles.



Fly

AIR MALTA



to
**NORTH
AFRICA**

(continued from page 1)

A considerable section of this activity is the result of the close partnership established between European publishing houses and their North African counterparts in the Arab speaking world. This is one tangible result of the dialogue between these two major areas of the Mediterranean region — a dialogue in which Malta has played and continues to play a major role. In this context, it is perhaps worth mentioning that all the students in our secondary schools are today studying Arabic together with other European languages.

All this activity has been going on side by side with our advances in the accelerated rhythm of our industrialization and the application of technical progress in all fields related to our development from shipbuilding to agriculture and tourism. While we are striving to harness the energy and skill of our workers together with the latest technological means towards our economic development we shall, of course, continue to cherish moral, spiritual and cultural values.

But our obligations to a newly liberated Malta demand of us a much more dynamic contribution than that of more respect for, and the paying of lip service to, the world of culture. In a relatively short period of time my Government will be putting into action a vigorous programme of new cultural activities aimed at reaching all the citizens of our country. It is our firm belief that in the Malta of today, the acquisition of culture should

never again become the privilege of any minority. Our aim is to achieve an ever increasing degree of active participation in cultural events by the greatest possible number of Maltese of all ages and from all walks of life. In the process of achieving these aims a wider definition of culture becomes inevitably clearer.

That is why my Ministry is very much aware of its dual responsibility in the field of education. It has to cater for the living continuity of broad cultural aims, extended to achieve the participation of new Malta's young generation in schools, colleges and the university. Our goal is the betterment of the quality of life. On the other hand, we must make practical educational provision to equip our young citizens to meet the challenges that face our constant efforts to build a better Malta. To fulfil our new and important role we cannot afford to remain complacent about the dangers of insularity and isolation. We have started and intend to continue to forge new links to join us to the rest of the world in the fields of politics, education, culture, science and technology. We are more than convinced of the major contribution that the world of books can make to the realization of our ideals, and that explains why we give so much importance to events like the holding of the Malta International Book Fair.

From the first edition, the organisers wanted to give a cultural dimension to our Book Fair. Last year one of the most interesting sections of the Fair

dealt with the *History of the Maltese Textbook*. This year the non-commercial section is being expanded to cover three aspects. An exhibition of Books for Pre-School Children from various countries is being mounted. This reflects the successful efforts of my Ministry in the setting up of Kindergarten Centres in every single town and village in Malta and Gozo.

Secondly, the Organising Committee has made arrangements for the bringing together of the constitutions of different countries of the world including those who for some reason or other could not participate in the Fair. Another section has been devoted to the late Nicholas Monsarrat. This world famous novelist, a friend of Malta and the Maltese, lived for more than a decade on the sister island of Gozo. His best selling novel *The Kappillan of Malta* has helped, in no small way, to make Malta even better known overseas. It is for this reason that the Organisers have managed to exhibit, among other important papers, the original manuscripts of this novel. I publicly wish to thank Mrs Anne Monsarrat for her generous help in this respect and for honouring us with her presence this morning.

It is against this background that I welcome you to Malta and express my thanks for accepting our invitation to participate in this young but healthy forward-looking Book Fair and look forward to welcoming you for the third Malta International Book Fair in April 1981.

(continued from page 4)

(5) *Gazzetta del Governo di Malta*, between 27 October, 1816 (143 issues); It then became the

(6) *Malta Government Gazette*, publishing articles both in English and in Italian;

(7) *The Mediterranean Register* was born and died in 1827.

The publications of the Government Printing Press were varied, ranging from price lists to almanacs. Perhaps the most noteworthy of the books published at this time is Dr. Stefano Zerafa's two-part work *Florae Melitensis Thesaurus*, published in 1827 and 1831.

In 1836, Lord Glereig, Secretary of State for the Colonies, formed a Royal Commission to inquire into the Malta's affairs including the question of press censorship. It was established that the British Government did have a legal basis for press censorship. As a consequence of the inquiry, however, a recommendation of freedom to print and publish, together with a law of libel to prevent abuses was accepted and passed on 15 March, 1839.

In the meantime the Catholic Church in Malta, though not against the liberty of the press, hesitated in extending that freedom to religious matters. These objections were also eventually bypassed, especially since Catholics were not dispensed from the spiritual censorship imposed upon them by Canon Law.

Private printing presses began to be set up in 1838, the year which also saw the publication of Malta's first independent newspaper, *Lo Spettatore Imparziale*, followed by *Il Portafoglio Maltese*, *The Harlequin* and *Il Mediterraneo*.

James Richardson, editor of *The Harlequin*, proved the libel laws to be effective by being the first to be condemned to a fine of 250 scudi or six months imprisonment for libelling the Catholic Church.

These newspapers, both independent and official, continued their work, opening the way for the modern era in Maltese journalism, and printing in general.

(Based on a series of articles by Joseph F. Grima which first appeared in *Heritage* magazine, published by Midsea Books.)



discussion of problems of marketing and distribution of books and audio-visual materials; to provide a forum for publishers, authors, booksellers and librarians with an interest in the literature produced by and about the Mediterranean region; to establish a market for antiquarian booksellers. Malta International Book Fair's distinctive feature, the inclusion of a section for antiquarian booksellers, was found attractive both by participants and by many of the visitors, a number of

whom showed special interest in items referring to Malta or the Mediterranean region. This beginning augured well for Malta International Book Fair as an important future international Fair for antiquarian books, maps and prints. The excellent facilities available at the magnificent Mediterranean Conference Centre, a 16th century building restored in 1979, will undoubtedly make participation in the Fair not only easier but also even more attractive.



the second Malta International Book Fair in April 1980.

The first Fair fulfilled the hope of its organizers that it would bring together publishers and booksellers from Europe and the Middle East. In fact, it did more than that. It clearly demonstrated that the central (strategic) position of Malta at the very heart of the crossroads between the Western, Christian culture and the Oriental, Islamic culture could make the Malta International Book Fair the Book Fair of the Mediterranean. Indeed, the response for the second edition of the Malta International Book Fair has vindicated the faith expressed in it by its organizers. Participants in the 1980 Fair not only include the usual publishers and book dealers from European and Arab countries but also representatives of a number of universities and other educational institutions. The aims and objectives for the second Malta International Book Fair remain the same: to foster professional contacts between authors, publishers, booksellers and librarians, to encourage the

The first Malta International Book Fair was launched in 1979. Originally the intention was to hold subsequent

editions in alternate years, but judging from the Fair's success last year, it was immediately decided to hold

