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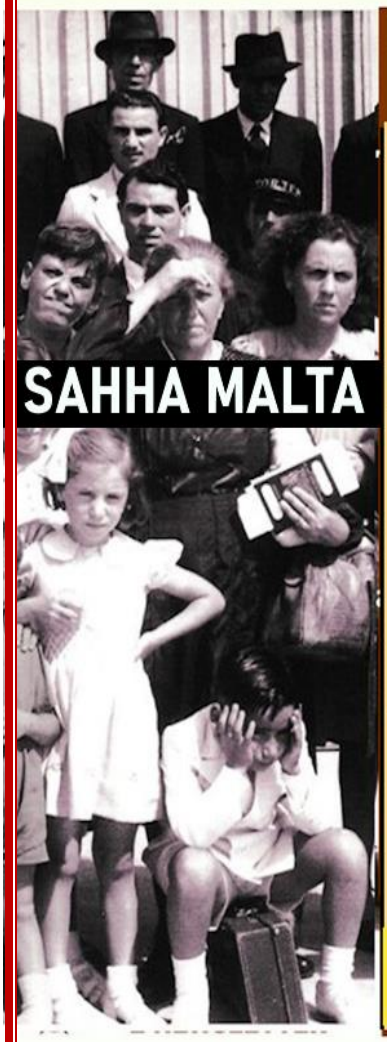

HISTORY OF MALTESE EMIGRATION

They left Malta and Gozo and their families and friends to seek a better future for themselves and their children. Now, many of them passed away and we remember their sorrow, tears and sacrifices to settle in far away countries like Australia, Canada, USA and UK. THEY ARE OUR **HEROES**

HER NANNA JUST TOLD HER SHE IS MALTESE

IL-ĦAĠAR
HEART OF GOZO

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How to make Maltese Cheese -Gbejniet-

Independence Day

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT SEAN RICHARDSON-NSW

Like all things in Malta, gaining independence from Britain was a hard fought and controversial path. Within Malta and in Britain, the differing views were debated over many years, till Malta formally gained independence on September 21, 1964.

60 years ago Malta became a sovereign nation within the Commonwealth, with Queen Elizabeth II remaining as the head of state. This year, 2024, is also a 50 year anniversary in Malta's path of nationhood towards carving its own place on the international stage. Ten years after Malta achieved independence it became a **republic**, in December 1974 having its first president and replacing the Queen as head of state.

Malta's strategic importance, underlined during the Second World War, coupled with the island's stern resistance against the Nazis and Fascist Italians was acknowledged by the British. The King gave the people of Malta the George Cross and raised the prospect of giving the Maltese people independence. Limited local rule was given in 1947 but considering its economic dependence on Britain, independence became a distant prospect even when the push for independence formed in the 1950s. Sir Herbert Brittain of the British Treasury remarked in mid-1955 that Malta could '*never be given Commonwealth status, because of defence considerations*'. The British government was hesitant to grant full integration, leading to frustration among Maltese leaders and citizens. Malta even flirted with the idea of integration with the UK in the 1956 referendum. After the failure of the referendum the focus again shifted towards full independence.

Independence was seen by the Maltese as an opportunity to assert their national identity, culture, and heritage. While there was a general sense of hope, there were also feelings of apprehension and uncertainty. Malta faced economic challenges and had limited natural resources, leading some to worry about the nation's economic future.

The turning point came in 1961, when a new constitution was drafted granting Malta full internal self-government, setting the stage for subsequent negotiations for complete independence. This was still not a certain pathway. Within the population frustrations built and there arose an anti-British and pro-Independence sentiment.

Malta's independence was granted through a series of political and constitutional developments, culminating in formal negotiations between Maltese leaders and the British government till the Independence referendum was held in May 1964. The referendum was successful and opened the way for a new constitution to be enacted. It provided for a parliamentary democracy with the British monarch as the head of state, represented in Malta by a Governor-General.

Malta formally gained independence on September 21, 1964. The transition was peaceful and marked by official ceremonies. A large celebration was held, with the lowering of the Union Jack and the raising of the Maltese flag.

The next step along the pathway to full autonomy via a republic began. Another momentous decision awaited the country and of course there were political differences within Malta and scepticism in Britain.

Writing at the beginning of 1965, Britain's high commissioner in Malta, Sir Edward Wakefield, recorded: '*For the moment … the change from dependence to independence appears to have been one of form rather than of substance. Before*

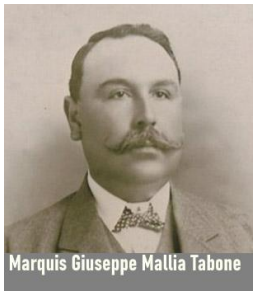
independence the Maltese were managing – or mismanaging – their own internal affairs. They are still doing so. Before independence their economy was sustained by British Services' expenditure in the island, coupled with British financial aid. It is still being sustained by the same means'.

It would take ten years till Malta's first President, Sir Anthony Mamo, was installed. Mamo having been the last Governor General, on December 13, 1974, helped make the transition a relatively smooth affair.

With 2024 marking the 50- and 60-year anniversaries, it should be remembered that Malta's independence was a significant and complex moment in its history, marked by a blend of hope, pride, and uncertainty.

The island nation further developed its own political and cultural identity, through becoming a republic and navigating its place on the international stage to later become a European Union members state.

This is the fifth article in a series of significant anniversaries marking Malta's pathway along nationhood. Other articles can be found in earlier editions of the Malta Journal or at seanrichardson.com.au, where Sean writes about Malta.


Marquis Giuseppe Mallia Tabone

IR-RAZZETT TAL-MARKIS – MOSTA

One true Maltese gem was founded in Mosta by a group of old enthusiasts in 1983 called the Ghaqda Filantropika Talent Mosti at the Razzett tal-Markiz Mallia Tabone. The founders have been sharing the same talents and unique interest in the theatrical arts and other creative activities over the decades.

Their undying love for the theatrical arts is exuded in each individual talent in various areas where they wholeheartedly contributed in many successful stage plays, dramatic and comical and folklore video recordings as well as religious pageants. They also have unselfishly shared their talents with the young and old alike and drama courses have been conducted for the enthusiasts.

Since the Ghaqda Filantropika Talent Mosti was allocated for this group of talented Mostin, many art and craft exhibitions and other related activities from literature, poetry readings and folklore to music and many more events have taken place at the Razzett tal-Markiz.

The people of Malta are truly proud of the Razzett tal-Markiz as it does not only give one the golden opportunity to express one's talent but a place to extend and exchange knowledge and to learn from one another. You can follow their activities on the Facebook page.

The Church in Malta and Gozo are launching a Maltese version of the official hymn for the 2025 Jubilee with the theme, 'Pilgrims of Hope'. Next year, the Church and Catholics from around the world are called to be a source of hope, unity and compassion within their communities.

The hymn was originally written in Italian by Prof. Pierangelo Sequeri, with the music composition by Maestro Francesco Meneghello, tackling themes such as creation, fraternity, the goodness of God and hope. The 2025 Jubilee begins officially on Christmas Eve this year and is then celebrated among dioceses all around the world on the 29th of December 2024.

The audio, lyrics and musical scores of the hymn for the 2025 Jubilee in Maltese can be found on the official website: iubilaeum2025.va.