

# Disinfection

by Dr. A. Bonnici

Part 8.

In Vol. 14 No. 1. April 1985 Issue I reproduced the declaration issued by Alexander Macaulay on the 4th November 1804, wherein it was expressed that a Public Health Committee was being formed. The following reproduction is the First sitting of the Committee of the Public Health wherein the rules regulating Quarantine were published for the first time:

## COMITATO DI SALUTE PUBBLICA

PER LE ISOLE MALTA, E GOZO.

---

SUA PRIMA SEDUTA 7 NOVEMBRE 1804.

**I** Signori Componenti il Comitato di Salute Pubblica nominati per deliberazione di Sua Eccellenza il Regio Sig. Commissarj delli 5 del corrente Novembre avendo oggi per la prima volta tenuto congresso, e considerando se stessi dietro all'avuto incarico responsabili in avvenire di qualunque sinistro accidente riguardo alla Sanità che mai seguisse per loro colpa hanno stimato molto congruente di conferire prima di tutto sull'attuale stato di Sanità o di mal essere in queste Isole.

**II** Protomedico, e Medico Maltesi, il Dottor Franklin Inglese rassicurati per l'esperienza, e tutti gli altri Signori per la pubblica voce esclusiva fianche del più remoto sospetto di contagio hanno senza esitanza veuna convenuto godersi attualmente in queste Isole la più perfetta sanità scevra fianche di quelle piccole indosposizioni, che in certe stagioni sogliono periodicamente ricorrere in ogni Contrada.— In conseguenza di ciò il Comitato propone di avanzarsi a Sua Eccellenza la preghiera, che ordini si Commissarj di Sanità di prevenire di questa circostanza le Deputazioni di Salute di Napoli, e della Sicilia per loro informazione e regolamento, essendo questa corrispondenza molto conveniente tra Paesi così vicini.

**SI** è quindi passato a diverse questioni relative alle precauzioni da prendersi in avvenire non parendo in circostanze così allarmanti sufficiente l'osservanza degli usi regolamentati; e restò a pieni voti risoluto sotto la riserva dell'approvazione di Sua Eccellenza.

**1** Che niuna Nave, o Vascello di qualunque sorta procedendo da Ponente si ammettano in Porto approdandovi pel solo oggetto di purgarvi la contumacia, ma capitando sieno immediatamente licenziati.

**2** Che tutte le provenienze da Malaga, Gibraltar, Cadice, e simili luoghi già infetti alle quali non osti il disposto nell'Articolo precedente sieno trattate con tutto il rigore come le provenienze di Levante portanti patente brutta.

**3** Che le provenienze da tutta la costa delle Spagne fino a Lisbona ancorchè non vi sia verun sospetto d'infezione nel luogo della partenza si assoggettino a trenta giorni di Contumacia, quindici de'quali consumino in Lazaretto, e nel corso degli altri quindici giorni possano passare nel Porto generale, e quivi attendere al discarico de'loro effetti non suscettibili, con quelle cautele besti che si sogliono praticare colle provenienze di Levante quando han patente netta.

**4** Che durante la Contumacia si diano a tali Legai due Guardiani a bordo.

**5** I Legai che vengon da Livorno finchè si avranno notizie migliori devon essere trattati come se fosser partiti da Malaga ec.

**6** Le provenienze da tutte le altre parti, e costa dell'Italia compresa quella che è bagnata dall'Adriatico si assoggettino a dieci giorni di Contumacia. Livorno è nel centro quasi della costa occidentale dell'Italia, non è in conseguenza mal'impiegata questa piccola cautela.

- 7 Per le provenienze dalla Sicilia bastan sette giorni d'osservazione.
- 8 Tutte le provenienze dal Nord compresa l'Inghilterra non e quando si continuerà e non aversene alcun sospetto s'assoggettano ad un'osservazione di quarant'otto ore.
- 9 Che non sieno esentati da questo rigore i Vascelli di guerra di qualunque descrizione.
- 10 Che si prendant le opportune misure acciocchè qualunque sbarco in alcuna parte di queste Isole, ad eccezione del G. Porto in Malta, e del Mizarro nel Gozo sia assolutamente impedito anche alle Barche pescheresche, ed alle Barche che passano, sortite dal Grao Porto, quante volte queste ultime non saran munite d'un permesso in iscritto de' Commissarij di Sanità.
- 11 Che sia proibito a qualunque Barca dentro questi Porti di trasportar viveri a vender e qualunque Nave, ed altro Legno esistente in alcun dei due Porti senza pratica.
- 12 Che i Pescatori ritornando dalla pesca fatta in alto mare non possano scendere in Terra nè comunicare con alcuno prima d'essere ragionate da uno de' Capitani di Porto.
- 13 Che sia permesso al minor numero possibile di Barche esser di notte tempo fuori de' limitanti per essi stabiliti; E quelle Barche che avranno tale permesso dovranno essere munite d'un polizino sottoscritto dai Commissarij di Sanità, e dell'Intendente di polizia i quali dovranno astenersi d'accordar tale permesso, se non a Barcajuoli de' quali potran comprometterci.
- 14 Che il numero de' Soldati di guardia in servizio dell' Officina della Sanità sia competentemente aumentato.

I Sig. del Comitato pregano Sua Eccellenza di prender sotto la sua considerazione il prodotto delle loro riflessioni, e di considerarle come un risultato della loro buona intenzione di servir la loro patria, e di corrispondere alle lodevoli premure della medesima Eccellenza Sua.

**Il Marchese Mario Testaferrata = Barone Saverio Gauci Commissario di Sanità = Dr. Vincenzo Azopardi Commissario di Sanità = Dr. Franklin = Gregorio Mattei = Edmund Noble = Dr. Fisico Giuseppe Ciaja = Il Cav. Paolo Sceberas Bologna = Dr. Luigi Caruana Protomedico, e della Deputazione della Salute Maestro.**

*Si eseguisca*

**Il Regio Commissionario  
ALEXANDER JOHN BALL**

Committee for Public Health  
for the Island of Malta and Gozo.  
Its first sitting 7th November 1804.

The members composing the Committee for Public Health, appointed by declaration of His Excellency the Royal Commissioner of the 5th November, having met today for the first time, and considering themselves by their appointment responsible in the future, for any adverse happening regarding Public Health, that could follow through their fault, have decided it would be useful to take stock of the present state of health and illness prevailing in these Islands at the moment.

The Chief Physician, the Maltese Doctors, and the English Man Dr. Franklin through their Medical experience, and all the other Gentlemen through Public opinion, exclude even the most remote suspicion of infection, and have without hesitation agreed that the most perfect health is being enjoyed in these Islands, at the moment without even those small indispositions that in certain seasons habitually recur in every area. Consequently the Committee propose to request his Excellency to order the Commissioners of health to inform of these circumstances the Committee of Health of Naples, and of Sicily for their information and action. This relationship being very convenient between neighbourley countries.

After the various questions were raised and the following agreed upon unanimously, subject the approval of His Excellency related to the precautions to be adopted in the future, as it does not appear that the observance of the usual regulations are sufficient in a crisis.

1. That no ship or vessel of any sort, coming from the East, with the sole intention of doing

Quarantine, was to be admitted in the harbour, but to be sent back immediately.

2. That all arrivals from Malaga, Gibraltar, Cadiz, and other infected places, to which the previous article does not apply shall be treated with strictness, like all arrivals from the East, bearing an unclean bill of health.

3. That all arrivals from Spain up to Lisbon, even though there is no suspicion of infection in the place of their departure, must be subjected to Thirty days Quarantine, fifteen of which to be spent in the Lazaretto and the other fortnight, allowed to be spent in the main harbour, and here unload the non infective merchandise, undergoing all the precautions that are taken, with arrivals from the East that have a clean bill.

4. That during Quarantine two guards shall be placed on board the vessel.

5. Vessels that arrive from Leghorn until better news is forthcoming shall be treated as if departing from Malaga. etc.

6. All arrivals from other parts and the coast of Italy including the Adriatic shall be subject to ten days of Quarantine. Leghorn is nearly in the centre of the West coast of Italy and therefore this small precaution is not badly invoked.

7. For all arrivals from Sicily seven days observation are sufficient.

8. All arrivals from the North including England, until no suspicion shall arise, shall be subject to 48 hours observation.

9. That warships of any descriptions shall not be exempt from these limitations.

10. That the necessary measures be taken to prohibit the disembarcation in any part of these Islands in Malta and Migiario Gozo even to fishing vessels, and to the commuting boats coming out from the Main Harbour, if they are not covered by a written permit by the Commissioner of Health.

11. That it shall be prohibited to any boat within these harbours to carry victuals and to sell to any vessel or any other ship, lying in these two harbours without pratique.

12. That fishermen returning from fishing on the high seas shall not be allowed to and nor communicate with any one, before being heard by one of the Captains of the harbour.

13. That it be allowed to the least possible number of boats to stay during the night outside the perimeter established to them, and those boats that are allowed, shall have a pass signed by the Commissioner of Health and by the Superintendent of Police, who shall refrain from granting such permission except to boatmen, to which they can accord trust.

14. That the number of soldiers on guard serving the Offices of health shall be adequately increased.

The members of the Committee pray His Excellency to consider the outcome of their ideas, and to consider them as the result of their good intention to serve their native land, and to cooperate with the praise worthy ideas of His Excellency.

Signed: Marchese Mario Testaferata – Barone Saverino Gauci, Commissioner of Health. Dr. Vincenzo Azzopardi Commissioner of Health; Dr. Franklin Gregorio Mattei, Edmond Noble, Dr. Giuseppe Ciaja, Cavalier Paolo Scicluna Bologna, and Dr. Luigi Caruana, Chief Medical Officer, The above was approved by Alexander John Ball.

Officio de'Capitani di Porto li 17. of Aprile 1813

E' permesso al Latore dalla presente di  
portarsi con barcajuolo di Sanità a *salare un pontone*  
vicino li Bastimenti in Contumacia.



Il Capitano di Porto.

*L. Schembri*

Specimen permit issued by L. Schembri Captain of the Port on the 17th April 1913, stating that bearer was allowed in the company of a Dep. of Health Boatman – to go on board a barge near the ship in Quarantine.

On the 12th September 1806 instructions were issued by Francis Laing Acting Public Secretary, for Commanders of Vessels under Quarantine.

At that time the Principal Office of the Quarantine Service was called the Superintendent General of the Quarantine Department and Captain of the Lazzaretto. He was a very important man and exercised extensive Powers. His word was final in matters connected with the administration of the Lazaretto and the control of the Quarantine harbour and anchorage. Because of his authority the Superintendent resented interference from the Highest Officers and conflicts often arose between the Superintendent General of the Lazzaretto and His Majesty's Commissioner in Valletta.<sup>1</sup>

# INSTRUCTIONS FOR Commanders of Vessels *Under Quarantine.*

**ALL** Vessels subject to the Performance of Quarantine are to hoist a yellow Flag before they enter the Port; and Commanders neglecting so to do are liable to a Fine of 200l.

**ALL** Vessels, subject to Quarantine, entering the Port of Vallette are immediately to go into the Inner Harbour and Anchor under Corradine; or in such place as shall be pointed out by the Captain of the Port; and they are, on no pretence whatever, to Moor in any other Situation, unless compelled by Stress of Weather, and in that case to shift their Birth the instant the Weather moderates.

**ALL** Vessels waiting for Convoy at this Port, and coming from Places that subject them to Quarantine, are, if they remain in the Port of Vallette, to Anchor under the Corradine, and take a Guardian from the Health Office; such as do not wish to incur the Expence of a Guardian, are to Moor in the Harbour of Marsamuscetta, near the Lazzaretto, subject to the usual Restrictions of that Port.

**THE** Boats of Vessels in Quarantine are always to keep a yellow Flag, or Pendant flying, when they pass to and from the Lazzaretto, or Barrier, and the Boats belonging to the Vessels performing Quarantine, are to be Chained to the Vessel, and to be secured with a Lock at Sunset; the Commanders will be responsible for any breach of Quarantine that may happen for want of this precaution.

**NO** Person in, or belonging to, any Vessel, shall presume to go on Shore, or on Board any other Vessel, on any pretence whatever, until Visited by the Health Officers, and the Commander of any Vessel will be liable to the Punishment annexed to the Breach of Quarantine if he suffers any Person to enter his Vessel and quit her before the Captain of the Port has Visited her, or while he is under Quarantine.

**THE Commanders of Vessels unloading at the Lazzaretto, are to be careful to Land every species of Goods, Cloathing, and Merchandizes, in Order that they may be Fumigated; and any Person concealing even the smallest Quantity of Effects on Board or on Shore, is liable to the punishment of DEATH in conformity to the Law of Malta and all Accomplices and Receivers of such Goods are rendered liable to the same Punishment.**

**THE Commanders, and all Persons on board Vessels performing Quarantine, are to pay strict Obedience to the Orders they receive from the Health Office, or Captain of the Port; and any Person going out of the prescribed Limits, or going on Board any Vessel, without Permission from the Health Office, or committing any act that may endanger the public Safety will on conviction suffer DEATH by the Law of Malta, and all Irregularities and Disorders committed on board any Vessel under Quarantine or disobedience of any part of these Instructions will be punished by the Quarantine Laws of this Island.**

**COMMANDERS of Vessels are to Answer faithfully to such Questions as shall be put to them by the Physician of the Health Office, relative to the Health of any Person on board, and all Commanders of Vessels are to make a Report to the Health Office on the appearance of any Sickness or Disease on board during the time they are performing Quarantine.**

**SHOULD the Commander, or any Person on board Vessels performing Quarantine, be desirous of Medical Aid, he is first to apply to the Protomedico of the Health Office, who will Report his Case; and Permission must be obtained from the Health Office before any other than the Physician of that Office be permitted to go a-longside the Ship.**

**By Order of HIS MAJESTY's Civil Commissioner,  
FRANCIS LAING,  
Acting Public Secretary.**

**Vallette, 12th September, 1806.**

During this period Malta was free from Plague until 1813. The revision of preventive measures against diseases gave rise to a most comprehensive set of regulations published by General Oakes.<sup>2</sup>

These regulations were consolidated subsequently in a special ordinance<sup>3</sup> which has now been embodied in the laws of Malta.<sup>4</sup> The Oakes regulations came out at a most opportune time because soon after publication an epidemic of plague hit the Island.

#### References

1. & 4. The Quarantine Service and the Lazzaretto of Malta by Profs. Galea.
2. Regulations for the Performance of Quarantine in Malta. N.D.
3. The Fourth Sanitary Ordinance (Infections Diseases Ordinance of 1908).

“The OAKES”

# REGULATIONS

FOR THE

## *Performance of Quarantine*

A T

### MALTA.

I. **A**LL Ships and Vessels as well His MAJESTY'S Ships of War as all others coming from, or having touched at any place from whence it shall by the Board of Health have been adjudged and declared probable that the Plague or any other Infectious Disease or Distemper may be brought, shall upon their arrival in the Harbour of Malta be obliged to perform Quarantine in such place or places, for such time and in such manner, as shall from time to time be directed by His Excellency His MAJESTY'S Civil Commissioner through the medium of the Health Officers.

And all Ships Vessels and Boats receiving any Person, Goods, Wares and Merchandize, Packets, Baggage, Books, Letters or any other Articles whatever, from or out of any Ship or Vessel so coming from, or having touched at such suspected place as aforesaid, are liable to the same Quarantine, whether such Persons, Goods or other Articles shall have come or been brought in such Ships or Vessels, or that such Persons shall have gone or Articles have been put on Board the same, either before or after the arrival of such Ships or Vessels at the Island of Malta.

And that until such Ships Vessels and Boats, Persons, Goods, and other Articles as aforesaid, shall have respectively performed and shall be duly discharged from such Quarantine no such Person Goods or other Articles as aforesaid or any of them, shall come or be brought on Shore or go or be put on board any other Ship, Vessel or Boat in order to come or be brought on Shore unless in such manner and in such Cases as they shall be directed and authorized by the Superintendent of Quarantine and under the immediate Inspection of one of the Captains of the Port or the Captain of the Lazaret.

And all Commanders, Masters and other persons on Board any such Ship Vessel or Boat so liable to Quarantine, and all Persons who shall have any intercourse or communication with them, or any of them shall perform Quarantine accordingly, under and subject to all the Pains, Penalties, Fine, Forfeitures and Punishments, as well Pains of Death as others to which they are by the Law of Malta subject, for any escape or attempt to escape or any other Breach of Quarantine Regulations.

II. Upon the arrival of any Ship or Vessel liable to Quarantine the Captain of the Port (together with the Medical Attendant when it shall be thought necessary) shall go off to such Ship or Vessel and at a convenient distance keeping to Windward and in the presence of the Officers, Crew and Passengers mustered

(The above is the first page and page 15 is the last page of a 16 page document.)

# TARIFF OF HEALTH OFFICE FEES.

SHIPS IN QUARANTINE.	Scudcs.	Taris.	Grains.
Guards and Guards Boats (per Day)	2		6
Health Office Fees for every Ship under 50 Tons	10		
above 50 and under 100 d <sup>o</sup> .	15		
above 100 and under 150 d <sup>o</sup> .	20		
above 150 and under 200 d <sup>o</sup> .	25		
above . . . . . 200 d <sup>o</sup> .	30		
Certificate under Seal . . . . .	2		6
-----			
All Vessels in Quarantine waiting for Orders or Convoy to pay according to the above Tariff, or (per Day)	5		
-----			
MERCHANDIZE.			
A Cargo or part of a Cargo received into the Lazaret } to pay One per Cent. . . . . }			
Guards and Guard Boats per Day . . . . .	2		6
Health Office Fees . . . . .	10		
-----			
All Merchandize (not landed in the Lazaret) which shall have undergone Quarantine on Board Vessels from places subject to Quarantine, to pay <i>when admitted to Pratique</i> ) Half per Cent. whether such Merchandize be Landed Transhipped, or remaining on Board.			
-----			
Ships having foul Bills of Health, and all Merchandize on Board of them to pay double.			
-----			
Upon the Expiration of the Quarantine of Merchandize in the Lazaret, Seven Days will be allowed for their removal; after which time, one or two Shillings per Week will be charged for every Bale (according to its size) remaining in Store,			
-----			
Cattle Landed from Vessels in Quarantine.			
For every Bullock	1		
» » Horse	2		6
» » Sheep			3
» » Pig			3
-----			
PERSONS PERFORMING QUARANTINE IN THE LAZARET.			
For every Room occupied (Guards & Guard Boats per Day)	2		6
Health Office Fees . . . . .	10		

All the above Fees to be Credited to Government, and no other Fee or demand is to be made by the Officers of the Quarantine Department,

Approved

**H. OAKES,**

**His Majesty's Civil Commissioner.**