



NERIK MIZZI, THE FORMATIVE YEARS. ANDREW P. VELLA MEMORIAL LECTURE, MUHS, AULA MAGNA, VALLETTA, 6TH FEBRUARY 2009 - HENRY FREUDO (MALTA, 2009).

Henry Freudo's latest publication is a pamphlet about the Nationalist politician, Neri Mizzi, and focuses on the period during which Mizzi was receiving his education. A period he refers to as 'the formative years'. This publication comes about at a particular time when the teaching of history is being put into question in Malta. For the past few years, teachers of history have been hearing rumours that the time allocated for their lessons will have to be reduced to allow for the teaching of other new subjects. Besides, they are also confronted with the daily frustration of working in an environment lacking resources and for the first three forms of the secondary education, they have to use the same main history textbook that has been in use for about three decades.

Reading Freudo's paper, the current situation about the teaching of history cannot escape one's mind and one begins to seriously think whether we, in Malta, are destined to remain in a state of a permanent revolution since our educational system undergoes a major overhaul every twenty years.

Mizzi received his early education at the conservative and austere environment of the Jesuit-run Gozo Seminary, famous, even amongst the Maltese, for its solid educational training. He then moved to Malta, where he continued his secondary education at the renowned Flores College in Valletta which was founded by Salvatore Flores, a 'Christian humanist' and 'a notable educationalist'. For Flores, the educational system should be a challenge for students and education *per se* was a life-long process.

After successfully completing his secondary education, Mizzi entered University, reading a B.A. in Science and the Arts, graduating in 1906. (Unlike today, both subjects were, at the time, considered one area of study). He moved on to Rome where he enrolled at La Sapienza taking up law. In his fourth year, he asked to continue his studies at the renowned Italian University of Urbino where he graduated the following year. All in all, Mizzi spent five years studying in Italy precisely between 1907 and 1912.

Freudo affirms that academically speaking Mizzi, as was the case with Gorg Borg Olivier and Dom

Mintoff, was 'no shining star' but like them, he pulled through by involving himself in extra-curricular activities.

It is of great interest to note that his law dissertation, which Prof. Freudo succeeded in tracing at Urbino, was related to journalism and journalists and his dissertation is still very topical and relevant to this very day. Mizzi's thesis focused on the legal implications of technological change on journalism. Already then he perceived the impact of industrialisation on newsprint and this revolution would lead journalists to start asking for professional fees. This had its consequences on the press: the issue of better salaries brought

spirit, Vanni joined the fray and supported *Italia Liberale's* decision to invade Libya. In his speech, at the opening of the academic year of 1911, Vanni considered such an invasion as a 'guerra di civiltà'.

During this same period, at Urbino, there was Professor Francesco Ercole whose name would become associated with Malta's history. He lectured on 'filosofia del diritto' e 'storia del diritto italiano'. Ercole was described as a kindred spirit and mentor to Mizzi. It is of particular interest to note that Ercole would become an open supporter of the Fascist regime and in 1928 published in Rome a book entitled *Dal Nazionalismo al Fascismo*. His connection with Malta would become tangible in the thirties, when the Fascist regime appointed him president of the *Regia Deputazione per la Storia di Malta*.

Freudo also delves into some of Mizzi's contribution to Italian newspapers. Mizzi's early works show that he tried to reconcile the *'Italia liberale'* with his strong Catholic sentiments. These were the two opposing spirits prevailing in Italy at the turn of the twentieth-century. He defines the Maltese as 'Giobertini nati' borrowing such

reference from the Risorgimento and the famous proposal made by Gioberti for the Pope to be king of a United Italy. For Mizzi, Religion (Catholic) and Language (Italian) intertwined and were inseparable. In this context, Freudo considers Mizzi's concept of Italianità as a traditionalist stance rather than a revolutionary one. There should be no doubt that the learning of history had an important role in the *forma mentis* of this Maltese politician. On reading this pamphlet, I cannot but conclude this review with the same thoughts expressed in the opening paragraph in relation to the current debate about the role of history in our educational system. One concludes that our contemporary education is still being subjected to some sort of ideological zealotry: in the past it was language, now it is the turn of history. In the name of progress, history and culture are being thrown into the dustbin.

In an attempt to understand the academic formation received by this Maltese politician, Freudo goes on to discuss Mizzi's professors. In 1911, the Rector of Urbino University was Professor Antonio Vanni, described by Freudo as 'un'uomo di sentimenti democratici'. Vanni was in favour of the emancipation of the working classes through education. However, as often happens in politics, these democratic sentiments were soon abandoned by the wayside and after Italy was taken over by a strong Nationalist

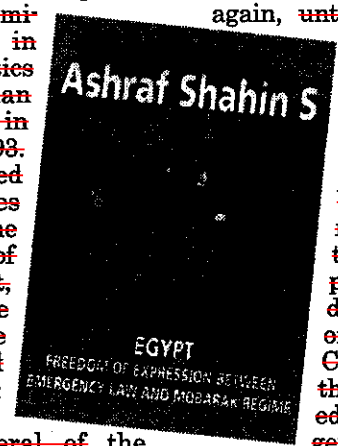
'EGYPT - FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION BETWEEN EMERGENCY LAW AND MOBARAK REGIME' ASHRAF SHAHIN S., (EUROMID) MALTA, 2009; ILLUSTRATED; PP. XX + 233. PRICE €47.

Ashraf Shahin Sallam is an Egyptian writer and legal consultant, a prominent activist in Egyptian politics and Human Rights, living in exile since 1993. He published several articles and books on the political state of affairs in Egypt, and is the author of the political novel *The Moon Lover*. He is secretary general of the Amal Maser Organisation and of the European African Human Rights Organisation. He submitted the present work as part fulfilment of a Master in International Law, with the University of Malta, in September 2008. Today he is reading for a Ph.D. in International Law. The book *Freedom of Expression between Emergency Law and Mobarak Regime* presents a study of the effects of the emergency law on freedom of expression in Egypt and the importance of removing that law because of its conflicts with international treaties which deal with human rights. The book deals in depth with

the "emergency law" which is considered as a tool in the hands of the executive power to storn many basic rights and freedom guaranteed by the Egyptian Constitution. Since the assassination of President Anwar El Sadat in October 1981, the emergency law was renewed and extended many times, again and again, until very lately in 2008 and discusses freedom of expression and the freedom of the press. Shahin gives the background of the modern history of the Egyptian press. He describes the rules of the Egyptian Constitution and the conflicts created by the "emergency law" especially when confronted with the international legal standards of freedom of expression.

In Chapter V, Shahin gives details of, and compares several declarations, treaties, instruments, and conventions which deal with human, civil, and political rights, and concludes with a chapter in which he analyses the impact of the Emergency Law (162/58) on the Egyptian Opposition's newspapers and journalists. Moreover he suggests his recommendations for a possible solution to these conflicts.

This book is being offered for sale from leading bookshops in Malta and Gozo.



Freudo book published in Italy

The University of Urbino in northern Italy has just published an important work by leading Maltese historian Henry Freudo in a special edition of *Studi Urbinati*, which has come out regularly since 1928. Entitled *Colonialismo e nazionalismo nel Mediterraneo - La lotta partitica a Malta durante l'occupazione inglese - tra assimilazione e resistenza*, the book is a cura di Stefano Bruno and carries an introduction by Professor Giuseppe Giliberti, holder of the chair of Foundations of European Law at Urbino, a 500-year-old university of studies in Le Marche named after its famous scholar-rector Carlo Bo. It was from this University that Enrico Mizzi had graduated as a lawyer in 1912.

Colonialismo e nazionalismo is essentially a revised version in Italian of Professor Freudo's earlier work *Party Politics in a Fortress Colony*, the second edition of which has been out of print for a decade. The book is updated to 2008 with a section on post-colonial Malta and *il dopo Mintoff*, as well as a comprehensive bibliography. *Colonialismo e nazionalismo* is being officially launched by Urbino University's rector, Professor Stefano Pivato, himself a modernist historian, and other eminent authors of various nationalities, in the autumn.

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