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WE reproduce entirely the following translation of the Electoral Appeal which the Executive Committee of the Nationalist Party has approved unanimously in Italian in its sitting of the 4th July 1947: -

"Electoral Appeal of the Nationalist Party to the People of Malta & Gozo"

Men and Women of Malta and Gozo!

THE HOUR has almost struck now for the holding of the elections under the new Constitution which will come into force after fourteen years of a dictatorial regime ushered in by the most iniquitous coup-d'etat of the 2/11/1933 and which will pass into our history accursed by generation after generation, so long as the Maltese People maintains itself worthy of its stock and civilization.

Recalling to your mind the unforgettable names of the many patriots who struggled and suffered for our hallowed National cause- from our Pater Patriae FORTUNATO MIZZI, founder and first leader of our glorious Party, to UGO MIFSUD who fell, in the full blast of war, on the field of duty whilst endeavouring in vain, in the Government Council, to save from an unjust and illegal deportation so many companions in nationalist faith and fight - the Executive Committee of the Nationalist Party launches this Appeal to you in order to spur you on, now more than ever before, to unite and coordinate your forces which the Imperial Government's policy has always sought to disperse and weaken often utilizing the help and slavishness of certain Maltese quite unworthy of the name.

The Imperial Government would have us take the new Constitution for self-government or autonomy. The truth is, however, that the new Constitution, which is much worse than that of 1921, is simply a very limited measure of Responsible Government which is but a mere shadow of self-government meant chiefly to screen from the public the activities and the responsibilities of the Imperial Authorities who, thanks to the numerous reserved matters and other restrictions quite incompatible with our autonomy, and mainly thanks to the diarchic regime, will continue into the future as in the past (with the only difference of acting behind the screen of a pretended self-government) dominating and regulating our affairs as well as controlling the situation for the purposes of their Imperialistic policy and for furthering what the Imperial Government considers are its own exclusive or main interests. We are all of us ready to acknowledge, by means of an Anglo Maltese agreement, the existence of certain legitimate Imperial interests so long as these are strictly limited to the defence of the Island, do not trespass over certain of our basic rights and do not imply the imposition upon us of a form of regime that is incompatible with our autonomy. The Maltese People can not and should not therefore, accept or gulp down the new Constitution without making, at least, all due reservations and protests. The Nationalist Party, which has always been the most loyal and bold exponent and upholder of national rights and- aspirations, did not fail to make such reservations and protests, quite clearly and - frankly in its memorials to Sir Harold MacMichael, the Constitutional Commissioner, and to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, as likewise it did not fail, through the Party Leader himself, to persuade the very National Assembly to pass unanimously at its meeting held on the 7th March, this year, a Resolution asserting the unquestionable right of the Maltese People to full political and administrative autonomy.

The British Government, of course, would have the whole world especially those independent nations within the Commonwealth, until lately known as Dominions, and the United Nations Organization believe that Malta has been given self-government, that is full political and administrative autonomy; but it is our interest to show the world the real truth, namely that the Constitution we are being given is only a limited measure of responsible government, and that what the Maltese People has, since many years, been clamouring for and has a right to get for ethnical, historical and civil reasons as well as on the strength of the principles mentioned

in the very Atlantic Charter signed in 1941 by the United Kingdom and the United States of America, is nothing short of what, up to a few days ago, was known as "Dominion Status", that is the same full and political autonomy which our first National Assembly had asked for from its very first historical meeting held on the 25th of February, 1919, and which the huge majority of the electorate in Malta and Gozo had asked for when they approved the Nationalist programme in the list general elections held under the 1921 Constitution in June 1932, when the people were free, at least, to give expression to their feelings and had not yet been subjected to that despotism and terrorism as well as fear which they underwent after the coup d'etat of the 2nd November, 1933, when the 1921 Constitution was withdrawn; and later in consequence of hostilities and the aftermath of war which, as we all know, has also influenced very much our second National Assembly formed while the war was still on.

With regard to its basic religious and civil principles, the Nationalist Party will always be loyal to those mentioned in its above quoted electoral programme of June 1932, later confirmed in the programme for the July, 1939 elections; but with regard to such reforms as have to be made in the new Constitution, until such time as our right to full autonomy is not recognised, the Nationalist Party means to insist at least for what its Executive Committee has already asked for or proposed in the Memorials forwarded the Commissioner MacMichael and the Colonial Secretary, which you all know of, as duly published on the 5th October of last year. The Party Executive is glad to note, anent these Memorials, that what is asked for therein, including what concerns the language issue, fully agrees in substance to what had been unanimously submitted to Commissioner Mac Michael and to the Colonial Secretary by other most authoritative constituted bodies such as the Chamber of Advocates, the Notarial Chamber and the Chamber of Legal Procurators.

It is common knowledge that, in order to combat the denationalizing policy of the Imperial Government which would have us dealt with as if we were of Arabic or Levantine descent and would therefore do away with all the characteristics of our glorious Latin civilization, the Nationalist Party must necessarily defend also our Italian culture, now hundreds of years old; nevertheless, the Party does not intend nor does it mean in any way to prejudice the English language the need whereof it has always acknowledged, and much less does it want to prejudice Maltese which is on the people's lips thereby being one of our characteristics which we must uphold and cultivate within the sphere of our national European individuality in the hope that, we will ultimately succeed, even if gradually, in finding a just and final solution to the language issue, the Executive Committee of the Nationalist Party, gives with pleasure its unanimous approval to the really moderate and conciliatory proposal recently put forward publicly by its Party Leader to the other opposing parties, namely the proposal that the teaching of Italian be reintroduced as a compulsory subject in the University, in the Lyceum and in the other Secondary schools, and at least as an optional subject in the Elementary Schools; and that, for the coming Legislature, the study of all other aspects of the language issue be entrusted to a Commission made up of competent persons who will undertake to carry out, upon oath, an examination of the whole question only from the point of view of the general interest of the Maltese people without any prejudice whatsoever, be it partisan or Imperialist. The outcome of the study of such a Commission may then be submitted for the consideration of Parliament or perhaps even submitted to you by National referendum provided this is organized with the utmost impartiality and guaranteed by a secret ballot. It would be difficult to imagine a more moderate and conciliative proposal than this; and the Nationalist Executive is hopeful that the Executives of the other Parties will approve of it as it has already been approved, after its publication in the 'Bulletin' of the 25th June last, by really prominent persons.

People of Malta and Gozo!

The Executive Committee of Nationalist Party has had, for obvious reasons, to give first place in this Appeal to the constitutional question which, in practice absorbs many other issues, but it acknowledges, of course, that there are other most important questions to be considered in the first place being the question of the

financial situation, the economic-social question and that about War damage and reconstruction, for in which latter, however, funds have already been for the most part assured; and all these questions will, during the coming Legislature, necessarily have to be put in the front line, and will practically absorb almost all the activity of the Government and of Parliament.

In the Electoral Programme of the candidates for the Legislative Assembly which the Nationalist Party intends to present to you, there will be submitted for your consideration the principal points concerning all these questions and other important ones, of an economic and social nature (particularly concerning the insurance of workmen against invalidity and old age; the building of other workmen's dwelling, and the relations between employers and employees). But it will, of course, be also necessary to develop public education and technical instruction further; safeguard public morality better; deal with the black market vigorously, and yet, at the same time, give to commerce all that it requires for its development, especially the freedom of commerce and competition with every country whereby can be brought about a reduction of prices in all imported commodities towards the desired reduction in the cost of living. Local industries however, will be also encouraged and protected in the general interest of both producer and consumer, and means will be found whereby capitalists will be made to start new industries such as would help to bring about, as much as possible, the economic emancipation of the Island. We will promote the development of the Maltese Mercantile Marine, the tourist movement, agriculture and fisheries; we will improve, to the best of our ability and as far as the country's resources and the great number of Government employees today will permit, all public services; we will do our best to render Government enterprises better paying concerns and less onerous on the tax-payer's back; we will give would-be emigrants full liberty to choose their new home abroad and will give them beforehand the necessary education to increase their chances of success there, but we will, first, and foremost, try to ensure bread and work for everyone in our own Island home. We will encourage the formation of cooperative societies and Trade Unions; we will insist with the Imperial Government for the return to the local Government of all such lands and buildings that are no longer required for the purposes of Defence; we will give out Government arable land on perpetual lease, and, with this end in view, we shall re-examine the plan which the Nationalist administration was about to put into application under the 1921 Constitution.

All these and other things besides will form part of the electoral programme which will be submitted to you by Nationalist candidates but as the question of taxation forms the main point of contention between the Right and Left parties that are, at the moment, opposing the Nationalist Party - which is the only Party that has known how to keep aloof from all egoistic interests of class or caste in order to better look after the general interest of the country, though it has always sought above all to raise, with true Christian democracy, both morally and materially, the humblest and neediest classes - the Nationalist Party Executive feels that it is worth while to make its views clear on the taxation question right now.

It is more than probable that the new Maltese Government will inherit from the present scandalous and disastrous Imperial Government administration, also the unpleasant necessity of having to fall upon the levying of additional taxation, but no Party can feel fully satisfied of the absoluteness of this necessity before it is returned to power and has been in a position to examine the financial situation in situ, so to speak, also with the help of loyal and able Government officials. Whichever Party is returned to power should feel it a duty, before it embarks upon the levying or not of new taxation, whether direct or otherwise, to see whether and, if so, how far it would be possible to bring about economy in the expenditure of administration which has now risen to the alarming sum of five million sterling per annum; as it should likewise feel it its duty to ensure the nature and entity of the Administration's credit, as well as to find out whether and how far can other public resources be increased or rendered more profitable.

The Nationalist Party is prepared to prove by facts, as it did when in power under the 1921 Constitution,

that the Maltese People are able to govern themselves and to administer its own affairs with wisdom, without asking for any financial help from the Imperial Government. It does not intend, therefore, to ask the Government in London for any Imperial grant, much less does it intend to accept certain other so-called grants which, as those recommended by Sir W. Woods, the Colonial Office financial expert, in the report of June 1916, would burden the Maltese Exchequer with enormous expenditure to the benefit, especially, of certain ill-concealed Imperial interests, and would give to the Imperial Government other pretexts for further interference in the control of our administration. The Nationalist Party will also refuse the so called "Imperial grant" on behalf of our University, for the real aim of the Imperial Government is that of controlling as much as possible, under the camouflage of autonomy, our highest cultural institutions, and of rendering practically impossible, by virtue of the law about the University introduced in the Government Council on the 3rd instant, all reforms whatsoever which the future Maltese Parliament would wish to make in the University in order to remedy as far as possible the evil consequences of the Imperialist policy. And yet, although the Nationalist Party has in mind the refusal of all such Imperial aid which is nothing but a sham of what real generosity should be, it means to insist with all means at its disposal to secure the settlement to us of all that is really due to us and that we have a right to claim from the imperial Government, which amounts, in the aggregate, to a sum far larger than what the Imperial Government is offering us, for quite different reasons, under the false name of "grants" which are being depicted to us as liberal and generous. In the first place, we have a right to ask for the return of the amount which the Maltese people, apart from many other services and administrative aid given to the Imperial Authorities during the war, had paid out in good currency to the local administration under the title of 'War Expenditure', whereof the Imperial Governor has refunded a good portion but has shouldered us with the balance which is about three million pounds, if not more! We have a right, also to claim that the financial settlement for damages suffered because of the war and for the necessary reconstruction be less unfair and more equitable than that which has been allotted to us by the British Parliament in February last with the passage of the 'Malta Reconstruction Act', in virtue of which the Imperial Government will pay out to us, across a number of years, (more than 25 perhaps!) the sum of thirty million pounds, that is some nine million pounds less than what had been reckoned with much reserve by Sir Wilfred Woods, the Colonial Office expert himself, when he was here in 1945. We have, besides, a right to claim, at least a reasonable annual interest on the amount of twenty million referred to in the said 'Malta Reconstruction Act', just as we are getting it on the original ten million, once the Imperial Government is not prepared to pay out the whole amount at once, but would deal it out in seemingly unending instalments. We have a right to contest the legality of the transfer to the credit of the Imperial Government from the War Damage and Reconstruction Account" of more than half a million pounds which, on the contrary, are due to the Maltese Exchequer; which transfer the local Government has recently carried out with the help of the bare official majority it enjoys in the Government Council, in the practically forced absence of nine out of a possible ten representatives of the people. We have also a right to claim from the Imperial Government the payment of a reasonable annual sum of money in compensation for the retention of all the lands, palaces and other buildings under its control, excepting of course such as are evidently and essentially of a military nature; and that all such contributions as will have to be made in Connection with the extraordinary works which the local administration shall undertake in the public interest but wherefrom the Imperial Services are bound to benefit to no small extent, be made in the shape of payments actually due to the Civil Administration for in services rendered, and by no means under the humiliating and untruthful titles of "grants" or "subsidies" or even "acts of grace".

It is understood also from official declarations made in the Government Council, that the Imperial Government does not intend to go on contributing, after the lapse of the present financial year, to the local administration for any part of the necessary expenditure to reduce the high cost of living, by reducing the price of certain essential commodities. This decision on the part of the Imperial Government is most unfair as this contribution for the reduction of the high cost of living was and is made also in order to compensate, up to a certain point, the limitation in the salary increases of thousands of employees dependant upon the Imperial Government, and

it is therefore not fair that this limitation in the wage increases should be made to the detriment of the Maltese Exchequer.

Evidently, there is more to add to the above, but it is considered that what has been outlined here is enough to show how, before the introduction of new taxation is taken in hand, it is necessary to carry out a thorough examination of our financial situation; to effect all due economy in the administration without any prejudice, of course, to public service and to claim from the Imperial Government all that is due to us by right, producing the necessary facts and figures and asking for such settlement unabashed, without any servility or renunciation, but also without asking for or presuming to get anything that we have no right to.

However, even if all this were to be crowned with the success it deserves, maybe it will not suffice to make us waive aside the necessity of levying new taxation. It is common knowledge that the disastrous consequences of a dictatorial regime to which we have had to submit for a good number of years, as well as the unfortunate circumstances of the aftermath of war and the needs to carry out the social reforms and other works outlined above, will most probably make us realize that there will be no escaping the levying of new taxation. Taking this into consideration it will be seen that taxation may be either direct or indirect or both, and the choice will have to be studied from the point of view of fairness and justice and from the immediate aims it is all meant to reach. In theory, at least, direct taxation is the fairest though, of course, it too has certain indirect effects. Nationalist leaders stated, over two years ago, to Sir W. Woods that the Nationalist Party is not in principle, against direct taxation. It is only public utility and public necessity that could possibly justify any Government to burden the people or a section thereof with taxation, but it would always remain just and humane that a Government which has to do it should seek to keep the poorer and needier section of the community from the burden it involves.

Men and Women of Malta and Gozo!

We have here put before you as clearly and sincerely as possible the views and principles we profess, taking into consideration the general interest of the country as a whole, without any materialistic selfishness, without any prejudice of either class or caste, without servility, and equally without any fear whatsoever. The time has now come for you to do your duty and help the NATIONALIST PARTY, both morally and materially, by giving it the opportunity to be able to put its noble aims into effect. The NATIONALIST PARTY is the only party that really deserves your support. The NATIONALIST PARTY, ever loyal to its principles and traditions, offers you the guarantee of a long and glorious past wholly dedicated to the defence of our Religion and Island-Home.

Long live Malta! Nationalism for ever!

Valletta, 4th July, 1947.

Avv. ENRICO MIZZI, Leader of the Nationalist Party and President ex officio of the Executive Committee.

Not. R. FRENDON RANDON LL.D. Honorary Secretary.