

Contextualising the 1961 Interdict in Malta

Sergio Grech¹

On 8th April 1961, Mgr Michael Gonzi, Archbishop of Malta, imposed an interdict on the executive members of the Malta Labour Party. Contrary to what is generally held, that was the first time in Maltese history that the Catholic Church imposed such a particularly spiritual sanction. Although the Malta Church had imposed the mortal sin sanction in 1930, during the Strickland days, on all those who aspired to vote for Lord Gerald Strickland and his associates, no interdict had been imposed on them at that particular juncture. In modern usage, the term ‘interdict’, and especially the word ‘*mizbla*’ (rubbish heap) which Labour leader Dominic Mintoff coined for the Labour supporters who were buried in unconsecrated ground, has been abused of and often referred to without proper consideration to its particular context. Moreover, as a result of the historical interpretation adopted by the Labour Party, there is a tendency by the man in the street to simply regard the interdict as an act of power by an angry archbishop who was eager to eradicate the Malta Labour Party once and for all. This work will analyse the real significance of the interdict and the resulting repercussions as envisaged by the teaching corpus of the Catholic Church in relation to the early sixties.

When Governor Robert Laycock addressed the country following the April 1958 riots, he promised fresh elections in the shortest possible time.² However, contemporary documentation shows that he was in no hurry to do so.³ In the long run, it became evident that Governor Laycock was afraid that Mr Dominic Mintoff might win the next election and the former therefore hung on to power by prevaricating. It was noted in 1959 that

1 Sergio Grech is the author of three biographies and the editor of the series *Bejn Storja u Miti*. He studied at the University of Malta from where he obtained a B.A. (Hons) in History (1998), a P.G.C.E. in History (1999) and an M.A. in History (2009).

2 *Resignation of Dom Mintoff, Prime Minister of Malta*, CO 926/792, The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew.

3 *Ibid.*

Mintoff ‘maintains a constant and vigorous propaganda campaign against the policies of Her Majesty’s Government and the present Administration, but can generally be counted as being shrewd enough to remain within the limits of the law.’⁴

After losing power in 1958, the Labour Party made sure that its organisation was tight. The party had the *Brigata* (brigade) for children, a women’s section, the Labour League of Youth and the District Committees.⁵ In 1962, the party boasted of having 8,000 members.⁶ Furthermore, the party held its own regattas,⁷ First of May celebrations,⁸ Carnival,⁹ song festivals and beauty contests.¹⁰ During 1959, the Labour League of Youth opened ten branches all over Malta.¹¹ The party could pride itself of the ‘voluntary spirit of its supporters.’¹²

The Labour Party adopted a non-cooperation stand with the British thereby imitating Mahatma Gandhi’s doctrine of passive resistance.¹³ While addressing the 1958 annual general meeting of Dingli’s Labour League of Youth, Notary J.F. Abela urged non-cooperation with the British and appealed for a non-violent stand.¹⁴ Members of government boards with Labour credentials were expected to resign.¹⁵ For instance, Mr Patrick

4 *Political Situation in Malta: Interest of Archbishop*, CO 926/657, The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew.

5 *Attitude of the Malta Labour Party*, CO 926/1142, The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew.

6 Report of Socialist International Delegation to Malta 20–26 November 1961 published in D. Mintoff, (ed.), *Britain, Malta and the Socialist International* (Malta 1962), 13.

7 *Il-Ħelsien*, 29 Aug. 1960, 2.

8 *Ibid.* 5 May 1961, 1.

9 *Ibid.* 15 Feb. 1961, 1.

10 Gauci, G. (2001) *Xieħda ta’ Seklu*, Malta: SKS, 145.

11 *The Struggle*, Jan. 1960, 8.

12 Report of Socialist International Delegation to Malta 20–26 November 1961.

13 *Meeting MLP National Executive and Parliamentary Group on 29 Apr. 1958*, Minutes MLP National Executive and Parliamentary Group 16 Aug. 1957 to 24 Oct. 1958.

14 *Ktieb tal-Minuti, Labour League of Youth (Dingli), Seduti Generali*, 28 Sep. 1958, Labour Party Club, Dingli.

15 *Konferenza Annwali tal-MLP li saret nhar il-Hadd 21 ta’ Dicembru, 1958, fir-Radio City Opera House Hamrun – Minuti*.

Holland, Mr Danny Cremona and Mr Albert Busuttill resigned from the Traffic Control Board.¹⁶ Those who failed to resign were expelled from the party.¹⁷

By 1959, the Labour Party had decided that it was high time to confront the Church head on. As Mintoff later told historian Joseph M. Pirota, '[it was] either that, or we would have been finished.'¹⁸ Since the Integration proposal, Mintoff had failed to convince the Church that his proposals would not harm her or her interests. Labour's membership in the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organisation (AAPSO), convinced the Church that it had no other option than to fight for her survival. The Church in Malta distrusted the policy of Integration. However, Independence, with the possibility of Mintoff as Prime Minister, caused her to shiver. Since Labour was not in power at the time, 'there was no more need for the Church to fear formal reprisals and harassment.'¹⁹ This meant that the Church came 'out of the sacristy' and took a stauncher role in politics, and its discourse became much more daring and downright political.

Mr Mintoff's crusade against the Malta Church was based on six points:²⁰

- a separation between Church and State;
- a secular state which tolerated all religions;
- civil marriage;
- a limitation of the privileges enjoyed by the Church;
- censorship to be in government's hands; and
- the justification of the use of violence under certain circumstances.

Archbishop Gonzi did not loath the fact that Malta was not being governed by local politicians. In fact, during a meeting with the British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan in 1959, Archbishop Gonzi had insisted that

16 *Meeting MLP National Executive and Parliamentary Group on 21 May 1958*, Minutes MLP National Executive and Parliamentary Group 16 Aug. 1957 to 24 Oct. 1958.

17 *Ibid.*

18 Pirota, J.M. (2001) *Fortress Colony: The Final Act 1945–1964, Vol. 3, 1958–1961*, Malta: Studia Editions, 598.

19 Koster, A. (1984), *Prelates and Politicians in Malta. Changing Power-balances between Church and State in a Mediterranean Island Fortress (1530–1976)*, Van Gorcum: Assen, 181.

20 *Ibid.* 197.

‘the majority of the people were happy under the moratorium. although politicians wanted parliamentary life back.’²¹ He added that ‘he hoped that there would not be an imminent end to the moratorium since... Mintoff... might win the elections.’²² A suffocating political religious struggle was the end result, dividing the colony into two essentially distinct camps: those siding with Archbishop Gonzi and those siding with Mr Mintoff. The latter, on the other hand, blamed the Church in Malta for using a ‘Nazi technique of suppressing freedom of conscience and freedom of speech.’²³

Meanwhile, in the pastoral letter issued for Lent in 1960, the Church in Malta condemned Socialism outright. The bishops of Malta clearly denounced the Socialist concept about private property and class struggle.²⁴ Catholics were reminded that being Socialist and Catholic at the same time was not acceptable.²⁵ The reaction to this pastoral letter varied, but the boldest reaction came from the press of the Labour Party itself, which maintained that the bishops’ instructions ought to be given the cold shoulder and that they should be dismissed as a purely political discourse.

The Struggle, the organ of the Labour League of Youth, criticised unscrupulously the pastoral letter, and that led to its editor Mr Lorry Sant, cousin of Mgr Karm Sant, being interdicted.²⁶ This was a new scenario for Maltese politics. As previously mentioned, there had been no interdict in the nineteen-thirties. The bishops, Mgr Caruana and Mgr Gonzi, had then imposed mortal sin on those who intended to vote for Count Gerald Strickland. Lorry Sant was only twenty-one years old at the time. Rather than treating the interdict as something to be ashamed of, as others living in a Catholic country might have normally done, the interdict featured prominently in Sant’s curriculum vitae throughout his political career. Rather than destroying him, the interdict made Mr Sant a bold hero in

21 Meeting between Prime Minister and Monsignor Gonzi, Archbishop of Malta, PREM 11/2745, The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew.

22 *Ibid.*

23 Mintoff 1962, 2.

24 *Lehen is-Sewwa*, 9 Mar. 1960, 1.

25 *Ibid.*

26 Koster 1984, 182.

the eyes of the Labour supporters.²⁷ The article in question, penned by pharmacist Joe Camilleri and published under a pseudonym, noted that although the pastoral letter had been published in Lent, it had nothing to do with that particular period. The writer maintained that the Church in Malta had failed to take serious action to condemn the Governor's behaviour.

According to journalist Mr Paul Carachi²⁸ and politician Mr Lino Spiteri,²⁹ Lorry Sant was advised by the party officials on several occasions to tone down *The Struggle's* content. The local British representatives reported that 'the Archbishop's action had been widely welcomed.'³⁰ Besides the personal interdict to Mr Sant, the Church also decreed that those who published, read or sold *The Struggle* were subject to mortal sin.³¹ The bishops wished to destroy the annoying newspaper once and for all, but their wish did not materialise. In fact, the Labour National Executive advised the Labour League of Youth to issue another newspaper under a different name.³² As a result, *The Whip* replaced *The Struggle*.³³

Barred from power, the Labour Party decided to take its issues out of the country in a bid to win support for its policies. This involved building contacts with similar Socialist parties and organisations like AAPSO. However the latter's profile was not compatible with the local mentality. It was 'Peking backed' and 'Cairo based.'³⁴ The word AAPSO soon became taboo.³⁵ The timing could not have been worse. This period coincided with Roman Catholic Cuba being transformed into a Communist country by

27 Taped interview Sergio Grech/Dr Ċensu Tabone, Private Residence, St Julians.

28 Carachi, P. (2002) *Il-Ġurnalista u l-Politiku*, Malta: SKS, 53.

29 Spiteri, L. (2007) *Jien u għaddej fil-Politika*, Malta: Publishers Enterprises Group, 85.

30 *Attitudes of the Roman Catholic Church*, CO 926/1151, The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew.

31 Għaqda Żgħażaġh Laburisti (1981), *L-Interdett Ġrajja ta' Għoxrin Sena ilu*, Malta: Għaqda Żgħażaġh Laburisti, 30.

32 Meeting MLP National Executive and Parliamentary Group on 10 May 1960, *Minutes MLP National Executive and Parliamentary Group 5 Nov. 1958 to 31 May 1960*.

33 Meeting MLP National Executive and Parliamentary Group on 2 Nov. 1960, *Minutes MLP National Executive and Parliamentary Group 5 Nov. 1958 to 31 May 1960*.

34 Frendo, H. (2000) *Ċensu Tabone, The Man and his Century*, Malta: Maltese Studies, 130.

35 Taped interview Sergio Grech/Mr Paul Carachi, Private Residence, Balzan.

Fidel Castro, and therefore a friend of Russia and China.³⁶ Mintoff came to be regarded as the Maltese Castro. A widespread fear invaded Catholic Malta that Mintoff, if elected to power, would turn Malta into a Communist state.³⁷ On the other hand, joining AAPSO meant a departure from the Western fold, which politically differed grossly from the rest of the world. Besides AAPSO and the Socialist International, the Labour Party had contacts with several other Socialist parties. On several occasions, members of the Labour National Executive accepted invitations from those parties to join them in their activities. Labour delegations went to Athens, Tripoli, Cairo, Belgrade, Tunis, Rome and Oslo. Some of those countries 'were not known for their love of parliamentary democracy or of Britain.'³⁸ The aims of such contacts were twofold: creating international approval for the party's policies and reaping material benefit for the party.³⁹ For instance, a printing machine was brought from Oslo at the time that the party was preparing to open its own printing press.⁴⁰

Rev. Fortunato Mizzi, son of former Prime Minister Enrico Mizzi, launched an offensive against AAPSO through his Moviment Azzjoni Soċjali (MAS), which insisted that AAPSO was dominated and financed by Communists.⁴¹ Joseph Felice Pace, who was very active within the MAS structure, explained to the present author that before MAS published its views about AAPSO, he himself had left a copy of the press release at Labour Deputy Leader Dr Anton Buttigieg's residence in Hamrun for his comments, but Buttigieg just posted the press release unmarked back to the movement.⁴²

MAS called for a national protest to which there was a huge response. The *Ġunta* made it clear that none of the members of the Christian lay organisations could be members of the MLP.⁴³ It argued that the islanders

36 *Problemi tal-Lum*, Vol. 1, No. 11, Nov. 1961, 324.

37 *Ibid.* Vol. 1, No. 8, Aug. 1961, 245.

38 *The Malta Independent on Sunday* Online, Issue No. 385, 7 Nov. 1999.

39 *The Voice of Malta*, 29 May 1960, 1.

40 *Meeting MLP National Executive and Parliamentary Group on 17 May 1962*, Minutes MLP National Executive and Parliamentary Group 29 Dec. 1961 to 29 Aug. 1962.

41 *Problemi tal-Lum*, Vol. 1, No. 2, Feb. 1962, 38.

42 E-mail from Mr Joseph Felice Pace dated 21 Feb. 2007 to the present author.

43 MAS (1961) *It-Tweġiba lil Dr Anton Buttigieg dwar l-AAPSO*, Malta: MAS, 1961).

refused moral or material help from AAPSO or from any other Communist bloc.⁴⁴ On 5 March 1961, a massive rally was organised. The local British authorities reported that there was an enormous crowd of between 70,000 and 100,000 present.⁴⁵ During the rally, Mr Ċikku Saliba claimed that the Labour Party had received 60,000 dollars from AAPSO.⁴⁶ Archbishop Gonzi repeated the same claim, asserting that the information had been given to him by a member of the Labour Executive.⁴⁷ The Labour Party denied the accusation and replied that ‘Archbishop Gonzi has once more been hoodwinked by British propaganda.’⁴⁸ Mintoff argued that ‘we have sent delegations in places where the British do not want them to be, and we continue sending them where they hate to see them.’⁴⁹ Mintoff’s contacts with AAPSO, Egyptian Gamad Abdel Nasser,⁵⁰ Yugoslavia’s Josip Broz Tito, General George Grivas, leader of the EOKA guerilla organisation, and Tunisia’s Habib Bourguiba, as also the party’s participation in the non-aligned summit in Belgrade, were eyed by his opponents with suspicion.⁵¹ According to Mintoff, the party’s contacts with the Western countries failed since ‘these are hand in glove with the English’.⁵²

The 1961 Lenten pastoral letter was dominated by the AAPSO issue.⁵³ It condemned the Labour Party’s decision to join AAPSO ‘without the consent of thousands of its members.’⁵⁴ The Archbishop argued that this

44 *Il-Berqa*, 8 Feb. 1961, 1.

45 *Attitudes of the Roman Catholic Church*, CO 926/1151, The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew.

46 *Il-Berqa*, 23 Mar. 1961, 2.

47 Kunsill tal-Provincjali u Kulleġġ tal-Kappillani (1961) *Il-Protesta ta’ Malta Kattolika*, Malta: Empire Press, 35.

48 *The Voice of Malta*, 5 Mar. 1961, 1.

49 ‘Transcript of Addresses made during the Malta Labour Party Meeting held at Blata l-Bajda, from 10:00 am to 1:15 p.m. on Sunday, 16 Oct., 1960’ in *Attitudes of the Malta Labour Party*, CO 926/1142, The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew.

50 *Forward*, 4 Dec. 1959, 4.

51 *Il-Berqa*, 29 Apr. 1960, 1.

52 *Attitudes of the Malta Labour Party*, CO 926/1142, The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew.

53 *Problemi tal-Lum*, Vol. 1, No. 4, Apr. 1961, 123.

54 *Ibid.*

move was ‘opening the door to Communist infiltration into Malta and into the Mediterranean.’⁵⁵

The events of March 1961 led the Church in Malta to take more drastic action intended to paralyse the Labour Party once and for all. The Archbishop, as a result, took a more doctrinaire view and adopted a strong position vis-à-vis the Labour Party. On 15 March 1961, the MLP issued a statement of policy in which it was stated that the attainment of Independence was its main aim. It was also declared that if Malta truly aspired for Independence, ‘we cannot look down upon anybody’s help.’⁵⁶ The party declared that it was not interested in ideologies that ‘are condemned by the Church.’⁵⁷ The document rejected the idea that AAPSO was ‘dominated by the Communists.’⁵⁸ The Labour Party accused Archbishop Gonzi of being more interested to ‘safeguard first and foremost good diplomatic relations between the Vatican and the United Kingdom...’⁵⁹ Such accusations could not leave Archbishop Gonzi indifferent. It was also declared that the Maltese clergy was not willing to co-operate with the Liberation Movement as in Cyprus.⁶⁰

On 23 March 1961, on the morrow that Mr Anthony Pellegrini and Rev. Feličjan Bilocca launched the Christian Workers’ Party, Canon Arturo Bonnici informed Mr Mintoff that, with reference to the Statement of Policy, the Church was expecting a public reparation by Tuesday 28 March; otherwise the MLP will be subject to ‘some of the penalties mentioned in Canon 2344 of the Canon Law.’⁶¹

The Labour Party responded that it was ‘impossible for the whole National Executive to meet and deliberate properly on a question of such importance in the short time allotted...’⁶² The deadline was therefore extended to 10 April. Three days before the ultimatum expired, the Labour Party informed the

55 *Ibid.*

56 Mintoff 1962, 8.

57 *Ibid.* 4.

58 *Ibid.* 8.

59 *Ibid.* 5.

60 *Ibid.*

61 ‘General Conference – Unanimous,’ *The Voice of Malta*, 16 Apr. 1961, 1.

62 *Ibid.*

Curia that it felt that the issue should go to the Party's General Conference.⁶³ The bishops did not accept the proposal and urged a definite reply by Monday 10 April.⁶⁴ But the Church itself did not respect its ultimatum, and on 8 April the Labour Party was informed that since a conference was called instead of 'withdrawing those offences and insinuations... their Lordships... feel compelled to inflict as of now the canonical penalty of personal interdiction according to canons 2291 n. 2 and 2275, on all those who at the meeting of the National Executive... held on 15 March 1961, took part in the drawing up of the statement or approved it by their vote.'⁶⁵

The Voice of Malta, the Labour organ, argued that whilst the imposition of the interdict was reported by *The Bulletin*, 'at the same time the Secretary of the Executive had not received any information. The Labour Executive met at 7 p.m. that day as notified, and half-an-hour later the Leader walked in and handed the letter of interdiction, which, despite being addressed to the Secretary, had been left with the Leader's post.'⁶⁶ *The Bulletin*, being an evening newspaper, was the first to announce the story.⁶⁷ In fact, Rev. C.G. Vella asked a friend of his, most probably Mr Kelinu Cachia, a M.U.S.E.U.M.⁶⁸ member from Tarxien, to deliver the letter at Mr Mintoff's residence.⁶⁹

A few years ago, Rev C.G. Vella maintained that he had '... prevailed upon Archbishop Gonzi, despite opposition from some Curia people, not to impose the interdict on all members of the Labour Party. This would have driven thousands of families out of the Church.'⁷⁰ He suggested that the bishop should interdict the Labour Party's National Executive instead. Vella's opinion was not shared by the Curia's top brass, which included

63 *Ibid.*

64 *Ibid.*

65 *Ibid.*

66 *Ibid.*

67 *The Bulletin*, 8 Apr. 1961, 1.

68 M.U.S.E.U.M., or il-Mużew, the Society of Christian Doctrine founded in Malta in 1907 by Dun Ġorġ Preca (canonized in 2007). The acronym stands for Magister, Utinam Sequatur Evangelium Universus Mundus (Master, would that the Gospel be followed by the entire world)

69 C.G. Vella, *L-Istorja minn wara l-Kwinti*, Produced by Mark Fenech and Henry Frendo, Programme No. 2, Blaze Productions.

70 *Ibid.*

Vicar-General Mgr Emanuel Galea, Archbishop Gonzi's Secretary Mgr Arturo Bonnici and the Curia's Chancellor Mgr G. Mifsud.⁷¹

However, in a letter written on 10 April 1961, – the date is to be particularly noted – Fr Vella explained to his friend Rev. Wistin Azzopardi MSSP, who served as a missionary in Australia, that the interdict, 'has been coming for a long time but Providence has certainly shown us how much it guides the Church and its bishops, for a better case than this could not have been found.'⁷² According to Mgr Carmelo Xuereb, a meeting had taken place at the Catholic Institute in Floriana during which Fr Vella had stood up and declared 'we will prohibit all (Labour) newspapers.'⁷³ According to Rev. John Dimech, Gonzi's chaplain at the time, it was not an easy decision for Gonzi to impose the interdict.⁷⁴ Three letters had been sent to the Vatican about the matter.⁷⁵ However, any answers to these letters remain unknown.

Labour responded with by holding an extraordinary general conference at the Comet Theatre in Floriana on 9 April 1961, during which the hundreds of delegates present noted that 'the party for the last three years had been the victim of continuous attacks by priests.'⁷⁶ The resolution approved by the delegates attacked the Archbishop's interference in politics.⁷⁷ Delegates accused the Church of siding with the British to alienate the people from the issue of redundancies.⁷⁸ Labour leader Mr Mintoff assured the delegates that the interdict would not endanger the party's project for freedom.⁷⁹

The Voice of Malta, the MLP's organ, tried to minimise the effect of the imposition of the interdict and argued that, notwithstanding the interdict, the Labour Party newspapers were going strong and 'there has been a greater

71 *Ibid.*

72 Letter from Rev. C.G. Vella to Rev. W. Azzopardi dated 10 Apr. 1961 filed in *Correspondence – Fr Charles Vella* at Cana Movement Archives, Floriana.

73 Pirota 2001, 782.

74 Carachi 2002, 54.

75 *Ibid.*

76 Copy of the original resolution entitled *Konferenza Ġenerali Straordinarja tal-Malta Labour Party Mizmuma fil-Comet Theatre il-Furjana, nhar il-Hadd 9 ta' April, 1951* signed by A. Buttigieg, D. Mintoff and Ġ. Zerafa.

77 *Ibid.*

78 *Ibid.*

79 Borg, J. (1982), *Imkasbrin fil-Mizbla*, Malta: Dipartiment tal-Partit tal-Haddiema, 14.

demand for them.⁸⁰ In order to boast and increase membership, the party decided to award an annual trophy to the Labour Club with the highest number of paid members.⁸¹ According to the British officers in Malta ‘the persons closest to Mintoff are unmoved by the interdiction and they are saying that, while it will cost the party some 20,000 votes, it will at the same time unite the party.’⁸²

Before the 1962 elections, the Bishop of Gozo, Mgr Giuseppe Pace, resurrected the interdict. This time the interdicted were Gozitans who stood as MLP candidates. Governor Guy Grantham reported that the interdict had been imposed without the approval of the Archbishop of Malta.⁸³ According to the Governor, there was an understanding between the Maltese bishops that ‘matters of this kind would be under Archbishop Gonzi’s jurisdiction.’⁸⁴ Grantham alleged that Archbishop Gonzi was ‘very angry with Pace.’⁸⁵

The interdict was followed by the condemnation of the Labour Party newspapers *The Voice of Malta*, *Il-Helsien* and *The Whip*.⁸⁶ Publishing, writing, reading, selling or buying these papers became a sin.⁸⁷ But the General Workers’ Union kept printing the newspapers as usual. Mr Joe Attard Kingswell, at the time the union’s general-secretary and printer, affirmed that he had met the Archbishop and had explained his view that stopping the printing of newspapers went against the principle of free press. He had therefore made it clear that he could not abide by the Church’s measures because he felt responsible for his employees.⁸⁸

80 ‘For Record Purposes. The Curia, MLP Papers and Indecent Dress. Directives to Confessors,’ *The Voice of Malta*, 4 Jun. 1961, 2.

81 *Konferenza Ġenerali tal-MLP li saret fit-Tivoli Theatre Paola nhar il-Hadd 18 ta’ Ġunju 1961 - Minuti*.

82 *Attitudes of the Roman Catholic Church*, CO 926/1151, The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew.

83 *Disputes between the Malta Labour Party and the Roman Catholic Church*, CO 926/1559, The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew.

84 *Ibid.*

85 *Ibid.*

86 ‘Ċirkolari tal-Arcisqof, Il-Kundanna tal-Gażzetti tal-MLP maħruġa mill-Kurja ta’ l-Arcisqof, 26 ta’ Mejju, 1961,’ inserted in A. Cassar, *Meta l-Għawdxin kienu Mxewxa*, Appendix F.

87 Azzopardi, A. (1986) *Storja tal-Partit Laburista, It-Tieni Volum 1958–1971*, Malta: MLP 1986, 61.

88 *Episodji*, produced and presented by Sergio Grech, Campus FM, Interview with Mr Joseph Attard Kingswell.

The condemned press suffered a general boycott.⁸⁹ Its reporters were not invited to cover events organised by Catholic bodies.⁹⁰ Priests could only read the interdicted press with the permission of the bishop,⁹¹ and the same applied to journalists.⁹² The move came to be described as an abuse of power but the Church backed its action through Canon Law (Code No 1395).⁹³ The ban was only lifted on 15 June 1966.⁹⁴

The condemnation of the Labour newspapers was not negligible in its effect. *Il-Helsien's* direction alleged that its volunteers were being chased after by the police who asked them to exhibit their permits to sell newspapers.⁹⁵ According to *Il-Helsien's* editor, members of the clergy went directly to advertising agents encouraging them not to favour the MLP's papers with adverts.⁹⁶ Ultimately, the newspaper was bound to have its price increased.⁹⁷

The interdict was a feather in the cap of anti-clericals, while it was of concern to those who tried to live as exemplary Catholics. The interdict prohibited the faithful from taking part in the liturgy and from partaking of the sacraments, and denied them an ecclesiastical burial, as was the case of heretics, schismatics or apostates. As was explained to Lorry Sant, an interdict deprived the Catholic 'of certain spiritual goods or rights'.⁹⁸ Nevertheless, an interdicted person could hear mass without, however, being allowed to receive the Eucharist.⁹⁹ Interdicted persons lost the right to receive the *bulettn*.¹⁰⁰ On the other hand, prisoners at Kordin, despite

89 *The Voice of Malta*, 20 Sep. 1963, 1.

90 *Ibid.* 5 Nov. 1961, 3.

91 Letter by Mgr L. Cachia to present author dated 19 Apr. 2001.

92 'I have the Archbishop's permission to read *The Voice of Malta*.' M. Strickland, Debates of the Malta Legislative Assembly, Sitting No. 39, 17 Apr. 1963, 2724.

93 Galea, E. (1962) *Frak tad-Deheb*, Malta: Empire Press, 15.

94 Spiteri 2007, 54.

95 *Il-Helsien*, 17 Jun. 1961, 1.

96 *Ibid.*

97 *Ibid.*

98 Letter from Chancellor Can G. Mifsud to Mr Lorry Sant dated 9 Apr. 1960 in Cassar, A. *Meta l-Għawdxin kienu Mxewxa*, Appendix D., 112.

99 Spiteri 2007, 54.

100 Lanfranco, G. (2005) *Drawwiet u Hajja mill-Istorja ta' Malta*, Malta, 54.

their criminal history, fared better since they retained the right to receive the *buletta*.¹⁰¹

The difference between mortal sin and interdiction was that, while a mortal sin could be absolved by a priest, interdict could only be removed by a Church Authority such as, for example, a bishop.¹⁰² The Church also distinguished between an interdict and an excommunication. The latter meant that the victim of this measure was completely cut off from the Church. Interdict, on the other hand, was a prohibition from receiving the sacraments.¹⁰³ In the event that an excommunicated person entered the church building during a religious function, the ceremony had to stop.¹⁰⁴ Social reformer Manwel Dimech, for example, was excommunicated.¹⁰⁵ However, the repercussions of interdict were much worse than those of a mortal sin.

Indirectly, the spiritual sanction had other repercussions also. They aimed at a total isolation of the sanctioned person in public life. Fervent religious people would not want to mix with interdicted people. An interdict could affect an employment interview or perhaps a career.¹⁰⁶ In political terms, the interdict meant less chances of being elected to government. Nationalist deputy Dr Ġ.M. Camilleri knew perfectly well what he was implying when he had suggested to the Labour deputies to recur to the Ecclesiastical Authorities if they wanted to be re-elected in government.¹⁰⁷

The interdict created havoc in the people's conscience since most people were Catholic, and Labourites were no less Catholic.¹⁰⁸ As MLP's Deputy Leader Ġużè Ellul Mercer had told anthropologist Jeremy Boissevain in the early nineteen-sixties, 'through the interdict, the Church is making an

101 *Il-Mument*, 15 Apr. 2001, 30.

102 *Lehen is-Sewwa*, 26 Sep. 1964, 4.

103 *Problemi tal-Lum*, Vol. 1, No. 4, Apr. 1961, 69.

104 *Regina et Mater*, No. 3, Mar. 1962, 60.

105 Frendo, H. (1972), *Birth Pangs of a Nation, Manwel Dimech's Malta*, Malta: Mediterranean Publications, 149.

106 Spiteri 2007, 47.

107 Camilleri, Ġ.M., Debates of the Malta Legislative Assembly, Sitting No. 58, 5 Apr. 1963, 2565.

108 'The River flows and Times Change,' *Malta Today*, 11 Sep. 2005, 8.

anti-clerical party of the Labour Party, an anticlerical party of a group of people who wished to remain practising Catholics.¹⁰⁹

The effects of the interdict on Catholics varied. Dr Anton Buttigieg narrated that it had left a dramatic impact on his father.¹¹⁰ For a short span of time, Labour deputy Dr Ġużè Cassar decided to quit politics because of the interdict.¹¹¹ In the nineteen-eighties, during a cabinet meeting, the interdict issue provoked a hot exchange between Labour Ministers Ġużè Cassar and Lino Spiteri. The latter accused Dr Cassar that he had chickened out when the interdict was imparted.¹¹²

It sometimes happened that relatives of an interdicted person were similarly sanctioned. Ms. Agatha Barbara recounted how her parents were barred from receiving sacraments because of her participation in politics.¹¹³ After some initial difficulties, her mother had managed to have a priest clandestinely call at her home to hear her confession and to administer the Eucharist to her, while her father toured the churches outside Żabbar to receive the sacraments.¹¹⁴ Rev. Adolf Agius, parish priest at Paola, refused to bless the residence of Dr Vincent Moran's mother.¹¹⁵

Walter Bugeja was baptised at the age of one-and-a-half years because his godfather Mr Frankie Micallef was a member of the Naxxar Labour Party Club Executive. The newspaper of the General Workers' Union held that Archbishop Gonzi was objecting to 'active Labourites acting as godparents in the bestowal of sacraments.'¹¹⁶ Dr Joseph Micallef Stafrace's children were baptised without any particular difficulty but since he was interdicted, he was not allowed to act as godparent if invited to.¹¹⁷ Usually, within the Maltese society, babies were baptised a few hours after birth because of fear that they would end up in limbo in the event they died before receiving

109 'The *Interdett* through a Foreigner's Eyes,' *Malta Today*, 25 Sep. 2005, 9.

110 Buttigieg, A. (1978), *L-Għażla ta' Hajti, Mill-Album ta' Hajti*, Vol. 2, Malta: KKM, 144.

111 Soler, E. (1986) *The Kings' Guest in Uganda*, Malta: the author, 287.

112 Spiteri 2007, 209.

113 'Qatt ma kont komda f'San Anton,' *Il-Hadd Magazin, It-Torċa*, 16. Jul. 2000, 2.

114 *Ibid.*

115 Taped Interview Sergio Grech/Dr Vincent Moran, Private Residence, Paola.

116 *Malta News*, 10 Jul. 1967, 3.

117 Micallef Stafrace, Y., 'Il-Kwistjoni ta' l-Interdett, *L-Istorja minn wara l-Kwinti*, Produced by Henry Frendo and Mark Fenech, Programme No. 2, Blaze Productions.

the sacrament.¹¹⁸ The priest used to take note in his baptism registers if the new-born's father or godfather was interdicted.¹¹⁹

It would be an exaggeration to assert that all local priests agreed with the interdict. However, only a few dared to take a position that differed from the mainstream. For instance, Dun Anġ Seychell was privately against the interdict but, when 'he had to choose loyalties', he ultimately chose the Church.¹²⁰ Mgr Fortunat Mizzi told the present author that his *Moviment Azzjoni Soċjali*, which was a Catholic movement, was objecting to the imposition of the interdict.¹²¹

The interdict left a direct effect on marriage ceremonies. An interdicted couple and their guests 'had to enter the church from the side entrance.'¹²² The ceremony was to be held in the church's sacristy. Labour deputies Dr Joseph Micallef Stafrace and Mr Lino Spiteri were married that way. Micallef Stafrace tried hard to convince Archbishop Gonzi to accord him permission to marry either at St Patrick's in Sliema or in an unknown countryside chapel, but Archbishop Gonzi refused.¹²³ The Archbishop offered him the possibility of marrying at the Mdina Cathedral or at his own private chapel at the Valletta Palace, on condition that the would-be spouse asked for pardon. Ironically, a British Protestant sailor could freely marry his spouse at St Patrick's chapel.¹²⁴

It is interesting to note that, in the case of Micallef Stafrace's wedding, no objection was raised for left-winger Ġino Muscat Azzopardi to act as a witness. After the ceremony, the Micallef Stafrace couple came across a crowd outside the Church showing them *Il-Haddiem*.¹²⁵ Lino Spiteri's marriage rites were celebrated in English as if his was a mixed marriage.¹²⁶ In the case of the Micallef Stafrace couple, two-fifths of the guests boycotted

118 Lanfranco, G. (2001) *Drawwriet u Tradizzjonijiet Maltin*, Malta: Wiseowl Publications, 79.

119 'The River flows and Times Change,' *Malta Today*, 11 Sep. 2005, 8. L. Spiteri, '80 Years' hard Labour,' *The Sunday Times*, 15 Oct. 2000, 5.

120 'For whom the Bell Tolls,' *Malta Today*, 11 Sep. 2005, 7.

121 Taped interview Sergio Grech/Mgr Fortunat Mizzi, MAS Headquarters, Valletta.

122 'Backdoor Marriage,' *Malta Today*, 4 Sep. 2005, 8.

123 'Iż-Żwieġ fis-Sagristija 40 sena ilu ta' Joe Micallef Stafrace,' *It-Torċa*, 16 Sep. 2001, 16.

124 Micallef Stafrace, Y., *op. cit.*

125 *Ibid.*

126 'The River flows and Times Change,' *Malta Today*, 11 Sep. 2005, 8.

the function owing to the interdict.¹²⁷ On the other hand, a practising Catholic was expected to marry in Church. Malta had no civil marriage yet.

The most difficult aspect for interdicted persons to accept was the denial of a proper Catholic burial. Cemeteries in Malta are either owned by the Church or by the State, but the 'State... safeguards their sacred and inviolable character in agreement with the Ecclesiastical Authorities.'¹²⁸ The Santa Maria Addolorata Cemetery, which was owned by the government, had a specific area for such burial. Labour supporters commonly referred to this section of the cemetery as '*il-mizbla*.' According to Micallef Stafrace, the 'so-called Christians' came up with the term '*mizbla*' to describe the area where the Labourites were buried.¹²⁹

Canon Law 1240 stipulated that those who lived contrary to the Catholic Church's teaching were to be buried in unconsecrated ground.¹³⁰ The *mizbla* was separated from the consecrated tombs by a high wall, and it had its own separate entrance. There were twenty-one tombs in this section and this particular area was known as Division West, Section DA, Compartment A. The *mizbla* tombs differed considerably from other graves. 'The graves were not adorned with any fancy marble statues or granite slabs.'¹³¹ There was no sign of a cross on the graves.

But this area of the Santa Maria Addolorata Cemetery had existed since the construction of the cemetery and was not constructed specifically in the sixties of the twentieth century. It was meant to host deceased persons who had not lived in line with the Catholic doctrine, that is to say those persons who were known in the vernacular as *bla pre'cett*. The archivist at the Maria Addolorata Cemetery marked such burials in red as *Extra Ecclesiam*.

In 1872, Lorenzo Pace, whose profession was described as 'trafficante,' was the first to be buried there.¹³² A barmaid was also interred there in 1949.¹³³

127 Micallef Stafrace, Y., *op. cit.*

128 Translation of Memorandum provided by Secretariat of the State dated 11 Nov. 1963 in *Church and State in Malta*, FO 371/172045, The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew.

129 Muscat (2005) 'Taking Politics to the Grave – the Undignified *Mizbla*,' *Malta Today*, 4 Sep. 2005, 8.

130 Galea (1962) 25.

131 Muscat (2005) 8.

132 ACA, Register of Burials Addolorata Cemetery, Vol. 1, 22 Jan. 1872 to 6 Aug. 1873.

133 *Ibid.* Vol. 76, 3 Jan. 1949 to 31 Dec. 1949.

Besides political burials, one recalls other burials of local citizens who had no connection whatsoever with politics. The present author counted four other cases for 1958 and 1960, two of them being females,¹³⁴ and another two cases for the period 1966–1969.¹³⁵

The idea of refusing a Catholic burial was not a totally new scenario in Malta. Maltese thinker and lexicographer Mikiel Anton Vassalli was refused a Catholic burial in the nineteenth century. He was not buried in the *mizbla* section but in Protestant burial grounds.¹³⁶ In the 1930s, Karmenu Ritchie was buried in the unconsecrated section because he supported Count Gerald Strickland.¹³⁷

During the rift of the sixties, seven persons were buried in this section because of the Church-MLP struggle. Of those – and this goes contrary to what is generally believed and assumed – only Ġużè Ellul Mercer had been interdicted.¹³⁸ The others had in some way worked actively within the party ranks thereby infringing the measures that the Church had taken vis-à-vis the Labour Party.

Ellul Mercer's burial in the '*mizbla*' was the subject of a controversy which was debated in several press articles and which was also the subject of Sunday sermons.¹³⁹ *The Voice of Malta* condemned those homilies and argued 'that not one priest had denounced Adolf Hitler after his death. That is as it should have been.'¹⁴⁰ Rev. Gerald Paris O.P., was reported as describing Ellul Mercer as 'a public blasphemer.'¹⁴¹ He went on saying that 'if his soul had to appear here right now, everybody would be so terror-stricken at its ugliness that there would be a stampede to get out of this temple.'¹⁴² The Ellul Mercer family tried to persuade the Curia for the Labour Deputy Leader to be interred in the cemetery's consecrated area but the Church

134 *Ibid.* Vol. 88, 3 Feb. 1960 to 8 Jan. 1960.

135 *Ibid.* Vol. 93, 16 Jan. 1965 to 18 Feb. 1966 and Vol. 97, 24 Aug. 1969 to 26 Oct. 1970.

136 Ciappara, F. (1995) "Vassalli and Protestantism," in *Journal of Maltese Studies, Essays on Mikiel Anton Vassalli*, Vol 23–24, Malta University Publishing, 51.

137 Borg (1982), 26.

138 *Ibid.* 4.

139 'Local Christian Charity,' *The Voice of Malta*, 1 Oct. 1961, 2.

140 *Ibid.* 2.

141 *Ibid.*

142 *Ibid.*

refused permission. 'In the eighties the Church authorities contacted the family and informed them that they were willing to transfer Ellul Mercer's remains so that these could be re-buried in the consecrated part of the cemetery.'¹⁴³ But the family 'refused on principle.'¹⁴⁴

Lisa Zammit's case is perhaps the most complex of them all. She served as Public Relations Officer of the Msida women's MLP branch. She was knocked down by a car in Msida and killed.¹⁴⁵ During her life, Ms Zammit had not only attended regularly the Church's functions but had also received Holy Communion regularly, something that she had every right to do since she had not been interdicted. Rev. Anton Pace, Msida's parish priest, refused to bless her home since she exhibited big portrait of Mintoff in her house.¹⁴⁶ When she was hit, a friar who happened to be commuting on a bus performed the last sacraments. Paradoxically, Zammit was buried in the '*mizbla*.'¹⁴⁷ Several years later the woman's remains were transferred to the consecrated area of the cemetery.¹⁴⁸

Mintoff used to maintain that the interdiction did not affect the Labour Party at all. He asserted that 'the membership of all sections of the movement... has risen since interdiction. So has the circulation of our papers and the attendance at our mass meetings...'¹⁴⁹ But reality differed. During discussions held at the party's highest level, it was actually noted that as far as the Labour newspapers were concerned, sales were dwindling and adverts were on the decrease.¹⁵⁰ Of course, Mintoff was speaking this way so as to boost his supporters' spirits. In October 1961, it was argued that 'the Archbishop must be disappointed that his action against the Executive

143 'Taking Politics to the Grave – the undignified Mizbla,' *Malta Today*, 4 Sep. 2005, 8.

144 *Ibid.*

145 Borg 1982, 49.

146 *Ibid.*

147 *Ibid.*

148 Muscat, '*Divide et Impera*, Ragonesi recalls the PN during the Interdiction,' *Malta Today*, 18 Sep. 2005, 8.

149 Mintoff 1962, 9.

150 *Meeting MLP National Executive and Parliamentary Group on 7 Jun. 1961*, Minutes MLP National Executive and Parliamentary Group 10 May 61 to 20 Dec. 1961.

has not had the effect of breaking it apart.¹⁵¹ The interdiction did not tone down Mintoff at all. The feelings of the other Labour members of the party varied. Paul Carachi, for instance, was afraid that he might die and end up in hell.¹⁵² But Lino Spiteri decided to quit the Sunday mass definitively.¹⁵³

The interdict had its definite weight on the forging of the 1962 Labour electoral manifesto. On 29 December 1961, the Labour Party Executive met to formulate the party's electoral programme.¹⁵⁴ A crucial issue that arose was whether the party was to include or not a reference to religion. The first motion, tabled by Joseph Micallef Stafrace and seconded by Colin Cauchi, proposed that the introductory paragraph should include a declaration stating that the party would be guided by democratic Labour and Catholic beliefs.¹⁵⁵ The second motion was more drastic: Karmenu Zammit and Lorry Sant suggested that there should be no reference to religion at all.¹⁵⁶ Dom Mintoff and Ġużè Zerafa tried to bridge the two schools of thought by proposing a concluding clause stating that the programme had no anti-religious items.¹⁵⁷

However, not one of those motions was adopted. A new motion, tabled by Danny Cremona and seconded by Paul Xuereb, suggested that the introduction should stress that the party's beliefs were democratic and that they were not contrary to Catholic principles.¹⁵⁸ Zammit took the floor again and suggested that the word 'Socialist' should be added. The motion was carried.¹⁵⁹

The manifesto had to be approved by the General Conference on 7 January 1962 and again the religious clause haunted delegates. George Zahra from the Labour League of Youth proposed that the word *Catholic* should be

151 *Disputes between the Malta Labour Party and the Roman Catholic Church*, CO 926/1559, The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew.

152 Carachi 2002, 60.

153 Spiteri 2007, 47.

154 *Meeting MLP National Executive and Parliamentary Group on 29 Dec. 1961*, Minutes MLP National Executive and Parliamentary Group 29 Dec. 1961 to 29 Aug. 1962.

155 *Ibid.*

156 *Ibid.*

157 *Ibid.*

158 *Ibid.*

159 *Ibid.*

inserted in the introductory part. The motion, seconded by P. Diacono of Sliema, failed to get through.¹⁶⁰ The last approved version read: ‘The Malta Labour Party reaffirms its democratic Socialist principles which do not run counter to Christian beliefs and solemnly subscribe to [those principles].’¹⁶¹

As a short-term measure, the interdict move was a triumph for the Maltese Catholics siding with Archbishop Gonzi since Mr Mintoff and his Labour Party were not elected to power in the 1962 turn of elections. To a certain extent, it was striking how notwithstanding the interdict, the ban on publications, mortal sin, burials in unconsecrated grounds and other deterrents, the mentioned party was not suffocated. It doesn’t mean neither that the party had come out of this unscathed, as Mr Mintoff had implied over and over again. That was part of the political strategy employed by the seasoned politician. Furthermore, as this paper proved, Mintoff was not a meek lamb. The dividing nature of the interdict led to the alienation of a good number of Labour Party supporters who drifted away from the Malta Church and most probably never really returned to the fold. Moreover, the interdict stirred anticlerical waves and encouraged the proliferation of secularisation trends. The interdict theme still evokes sensational feelings when discussed in the public sphere since the subject is discussed without having this context in mind.

160 ‘Konferenza Ġenerali Straordinarja tal-Malta Labour Party li saret fit-Tivoli Theatre nhar il-*Hadd 7 ta’ Jannar, 1962-Minuti.*’

161 *The Voice of Malta*, 7 Jan. 1962.

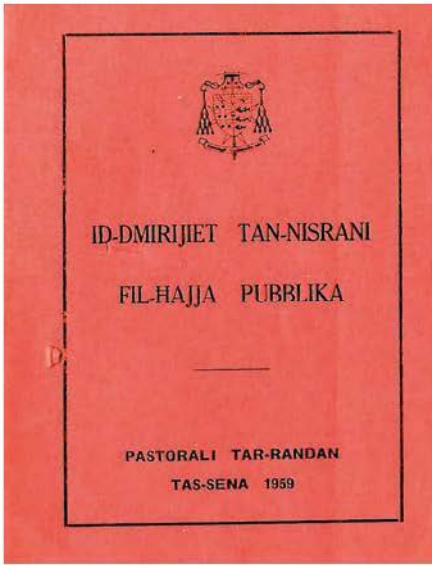


Fig. 1. 1959 Pastoral Letter condemning Socialism

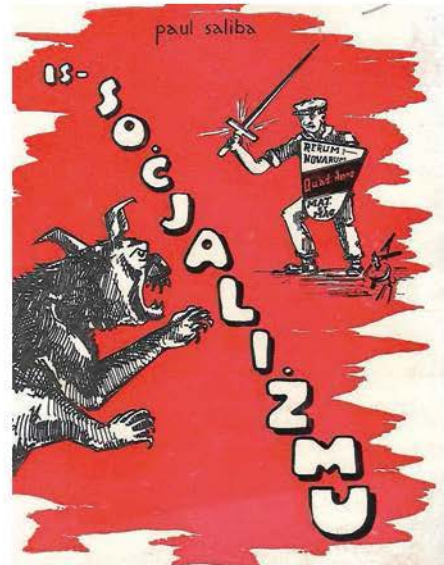


Fig. 2. A 1961 Publication condemning Socialism in Malta



Fig. 3. A 1961 publication defending the archbishop of Malta



Fig 4. A publication by Dom Mintoff about Integration

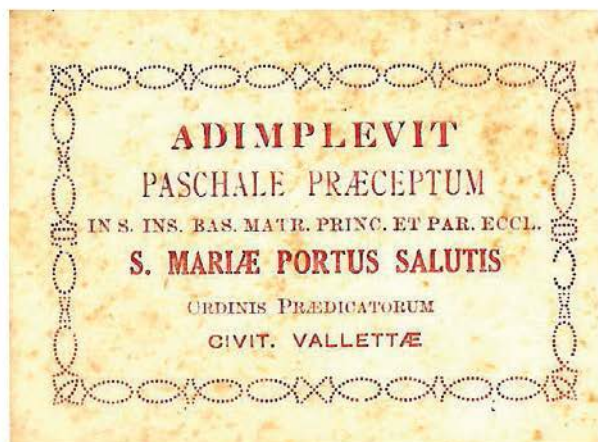


Fig. 5. Bulletin tat-Tqarbin (Front)



Fig. 6. Bulletin tat-Tqarbin (Back)

The Knight



No. 2.

ORGAN OF THE "LABOUR LEAGUE OF YOUTH" MALTA

June, 1960.

Labour League of Youth (Malta)

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

SUNDAY, THE 12TH JUNE, 1960, MUST CERTAINLY BE HELD AS A RED LETTER DAY BY MALTA'S YOUNG FREEDOM-FIGHTERS. ON THAT DAY, A PACKED-TO-CAPACITY COMET THEATRE WAS THE SCENE OF AN UNFORGETTABLE "MALTA LABOUR LEAGUE OF YOUTH" ANNUAL CONFERENCE, WHERE WILD SCENES OF ENTHUSIASM COUPLED WITH A STRONGER WILL TO RESIST OUR FOREIGN OPPRESSORS WERE THE ORDER OF THE DAY.

Youths and teenagers of both sexes, streamed in great numbers into the Theatre, displaying streamers and placards "We Want Independence" and "Such Is British Democracy", whilst others carried white and red Maltese flags, a token of love and respect towards our Motherland. The expressive scenes of enthusiasm which greeted each session of "Independence"

by our Youth Leaders, were enough proof that nothing will succeed in dividing our youth — the lifeblood of a New Malta. It was, in fact, another demonstration of loyalty to our beloved National Leader Dom Mintoff, whose unmatched courage and steadfastness in face of grave dangers, have hastened the day when Malta shall attain full nationhood living in peace and

harmony with other peace-loving nations.

The speakers at this patriotic "Youth Annual Conference" were Mr. Joe Camilleri, President of the "Labour League of Youth", who thanked heartily all those who contributed to the enormous success of the Youth Rally. He outlined the many malicious attacks levelled at our

(Continued on page 6)

By A YOUNG
FREEDOM-FIGHTER



The Future President of Malta Dom Mintoff — "Our Fight IS and WILL REMAIN against the British".

The Comet Theatre on the occasion of our memorable General Conference. Lorry Sant, Lesgue Secretary General, is seen reading the Administrative report. The report was passed by acclamation. Others in the picture are left to right: Mr. Mike Pullis, Charles Altard Gen. Treasurer, Sav. Fenech, Propaganda Sect., Joe Camilleri, President and Dr. J. Micallef Stafrace.



Fig. 8. Labour Newspaper 1

IL-FJAMMA

MAGAZINE TA' L-GHAQDA ZGHAZAGH LABURISTI

NUMRU 8

30 TA' NOVEMBRU 1962

JINBIEGH 34

BORG OLIVIER F'KAOS KBIR SE JIBQA' TRANKWILL?

Ghaddew disa' xhur u Borg Olivier ghadu ma wettaq xejn konkret la biex niksbu l-indipendenza taghna u l-anqas biex ma mmutux bil-għal kaġun tas-sensji li se jrin jingħotaw. Skond l-aħħar figuri l-qagħad żjed tagħna u d-diportazzjoni għall-artijiet imbeġħda qegħda ssir kwazi kull ġimgħa.

F'Xifer Preċipizzju

Sadattant Borg Olivier għabba lil Malta bi dijn kbar u għadu jissellef, waqt li baxxa rasu għal dak kollu li ordonat il-Gran Brittanja. Il-bieċa karta li baġħat bhala protesta kontra s-sensji, ma kellha l-ebda effett fuq il-Gvern Inġliż. Il-Gvern jaf tajjeb kemm Borg Olivier jista' jiġġieled għall-indipendenza u kemm għandu għal qalbu l-pultruna tal-belus bl-isbah sal-arju. X'importa billi Malta tinsab f'xifer preċipizzju, se taq' għall-isfel!

Il-fit emendi li għab għall-konstituzzjoni ma għandhom l-ebda saħħa kontra l-Gvern Inġliż, la biex jinżammu s-sensji sakemm jinstab xogħol alternattiv u l-anqas biex intejjbu l-qagħda tagħna billi nircievu għajtna minn għand kulħadd.

Staffa għall-Gvern

Inġliż

Kemm ilu Borg Olivier fil-Gvern kollux kompli iddettorja. Conna ngħidu għall-amministrazzjoni kolonjali li hija dittatorjali. Forsi Borg Olivier bi-risponsabbiltà li wera u li qed

juri, bil-piż kbir li qed jgħabbi lil Malta, mhux qed jagħmel iżjed hšara mill-barranin?

Il-barrani hekk irid. L-ewwel farfar mill-obbligji li għand u lejna u issa halla lil Borg Olivier bi gvern Malti jaffronta sitwazzjoni bħal din meta hu qagħad wara l-paraventu. Borg Olivier qed iservi ta' staffa għall-Gvern Inġliż. Diga' saret hšara biżżejjed. L-iżbalji ta' l-amministrazzjoni kolonjali qed ibatihom kollha l-Gvern Malti. Quddiem il-poplu, l-Gvern Malti qed jidher bhala gvern in-kapaci, bhala gvern li qed jaqdi mill-koxxa lill-gvern inġliż.

Il-fitit titjib li se jsir fil-qasam soċjali, se npattu għalih qares. Din is-sena l-budget gie ipprezentat — wara li se jrin niddeju bhafna flus. Sena oħra li tinsab bhafna x'se naghmlu? U mbagħad darb'oħra meta ma jkollniex iżjed fuqhiex niddeju x'naghmlu? Immorru għaz-zalzett, jew!

L-iżbalji Tiegħu

Borg Olivier m'għandux għalfejn ikompli jgħaffeg iżjed. Ahna m'ahnix se jrin nakkuzawh ta' l-iżbalji li saru mill-

amministrazzjoni kolonjali, iżda l-iżbalji li għamel hu huma bhafna u tiegħu biss. Il-poplu Malti qed ibati l-konsegwenzi talli Borg Olivier:

1. Irriřfuta rappreżentant tal-G.W.U. meta tela' jiddiskuti Londra.
2. Isellef flus iżjed milli Malta tiflah tiddejjien.
3. Wara deħaffien u ġuffija fil-ġlieda għall-helsien.
4. Wara dan kollu, baqa' m'cappas fil-gvern, mingħajr ma għazel it-triq tal-unur u rriřzenja.

Lupa Kbir

Borg Olivier dejjem jista' jirriřzenja u jagħmel lok għal haddieħor aħjar minnu biex imexxi l-il-pajjiż għall-helsien u stabbiltà. Iżda dan Borg Olivier qatt ma jagħmlu. Il-lupa kbira li jibwa' fil-Gvern akkost li jħarbat ta' taħt fuq l-il-pajjiż tegħle kull sens morali u ta' rġulija.

Borg Olivier tela' għal erba' snin fil-Gvern Felezzjonijiet mahmuġa bi-indill tal-kleru. Jistgħu jgħaddu erba' snin.

Malta ma tibqax iżjed Malta tal-lum u l-biki tal-igħar ikun jinstreama' għand bhafna fammi u fit-triqat.

Jista' wkoll jgħaddi rih ta' siegħa li jnaddaf il-qiegħa kulha.

Jigri x'jigri, l-istorja tibqa' dejjem hemmi biex tfaħkarna fil-bierah, fil-lum u l-għada. U t-tradituri hadd ma jkun jista' jibdilhom isimhom, daqq kemm il-patrijotti hadd ma jkun jista' jneħhibom minn oħib ġensna.



Avviż lis-Sezzjonijiet

Il-Kaxxier Generali ta' l-Għaqda Zgħazagh Laburisti jinforma lli dawk is-Sezzjoni jiet li għadhom lura fil-hlas tal-gazzeti, badġes eċċ. Jgħu jħallsu malajr kemm jista' jkun biex ikunu jistgħu jsiru l-kontijiet tas-sena.

Il-Kaxxiera għandhom jħallsu wkoll il-membership tal-membri tas-Sezzjoni tagħhom u jagħmlu 'drive' għor biex dawk il-membri li għadhom lura fil-hlas jħallsu l-membership fee.

Il-Kaxxier ikun ku lli nhar ta' Sibt il-Headquarters tal-Partit, il-Belt bejn id-9 a.m. u s-1 p.m.

JOHNNY AZZOPARDE
Kaxxier.

Fig. 7. Labour Newspaper 2

THE WHIP

IL-FROSTA



2

ORGAN OF THE "LABOUR LEAGUE OF YOUTH" MALTA

DECEMBER, 1960



LEADER'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE TO THE LABOUR LEAGUE OF YOUTH

*A Very Happy Christmas
To All Our Readers*



OUR LABOUR LEAGUE OF YOUTH HAVE HAD SOME VERY HARD KNOCKS IN 1960. OUR OPPONENTS CHOSE TO STRIKE AT THE ROOTS. VERY QUICKLY THEY HAVE FOUND OUT HOW MUCH EASIER IT IS TO REMOVE SOME OLD BRANCHES THAN TO PULL OUT FRESH ROOTS WEDGED INTO OUR HARD ROCK.

Our Youth have withstood the test and emerged tougher and more serene. They have also learnt the importance of having close ties with our parent organisation; without these bonds a unified defence against the attacks of our enemies is impossible.

How to preserve their identity and at the same time carry their voices within the policy-making councils of our Movement is a delicate problem which only they can solve through many pain staking trials and errors. The progress made so far is promising.

The year 1961 will call out only for drive, enthusiasm and militancy but also, and to a much greater extend, for faith in our ideals and vision.

These are the very qualities which Youth can supply to invigorate and sustain the experienced but worn-out veterans on the front line. To do it unobtrusively, is to ensure complete success in this mission.

On behalf of the National Executive of the Maltese Labour Party, I extend to all the members of our Labour League of Youth, warmest greeting for a happy Christmas and sincerest wishes for a New Year full of successes in our common task to free this small island of ours from foreign domination.

DOM MINTOFF.

Fig. 9. Labour Newspaper 3

THE STRUGGLE



No. 8

Organ of "Labour League of Youth" (Malta)

March, 1960.

THE MALTESE CARNIVAL ORGANISED BY THE M.L.P. WAS

A THUMPING SUCCESS

THE THOUSANDS UPON THOUSANDS OF MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN WHO CRAMMED THE STADIUM ON SUNDAY AND TUESDAY CAN BEAR WITNESS TO THAT.

All the participants in the Carnival Parade were amateurs. They did not get one rusty farthing for the enormous work they bore. But WHERE THERE IS A WILL THERE IS A WAY. The wonderful show put by Labour Talent which was of a very high standard will not be easily forgotten. It was truly a Carnival to remember. On behalf of our Editorial Board and of the L.L.Y. we say "Well done! Everyone of you has won a place in our hearts.



Dom Mintoff presenting the cup to Mr. Tanti, Leader of the company in costume "Penguins Eek" of the M.L.P. Zefjun. Looking on are Leony Sant and Mr. Mario Miazzi (with cup in hand) who was co-leader of the company in costume "Id Duda" of the M.L.P. Tanti.

* A FITTING *
* CLIMAX *

THE MALTESE CARNIVAL FESTIVITIES REACHED A FITTING CLIMAX ON SATURDAY, 5th MARCH, WHEN THE M.L.P. HELD A SOCIAL EVENING AT THE BALLROOM OF THE HOTEL PHOENICIA. ON THAT DAY PRIZES (SILVER CUPS DONATED BY LABOUR ADMIRERS) WERE PRESENTED TO ALL THE COMPANIES WHO TOOK PART IN THE STADIUM CARNIVAL.

How all those present clapped as the leaders of the companies stepped up to the bandstand to receive their prizes! They were not merely clapping and congratulating those who gained first places. NO! They were saying "well done!" to ALL those who took part. And ALL of them deserved the thunderous applause they received — THOSE TRUE, LOYAL SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF MALTA.

The "Social Evening" started at 6.30 p.m. Even then the Ballroom was full to capacity. Likewise were the balconies which surround it. And whether the people were on the dance floor trying to dance to the rhythm of the music played by Jimmy Dowling and his orchestra (we say trying because it was almost impossible to move about in the thick crowd), or whether they were merely looking on,

everybody was having the time of his life. For it was an occasion free of ill feeling and rivalry. The spirit of brotherhood reigned supreme, enabling all those present to forget for the moment their troubles and tribulations, and to give themselves solely to having fun.

Later on in the evening our Leader dropped in. The tremendous ovation Dom Mintoff received as he stepped into the

ballroom illustrated clearly the great love and faith the people have in him.

After Mintoff delivered a short speech the fun started anew. Youths paraded round the hall proudly exhibiting their silver cups and inviting all and sundry to drink from them.

The revelry and fun went on till 10.30 p.m. when Dr. Anton Buttigieg, President of the M.L.P., thanked those present for all that they had done and bade them good night.

Fig. 10. Labour Newspaper 4