



# The kickbacks and the deceit

**Kickbacks consisted of plots. The middleman who received the plots was at times threatened with his life.**

**Piju Camilleri would tell Joe Pace that he should concentrate on the safety and future of his family.**

**Threats made Joe Pace succumb to unbearable pressure and to sign documents under duress. Once again, for this to happen, legal firms, lawyers and notaries were regimented. They all closed an eye to the 'way' things were carried out. Politicians acting as notaries would continue to serve clients who were renowned for their highhandedness and brusque way of dealing with matters.**

# The plots that were given



The area at Salina that mushroomed out of nowhere

The scheming was endless. The equation was a very simple one. Permits for plots would be issued on one condition; that the individual or individuals would have to receive a kickback. The kickback would take the form of a number of plots.

The locality that was earmarked this time was Salina in the area near the Salina Bay Hotel (now the Coastline Hotel).

The land belonged to the Camilleri brothers of Park Hotel fame. The area was never expected to be a development zone. Indeed, it was a pristine green area with only a chapel and some dwellings nearby.

But it was not to remain so. Vince Camilleri of Vica Limited wanted building permits for Salina.

Tor Limited, a company owned jointly by Piju Camilleri and Joe Pace, together with Luqa Development, owned by Piju Camilleri and his family, acquired a number of plots from the Camilleri brothers of Vica Ltd on 6 November 1981. The plots at Salina

were owned jointly in equal measure by each of the two companies. But Joe Pace did not even know that Tor Ltd had been given plots. The permits were seen to by Lorry Sant, then a corrupt work minister and a protagonist for the Labour Party, who at the time had the absolute power to determine where and when permits were issued. Something he used to his perverse advantage until 1987.

It was customary that Lorry Sant would issue permits in return for plots. In the years between 1985 and 1990, Piju Camilleri, Lorry Sant's henchman sold a number of plots at Salina without Joe Pace's consent that belonged to the two companies.

They included two plots in 1985, two in 1986, three in 1987, three in 1988, three in 1989 and two in 1990. Technically these plots were sold irregularly to the people involved, and could have very well meant bad news for Piju Camilleri, better known as il-Hawsla, who never

informed Joe Pace of these sales. Every year Joe Pace would be asked by Lorry Sant to sign the audited accounts of Tor Limited. He did so without looking at the accounts.

Why did Joe Pace accede to this?

Because he was scared to say no. He was always under the threat of Lorry Sant and Piju Camilleri, who continued to haunt him well after the Labour administration had been replaced by a Nationalist administration in 1987 and 1992.

He did so until 1995, that is the year of Lorry Sant's death, after which Joe Pace started to ask questions. Before his death, Lorry Sant was too sick to put pressure on Joe Pace. But Pace's apparent opposition to concede to pressures from Piju Camilleri led to a bomb explosion which damaged his family's residence and a number of tourist apartments in March 1995.

In October of that year in the presence of Labour parliamentarian Charles Mangion,

Piju Camilleri's faithful notary, the plots owned by Tor Ltd situated at Salina were transferred to Luqa Development Company Limited; a move that was carried out in an attempt to neutralise the 'illegal' acquisition of property at Salina without Joe Pace's knowledge.

The question arises again: Why did Joe Pace consent to having these plots transferred?

The answer is simple. After the bomb explosion at his residence in March, he was in no mood to confront Piju Camilleri. There was nothing to prove that Piju Camilleri had placed the bomb, but then Piju Camilleri had on several occasions threatened Joe Pace. And the well-built, angry man with a penchant for colourful language, blasphemy and fistfights was not to be sneezed at.

More surprising is the complete lack of interest shown by the authorities which prompts us to ask the following questions:

**Were police investigations initiated in relation to the above-mentioned cases?**

**Has Piju Camilleri been investigated in relation to bombs placed at the homes of Joe Pace and Joe Borg?**

**Has the Prime Minister had any briefings with the Home Affairs Minister and the Commissioner of Police on this subject?**

**Has the Labour Party questioned Notary Mangion's relations with Piju Camilleri who has been expelled from the party?**

# in return for permits



Charles Mangion (centre) with Joe Pace (left), Piju Camilleri (right) and another legal representative