

NATIONALIST PARTY ELECTORAL PROGRAMME

MARCH 1966

In 1962 the majority of the Maltese and Gozitan electorate placed their confidence in the Nationalist Party. This confidence was endorsed and enhanced by the Referendum of 1964. The Party gave proof that it was worthy of this twice expressed confidence; it honoured its promises and gave to these Islands independence based on an essentially democratic constitution. In fulfilment of its promises the Party entered into a Defence Agreement and into an Agreement for Financial Assistance with Great Britain.

The Constitution safeguards human rights as established in the charter of the United Nations, assigns to the Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church its rightful place and ensures for the country a sound political basis for a democratic system through an Independent Constitutional Court.

Independence was the triumph for the aspiration of our people following a long and hard-fought battle waged by the Nationalist Party alone. It also meant the commencement of a no less harsher struggle for the advancement of our nation in the economic and social fields and for the freeing of our economy from its entire and long-lasting dependence on defence expenditure.

The Nationalist Government, which, therefore, succeeded, through Independence achieved in a peaceful and democratic manner, in providing once and for all a sound political and constitutional basis, is also providing with the assistance of United Nations experts, a full and detailed development plan.

Fundamental Principles:

The Nationalist Party places before the people the following fundamental principles on which it is going to base its political activity:

- A. The safeguarding of the Independence Constitution and consolidation of the democratic system of the country.
- B. A policy based on the principles of our Religion which guarantees the best relations between Church and State.
- C. The distribution amongst the entire population of the fruits of development and economic progress, according to the tenets of social justice, and on the basis of individual initiative and productivity. Greater improvement in the standard of living particularly in the case of the most needy.
- D. The defence of our civilization coupled with the development of national culture based on the European and Latin characteristics of our people; a continuous vigilance to protect the national heritage.

1. FOREIGN POLICY

The Nationalist Party firmly believes that Malta should not remain neutral in the ideological struggle between the Western block and other countries. Stability in the international field is a necessity for Independent Malta in the same degree as is internal stability. A Nationalist government, therefore, whilst maintaining the best relations with all countries especially those of the Mediterranean and particularly in the commercial field, shall continue strengthen the friendly relations with the Western countries and pledges itself:

1. To play its part so as to ensure the continued operation of the Defence Agreement with Great Britain in an atmosphere of alliance between the two countries.
2. To participate substantially in Commonwealth activities.
3. To keep on strengthening the association with N.A.T.O.
4. To contribute towards the success of the policy of the Council of Europe of which Malta is an active member and to look with interest towards the movement for a United Europe.
5. To continue to take a very active part in the activities of the United Nations Organization for the promotion of its ideals.

The principal aim of our foreign policy remains world peace built on the freely expressed will of the people on social justice and on economic security for all.

II. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Malta's economy cannot depend on the defence factor as it did in the past; the country must therefore diversify its national economy And must take advantage opportunities that may come its way in this field.

This change in the economy shall, in accordance with the Five-Year-Plan, be achieved by development in the three sectors of:

INDUSTRY - TOURISM - AGRICULTURE

This development plan is being aided by capital expenditure from Britain to the tune of £51,000,000 spread over a period of ten years, a sum which was acquired by the Nationalist Government along with Independence. The Nationalist Party does not only want to encourage Maltese capital but shall strive to continue attracting foreign capital into Malta to boost this development.

To achieve this two things are mainly required:

(1) Political and Social Stability in the Country

The Nationalist Party in power gave proof that despite the many and enormous difficulties it had to face throughout the past four years it was wise enough to tackle them successfully in good order and peace.

Order and peace in the country are essential in order to encourage both local and foreign capital to be invested in Malta thereby ensuring the sustained building of the national economy on solid foundations.

The Nationalist Party is the greatest guarantee for the continuation of the reign of peace and order amongst us and for the maintenance of political stability.

(2) An Intensive Programme in all the Spheres of the Economic Sector

To this end the Nationalist Party will take the necessary measures to ensure the following:

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

(a) A Central Bank and Banking Legislation:

A Central Bank shall be set up in Malta to take over the functions of the Currency Board and to be the

official depository on behalf of the government of Malta in all the international transactions between governments and between the Central Banks of other countries. Through a Banking law, the draft of which has already been prepared, following consultations which took place in Great Britain and America, the Central Bank will ensure that commercial and savings banks shall keep adequate deposits with it and that monies deposited by Maltese nationals are not invested without sufficient security.

After issuing the licences to those banks receiving deposits of Maltese nationals, the Central Bank will ensure that enough money is kept by these banks to meet all short-notice withdrawals; it will also encourage local investment by means of a reasonable policy regarding credit and will see to it that no monies are collected from Maltese nationals by foreigners for insecure investments. The Central Bank will encourage small investors to participate in highly profitable and government guaranteed official loans.

(b) Development Corporation:

One of the first steps that the new Parliament shall take will be the setting up of a Development Corporation which will be known as the Malta Development Corporation which will finance investment in Maltese industry, in the development of hotels and tourist projects and in agriculture. This corporation will promote and examine projects for which it will provide the necessary funds. To achieve this, funds received from the British Government will be made available to it; it will have a direct share in the capital structure of certain enterprises; it will sell those shares and it will assist in the formation of a market for industrial capital in Malta. It is expected that the Corporation will be in position to help bring about a more accelerated economic development especially in the industrial sector. The Nationalist Government has studied this matter intensively in conjunction with foreign experts and has also prepared the necessary legislation.

(c) Affiliation with the International Monetary Fund:

In the monetary field, Malta will become a member of the International Monetary Fund which regulates the values of the currencies of member nations in international exchanges. Thus, not only will the stability of the Maltese currency which will have world-wide official recognition be maintained, but Malta will hold a margin of safety in that the value of our pound will be amply safeguarded by a monetary authority which has the power to keep stable the value of currencies of great countries, like the sterling and the dollar.

In virtue of its being a member of the International Monetary Fund Malta will also be a member of the World Bank and of its affiliated organisations. Those organisations provide aid in no small degree to develop countries like Malta by means of loans to finance large projects, as in the case of our Power Station, and also by means of low rate international credit for purposes of development.

(d) Taxation:

A detailed study will be carried out in order to ensure a better functioning of the tax structure of the country, including Income Tax. The Nationalist Party premises that, compatibly with the exigencies of the country and with the development of the national economy, the local tax structure will continue to offer incentives to induce local investment. Special attention will be given to local industries and craftsmanship in order that those tiny benefit from newly invested capital by being subsidized and modernised.

(e) Free Port:

The creation of a Free Port is expected to make a major contribution towards the development of the national economy. The setting up of a Free Port will mean a new, modern and large port well equipped to cater for the large ships and tankers, and a place free from all sorts of commercial shackles where both large and small industries will be set up, as well as other establishments ancillary both to the port and to the

industries themselves. A Free Port will attract those industries with a potential for the export trade and those industries which specialise in the finishing or assembling of products meant for export. The Port will once more pave the way towards the creation of an 'entrepot' trade, a trade which Malta had lost and which when regained shall, together with the other projects of the Party, amply make up for the profits which Malta is forfeiting as a result of the reduction in British Services expenditure.

Apart from this, a free Port together with the registration of merchant shipping in Malta and with other facilities like the Dockyard and lumbering facilities will attract to Malta a considerable number of merchant ships and tankers with all the economic advantages that the presence of these vessels entail.

(f) Registration of Merchant Ships in Malta:

legislation shall be enacted which will offer special concessions to all those wishing to register their ships in Malta. International conventions shall be respected.

(g) Registration of Foreign Companies:

An exhaustive study will be made of the facilities which may be offered to foreign companies which register in Malta in order that those may enjoy benefits under special conditions.

(h) Purchase of Lands and Buildings:

The greater part of key plans has been already prepared and these plans are available to all for inspection. Modern building legislation will be enacted and the procedure for the issue of building licences will be simplified.

Town planning legislation will also be effected. The question of the purchase of land by foreigners will be deeply studied with a view to furthering the best interests of the country.

(i) Drydocks:

After successfully finding a temporary solution to the Dockyard problem which arose out of differences between the British Government and Bailey, the Nationalist Party will now take all necessary measures in order that a final solution to this question be evolved. Expansion and diversification work in the Drydocks will proceed in the interest of the nation and of the workers.

(j) Oil:

Legislation dealing with oil exploration and exploitation of the continent shelf will be immediately brought before Parliament. An offshore survey will be carried out to assess the prospects of oil deposits and all possible steps will be taken to induce companies to take part in exploration work.

TOURISM

The energetic tourist drive which the Nationalist Government carried out during the last legislature produced very good results, the good effects of which will be enjoyed to a greater degree over a long period of years to come.

The Nationalist Party will continue its herd in order to multiply the number of tourists coming to Malta by the best possible means, among which will be include:

(a) Aid to existing hotels.

(b) An improvement in sea and air transport between and Italy and other centres with a tourist potential. A study will be made together with other countries to consider the possibility of the exchange of tourists.

(c) Marsamxett Harbour and Manoel Island will continue be developed as yacht centres which shall offer competition to the best yachting centres in other countries.

(d) The best possible benefits will continue to be granted to further encourage the construction of new hotels.

AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES

AGRICULTURE

The agricultural programme of the Nationalist Party aims at achieving the following principal targets:

(a) to encourage our farmers by various means to grow these particular crops which are easily marketable and which will fetch the best possible prices.

(b) To ensure a decent price for crops by controlling the importation of foreign products and by fixing prices whenever the need for such a measure is felt.

(c) To subsidize by grants and loans; to assist by giving advice through the Extension Service, and by providing medicines; and also to supply water and electricity and to obtain fodder at cheap prices.

(d) To protect the farmer as much as possible against his having his fields expropriated and to maintain a policy of soil conservation.

(e) To strengthen existing co-operative societies and to encourage the formation of other such societies and to help these by financial, technical and administrative means.

(f) To encourage the exportation of agricultural products.

FISHERIES

The Nationalist Party will aid the fishing industry thoroughly and will help fishermen to attain a better standard of living.

In particular the following measures shall be taken:

(a) Grants and loans at a low rate of interest to fishermen to enable them to own their own fishing vessels, tackle and equipment.

(b) The building of modern houses and stores at moderate rents in the fishing districts of Malta and Gozo.

(c) Consultation and co-operation between the Department of Fisheries and the Naval Authorities to ensure the protection of fishing vessels and the payment of adequate compensation for damages.

(d) Maintenance of a fair price and market preference for fish caught by local fishermen. Deep freeze preservation of fish will also be encouraged.

III. INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

The Nationalist Party acknowledges the rights of the workers and of Trade Unions, and treats the relations between employer and employee in the spirit of the constitution of the second Vatican Council which deals

with the Church in modern times.

Whilst the right to strike will continue to be acknowledged, the Party is confident that during this period of the diversification of our economy and industrial development such a right will only be used as a last resort. The Party will also work to reach agreement in industrial dispute through conciliation, negotiation or arbitration.

The Nationalist Party intends to modify the Arbitration and Conciliation Act to provide for the speeding up of negotiations and to facilitate agreement between the parties concerned in trade disputes.

As for the Civil Servants, the Nationalist Party will take steps to ensure that those Trade Unions which are properly organized and which represent members in the service of the Government shall have adequate machinery to ensure proper negotiations regarding their conditions of service.

IV. HEALTH

Consideration will be given to the possibility of the introduction of a Health Insurance Scheme from which all citizens would benefit. A scheme that shall provide health services such as visits by physicians and dentists, visits by specialists; ante-natal and child-health clinics; medicines and hospitals. It is planned not to interfere with the free choice of one's physician. Consultations will be held with interested associations regarding the planning and implementation of this scheme.

More hospitals will be built and the existing ones will continue to be enlarged and modernized.

V. EDUCATION

A Nationalist Government will attach the greater importance to the education of the people particularly in the development of Independent Malta. Educational advance is the backbone of the nation; it provides a sound basis for the development of democratic institutions and constitutes an essential ingredient of economic development.

Until such time therefore as the promised report by the U.N.E.S.C.O. experts concerning suggestions for the reform and modernisation of the educational system is available a Nationalist Government proposes the following reforms:

(a) Primary Schools

These will be divided into Primary Schools for children between the ages of 6 and 11, and post-primary schools for children between the ages of 12 and 16. Whilst the system of teaching in the primary schools will be a uniform one, teaching in the post-primary schools will include vocational training.

(b) Secondary Schools

These will be divided into three categories: --

i Classical Schools

ii Technical Schools

iii Commercial or Modern Schools

(c) Sixth Form

The Sixth Form system will have to be extended so that a larger number of students would be able to reach the "A" level of the G. C .E. and to attract a larger number of students to the University or the other higher institution of education. Thus the percentage of those attaining higher levels of education will be increased.

A programme will be planned for the grant of bursaries to Maltese students for courses in the Royal University of Malta, in the College of Arts, Science and Technology and enable then to proceed to foreign universities. Thus Malta shall have sufficient number of graduates not only in the traditional professions of this country but also in the fields of teaching, economics, accountancy, science, mathematics, commerce and industry. These graduates shall be afforded opportunities for absorption in the public service to occupy positions of responsibility in industry, commerce and all other activities of the state.

VI. INCOME TAX

The Nationalist Party undertakes to appoint immediately a commission which will be as representative as possible, made up of members of Parliament and of the public and which shall be aided by experts from abroad, if necessary. This commission shall have the task to study in great detail the Income Tax law and to suggest amendments to its administrative procedure, with a view to lessen the hardships, burdens and undue inconveniences and to evolve a system of tax collection which will eliminate the hardship caused by the demand for full immediate settlement.

Until such time as the commission concludes its work, a Nationalist Government promises the following: --

- (1) A rise in the ceiling of personal deductions.
- (2) An increase in allowances for expenses incurred in connection either certain maladies and extraordinary expenditure connected with illness.
- (3) The existing children's allowance will be increased on a scale relating to their ages.
- (4) An increase in the maintenance allowance in respect of immovable property.

VII. EMPLOYMENT

Notwithstanding the fact that registration for employment has gone up as a result of discharges from the Services and also due to the fact that more females and young persons are registering for work, the Nationalists Government during the past 4 years created over 7,000 new jobs and today the number of persons working in Malta - 88,120 in 1965 - is greater than it ever was before. This shows 6,000 more people in employment than Prof. Stolper, the U.N. expert had forecast in his report. This same expert had also predicted that in 1965 the number of unemployed could be in the range of 9,100 to 11,900.

A Nationalist Government promises to continue in its tireless efforts to create more work and more jobs in order that when we reap the fruits of all that has been accomplished there shall be full employment in the shortest time possible. In the granting of aids to industries, the Nationalist Party will give preference to those industries which employ male workers.

VIII. SOCIAL SERVICES

LABOUR

A Nationalist Government shall improve the economic security of all classes. It shall therefore continue setting up Wages Councils to enable each and every worker in private industry to enjoy decent wages and

conditions of work to the limits which economic progress and productivity of the country permit.

The Nationalist Party shall strive to maintain the high standard in the material and moral spheres.

A decent home equipped with all the essential services for each and every family will remain the ideal of the Party; the building of new houses and the improvement of old ones will continue to be encouraged. Water, electricity, drainage and telephone services will be extended to all localities in Malta and Gozo.

PENSIONS

The Nationalist Party will increase old age pensions in those cases where there are no alternative sources of income.

The Nationalist Party will increase the rates of pensions payable to those who are injured in the performance of their work. The Nationalist Government guarantees that no Government pensioner will have his pension reduced when he becomes entitled to National Insurance Pension.

Some increase of pension will be granted to those government employees who had retired at a time when salaries and wages were very low.

IX. GOZO

As in the past, Gozo will enjoy all the benefits outlined above but the Nationalist Party understands that Gozo has its own particular problems which are: --

- (a) The system of administration.
- (b) Communications with Malta, with which is connected the question of tourism, and
- (c) The building of a new hospital.

Steps will be taken to ensure a greater and a more effective coordination between the various government departments.

Transport between Malta and Gozo will be improved and the next ferry contract will have to provide for more trips and more accommodation for the transport of motor vehicles. By way of improvement in this service the problem of the berthing of the ferry boat in all kinds of weather will be definitely decided. This problem is already being studied by a commission appointed by the Nationalist Government.

The building of a new and modern hospital has already been approved and work will start in a short time. The "Consultants' Service" will be improved.

There will be an increase in the aids to fishermen in Gozo ports.

A detailed study of the position of Co-operative Society in Gozo will be made with a view to assistance being provided.

X. GENERAL

The Nationalist Party is of the view that sport is essential to the character formation of our youth and that it is a healthy pastime for the people.

In this particular moment of the development of our country the need is felt for the construction of a national stadium and a Nationalist Government will take all necessary steps to ensure that this is achieved.

Work on the Kingsgate project leading to the reconstruction of the Opera House will be continued.

At the right time a study will be made with a view to preparing the country for the change-over to the metric and decimal system.

The Nationalist Party's aim of equal pay for equal work will be gradually implemented.

Public transport and the refuse collection system will be extended and improved.

A detailed classification of hotels and restaurants will be made and assistance will be given to small establishments connected with tourism to improve their sanitary service.

In the implementation of this comprehensive and all embracing programme which shall affect all parts of Malta and Gozo, the Ministry of Works will continue to take an active part and to devote all its energies in the creation of new work projects providing for further employment.

The Nationalist Party shall give concrete consideration to those suggestions from certain unions and associations which have not been included in this programme and which have reached the Party somewhat late in order to enable a proper study of their implications at this stage.