

Speech on behalf of Löwenbräu

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It is an honour and a pleasure for me to address this seminar for the second year running.

The first Annual Löwenbräu Seminar, which was held in January 1994, was a great success in terms of attendance as well in terms of the quality of the papers presented. The topic covered last year, namely tourism, is of great importance to Gozo, and the seminar, together with the book of proceedings published by the University Gozo Centre, have shed new light on the problems and prospects of this industry.

The theme of this year's seminar is culture, another area of major importance to Gozo. Gozo has its own cultural identity, and the purpose of this seminar is to discuss this identity, with the aim of preserving and enhancing it. The list of topics included in the programme shows that the discussion will touch upon a large variety of topics, including art, archaeology, history, village life, religion, folklore, language, and economic relationships. These aspects of social life have together moulded a unique culture, which though not completely distinct from that of mainland Malta, has its identifiable characteristics

A classical definition of the word culture was given by the renowned English Anthropologist Edward Burnett Taylor, in the introductory chapter of his book written in 1871 entitled *Primitive Cultures*. In this book he gives this definition: "Culture ... is the ensemble of faith, arts, morality and custom and heritage obtained by mankind as a member of the society where he lives."

Going by this definition, this topic should be studied from a wide array of perspectives. The organisers of this seminar were therefore right to include papers on the various aspects of culture. I was particularly pleased to note that one of the papers deals with prehistory, and that

other papers also take a historical angle, because a proper understanding and appreciation of a culture requires the study of the origins of human settlements, and their development during millennia. This in turn would help us understand and appreciate the inheritance that each era contributed to our society.

Culture is not a static occurrence; it evolves and expands in the course of time. It is this evolution that makes a culture unique and different from other cultures. We are meeting today to analyse the Gozitan culture, not only to understand and appreciate it better, but also to suggest ways in which the Gozitan cultural endowments can be passed on to future generations.

We are lucky enough to have inherited a rich cultural patrimony from our forefathers, starting from prehistoric times, covering art, language, religion, and other aspects of human endeavour. We have the duty to preserve this inheritance, and to make sure that we do not destroy this most valuable asset. As H.E. Dr. Ugo Mifsud Bonnici said in the inauguration speech, cultural diversity is very important for humankind, and like bio-diversity, could be a major contributor to the survival of our species.

This seminar is therefore addressing a topic with major implications for society. It is for this reason that as General Manager of Löwenbräu, I feel honoured to be associated with the organisation of this event. The cooperation between the Löwenbräu Brewery, the University and the Ministry for Gozo is a good example of how the public and private sectors can work together to promote scholarly endeavour, with the aim of fostering interest in an area with important policy implications. The Löwenbräu Brewery firmly believes that it has a social role to play and it is this belief that prompted our company to extend our support in this regard. Being one of the leading companies on the Maltese Islands, we feel it is our responsibility to serve as an example to others.

To conclude, I would like to thank the Hon. Minister for Gozo, Mr. Anton Tabone and Prof. Lino Briguglio, who directs the University Gozo Centre, for their involvement in the organisation of this seminar, and for giving our company the opportunity to continue supporting cultural development in our islands.