

RIVISTA 1996

FROM THE STRATEGIES TO THE REFORM

Although the origins of the Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem are lost in the mists of time, the origins of its juridical existence are well defined. By 1099 it had already received recognition and privileges from the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, followed by the "Papal Bull" of Paschal II in 1120, making it independent of the religious and lay authorities in the territory in which it acted. These were the sources of the sovereign powers which the Order of St. John began to wield on Rhodes and later in Malta, establishing an authentic diplomatic service in all the Christian States; hence its defence of Christendom at a time when it was threatened by the infidels.

The Order was a sea power at that time and played an important political role in the Mediterranean theatre. When Napoleon occupied the island of Malta in 1798, which was then handed over to Great Britain in 1800, the Order moved to Messina, Catania and Ferrara before finally settling in Rome. It still claimed Maltese sovereignty and participated with its delegates of diplomatic rank in the congresses held in the early 19th century in Amiens, Paris, Aix-la-Chapelle and Verona, up to the one in Vienna. Diplomatic relations, especially those with Austria, then the leading Catholic power, continued despite the loss of the Maltese island, until they reached the present 72 diplomatic missions. The diplomatic immunity and privileges which the Order now enjoys world-wide are naturally at the service of its humanitarian aims, pursued wherever hospital assistance is required and during wars or natural disaster. Internationalist doctrine compares the Order's position to that of the Holy See, albeit on the level of abstract legal principles and not with regards to its effective political and diplomatic weight.

Hence its diplomatic recognition, the result of centuries-old relations with Catholic States. But it is interesting to see that today even non-Catholic States, such as Egypt, Morocco and Thailand, or Marxist ones such as Cuba, maintain relations with the Order on diplomatic levels.

In this long journey it is noticeable, as I like to point out, that the exercise of sovereign prerogatives has always been linked to its hospital service and military action in defence of the faith, and that these goals represent a constant in the sources of the Order's legal system, from the time of the Regula of 1145 to its present Constitutions. The revisions of

the Regula are incorporated in the Code de Rohan, forming the basis of the Constitutional Charter of 1961, still in force.



A sinistra in alto, Sua Altezza Eminentissima, Fra' Angelo de Mojana, 77° Principe e Gran Maestro, deceduto il 18 gennaio 1988, promotore del Programma Future Strategie dell'Ordine.

Al centro, Roma. Villa Magistrale. I Membri del Consiglio Compito di Stato si recano in processione alla Sala del Consiglio per procedere all'elezione del Principe e Gran Maestro, Fra' Andrew Bertie, avvenuta l'8 aprile 1988.

A destra, S.A.Em.ma Fra' Andrew Bertie insieme con il Gran Cancelliere Amb. Conte Don Carlo Marullo di Condojanni, durante l'Udienza per gli auguri del Corpo Diplomatico presso l'Ordine, il 14 gennaio 2000.

Rome. Magistral Villa on the Aventine Hill. H.M.E.H. the Prince and Grand Master, Frà Andrew Bertie, during the solemn audience for the Diplomatic Corps to give their greeting.

In basso, Roma. Palazzo Magistrale. I membri capitolari, provenienti da ogni parte del mondo, durante una delle sedute del Capitolo Generale; vi hanno preso parte i Cavalieri di Giustizia e i responsabili degli Organismi Nazionali dell'Ordine.

Rome. Magistral Palace. Capitular members from all over the world during one of the sessions of the Chapter General; Knights of Justice and heads of the Order's National bodies were present.

In 1987, Grand Master de Mojana was far-sighted enough to welcome the idea put forward by many presidents of the Order's national associations for organising a seminar, which took place - the Grand Master having died in the meantime - on 2, 3 and 4 December 1988 in Magliana Castle in Rome. It was inaugurated by his successor, the present Grand Master Fra' Andrew Bertie, who has given constant encouragement in the pursuit not only of new forms of religious testimonies, but also charitable and welfare ones. The theme of the Rome seminar was the Future Strategies of the Order, and

subsequent meetings continued the work initiated by that now historic occasion, giving birth to six study commissions: Spirituality - Hospital Service and Welfare Activities; Civil Defence and First Aid; International Aid; International Fund Raising; Communications; Emblems - Sponsorship.

After the second seminar, held in Malta in 1993, the Future Strategies became Operational Strategies, mapping out the Order's renewal process in view of the third millennium.

Moreover within the framework of spirituality, the Order is implementing the "Sant'Angelo Fort" project - also a good excuse to return to Malta - for the religious and spiritual preparation of its members with the idea of training the Order's future leadership. This also includes the training and up-dating of the diplomatic corps, indispensable for keeping faith with the commitment made to the international community. Hence many new embassies and missions have been opened in supranational organisations. This will enable not only a correct development of bilateral relations, but also the prospect of serious and concrete work within the context of international co-operation.

At the same time, on the institutional level, many Malta bodies no longer suited to modern situations are being wound up, including the Hospital Studies and Research Institute, AIOM (International Aid), the Medicine Collection Centre, the Paediatric Academy and the Magistral Committee of Heraldic Advisors. Similar steps are also being taken in diplomatic missions; these are all significant signs of a desire for change. In addition, the principle of the participation of the Order's members in its life finds space in the sphere of international fund raising (meetings of presidents in Bonn in 1993 and Warsaw in 1995).

On the communications front, an information network is being developed among the Order's members, and a Communication Board has been established which maintains professional contacts with the mass media, from newspapers to radio and television and from information technology to Internet. In the context of the studies on emblems, the Order's badges and coats-of-arms are being standardised for all its bodies, and especially the operational ones. The Chapter General of 1994 concluded the efforts of the Strategies Programme, enacting the decisions of the Order's second seminar and setting up a commission for the reform of the Constitutional Charter and Code. This commission has examined all the articles linked to the organisational aspects of the Order's life, whereas the same Chapter General has entrusted the revision of the articles concerning the strictly religious part to a second joint commission which is still working on the texts. What seemed simply utopian in 1988 has now become an actual process of institutional reform.

All the Order's members have contributed to this work, not only in the meetings and seminars, but also in the commissions and subcommissions, quietly producing concrete projects, some already completed before schedule. It should not be forgotten that it was the Latin-American meetings and seminars which prepared the ground for what certainly represents the most significant achievement for the third millennium: the Order's admission as Permanent Observer to the United Nations Assembly.

This accomplishment was not only the point of arrival of the Order's humanitarian action world-wide, but above all a political recognition, a necessary point of departure for future actions. It is precisely in contacts with the UN Headquarters that procedures can be speeded up, acting as a sounding board for those humanitarian works which the Order has been carrying out for nine centuries and which, today more than ever, commit it to safeguarding the individual's rights.

Through the UN, the action of the Order's bodies engaged in humanitarian aid will become even more incisive and rapid. In particular ECOM, the International Emergency

Corps, is starting to become a very efficient operational tool, which can also be put at the disposal of the United Nations for those sectors where it has specific skills.

The author had the honour not only of organising the first seminar, desired by the heads of the Orders national and international bodies, but also that of participating in the Chapter Generals of 1989 and 1994, of signing the agreement granting the Sant'Angelo Fort, and of opening in Miami, Florida the Co-ordination Centre for Aid to America, of chairing the first commission for the reform of the Constitutional Charter and Code, concluding the work on the strategies in the second seminar in Malta, with the papers presented to the Chapter General of 1994.

All this in line with the Latin-American meetings, which have also been important for creating a favourable climate for international diplomacy in the American continent, helping to achieve the Order's recognition in the United Nations. With humility therefore, but with the awareness inherent in the institutional tasks I have carried out to date, I consider it necessary on the eve of the Chapter General of 1997 to draw the attention of all my confreres to the fact that delicate political and institutional problems have to be addressed. The Order's ability to keep pace with the great transformations heralded for the new millennium will largely depend on the solution of these problems. The Order must therefore also adjust its governmental structures to this new scenario.

The reform of the constitutional documents of States and bodies is always the laborious result of a delicate compromise between the substantial needs of different components. The reform of the Constitutional Charter and of the Code is based on two principles: that of the need to adapt to the norms of the new Code of Canon Law, and that, as said earlier, of tackling the new needs of the modern world, on the level of values and on that of organisation. This must be done in perfect understanding with the Holy See, which has the institutional duty of supervising the regulations of religious orders. The two commissions, which have worked on the new constitutional texts, have based their efforts on these principles. The texts they have produced, included in the final proposal to be submitted, as said before, to the Extraordinary Chapter General of 1997, represent the base of discussion for the political compromise which has to be reached during the same Chapter between the Order's two major components: the religious and the lay. The hope is that we will arrive at the Extraordinary Chapter General with a broad consensus, enabling a strong and decisive reform; a consensus which must be sought over and above any constraints, to avoid any possibilities of fracture or stubbornness which could affect the effective application of the new regulations.

Each Chapter member will certainly be free to propose amendments or suggest additions to the agenda of subjects concerning the Order's constitutional documents. It will be the force of free, individual conviction which determines the final document, certainly inspired by tradition, but following the changing times, imposing new ideas for the Order's humanitarian character as well as its nobiliary and charitable-welfare one.

This must be done without upsetting its charisma and without being tempted by dangerous adventures which could find internal consensus, but which could also make the Order go down in world opinion; an Order which is historically religious, lay, nobiliary, hospitaller and military. The amendments to the Constitutional Charter and Code are an important milestone along the road towards the third millennium, seen as a greater participation of members in their Order's religious life, whose structure needs considerable support on the worldly level; support also relating to the political-diplomatic sphere with particular reference to its nature as a Sovereign State.

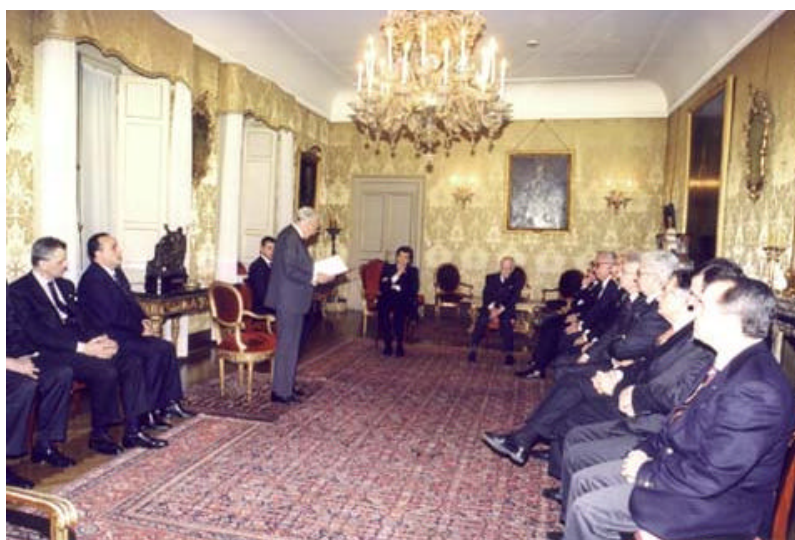
May the Holy Virgin of Fileremo and St. John the Baptist inspire all the Chapter as it pursues its work of institutional renewal, a necessary premise for those organisational adjustments in the Order's life, indispensable for the years to come and for the human situations on which it has to act, under the enlightened leadership and exemplary testimony of H.M.E.H. the Prince and Grand Master.

SOVRANO MILITARE OSPEDALIERO
DI SAN GIOVANNI DI GERUSALEMME
DE IOTA E DI MALTA

RUOLO GENERALE
1997



Palazzo Malin - Via Condotti, 40 - 00187 Roma



Rome, Magistral Palace The members of the Magistral Courts were received in audience by H.M.E.H. the Prince and Grand Master on 14th February for the inauguration of the Order Legal Year. The audience, in the presence of the Sovereign Council, opened with an address by the State Attorney, Prof Francesco Gazzoni.

From the Strategies Programme to the Reform Main events from 1987 to 1996

8-9 October 1987, Sovereign Council, Mandate to the Receiver of the Common Treasure for the Future Strategies Seminar

2-4 September 1988, Future Strategies Seminar Establishment of the six Commissions

7 March 1989, Chapter General

22 October 1989, 1st Meeting Strategies Commission

4 June 1990, 1st Report Work Groups

13 September 1990, Henckel Work Groups Report

16-17 November 1990, First Latin-American Meeting

25 February 1991, First Meeting Communications Delegates

21 June 1991, Sant'Angelo Fort Agreement

12 July 1991, First ECOM (Emergency Corps) Meeting

14 October 1992, Sovereign Council, Establishment Marullo Commission "Constitutional Charter and Code Reform"

26-28 March 1993, Hospitallers' Conference

<i>13 October 1993, Sovereign Council, Submission of Proposed Amendments "Constitutional Charter and Code Reform"</i>
<i>22 November 1993, Establishment Latin-American Standing Committee</i>
<i>10-11 December 1993, Second Strategies Seminar</i>
<i>25-26 April 1994, Chapter General</i>
<i>9 June 1994, Sovereign Council, Joint Legislative Commission "Constitutional Charter and Code Reform"</i>
<i>1994, General Inventory of the Order's Goods</i>
<i>24 August 1994, The Order's Admission to the United Nations</i>
<i>23 June 1995, Establishment of Communication Board</i>
<i>22 October 1995, the Order participates in the United Nations 50th Anniversary General Assembly</i>
<i>27-29 October 1996, Meeting of "Alliance" Members, St. John Orders</i>



Order's mint silver commemorative coin for the 9th centenary.