Knights received the accolade. Here the Knights and the Maltese gathered in moments of distress — epidemics, droughts and enemy attacks — to seek the mercy of God and the intercession of Our Lady. In this church bishops and priests are consecrated. Here, too, men and women from all walks of life meet to thank God for Malta’s past victories and to pray for the fallen in war. The best sermons and sacred orations in Maltese, Italian and English, have been delivered from the pulpit of this church. Diocesan processions and pilgrimages start and end here. Religious Congresses, National or International, have been inaugurated here.

This is the holy place where one can best hear the throbbing heart of Catholic Malta.

THE CUSTOM HOUSE — MALTA

BY CHEVALIER JOSEPH BORG

Senior Customs Analyst.

On the happy occasion of the 200th Anniversary of the laying of the foundation block directly in the sea-water in 1774 for the building of the Malta CUSTOM HOUSE by the clever architect Joseph Bonnici (1707-1779) from Luqa — scholar of architect John Barbbara (1640-1730) from Lija, and Donat of the Order, also famous, incidentally, for his other great works, I mean, the building of the Parish Churches of Floriana (began in 1733), of Cospicua (during Parish Priest John-Baptist Crispo, 1742-1759) and of Nadur, Gozo (begun on 7th December, 1760 during the time of Parish Priest Saviour Galea, 1743-1778), as well as the rebuilding in 1739 of St. Barbara’s church for the Langue of Provence, of “Our Lady of Liesse” church for the Langue of France and of the “Gran Castellania” palace or Court of Justice (now the Ministry of Health and Health Department, and which was begun in 1748 by architect Francis Zerafa who died on 21st April, 1758 but finished in 1760) all three in Valletta — which CUSTOM HOUSE is most fittingly described as having an astonishingly Venetian air in the true style of the Academic School, one of the few local Government edifices which had never changed the use for which it was purposely constructed. I was asked to write a small study about our fiscal provisions from a Customs point of view.

Customs, or more properly Excise. Duties were imposed locally since very far off times, indeed we know, for examples: (1) that the Roman Governor Verres of Sicily (73-71 B.C.)
exacted four hundred jars of honey from our forefathers as his due, though a law suit was instituted against him for this extortion and for other outrageous crimes against the people of Sicily by that famous bee-keeper, orator and lawyer Marcus Tullius Cicero, 106-43 B.C., which he bravely won even though Verres was defended by the then leading Roman advocate Hortensius), because then, and for several centuries after, most of the profits of the working people went for the upkeep of their ruling ones and not to provide welfare and social services to the more deserving families of the community at large:

that as in 395 A.D. the Roman Emperor Theodosius I the Great (378-395) had divided his dominions between his two sons Honorius, 395-423, and Arcadius, 395-408, (the latter had been assigned the Eastern section with capital at Byzantium), and that as Sicily, Malta and Gozo then formed part of this portion, (as evidenced by the deep rooted local devotion towards Eastern Saints, etc.), with the coming into force of the "Corpus Juris Civilis" of Emperor Caesar Flavius Justinianus of this Eastern Empire (482-527-565), and consisting of the Codex edited in 529, of the Digest in 530, of the Institutes in 533 and of the Novels (a supplement to the Code, in Greek, published after his death) and wherein provisions were made for the collection of ordinary rents and emphyteutical ones, besides some taxes for which a body of itinerant tax-collectors called the "Fiscus" was created and who normally extorted as much money or kind as possible to remit the agreed amount to their Employer and naturally to serve as ample surplus for their troubles, our rather poor Islands had to put-up as best they could with this kind of harsh treatment. Emperor Justinian was, however, one of the greatest of Byzantine Emperors, codifier of Roman Law, as just said, per the great lawyer of that time Tribonianus and a host of assistants, and builder of the famous Hagia Sophia or St. Sophia's

Cathedral Church, now the chief mosque of Istanbul, Turkey. He was an enlightened despot, a patron of the arts and sciences, and his court was a centre for learned men and troubadours.

These representatives of the King in-charge of collecting the taxes due to the Crown remained for several centuries afterwards: indeed we find that in 1507, for example, King Ferdinand the Catholic II of Sicily and V of Spain (1479-1516) ordered his "Fiscus" to buy from the money due to the King two rolls of brown cloth and give them to the then newly established Franciscan Friars Minor at Rabat for their use.

Similar tax-collectors were also made use of by the medieval barons and other proprietors of land, and, stretching the comparison too far, today there exist in Gozo procurators who collect dwellings and land dues for Maltese owners:

that the Arabs in 992, according to their historian Al Kasuani, promised our ancestors, amongst some other beneficial propositions as freedom in religious matters and direct ownership of several plots of land, the removal of all taxes on foodstuffs if the Maltese and Gozitans helped them in repelling the threatened landing of their former masters, the Byzantines, after that the Emir of Malta Al Kurx had maliciously sold both our Islands to their Emperor Basil II for 600,000 "Zarzahub" Turkish coins;

that the same Arabs in 1048, in order to prevent a similar recurrence, promised our forefathers the total taking away of the remaining dues on caught fish, firewood and dwellings and the granting of self-government headed by a local "Hakam" and four deputies or assistants "Il-Gemmha", so-called because they used to meet on Fridays (Friday, in Maltese, is "Il-Gemmha");

that at the time of the Sunbian or Bavarian Hohenstaufen Emperor Frederick II (1194, 1197-1211-1220-1250). I as
King of Sicily at not yet 4 years old. King of Germany in 1211 and Holy Roman Emperor in 1220, nicknamed “Stupor Mundi”, who re-established in 1230 the local Municipal Body or Corporation, known as “Consiglio Popolare”, but with only two men called “Boni Viri” as its officials, sometimes also referred to as Jurats or Jurors because they were obliged to take their oath of office (from the Latin word “juro”) on the four Gospels, this Emperor issued in 1231 his “Liber Augustalidis”, or “Code of Frederick of Suabia”, a new body of enlightened Criminal and Administrative Laws for both his kingdoms of Suabia and of Sicily with its dependencies of Malta and Gozo.

By the way, Frederick gave our Islands, for the very first time as far as it can be ascertained, as a fief to Mr. Henry Arrigo Pistore, who was also made by him “Count of Malta” and Grand Admiral in 1222 for his extraordinary bravery as Captain of the Emperor’s ships when he captured the two forts at Tripoli and which bravery he further showed during his participation in the fourth Crusade of 1228; while in 1235 he gave them to one of our nationals by name of Paul (cf. R.M.L. Arch. No. 657) and they remained in his family for a long time; but later on 31st July, 1394 during the siege of Catania they were likewise re-bestowed on the noble Artais d’Alagona, father of Bishop of Malta Monsignor Dom Anthony (1466-1478), a Benedictine monk from that city and who gave the land at Rabat to the Dominican Fathers wherein they built their first Malta convent near “Our Lady’s grotto” on 27th June, 1466 as per document still extant at this convent and hence his picture in here.

Emperor Ferdinand expelled the Arabs from our Islands in 1224 where they had ruled since 870 and were tolerated to remain since subdued by Count Roger the Norman in July 1090.

Said “Consiglio Popolare” was given the name of “Universita” by King Peter I of Sicily (1283-1286) and III of Aragon, in 1283 as per document sent to our progenitors wherein he indicated that he wished that this new name would carry the meaning of Government by the Whole Population through their Constituted Leaders. This happened after that the Aragonese Admiral Roger de Loria had besieged Gozo on the 8th June of that year, took possession of it and, after obtaining the oath of submission from its “Hakem” Reynaldo de Palearia and several gifts of gold, precious articles and foodstuffs, left a garrison, and having likewise subjected Malta, relieved both Islands from the tyranny of the French Angevins of Charles I of Anjou, brother of saintly King Louis IX and of both “Castel Novo” construction in Naples and of the “Sicilian Vespers” fame, and who had appointed on the 19th July, 1276 the said De Palearia as Custodian of the Gozo Citadel and “Hakem” of that Island, was granted the personal title of “Count of Malta and Gozo” by his master King Peter I. Roger went to Gozo first on the advice given by the international intriguer John of Procida to King Peter to invade Sicily, Malta and Gozo, but first the last and smallest Island that he himself might direct and help the development of the battle from Gozo;

(6) that our forefathers obtained the freedom from all burdens by the “magnanimous” King Alphonse V of Castile and Aragon and I of Sicily (1416-1458), who had previously mortgaged our Islands to his Sicilian Viceroy Don Antonio Cardona but the latter, after only five years, had sold his fief for 30,000 gold florins of Aragon (about £15,000) to Admiral Don Gonsalvo Monroy, who was at first so cruel and exacting in his taxes that led the local exasperated inhabitants to redeem 20,000 of said sum on 30th December, 1427 gaining thereby their “Magna Charta Libertatis”; very soon later, however, this same king established the “Hakem” or Governor as Commander of the army militia and stipulated that every well-to-do, that is in possession
of 100 gold "uncie" of money, had to keep a horse for such purpose and be prepared, if called upon, to take the field, or otherwise to provide a horse-soldier or cavalry-man at his own expense; while those who had only 60 "uncie" had to keep it with some other equally wealthy person.

Moreover, King Alphonse extended in 1419 the excise duty, paid since the previous two years, at the rate of one florin on every barrel of imported wine, also on all forms of dwellings in both Islands, and ordered that the money accrued therefrom be employed in strengthening the bastions and defences against the barbaric corsairs.

On the 27th November, 1427 said Corporation to manage the local affairs in each Island was again reconstructed and its head called "Capitano della Verga" from the "Rod of Office", as a sign of his authority, and which rod was always carried before him while on duty. (The last Captain of the Rod was Dr. Joseph-Mary Bonnici, J.U.D., 1814-1818, and an oil painting of him with his said "Rod of Office" can be seen at the house of my friend, Mr. Joseph Bonnici Mallia, L.C., in Tower Road, Sliema).

In 1466, under King John II, brother of King Alphonse, and King of Navarre besides being King of Aragon and Sicily (1458-1479), a tax was imposed for the same purpose called "Il-Mahe res" or 'Guards' dues' on all slaughtered animals, called "il diritto del Mandarano", while all farmers had to give away some grain for every cow they made use of in their work.

(In fairness' sake, one must add that the said Don Gon- salvo Monroy on his death bed on 10th April, 1429 ordered that the remaining 10,000 gold florins be pardoned, and that of the 20,000 duly paid, half of them be given to the poor of both Islands and the other half be spent in strengthening the fortifications of Notabile, Borgo and the Citadel of Gozo).

(7) that at the time of the Commune or Popular Council of
so-called "Universiti" at Notabile, at Gozo and at Vittoriosa-Valletta, each "Hakem" or Governor thereof was entitled to 300 "skudi" per year (as per decree of the 13th January, 1647) and 18 "skudi" yearly allowance for residence, one lamb out of every ten born ones (as per decree of the 18th April, 1637), six "skudi" per year from every wineshop, one "skud" yearly from every farmer using a cow or ox for ploughing his fields, a measure of corn and some straw from all those who had a horse, a tax of 4 cents 2 mili on all court fines (as per the "Manoel Code" of 1723), and that his Lieutenant enjoyed a salary of 100 "skudi" per annum. As an example to show that the "Universities" continued to enjoy the power to collect taxes during the time of the Order is that which the University of Mdina imposed on 21st September, 1567 when it was ordered that a tax of six "irrigisti" (or 4 cents 2 mili) be levied on every measure of imported grain and on every "habba" (or 1/3 mil) on every 4 gallon wine, the accrued money to be employed in helping the building of Valletta:

(8) that at the time of the Sovereign Military Order of St. John, regulations or "Prammatiche" were issued by:

(a) Italian Grand Master Fra Gregory Carafa (1680-1690) on the 12th September, 1680, embodying the rights and duties of public officials, common forms of crimes, requisites for contracts of purchase and sale of moveables and immovables, court proceedings, and the sources of revenue, as the old taxes on grain — although then forming the chief concern of the Jurats, until the establishment of the said Popular Council was finally done away with by the English Governor Lieutenant-General Sir Thomas Maitland, G.C.B., 1813-1824, through Proclamation of the 30th December, 1818, and who consequently ordered its free trade as from the 24th January, 1822 — and salt, the special one "sisa" upon imported wine, those begun in 1673, (under Spanish Grand Master Fra Nicholas Cotoner,
1663-1680, who had felt the necessity of a radical reform in legislation and had appointed a commission for this purpose, but death called him before the statutes were completed, and which were then issued, as just said, by his immediate successor Grand Master Carafa), on tobacco, soap, leather, paper and coffee, which were imposed to provide money for the running of the coastal watch-towers, and the excise duty on the catching of tuna fish.

(By the way, may I be allowed to say here that Grand Master Fra Nicholas Cotoner is best remembered for the setting-up of the School of Medicine and Anatomy on 19th December, 1676 and the first Medical Botanical Gardens in the ditch of Fort St. Elmo in Valletta in 1674 through the excellent services of that famous Maltese medical man and eminent botanist Fra Joseph Zammit, M.A., M.D., 1646-1740, a Chaplain of Obedience in the Order of St. John and Medical Superintendent, or “Protopedico”, of the Order’s hospital or “Sacra Infermeria” at Valletta. He hailed from Bajza, hence the marble slab in his memory at the choir of the Parish Church thereof, and pictures of him are to be found at the Royal University, Valletta and at St. Luke’s Hospital, Gwardamanga).

Grand Master Carafa built in 1686 the first Customs safe wharf under Lascaris Barracks in the place formerly occupied by the Order’s fruit garden, and where incoming vessels could take refuge from tempests “Tutum hoc cymbarum refugium procellis erigendum curavit MDCLXXXVI”, which wharf was again re-arranged and much prolonged by the Portuguese Grand Master Fra Don Anton Manoel de Vilhena (1722-1736), who also constructed a store-house with marble oil-vats with a total capacity of 80,000 “caffisi” (or, at 4) gallons each “caffiso” amount to 360,000 gallons and at 4,546 litres each gallon are equal to 1,636,560 litres), on the other side of the road beneath Floriani’s Lines, as per Acts of Notary Gaspard Dominic Chircop of the 29th July, 1727 and again by his co-national Grand Master Fra Don Emmanuel Pinto de Fonçeça (1741-1773), who likewise constructed near said oil store-house a chapel, which on its façade had the bronze image of Christ now on the façade of St. John’s Co-Cathedral, and the extensive bonded stores, consisting of nineteen large depots, on land belonging to the “Monte delle Redenzione degli Schiavi” — Bank for the Ransoming of Slaves, and which stores still bear his name.

(b) The said Grand Master De Vilhena, who ordered that the statutes of former Grand Masters be reformed, those superfluous abrogated, new necessary ones enacted, and all of them incorporated into a statutory book, the “Manuel Code”, which was duly promulgated in Valletta on the 15th November, in Notabile on the 6th and in Gozo on the 12th December, 1723. These laws deal with public, civil, criminal, judicial, police and commercial regulations, which were all somewhat mitigated by this benevolent Grand Master with the exception of those enjoyed by the local authorities to avoid unnecessary friction. He also undertook the building of several public places all over both Islands — hence the inscription on his famous, black, bronze-marble mausoleum made in 1729 by the Florentine sculptor Maximillan de Soldanis Benzi (1658-1740) in the chapel of Castile, Leon and Portugal at St. John’s Church: “Quod ubi gressum in his insulis sistes, pietatis ejus, munificentiae, securitatis, amoenitatis monumenta ibi invenies” — wherever you go and stop in these Islands, there you will find monuments showing his kindness, generosity, defensive security ideas and general well-being sentiments — and even saw to the lowering of the selling prices of most of the provisions;
(c) and lastly the French Grand Master Fra Emmanuel Marie de Rohan Polduc (1775-1797), who remained remembered for granting to the dear district of Zebbug, Malta, the title of "Città De Rohan" on 21st June, 1777 after formal request by the then Parish Priest Very Reverend Felix Borg (1762-1801) from Zabbar and the two Zebbug brothers Paschal, created Baron of "Buleben" by this same Grand Master one month after on 23rd July, 1777 and the Very Reverend Justus, S.Thr.D., Auditor of the local Holy Inquisition, (there are pictures of them both at this Parish Church sacristy), hence the large gateway "Porta De Rohan" leading to this district and for causing most of the previous laws to be amended, re-enacted and embodied into his "Diritto Municipale di Malta" of 1784, therefore also called "De Rohan Code", wherein he organized the administration of justice, put an end to the abuses of the judges and other officers and re-modelled police and customs laws; and who also on the 27th July, 1776 inaugurated the present monumental CUSTOM HOUSE at the Marina, which had been planned under the said Grand Master Pinto, well remembered, incidentally, for graciously granting to Qormi the title of city "Città Pinto" on 2nd May, 1743 also after formal demand by the then Parish Priest of that district, Very Reverend Joseph Vella, S.Th.D., J.U.D. (15.11.1733-29.9.1776) from Valletta (there is a picture of him at the Museum attached to his Parish Church), and who was later while still at Qormi appointed Vicar-General (1766-1775) with Bishops Fra Bartholomew Rull (1757-1769) and Fra Carmel John Pellerano (1770-1775, 1780), and for completing the statelest Auberge de Castille, begun by the famous architect Donat of the Order Jerome Cassar (1520-1586) from Gudja in 1574 but only finished during his time by architect Dominic Cachia (1710-1790) from Zejtun, (of the Birkirkara Basilica, Collegiate, Parish Church building, 1727-1745, fame) and now appropriately serving as Office
of the Prime Minister, and the BUILDING of said CUSTOM HOUSE in 1774 under his immediate successor the Spanish Fra Don Francis Ximenes de Taxada, 1773-1775, (remembered, by the way, for the so-called "Uprising of the Priests" led by Reverend Cajetan Mannarino, 1733-1814, from Birkirkara but then living at Floriana, on the 8th September, 1775 against his rather harsh rule resulting in being the only Grand Master not to have a monument in St. John's and his picture in the ceiling of Vittoriosa Conventual Collegiate Parish Church, naturally not even of the last one in Malta the German Fra Ferdinand von Hornesch, 1797-1799-1805, who did not die here), but completed and finished at De Rohan's expense during the first year of his reign per Donat architect Joseph Bonnici (1707-1775), and who also appointed Count Augustine Formosa de Fremaux as its Superintendent of Revenue or "Vestigalibus Praefecto" on same date of the 27th July, 1776, as her marble slab on the wall at the third landing of the main stairs there.

(The original marble slab on the door leading to the so-called long room was broken in several pieces when the Custom House was damaged during World War II, hence the new slab; of the former only three small parts forming about one-fifth of the whole were found in the debris and are still preserved at the Department store-room under the Lift arcade, where is also to be found a very fine, multicoloured, in-laid, thick-marble slab with the Coat-of-Arms bearing the closed royal crown of this Grand Master, most curiously prepared on the back of a slab which formerly exhibited an illated inscription saying: "Ad Futuram Re Memoriam" of the "Non Gode l'Immunità Ecclesiastica" at St. Anne's chapel in the Castle as per order of Pope Clement XII, 1730-1740, given on 13th August and promulgated by Archbishop-Bishop Fra Paul Alpharan de Bussan, 1728-1757, on 16th September, 1735, now in two pieces and which is reputed to have been fixed near the above larger one on the wall of the fifth and upmost landing facing the main stairs by the door of the long room).

It has also been surmised that the sea-looking façade of the Custom House was originally decorated by the Coat-of-Arms in stone of the same Grand Master De Rohan — thought to have been obliterated along with many others all over the Islands by Napoleon — with two mermaids on its sides supporting the large frieze above them and the bases for which are still in place — believed to have been destroyed by falling through some strong wintry North East wind — as was the custom of monumental buildings of that epoch, say, like its architect's master John Barbara's Sicilian or Spanish style Archbishop's Seminary at Mdina, though finished in 1740 that is 10 years after his death, with its two huge caryatids holding the balcony on its front elevation. The painting, however, in the Comptroller of Customs' room does not represent this Grand Master but the equally famous Pinto.

With the coming of the English and the abolishment of the "Università dei Graniti", as just said, the Customs (and Port) Department was augmented but continued to stay ever since in the same edifice at the Marina, Valletta.

(a) On the 18th May, 1840 with the enactment of Ordinance No. VI of that year by Governor Major-General Sir Henry Frederick Bouverie, G.C.M.G., K.C.B. (1836-1843), a new "law for regulating the collection of the duties on imports" was established, while most of the other provisions of the "De Rohan Code" were amended and embodied in the "Criminal Code" of 1854:

May I here add for historical purposes that the Jordan lighthouse in Gozo, so named after the hill on which it was built past the village of Ghasri — while the hill itself had been in turn so-called after the Knight of the Langue of Auvergne Fra Henry de Gourdan who had a small beacon installed up there on it as early as 1667 — and which sheds its directing light for miles out on the sea in aid of ships
coming from the West, was built during the Governorship of Major-General Sir William Reid, G.C.M.G., K.C.B. (1851-1858) and inaugurated provisionally on 15th March, 1853 and permanently on 11th October, 1857. Its masonry structure was somewhat copied from the famous one at Alexandria Harbour, Egypt, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, which was copied even in many Mohammedan minarets as, say, in the one at the Ascension Mosque on the Mount of Olives, Palestine. Though it used either ordinary petroleum lamps (21 of them) or at best gas-mantle ones with silver reflectors, yet its light was visible from a distance of 24 miles; this notwithstanding, on 1st August 1963 one big electric light lamp, made by the French Firm Barbier Bernard et Turenne of Paris, with a light intensity of 895,000 candles and visible from a distance of 32 miles, began to be used. Jordan lighthouse is 69 feet high and is 592 feet above sea-level.

The Delimara (Dejr l-I'mara) lighthouse at Malta was commenced to be built a little earlier in 1850 during the Governorship of the Right Honourable Richard More O’Ferrall (1847-1851), who had also, incidentally, reformed the Custom House Regulations and increased the number of watchmen, but was completed after the Gozitan one in 1855, and is only 151 feet above the level of the sea, it employs to this day its ancient, hand-wound, clock-work mechanism to provide the motive power: a ton weight hung, pendulum-fashion, revolves a petroleum burning lamp every four minutes. Originally it exposed a fixed red light, but in 1896 at the time of the English Collector of Customs Mearable it was adjusted to show an alternating red and white flash every 30 seconds visible 15 miles away under normal conditions, its arc of visibility being 19° to 295° and is likewise very useful for vessels approaching our Island from the opposite East or South-East direction.

During the time of office of Governor the General Sir John Gaspard Le Marchant, G.C.M.G. (1858-1864) the Customs iron sheds Nos. 2 and 3 and the so-called potatoe one at the Marsa were erected and a new set of grain stores or ‘fosse’ were excavated at Floriana in 1861, while in 1858 he had also provided Pinto Bonded Stores with two sets of large, heavy, inoxidable metal, dumpy, cylindrical, grain-measuring vessels of one bushel and half-bushel each, two large, lipped, copper, grain measures, as well as some large, lever-balances or so-called “Roman” steelyards or in Maltese “stasija” with an accompanying collection of very heavy weights, all still extant and, with the exception of the weights, all in very good condition and are now preserved at said stores-annexe under Crucifix Hill, where is also to be found in an adjoining room a very sensitive, “Avery”, rather large balance. Another two, old, conical corn measures of the period are preserved at the Comptroller of Customs’ office, while a similar one is at the Port Department, all said equipment was acquired during the time of Collector of Customs Mr. John Vella, created C.M.G. in 1868. A large balance, weighing nearly 4 cwt, and constructed to weigh from 1 cwt but astonishingly sensitive up to 1 drachma or one-eighth oz. was made in 1876 by the famous Mr. Michael-Angel Sapiano (1825-1912) from Luqa, during the time of Collector of Customs Sir Ferdinand Vincent Inglott, G.C.M.G. (1820, 1870-1886, 1893) from Vittoriosa, and collocated on a specially built, stone base at Pinto Bonded Stores and is now, with only its pointer or indicator dislocated, in the store-room annexe to them, while a rather long, black, lever-balance, also still existing at same annexe, was purposely bought for use in weighing boats taking part in the annual National Regatta races, indeed in the atrium of the Custom House the large one and the two small, ring, chain holders and accompanying hooks for the purpose are still visible in place at the ceiling and opposite entrance-doors side walls thereof.
I think that I may be allowed to add that:
(A) the Collectors/Comptrollers of Customs, besides
 those mentioned in this study and the earlier ones at the
time of the Order as say
Count Jurat John Anthony Cliantar (1696, 1721-1727, 1778).
Baron Publius Sceberras Testaferrata (1727-1760),
Noble “dei Duchi” Don Verano Saverio Crispo (1760-1768).
Noble Paul Grognet (1768-1769),
Noble George Grognet (1769-1776) and the already
mentioned
Count Augustine Formosa de Fremaux from 1776.
were the following gentlemen during our century:
1. Mr. John Marrable (1799-1909).
2. Mr. Lawrence Gatt (1909-1913).
4. Mr. James Turner (1927-1933).
   (with Assistant Mr. Edgar Sammut, when the post of
   Assistant-Comptroller was created).
5. Mr. Edgar Sammut (1933-1938).
   (with Assistant Mr. F.I. Petrocchiino).
   (with Assistant Mr. Frank Agius).
   (with Assistants successively
   Mr. Saviour Cremona and
   Mr. Walter J. Caruana).
   (with Assistants concurrently
   Mr. Walter J. Caruana and
   Mr. Joseph Farrugia.
   and subsequently the latter
   until he was promoted Treasurer and
   Mr. Augustine Laurenti).
   since 1961 and later promoted Financial Secretary,
   (with Assistants concurrently
   Mr. Augustine Laurenti and
   Mr. Joseph Attard).
10. Mr. Augustine Laurenti (1967-1970), subsequently promoted
    Secretary to Ministry of Development,
    (with Assistants concurrently
    Mr. Joseph Attard and
    Mr. Henry J. Bellizzi).
11. Mr. Joseph Attard
    (with Assistants concurrently
    Mr. Henry J. Bellizzi and
    Mr. Carmel Vella, who was later
    seconded as Acting Secretary
    in Public Service Commission, and
    (with Assistant Mr. John Scicluna, D.P.A.).
(B) The extensive Customs sheds known as “Mifsud
Verandahs” at Marsa, incorporating Nos. 2 and 3 iron sheds
and where the New Port section had been extended in 1866
during the Governorship of Lieutenant-General Sir Henry
Storke, G.C.B., G.C.M.G. (1864-1867), were built during
the time of the former Minister of Industry and Commerce
and then Prime Minister Sir Ugo P. Mifsud, Kt., L.L.D.,
B.Litt. (1889-1942), hence their name, and inaugurated in
December 1925 by Governor the General Sir Walter Norris
Cungrege, V.C., K.C.B., M.V.O., A.D.C. (1924-1927), as
recorded on label thereon.
(C) The Customs House was provided with a fully fledged
Laboratory at the mezzanine looking on the harbour since
1929 — previously some elementary testing work was car-
ried out by the Customs Officers of the Landing and Ware-
housing Branch at the Wet Section of Pinto Bonded Stores.
During the last war years when the central part of the
Custom House was severely damaged and partly destroyed,
the Laboratory and the Shipping Office — then situated at
the ground floor apartment directly under the Laboratory
and managed by the late Mr. Frank Casolani assisted by
Mr. Edward Kerri — were the only sections of the Customs
Head Office, and as worthy representatives thereof, which
remained at the Marina and the Laboratory had then to
use the small, wooden, spiral stairs entered at from the
small side door opposite the public convenience and since
walled-up; all the other sections were allocated at a large
house in Old Bakery Street, Valletta.
But on 20th May, 1966 the Laboratory was transferred to
the top floor of the opposite building across the main road
formerly occupied by the Port Manager and his staff, while
the Shipping Office was allocated at the lower floor in the
same building. The Analysts, Senior Analyst and their
Assistants were the following:

1. Mr. Joseph E. Serge, Ph.C. (1929-1930).
   His Assistant was Mr. Louis Micaleff, Customs Officer.

2. Mr. Anonie Merguerat, Ph.C. (1930-1945).
   His Assistants were Mr. Saviour Said, Customs Officer, later promoted Rationing and Essential Supplies Officer, and concurrently Mr. Edward Refalo, Ph.C. and subsequently Mr. Carmel Vassallo, Ph.C. since 1944.

   His Assistants as Junior-Analysis were Mr. Joseph Borg, Ph.C., L.P., since 1946 and, when Mr. Borg was seconded as Assistant to the Scientific Adviser with the then Department of Trade and Industry, Mr. Albert Zarb Cousin, B.Pharm., and later Miss Mary Mintoff, B.Pharm.

4. Chevalier Joseph Borg, K.M., Ph.C., L.P., F.R.S.H., F.Inst.Pet. since 1960, whose post was given the rank of Senior-Analyst in 1968. His Assistants consecutively were:
   - Miss Mary Mintoff, B.Pharm., Mr. Victor Sciberras, B.Pharm., both as Junior-Analysis.
   - Miss Edith Borg, A.M.R.S.H., as Assistant-Apothecary and Clerk.
   - Mr. John Sammut, B.Sc., M.Sc., and since 17th February, 1969 Mr. Victor Herbert Sammut, B.Sc., M.R.S.H., both as Analysts.

(b) Ordinance No. VI of 1840 was, however, replaced by "The Import Duties Ordinance — No. III issued on 2nd March, 1917 by Governor Field Marshal Paul Sanford Lord Methuen, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O. (1915-1919) 'to regulate and revise the duties on imports'.

(c) which was in turn amended by Proclamation No. VII of 31st March and re-issued the day after on 1st April, 1934 by Governor the General Sir David G.M. Campbell, K.C.B., A.D.C. (1931-1936) as 'The Import and Export Duties Ordinance' — No. XVIII of that year, and later formed 'Chapter 122 of the Revised Edition of the Laws of Malta', but since repealed and replaced by the "Import Duties Act" of 1964.

Separate provisions for the smooth running of the Customs (and Port) Department were also issued parallelly to these three Ordinances, as say those already alluded to by Governor O'Ferrall who had also, incidentally, issued
Prime Minister on Wednesday 10th March, 1971, it was jointly agreed to provide for reciprocal tariff concessions divided in two phases of five years each, during the first phase of which Malta would benefit from a 70% reduction in duties in the then six receiving countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands) now nine (on the inclusion of England, Denmark and Ireland) on all items of merchandise exported, except on agricultural produce, petroleum products and some textile articles, as well as the removal in her favour of all quotas, while Malta conceded in return a 35% Customs duty deduction, divided as 15% accorded as from 1st April, 1971, by a further 10% given as from 1st April 1973 and by a still reduction of 10% as from 1st April, 1975, on all articles imported from them, excepting some items as petroleum products, beverages, spirits, saccharin tablets, grape must, etc.; while during the second stage all Customs Tariffs between both sectors to the agreement are to be removed and that Malta will adopt their common tariff as regards merchandise imported from third parties, hence the final arrangement and reprinting of the “Malta Customs Tariff” carrying the inclusion of the fourth, fifth and sixth duty columns made in pursuance and for the purposes of subsections (3) and (4) of Section 4 of said Import Duties Act 1964 and reprinted under the authority of Section 25 thereof, made by Government Notice No. 270 of 31st March, 1971 through the same Sir Maurice, then Governor-General and presented by the then Minister of Finance, Customs and Port, the Honourable Dr. Giovanni Felice, LL.D., M.P. (Incidentally, some sorts of agreement were made by said European Community with fifty states scattered all over the world, and these include similar Association Agreements to ours with 27 countries: Turkey, Greece, Cyprus, Morocco and Tunisia and 22 African nations which have particular relations to European states; besides special trade privileges with other 9 European and 13 further countries: Egypt, Israel and Lebanon in the Eastern Mediterranean, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and the Philippines in Asia as well as Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay in South America). During the tenure of office of the present Minister responsible for the Customs Department, together with Finance and Port, the Honourable Dr. Joseph Abela, LL.D., M.P., some amendments were made to this Import Duties Act 1964, as those removing or reducing the duties on articles required for industrial purposes or for agricultural use (viz. Act No. XLII of 3rd October, 1972, Act No. VIII of 16th February, 1973 and Act No. XXIII of 4th July, 1973) or increasing those on wines, spirits and tobacco (Act No. XXVIII of 1974) and assented to by our present first Maltese Governor-General Sir Anthony Joseph Mamo, Kt., O.B.E., K.S.J., O.C., LL.D., B.A.

I am indebted to Mr. Henry J. Bellizzi, the Comptroller of Customs, for his co-operation and help in the compiling of this paper.

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LIBERTY AND MORALITY

Marx and the Scholastic Approach

By S. Busuttil, Ph.L. (Greg.), Ph.D. (Ang.), Ph.D. (Econ.) (March.)

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WHAT DID MARX THINK OF HUMAN Liberty?

The answer is not easy to come by, and in the course of the years different but not completely satisfactory answers have been given. I will not attempt here to say the last word on the problem, but I will try to trace, in brief, the main lines of Marx's thought on this point.

If we consider Marx's thought as a theory, we are led to conclude that the actions of man are historically determined. As such, from a theoretical viewpoint, one is compelled to say that excluded human liberty.

But Marx's thought is, above all, directed to action, to "Praxis." And the theory is intended, I think, as a useful analytical instrument to help in the realization of that Praxis. In the latter sense, it would seem that the Marxian theory of society is proposed as an ideal form of liberty for man.

But how are we to reconcile historic determinism, through economic forces arising out of matter, with the liberty of man?

Jean-Yves Calvez writes: "Si les rapports de production et les infrastructures sont déterminés par les forces de production, faut-il dire que le mouvement entraîne automatiquement la révolution et crée même, par conséquent, une volonté humaine apte à décider et à faire la révolution, ou bien faut-il dire que la détermination est moins stricte et que l'homme, en prenant un certain recul par rapport au développement des forces productives et des rapports sociaux, est capable de prendre la libre décision et de se donner la tâche de transformer la société devenue inhumaine?"

"La dialectique immanente au devenir des forces de pro-