

## The French Occupation (1798-1800)

- 1798            Napoleon Bonaparte takes Malta and plunders the islands. The Order of St. John is ordered to leave the island. The Maltese rise up against the French; helped by the British, they besiege the main French garrison.  
The Order of St. John was losing its touch with the population in general. High ranking knights were secretly conspiring with the French directory and there was sufficient discontent that when Napoleon Bonaparte invaded the islands in 1798, the Maltese hailed him as their saviour and offered little resistance. Napoleon had promised liberty, equality and fraternity but the Maltese soon realised that these were vague promises.
- 1798            June 9th                    A French army of 54,000 troops under Napoleon Bonaparte invaded the Maltese Islands on its way to Egypt. The Knights were given three days to leave. Knights of St. John expelled after 268 years in Malta. Inquisition abolished.
- 1798            September 2nd            The Maltese revolt against the French when these confiscate property belonging to the Maltese Church. The French take refuge behind the walls of Valletta and Cottonera and a two-year siege begins.
- 1799            Dun Mikiel Xerri and other Maltese executed by the French after a failed plot to storm the Valletta walls. The British take the islands under their protection in the name of the King of Two Sicilies.
- 1800            September                    The French surrender.