

Source: Brochure published by Progress Press, 1981

Four graphics and two photographs are omitted.

Ripe for Change

Nationalist Party Electoral Program Approved by the General Council on Saturday, 14th November, 1981

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POLITICAL AFFAIRS

1. FROM GOVERNMENT BY STATE MONOPOLY TO GOVERNMENT BY DIALOGUE IN WHICH ALL CAN FREELY PARTICIPATE

A Nationalist Government will be completely different from Mintoff's Government. The Nationalist conception of a proper role for Government in a democratic state is totally at variance with what Mintoff thinks a Government should be, and is entitled to do. We can best exemplify what Mintoff's notion of Government is, by reference to just one typical instance: the way he dealt with the Drydocks workers in June last year.

On that occasion he informed the Drydocks workers that there was the prospect of a financial loss on the year's trading out-turn of around one and a half million pounds. In fact it later transpired that the expectation was that there would be a profit of more than three quarters of a million pounds as in fact proved to be the case. Mintoff's Government is not given to volunteering information; it tends, in fact, to withhold or distort it, almost as if it believes that it is not in your interest to know too much about matters that directly concern you, possibly because the better informed you are the more likely you are to question and exercise your faculties of independent judgement.

The "reforms" which Mintoff proposed to force upon the Drydocks workers, because of the 'deficit' he had prospected to them, were in fact resisted and eventually shelved. It was an exercise in power politics which did not come off, but it was instructive, nevertheless, as an example of unprincipled Government. There was no attempt to consult with the workers, no attempt to reach an agreement with them, no attempt even to work through the Council of Administration in the Drydocks. The Mintoff Government simply determined upon a course of action and sought to impose it.

The Drydocks workers won this particular confrontation with Mintoff - but did they really? At the close of the year the workers got their long delayed revision of salaries and wages, and the workers were told that the revised rates took full account of the profit made that year. The increases, however, in total sum, did not add up to the total amount of profit made by the Corporation for the year. The workers have not been told where the balance of the profit has gone, though they have a right to know. They may be forgiven, therefore, for questioning what sort of workers' participation they really have in the Drydocks Corporation, and whether such participation adds up in practice to an exercise in partnership in any meaningful sense.

The Council of Administration of the Drydocks is supposedly in charge of affairs in the enterprise. In fact, however, decisions concerning the distribution of profits were clearly taken by the Government. Mintoff's Government, in disregarding legally established institutions, showed on this occasion the same sort of contempt that it has shown on others towards Parliament, the Courts of Law, the Church, and even other bodies supposedly autonomous established by itself.

There are some who refer to this sort and style of Government as "Socialist", yet perhaps a better way of categorising it would be to refer to it as State Capitalism. The Mintoff Government tends to run the country very much in the manner of a private capitalist, managing his own privately owned property, and seeking to maximise his own profit and not that of the country's citizens. The function of the citizen, in the Mintoff Government's book, is to serve the Government, and woe betide those who dare question its will or stand up to its whims. Government and citizens appear to be rival competitors in a race, with the Government prepared to stop at nothing in order to win.

Certainly this is not Government in any Christian Democratic sense. It is the complete antithesis of it. For there to be a truly democratic Government, a Government responsive to the sense, mood and wishes of the people, there must be in the first place, respect for truth and a recognition that the people of this country are entitled to be fully informed on all matters of Government which concern them.

A second requirement is that there should be a continuing and open line of communication between the Government and the governed, an uninhibited dialogue by means of which popular opinion can be sounded, opinions freely stated, and consensus attained wherever possible. A "Command" situation, where orders are transmitted from above for implementation without question is incompatible with respect for the freedom and dignity of the individual.

Thirdly, if there is to be true social justice, the resources of the community deriving from work must be apportioned not only among those who have contributed to production according to the extent of that

contribution, but also in a manner which would compensate as far as possible for the disabilities which the less fortunate members of the community suffer from through no fault of their own.

Fourthly, there must be proper respect for the institutions through which meaningful democratic dialogue can be conducted, so that law and order can be maintained, economic development planned and implemented, and future progress ensured. A Nationalist Government will be motivated by these principles in all its policies and their execution.

1.1 FROM GOVERNMENT BY STEALTH TO OPEN GOVERNMENT

A Government which behaves with proprietary arrogance towards the citizens of the country it rules is likely to have scant regard for the truth. It would be in keeping with the standards of such a Government that it should enter into a secret agreement with a foreign power, without informing its people or its Parliamentary institutions about it, and to continue to withhold information concerning such an agreement even when circumstances have led to a deterioration in relations between Malta and the foreign power with which we have this secret arrangement.

The Mintoff Government's distinguishing mark is its contempt for the opinion of others; it does not feel called upon to explain any radical shifts of direction in its foreign policy. We are on the friendliest of terms with a neighbouring country one moment and this country is described as behaving in a manner befitting our worst enemy the next. It is the same story with Italy: a country we could not trust at one time, because it was a neighbour of ours; and as it was possible that there might be a conflict of interests between us; they could not be relied upon to defend us. Yet the Mintoff Government was not averse, years later, to negotiating a "security" agreement with Italy which effectively gives them the discretionary right to determine if and whether they should intervene in circumstances where we may consider our security to be in prejudice. It is by no means certain that Italy has the military power to defend us. Yet Mintoff takes the occasion of this agreement to claim a major diplomatic triumph; and he calls this "foreign policy".

Even in its internal administration of the country, this Government has not been noted for its regard for the truth: in fact, in virtually dismantling the education establishments at secondary and tertiary levels, it has undermined the institutions where students are taught to think for themselves and to search for the truth. The management of the broadcasting media under this administration has reached unprecedented levels of banality, almost as if it was the deliberate intention of those in authority over the broadcasting system to ensure that those media do not in any way contribute to a broadening of people's minds, and to a raising of their standards of cultural and intellectual awareness. The Government's Information Department has not been very forthcoming where information about the running of Government is concerned.

A Nationalist Government will be an open Government. In accordance with modern practice in the most advanced democratic countries abroad, Government files and other official documents will be available to the citizen if he is the individual they concern, even in court cases where one of the contesting parties is the Government. Official documents will only be withheld when this is absolutely essential for national security and similar over-riding reasons of public interest. Information available to the Government should as a rule be given as wide publicity as possible, saving such information as may harm the legitimate interests of private persons. In its economic dimension the availability of information is particularly important because rational decisions must rest on an evaluation of relevant data. It is important that public opinion should be given all the information and facts it is entitled to have, just as it is important that the information and facts should be the whole truth and nothing but the truth. The stress we place on information and truth is linked to the great importance we attach to the provision of education on as broad and as free a basis as possible. It is relevant no less to an improvement in the quality of broadcasting, to a furthering of the freedom of the press, and to the development of communications in other ways, so that our people can form their own opinions

intelligently, in the manner of people having control over their own destiny.

1.2. FROM GOVERNMENT BY DIKTAT TO GOVERNMENT THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

A Government which considers itself vested with almost absolute powers - powers of ownership over the country it governs - feels little compulsion to communicate with the people, let alone to give them the true facts when it does. Communication implies a willingness to listen, to discuss, to attach due weight to what others have to say. It is difficult to appreciate the need for communication and dialogue if you start off from the premise that there is only one mind that matters, only one opinion that counts, that is worth having. Nor are you likely to be disposed to hear the other side if you are the sort of person who says, as a Labour Party Paper once did, when the University was ravaged and dismembered, that our intellectuals should be put into deep freeze. If you really do think development of the intellect is something to be discouraged, then it is easy to understand how such an attitude can breed arrogance and contempt, to the point where you might well feel that those who disagree with you should be brought into line by pressure and force if need be. Mintoff professes to respect freedom of thought, freedom of conscience, and to be committed to the ideals of democracy. He has even styled himself a "professor of democracy", and one of his favourite ripostes when called to account for some act of intolerance is to say in effect: "What are you grouching about - I haven't locked you all up in prison have I?" We are, it seems, expected to be grateful for small mercies.

What Mintoff chooses to overlook is that if we (who have done nothing that warrants imprisonment) are out of jail, so too are the thugs that beat us up, burnt our clubs, and the people who have made fortunes out of corrupt practices. Many of those who have minds of their own, and who chose to think with them, have left, in what has amounted to a mass exodus, the Government service, the nationalised banks, the educational sector, the medical service, the police force, the General Workers' Union and even the Cabinet. Their places in the Government service have been taken by foreigners and "yes men", often paid exorbitant salaries to do the jobs which their Maltese counterparts were doing much better for much less.

In many ways this is colonialism again at its worst, and we did not struggle for, and win, independence just to have one man free to lord it over us now as if the country were his own private property. Independence was for everybody and human rights are there to be exercised by all. Mintoff's brand of liberty fits in perfectly with the highly selective information practises of his Government. Its statistical service has lost all credibility. Nobody accepts that the Government's cost-of-living index provides a true measure of price movements any more than anybody accepts that the Government's measure of unemployment provides a true measure of those without employment, and who are actively seeking it.

A Nationalist Government would cherish a different concept of freedom. Freedom should not mean that one person sitting in his ivory tower at Castille is free to exercise sole and full power over the rest of us: on the contrary, it should mean that all citizens have the opportunity to develop their talents and to express themselves and their personalities in partnership with their fellow citizens. The Government is there to see that this takes place. Certainly it is not the Government's function to suppress all initiatives other than those which have its immediate backing, or which originated under its direct sponsorship, flowing from the uniquely fertile mind of the head of Government himself.

It is the Government's duty to protect all citizens, particularly the weak against the strong, not to seek to stifle the creative instincts of others. Indeed the Government should see itself as a catalyst for the bringing together of different minds and different view points, so that out of free discussion plans can be drawn up which would direct to the public good the capabilities and initiatives of all. The efforts of individuals, in isolation from others, can only be of limited value: these efforts, however, put together and coordinated within the framework of a national plan can be rendered much more productive.

A Nationalist Government will be guided by two principles which express its commitment to extend the practice of democracy from the political to the economic and social spheres as well.

The first principle is that the right to control, to direct and to partake of the fruits of work, should be reserved to those who in some way contribute towards the productive activity of the particular enterprise. The second principle is that we recognise the right of the owners of capital to receive adequate compensation for its use.

1.3. FROM GOVERNMENT BY PATRONAGE TO GOVERNMENT ON THE BASIS OF EQUALITY

Without respect for the truth and without liberty there can be no true justice. Mintoff's Government has thought fit to instil in the public mind the belief that if somebody gets a job, an increase in wages, or some sort of permit or licence, all of which he is in fact entitled to receive as a matter of right, he should nevertheless consider himself beholden, should feel that he has received a favour, a gift, out of the kindness of the Government's heart.

We see this blatantly in evidence in the way the National Insurance Scheme has been projected. The benefits we are all getting under that Scheme, whether by way of pension, bonus or health service, are benefits we ourselves have paid for; yet Mintoff would have us believe that we are getting these benefits, these services, purely out of his Government's generosity and compassion. This humbug is a mockery of the idea of justice, whether social or distributive. Nobody can testify to this with greater authority than those who have been employed in the Government sector over the period of the Mintoff administration.

A Nationalist Government will seek to bring about social equality, through eliminating or compensating for natural or educational disadvantages arising from birth or other circumstances. This does not mean that we are in favour of "sameness": on the contrary, we recognise that every individual has his particular endowments, which may differ from those of others, his own deep desires, his own plans. But a Nationalist Government will strive so that everybody, and especially those who are disadvantaged in one way or another, should have both scope and opportunity for the fulfilment of their respective talents and personality. In redressing imbalances between the resources of citizens, in rehabilitating the emarginated, in providing services for the younger members of society, for those who have gone past working age and for others who, for one reason or another, find themselves handicapped by circumstances, the Government is doing no more than putting elementary social justice into practical application. By restoring equitable balance to the scales of welfare the Government is only fulfilling its duty and obligation to see that they are not at any time tipped too heavily against the disadvantaged and less fortunate members of the community.

A Nationalist Government would subscribe to the principle that the wealth of the world we live in belongs to, is the common heritage of, mankind in general. It is this consideration, this awareness, which led us during our last term of office to take the initiative in the United Nations to secure acceptance of the principle that the enormous resources lying in the seabed in areas outside national waters should be exploited for the common benefit of all, and the proceeds used, under United Nations auspices, to bridge as far as possible the enormous gaps which have developed between rich and poor countries. This was an initiative with enormous and far reaching implications. We have seen its relevance in a matter which concerns us intimately, in the context of the dispute which has arisen between Malta and Libya over offshore oil prospecting rights.

The Nationalist Party does not believe that the resources of the Maltese Islands belong to the Government of the day; they belong in our view to the people who have created these resources by the sweat of their labour. In shaping its social security policies and system a Nationalist Government will at all times heed the fact that the human dignity of the persons being assisted must be respected. We will guard against the pitfall of "anonymity" - of losing sight of the fact that the people we deal with are individuals, distinct human beings, and

not 'things', anonymous numbers to whom a pension or other service is to be given. The state will not seek to usurp the vital function of the family, nor will it set aside the efforts of the voluntary societies and organisations in the welfare field. These voluntary societies render an essential complementary service which can only be adequately provided if those who give it are imbued with a true sense of dedication and sacrifice, which in the nature of things one is more likely to find in a volunteer than in a paid worker.

1.4. FROM GOVERNMENT BY TENSION TO GOVERNMENT BASED ON RESPECT FOR RIGHTS

A Government which behaves as if it owns the country - in the manner of a capitalist, who considers the national heritage his own property, and not that of the community in general - is unlikely to respect truth, liberty and justice as binding principles of action. It is no surprise therefore that we find such a Government totally ignoring public opinion, administering our national affairs inefficiently, and prejudicing our future by undermining those institutions which directly bear on the capacity of our society to develop and evolve in an orderly manner.

This Government blunders from crisis to crisis, generates quite unnecessary tension and anxiety, and seems to go out of its way to induce a pervasive feeling of uncertainty as to what the future holds in store for us. Inevitably the cohesion of our social structure is shaken, the moral fibre of our people is eroded, and the way is laid wide open for the unabashed practise of crude patronage and open corruption. Politics becomes synonymous with lust for power, and political life a path by way of which unmerited material advantage can be more easily obtained.

Our laws have become cluttered with provisions which leave substantial powers of delegated legislation - by regulation - to unfettered Ministerial discretion, to be exercised as and when they see fit. This delegation to Ministers of power to regulate has been carried to the point where Parliament has effectively abdicated to the Government a substantial part of its substantive role, which is to legislate and to control the exercise of the powers vested in the Executive in terms of those laws. The ordinary citizen has now been denied the right, even, of challenging the exercise of Ministerial discretion, so that he does not any longer have the right to recourse to judicial process should he feel that Ministers have used their discretionary powers abusively. A review of all these laws, and regulations stemming from them will be undertaken so that the true concept and spirit of the rule of law can once again prevail.

A Nationalist Government will have to pick up the pieces and rebuild anew. Inevitably it will have to be a phased process of recovery. There is so much to put right. The more glaring abuses, the more urgent tasks, will have to be tackled first, while we embark on the longer term programme of national reconstruction and rehabilitation. The Constitution of independent Malta will have to be improved and strengthened to provide for greater popular participation through dialogue and for a more equitable participation by all in the fruits of what life has to offer.

2. AN ESSENTIAL BASIS FOR DIALOGUE

2.1. INFORMATION

Information is the key to all progress in today's world. Mintoff's Government has seen to it that this key is kept securely away from popular reach, it has sought to bar access to information, to confuse people's minds, to camouflage its policies, so as not to let the people realise just where they were being led to.

A Nationalist Government will draw up a national information plan, on the basis of the UNESCO model of

September 1974. The primary aim of this national plan will be to ensure that our people get full right of access to whatever information they may seek or may need.

We will seek to co-ordinate on a national basis all library facilities now provided by public institutions, we will properly organise and centralise the archives in which official public documents are stored, we will set up new documentation services, and we shall have an Advisory Board to help Government systematize and organise the diffusion of information from public sources on as efficient and as effective a basis as possible.

We shall set up centres of information at district level in various parts of Malta and Gozo. These centres of information will be at the disposal of the public, not only to provide information as such, but also to advise on problems that citizens may have concerning the exercise of their rights under the law, concerning doubts regarding their entitlement to social security benefits, concerning matters of interest to the consumer, matters such as prices and quality standards, etc. These centres will be under the charge of local Councils which we propose to set up, which Councils are referred to later in this Programme.

2.2. BROADCASTING

The Mintoff Government has reduced broadcasting in Malta to a sorry state. Never has quality been so low and never has the content of broadcasting been so brazenly partisan, to the point where it offends all sense of democratic propriety. There are several things which are wrong. In the first place the Corporation responsible for broadcasting in Malta is subject to direct Ministerial orders. Secondly the Broadcasting Authority has been put in a position where it can no longer effectively attend to its duties and carry out its statutory functions. Thirdly, appointments within the broadcasting sector have been unjustly and absurdly coloured by political considerations.

A Nationalist Government will correct all this:

Broadcasting will be hived off from Telemalta and managed by a Corporation made up of people competent in broadcasting, and capable of acting without political bias. The Board so constituted will not be required to take orders from any Minister.

ii. The Broadcasting Authority will be permitted and required to run its business once again without any sort of political leaning. The quality of programmes as far as information, education and entertainment is concerned should be substantially raised above their present abysmal levels.

iii. We will encourage the formation of groups of citizens who will act as unofficial monitoring boards, assess the quality of the programmes being broadcast, and thus bring public influence to bear directly on the choice and type of programmes being shown on the broadcasting media. Air time on the media will be reserved for those bodies and societies which feel they have ideas to project which would be of interest to the listening and viewing public, and such associations and bodies will be-assisted to avail themselves of the broadcasting opportunities put at their disposal in the most effective manner.

2.3. FREEDOM OF SPEECH

On assuming office the Mintoff Government found a set of laws relating to freedom of speech which dated back to the Colonial era, and which were being progressively withdrawn as circumstances allowed by the Nationalist Administration. Mintoff chose instead to keep these laws in being, and he even went to the extent of reinforcing some of them so as to further weaken the citizen's position vis a vis the Government. The Press law had been drawn up by the British Government on the eve of the last World War in order to be able to gag anti-Government sentiments publicly expressed. Mintoff has given a further dimension to these laws by insulating the Department of Information, in the exercise of its official functions, from the effects of the law of

libel when commenting or making statements about private parties. The imbalance between citizen and Government has thus been heavily accentuated, since the citizen is vulnerable to libel action in situations and circumstances where the Department of Information, speaking and acting for the Government, is not. Today's law barely permits criticism of the Government, without exposing the person who criticizes to a charge of incitement; the official organs of information, on the other hand, can say what they please about private citizens, can do this in the most damaging manner, and yet are immune from legal proceedings. A Nationalist Government will redress this imbalance and will permit full freedom of expression to all in accordance with the true spirit of the laws concerned, and of the Constitution, respecting the right of freedom of speech.

3. A FRAMEWORK OF DIALOGUE

3.1. THE CONSTITUTION

The Constitution of Malta was designed to provide a framework within which democratic life in Malta could really function, but the spirit of the Constitution was not sufficiently firmly established to be able to survive and thrive under Mintoff's Government, and to safeguard the citizen against outright trampling on his rights.

A Nationalist Government will seek to instil in the people a greater awareness of the spirit which motivates it; it will also seek to involve the people in its revision, in order to ensure that the Constitution is not only respected but also improved and strengthened where necessary.

The 21st of September, Independence Day, will again be reinstated as Malta's National Day.

3.2. HUMAN RIGHTS

A Nationalist Government will subscribe without further delay to the convention regarding Human Rights which already binds other countries within the compass of the Council of Europe. The effect of this subscription will be to permit any Maltese citizen, who may feel that his fundamental rights as a human being have been aggrieved, to put his case before the European Court of Human Rights. Such Human Rights may still be prejudiced by laws of the Colonial era, which have until now enjoyed a privileged status under our Constitution. Such laws will no longer be sheltered. It will also be necessary to amend the relevant section of the Malta Constitution to add discrimination between the sexes to the other forms of discrimination which the Constitution specifically prohibits.

3.3. STRENGTHENING OF PEOPLE'S RIGHTS

The Constitution will also need to be strengthened in other respects:

- i) It will be necessary for instance to reinforce the guarantees relating to the independence of the Courts of law, and to the independence of other tribunals and commissions set up by the Government, because recent experience has shown that the guarantees, as they are now, do not provide adequate safeguards against political interference and pressures.
- ii) It will be necessary as well to ensure that the citizen is given adequate protection against abuse of power by the Executive. iii) The Auditor General must be given further powers so that he can fulfill more efficiently his duties as watchdog over the use of public monies by the Government.
- iv) There are various provisions in the Constitution which require the Government of the day to 'consult' the Opposition before taking action. The term consultation has tended in practice, under the Mintoff Government, to be arbitrarily construed and has become virtually meaningless. A more precise and meaningful definition is

called for.

These changes will form part of a wider exercise in the course of which, subject to approval by the people, the Constitution will be generally reviewed, so as to ensure that it reflects at all times the fundamental moral values to which the Maltese people as a whole subscribe.

4. DIALOGUE AT THE TOP

4.1. PARLIAMENTARY SUPREMACY OVER GOVERNMENT

A Nationalist Government will seek to restore to Parliament the dignity, the respect and the authority which have been so sadly eroded since Mintoff came to power. A Nationalist Government will in no way inhibit, the Opposition from exercising its constitutional role and duty of opposing; it will honour its obligation to answer freely and fully whenever questions are put to it in Parliament, and will deal fully as well with all criticism levelled against its policies or actions by the Opposition; it will make it its business to keep Parliament fully informed at all times about all aspects of the Government's work and its handling of the administration of the country; it will seek to give Parliament a more meaningful role in the enactment of legislation, as well as in the control by Parliament of the exercise by Ministers and Government departments of powers vested in them by legislative delegation. Parliament should be the place where the free interplay of dialogue can find fullest expression at the political level.

4.2. BETTER ORGANISATION OF PARLIAMENTARY BUSINESS

A Nationalist Government would like to see Parliament functioning more effectively. We deplore the way Mintoff has steamrollered Parliament over the past ten years, especially when it was dealing with vital aspects of Government business. We intend to make the accountability of Government to Parliament less of a fiction than it has been in Mintoff's time.

We will therefore appoint Permanent Parliamentary Committees to consider the more important aspects of Parliamentary business (such as expenditure of public monies, foreign affairs, etc.). The Committees will be able to go into the subject matter in greater depth and will be able to take all the time they need to arrive at considered judgements. Ad hoc Parliamentary Committees will also be set up from time to time to consider the provisions of draft laws in greater detail than limited Parliamentary time allows, to examine problems or projects which come under Parliamentary review, so that the House as a whole can take more informed decisions regarding such laws, problems and projects. They will, on conclusion of their investigative function, report to Parliament.

These Committees will have at their disposal whatever relevant information the Government may be in a position to provide, and they will be free to take expert opinion, as well as to sound the views of people considered knowledgeable and who have a legitimate interest in the matter being considered.

5. OTHER TOOLS OF DIALOGUE

5.1. LOCAL COUNCILS

Mintoff's Government, not so long ago, was talking of setting up a network of "Neighbourhood Committees". It would seem that this proposal has been set aside, quite possibly because certain interested parties came to realise that these Committees, if established, would seriously limit the scope for the exercise of political

patronage.

A Nationalist Government, in accordance with its proposed plan to decentralise the exercise of administrative power wherever possible, will, after taking soundings of public opinion in the various districts of the Maltese Islands, set up Local Councils. These Councils will be elected by the people who live in their respective areas, and they will be given specific functions, functions which will be consultative in some respects and executive in others. If necessary, the Councils of certain localities may have their powers extended by special statute. This will be done in accordance with the principle of 'Subsidiarity' - a basic principle of Christian Democratic thinking since its very earliest days. The principle of 'Subsidiarity' - a basic principle of Christian Democratic thinking since its very earliest days. The principle of 'subsidiarity' means that decisions should not be taken at a high level whenever they can be taken by an authority at a lower level and closer to the people directly affected by such decisions.

5.2. VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS

The Nationalist Party has always expressed its warm appreciation of the good work being done by the many voluntary associations or groups of citizens set up to further the ends of some particular cultural or welfare objective. Under no circumstances will the Nationalist Government seek to limit or inhibit the work of these organisations, or try in any way to bring them under Government control; on the contrary it will, in consultation with these bodies, amend the law wherever necessary, so that voluntary bodies of this sort will be able to develop and extend the range of their activities, thus enriching the social life of our country.

6. ORDERLY DIALOGUE

Mintoff has never been able to clearly distinguish between the role of the Armed Forces and that of the Police Corps. He has confused the two and introduced an unnecessary overlap between them: the end result has been that today neither the Armed Forces nor the Police can function as effectively as they should. A Nationalist Government will once again revert the Armed Forces to a purely military role, and will require the Police to stick to purely police work.

6.1. THE ARMED FORCES

The role of the Armed Forces of Malta should be clearly defined. The Armed Forces are there so that, in case of need, they can defend the Airport until outside aid can reach us; to defend the coastline and our territorial waters; to provide a skeletal framework around which the Armed Forces can be built up in the event of mobilization; and to assist the internal security forces in situations where their particular training and equipment enables them to provide appropriate back-up support. Mintoff's views on the Armed Forces have undergone change. His first inclination was to see no need at all for land forces except as parade material; later on, he realised that our Armed Forces, small as they are, can yet serve a useful function in certain types of emergency. It was then, however, that he reaped the fruit of his improvident policies over the preceding years: he had long denigrated the trained officer element and had driven most of them into early retirement or resignation; the trained officers were replaced by political appointees who were left totally untrained and are, therefore, totally unfitted to function in an operational military capacity; so what we have now is a Corps which is undisciplined and ineffective as a military force. Mintoff's answer to the problem he himself had created was to merge the Armed Forces in effect with the Police. This however is no solution. A Nationalist Government will again revert our Armed Forces to their proper role, and train them up to the standards of the highly professional military establishment they once were. The conditions of service of the Armed Forces will be tailored to the sort of work they perform and the exigencies of the service they render. The Armed Forces

will once again be placed under the command of competent officers, trained in the latest systems of modern warfare suited to the limited role they will be required to undertake.

6.2. THE POLICE FORCE

The role of a police force is to maintain public order, to assist in the rendering and enforcement of justice, and to protect all citizens without distinction. The police force has been burdened with work quite extraneous to the nature of police work as such. It has been involved in the certification of sick employees who are absent from work, a job which was formerly done by the doctors, and has been subjected to a great deal of political interference.

Transfers of personnel from other departments of Government is no way to build an efficient police force.

Police work requires specialized training. Where this has not been given a Nationalist Government will see that it is provided. Within the Corps, promotions should be given on strictly objective and defined criteria. For the police force to be able to cope with its own work, let alone with such other extraneous work as is thrust upon it, it is necessary at all times to see that the establishment is kept up to full strength. The police force is so depleted today that certain police stations are only functional for a limited number of hours each day. This cannot be permitted to continue. A Nationalist Government will revise the conditions of service of the police force so as to relate them strictly to police work, and to the burdens inherent in such work. Among other measures envisaged will be the restoration of the right of a member of the police force to retire, when he is entitled to do so, without facing the prospect of a reduction or abatement of pension, should he decide to seek gainful employment elsewhere, after retirement from the police force at an age below the normal retiring age of other Government employees. A Nationalist Government will enable the police force to recover its self-confidence and self-respect, and regain the esteem of the entire nation.

7. EFFICIENT IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS

7.1. THE CIVIL SERVICE

Mintoff's Government not only wrought havoc on the Armed Forces and the Police Corps - the uniformed elements of the public service - it also made a shambles of the non-uniformed element; the Civil Service. A large number of the best elements of the Civil Service, unable to adjust to the new system, and demoralized by the lowering of standards of honesty and efficiency to which they had long been accustomed, felt compelled to leave the service. Most civil servants in Government departments nowadays do their work in an entirely routine fashion, and give it as little as they can or they must: except in circumstances where private interests are being served, instead of the good for the community as a whole.

A Nationalist Government will clean up the mess and sanitize the environments which have been contaminated. The deterioration of standards of the Service has now reached a point where even those departments which have become totally politicised are no longer able to serve their political masters with the same measure of efficiency that was once possible.

A Nationalist Government will see that those who suffered injustice on account of political discrimination, or for some other reason, will be duly rehabilitated.

It is recognised that if the Service is to rise once again to its former levels of efficiency and proficiency it will need to attract a large intake of new blood, suitably trained and motivated. This will be facilitated by way of a general revision of salaries and conditions of work.

Recruitment and promotion procedures will be reviewed and reestablished on purely objective foundations, after consultation with the unions and interests concerned. Political favoritism in any shape or form is out.

The Civil Service will again be a general service in the conventional and traditional sense. Specialisation in particular areas or types of work will not be permitted to prejudice the service-wide career prospects of the civil servant, and all civil servants will be given the opportunity to broaden their experience and to fit themselves for promotion and higher responsibilities in the course of working out their career. A distinguishing feature of Government at political level over the past ten years has been the arrogance of those in power; some of this arrogance has rubbed off on to the civil servants, even those at very junior level, and this must be firmly corrected, because the public expects and will be given a truly 'civil' service in every sense of the term.

7.2. WORKS COMMITTEES

A Nationalist Government will give full scope for the exercise of initiative, for the generation of ideas, and for the making of proposals regarding methods and conditions of work by the employees themselves.

In 1978 Works Committees were elected in the various Government departments in order to advise Ministers on methods of increasing productivity and other matters. Circumstances since then have given rise to serious doubts as to whether it was even the Government's intention to introduce democratic procedures in Government departments. One outcome of these elections for instance was that a number of those who were elected to these Works Committees - persons who apparently the Government was not pleased to see there - found themselves transferred to other departments, on grounds of "Service exigencies" as the Government put it. In any event these Works Committees have not in fact been given any opportunity to participate in meaningful decision taking. It would seem that Mintoff's object in setting up these Committees was really to push out the Unions which were refusing to be cowed and were pursuing an independent line. When this ploy failed the Government's answer was to put these Works Committees into suspended animation.

A Nationalist Government will review the whole system under which these Works Committees are supposed to have been established, will remove its undesirable features, and will seek to use the Committees as effective instruments of workers' participation.

8. THE RULE OF LAW

8.1. ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

Over the past ten years there have been a number of disquieting developments in the Judicial sector. For three years we were without a Constitutional Court, and on other occasions we have seen other Courts effectively suspended owing to the transfer of the presiding Judge or Judges to other duties. This sort of heavy handed intervention by the Executive has led to the suspicion that other tampering with the administration of Justice has taken place, or is possible, and has given rise to the feeling that it is pointless to take the Government to Court, even when you have every reason to believe that you should win the case on its objective merits.

Mintoff's Government has enacted a law in terms of which the Courts are debarred from taking cognizance of cases where Government officials may have manifestly abused their powers in the exercise of discretion vested in them under some particular law, possibly acting under Ministerial duress.

Mintoff's Government has spoken about the Courts on many occasions in such derogatory terms as to seriously undermine the standing of the Judiciary; in terms which clearly betray a lack of the sort of respect

one normally expects to see shown to the Judiciary by the Government of a supposedly democratic country. The Judges themselves haven't always managed to safeguard the dignity of the high office they hold in the service of justice in our country.

The Maltese people have seen the police force often reduced to the status of an instrument in the hands of Government, and they have heard the Government openly state that criminal proceedings will not be instituted against thugs who have indulged in the grossest forms of violence, on the flimsy and quite untrue pretext that these thugs had been provoked into doing what they did.

A Nationalist Government will see that the Courts of Justice and the police force will once again be able to act with full efficiency and without improper interference from any quarter. It will also ensure that civil servants are not allowed to enjoy undue privilege in the exercise of their duties. It is necessary that there should be more Judges and Magistrates who enjoy public respect and esteem, especially from the Government which itself appoints them.

The police should act, and should be seen to act, not only in accordance with the letter but also in accordance with the spirit of the law and of the Constitution. Citizens must not be denied their liberty and cannot be kept under arrest for unduly long periods without any specific charges being brought against them.

8.2. REHABILITATION OF PRISONERS

There has been a disquieting increase in the rate of crime over the past few years, stemming largely from social, economic and in some instances even political circumstances. Our first priority will be to arrest this trend by tackling its root causes, but we must also strengthen the capability of those concerned with the apprehension of offenders to do their job effectively. The object of justice should not be vindictive; it should rather be directed towards rehabilitation through re-education. The punishment must fit the crime and it should serve to deter, but a reformed criminal should once again be enabled to take his place as a useful member of the community.

We will reform our penal approach on the basis of the most progressive systems abroad, in accordance with the recommendations of the Council of Europe. Prison sentences should not be imposed if other measures can equally serve to bring about the desired change of conduct in an individual. Where prison sentences are deemed appropriate young persons and first offenders should as far as possible be kept totally apart from the more hardened criminal elements.

The prison regime must aim primarily at rehabilitation and reeducation. The point of giving prisoners work to perform is not just to keep them busy, but also to teach them skills relevant to the finding of suitable jobs on the labour market, and to prepare them positively for social integration in a normal working environment when they leave. Prisoners must be encouraged and enabled to make good use of their leisure time. Prison officers must be suitably trained for their difficult 'mission' of supervising and actively promoting the rehabilitation of persons who have taken to crime.

A Nationalist Government will ensure that persons leaving prison are given the assistance they need by the State's social services, and are in particular enabled to find suitable jobs. The co-operation of voluntary societies, especially trade unions, can be of great help here.

9. DIALOGUE WITH OTHER COUNTRIES

9.1. THE SAFEGUARDING OF INDEPENDENCE

Though Mintoff's Government purports to be following a strictly neutral foreign policy, we see it in fact tending increasingly to incline heavily in one particular direction. This bias is evident in the accord recently negotiated with the Soviet Union, through which Malta has acquired no very obvious advantage, but only the understanding that, in certain circumstances, the two countries will endeavour to reach agreement on a common line of policy. This is, to say the least, extraordinary, considering the stress so often placed in the past by the Mintoff Government on its determination to stay clear of 'alignments'. Neither this agreement, nor that negotiated with Italy, has provided Mintoff with guarantees for the defence of Malta against external aggression of the sort he said he would be going for at the time of the last election.

A Nationalist Government's policy will be unequivocal and consistent. We will allow no country to exert undue influence over our affairs; will concede no country privileges incompatible with our status as a truly independent nation, and under no circumstances will we allow foreign military bases to be set up in Malta. A Nationalist Government will not involve Malta in any military alliance; nor will it permit Malta to be used as a base for attacks launched on other countries. We will seek security in the company of nations which share our ideals of liberty and democracy, and which have both an interest and the capacity to defend us should our territorial integrity (including the integrity of the sea areas which belong to us) be subjected to threats by hostile forces.

9.2. COMMITMENT TOWARDS A JUST INTERNATIONAL ORDER

The Mintoff Government has failed to grasp that a small country such as ours can earn respect, and command attention on the international scene, not by postures totally out of keeping with the true extent of our power and influence, but by the more subtle influence we can bring to bear through the force of our ideals and the moral values we subscribe to.

Our previous Nationalist Government showed how Malta can in fact contribute to peace, and the shaping of a new international order, through the initiatives it took in the United Nations; initiatives relating to the harnessing of the resources of the sea for the common benefit of mankind, the treatment and care of the aged, and on other themes. For many years Mintoff chose to ignore these initiatives, to play them down, and only recently has he finally come to appreciate that they are not only issues of great importance in themselves, but also significant in terms of our own national interests as well.

There are prizes to be won by those who come up with valuable new ideas, based on human values of the highest order. One such reward, which we can justifiably aspire to, would be the selection of Malta as a Centre for the location of international institutions and for the propagation of cultural exchanges: we could lose out, here too, if we construe our interests in too narrow a fashion, and do not sufficiently appreciate that whatever conduces to the welfare of all must necessarily contribute to our own national welfare as well.

A Nationalist Government will continue to support the efforts being made to establish a new international economic order. One specific contribution a Nationalist Government would make in the fight against hunger, sickness and misery is referred to in the Section of the Programme relating to Youths. Apart from this: we will seek to extend the principle of "common heritage" to other areas where it can appropriately be applied, such as outer space, and the intellectual riches which have been bequeathed to mankind over the ages.

We shall pursue these ideals in the international organizations we belong to, such as the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the Commonwealth.

9.3. MALTA'S ROLE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

The Mintoff Government has sought to give the impression that it was Mintoff's predestined role, his ordained

mission, to bring order and peace once and for all to the Mediterranean area. Thus, he would in some way bring about the early withdrawal from the Mediterranean of both the American and Russian fleets, 'settle the Middle Eastern conflicts and disputes and bring peace to our Mediterranean shores, and launch a new era which would permit lamb and wolf to recline together in warm embrace. The total failure of his policies bears ample witness to the superficiality of Mintoff's understanding of the problems bedeviling the Mediterranean, the utter lack of realism of his Mediterranean dream.

The Mediterranean today still wears the scars of its colonial past, especially typified by the state of fragmentation of the area which we see today. Commercial transactions, sea transport communications, passenger movements: all still revolve on the old colonial axis, and linkages between former colonies and their respective former colonial powers remain vastly more important than the links which these ex-colonial territories have been able to establish between themselves in the Mediterranean. The peoples of the Mediterranean have yet to get better acquainted, we are not sufficiently aware of our neighbours' needs and potential and haven't really established in what ways we can help each other - and ourselves - in complementing our development programmes.

In the distant past, when the Mediterranean was the cradle of world civilization, there were close and diverse economic and cultural relationships between us. In more recent times we were separated by colonial dependence on other (Northern) countries. Even now however we have yet to re-discover our Mediterranean identity, to develop an awareness of what binds us together and what distinguishes us from one another, to cultivate an understanding of our respective social, economic and political systems, to acquire an insight into the conditions and ways of life of the different countries of the area; to discover, in other words, and appreciate the cultures of the Mediterranean peoples. We need to get to know each other better before we can develop closer commercial and other ties of mutual benefit.

Areas of operations which could lend themselves to concerted action at this stage include: the development of fisheries, under appropriate controls, and through a strengthening of existing organizations; research directed at the development of new systems for deriving energy from solar power, from wave motion, from wind force; improved air and sea communications; the setting up of industrial and agricultural banks, etc.

It was a strategic error on Mintoff's part to imagine that he could reap "Mediterranean" dividends from his unsolicited initiative at Helsinki, when, without any real mandate from the countries concerned, he set himself up as spokesman for them all. He got little support or appreciation from those he ostensibly represented. In concerning himself with the world stage Mintoff neglected or chose not to support initiatives closer home, at a more practical, down to earth level - the promising initiative for instance then being pursued for the further development of educational co-operation in the Mediterranean area. He also neglected to pursue a policy of collaboration between countries at grass-roots level, believing perhaps that contacts should always start at Governmental level before working their way down to local, regional or group level. In fact, as our experience in regard to sea pollution control has clearly shown, the forms of collaboration which work best are often those which start at base level and work their way up.

Under the Mintoff Government several initiatives which might have come to something were ruined because the approach was wrong, or because of sheer tactlessness on the part of the Government. Mintoff's Government has this tendency to patronise others - to seek to teach, lead, and dictate - which doesn't go down too well, and often leads to our losing the one big advantage we have over others in seeking to attract an international "Centre" to Malta; the advantage of being small and therefore supposedly free of any desire to dominate.

Arrogance and aggressive postures are not the qualities which go to make a good interpreter. Mintoff's preference for bilateral arrangements, when multilateral agreements would be more appropriate, often proves

diplomatically counter-productive.

A Nationalist Government will base its Mediterranean policy on clearly defined principles, so that whoever negotiates with us will have no doubt as to who we are, or where we stand. We will seek first of all to give the process of dialogue an international dimension by promoting dialogue between the various countries of the Mediterranean. It is on the basis of such dialogue that we can later set up the common institutions and reach the agreements which will be the substance of our Mediterranean approach. A Nationalist Government will not seek to impose on or dictate to any other.

9.4. RELATIONS WITH EUROPE

The Mintoff Government's policy towards Europe has been inconsistent and ambiguous. We are Europeans one moment, something else the next. A Nationalist Government affirms unequivocally that we are Europeans, that our place is in the fold of a United Europe, as conceived by the three Christian Democratic Statesmen who are rightly referred to as 'the fathers of Europe'. The founding fathers regarded the economic community as a first step towards what they foresaw would eventually be a political union. We will seek full membership of the European Economic Community, if as we expect, the right conditions are negotiated for us to be able to take this step; because we see the further unification of Europe as a measure which strengthens the prospects of peace: while also conducing to a more balanced development of the different regions of Europe, and indeed of the different regions of the world as well. Membership of a federal organization of states does not lead to any loss of identity on the part of the states concerned: it strengthens it.

9.5. RELATIONS WITH ARAB STATES

A Nationalist Government would see Malta's membership of the European Economic Community as a factor conducing to better relations with the Arab states since we will then be able to contribute our bit towards the process of developing a new and more balanced Euro-mediterranean set of relationships.

A Nationalist Government cannot, without denying its own identity, fail to recognise that like any other the Palestinian people, today represented in effect by the PLO, have a right to a homeland of their own. We have no wish to intrude in the internal affairs of the Arab family of nations, but we will collaborate with it in promoting the movement for the re-awakening and development of the Mediterranean, with all sincerity and to the full extent of our ability. We consider it particularly important for the future of Malta that economic and cultural ties between ourselves and the Arab countries should be strengthened.

We undertake, in particular, to see a solution, preferably by way of negotiation, with the Libyan Gemaherija, on the oil exploration issue, in the context of a plan for the exploitation of the resources of the zone which would be of advantage to both parties.

9.6. STRENGTHENING OF DIPLOMATIC SERVICE

A Nationalist Government will put the Diplomatic service of Malta once again on a sound footing and restore its self-respect. We consider it important that Malta should be properly represented in those countries where large numbers of Maltese reside, such as Canada and Australia - and we will re-establish good relations between Malta and Australia (relations which have been under severe strain during Mintoff's Administration). The Diplomatic Service will be expected to involve itself in the promotion of Maltese exports abroad as well as in the negotiation of certain types of agreement, such as recognition abroad of educational qualifications obtained in Malta, problems respecting the payment of pensions to returned Maltese migrants, negotiation of double taxation agreements, etc.

9.7. MALTESE IN FOREIGN LANDS

A Nationalist Government will encourage Maltese people living abroad to maintain their Maltese identity, as well as their Maltese cultural awareness and heritage, through exchanges of artists, teachers and students, through aid to emigrants associations and in other suitable ways.

We consider that Maltese emigrants, even those who have become citizens of the countries they have settled in, should not be treated as if they were complete foreigners, particularly where the right to purchase property in Malta is concerned. There will be no discrimination between Maltese citizens, irrespective of whether they are returned migrants or not.

II. ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

10. A NATIONAL PLAN BASED ON PERSONAL INITIATIVE

10.1. STATE CAPITALISM IS WRONG

The Mintoff Government's total failure in the economic sphere is obvious, and made more so by the way the information services, controlled by the State, seek to cover it up. They tell us as little as possible, unless it suits them to do otherwise, and when they do give us information it is invariably slanted and designed to mislead, to obscure, to cover up, to pull wool over people's eyes. Governments which have nothing to hide, which are prepared to come clean with the people, do not behave this way.

Even so there were some things which could not be hidden, because the situation, the facts, are too well known.

Industrial Development for instance. We were led to expect by Mintoff's Government in 1971 that there would be jobs for everybody in next to no time. We were going to get as many large sized enterprises as we needed, and stable employment in the sector was assured. No problems at all. Yet our experience has been a succession of Labour Corps, one after the other, almost like the tree of Jesse, except that the Labour Corps' line of descent has not got us to its pre-destined end. It has provided no lasting solution, has not freed us from the need to resort to one short term expedient after another.

Mintoff's Government firmly undertook to see that, by the time the British base in Malta was finally wound up, we would be economically self-reliant. Yet to this day we witness the unedifying spectacle of our Government seeking, begging, for financial aid from foreign countries. Some sources do respond; others promise support but fail to deliver. It is questionable how far one can trust somebody who on the morrow of being helped by a country turns immediately to consorting with that country's enemies.

True, Malta does not lack financial resources generated by the savings of our own people. Yet Mintoff's Government has shown itself quite unable to harness these savings, to translate them into productive investment at home, to use them for the creation of jobs, and to further the economic development of our country along sound lines. The setting up of a new productive enterprise in Malta today, and the sale of its products in export markets, is no easy matter; less so today perhaps than ever before. Industrial initiatives have to be carefully planned on professional lines and Government backing in one form or another is required. Industry must see the Government as a dependable ally concerned with its problems, and able to guide and assist in circumstances where such guidance and assistance is warranted.

Mintoff's Government was more concerned with trying to show how clever it was, and that whatever private enterprise could do, his Government could do better. Large sums of Government finance, the people's money, were squandered on projects selected and set up under Mintoff's personal initiative and direction. The trees he set up have borne few leaves and even less fruit. Most of the industrial ventures launched by Mintoff's Government have been short-lived. A good number of them have gone bankrupt and a fair number of others are on the same slippery path to collapse.

Mintoff has not profited from experience or sought to change his approach. His reaction to failure was not to re-order his policies, to see that the industries being set up were in fact of the right sort, able to produce more and compete successfully in export markets; he sought instead to bridge the widening trade gap by cutting down on imports. Having failed dismally in the industrial sector, Mintoff extended his interference to commerce, hoping to compensate for his inability to generate sufficient flow of exports by taking over control of importation of consumption goods. The result has been grave inconvenience and privation to the consumer and widespread corruption in the administration of those trading activities brought under Government control.

Mintoff's policies have not only made the housewife's lot more intolerable: even industry has suffered. His Government has maintained the external value of the Malta Pound at a high level, and in so doing has made the task of our exporters even more difficult than it already was and is. He could have provided our export sector with a measure of relief (by adopting some dual exchange rate system, as practised extensively abroad, or by some discount arrangement which would have given 'bona fide' exporters the opportunity to sell at a cheaper Malta Pound rate) but evidently helping our export sector is not one of his priorities.

In the tourist sectors our experience has been exactly as the Mintoff Government said it should not be, and it is apparent that even the policies spelt out in the new plan for 1981-85 are not being adhered to. Numbers have continued to increase, and qualitatively our visitors have continued to be the low spending sort, the sort whose holiday destination tastes tend to be volatile and changeable. The numbers have aggravated a number of our own problems, not least the problem of water shortage.

Agriculture: Mintoff's Government did not take adequate precautions, following the first outbreak of foot and mouth disease among our farm-animal population in Malta. They were given timely advice by experts, advice which was not heeded, and the result was a second outbreak. A refuse dump has been allowed to be situated right in the heart of an animal breeding agricultural zone, doing the rat population a service in the process and making it easier for them to go about their deadly business. We see evidence of the same lack of realism and sense of proportion in regard to fisheries: in the trawlers' project, now virtually bankrupt, on the one hand, and in the neglect on the other hand of the fish farming project, a project which holds out such high promise for the future.

The root cause of this disastrous all round experience, of the total failure of the Mintoff Government's economic policies, lies in this Government's determination to pursue a strategy of economic development based on the concept and practice of state capitalism - the worst form of capitalism - Capitalism coupled with Monopoly, with the Monopoly in State hands. State Capitalism, inevitably, is not only inefficient but also incompatible in practice with true social justice.

In recent years incomes have failed, in real terms, to keep pace with the rise in prices. Money is getting to be worth less and less, and the less affluent members of our community are finding it ever harder to make ends meet.

There are indications, in the 1981-85 Plan, that the Mintoff Government is now aware that some of its earlier policies were mistaken and ill-conceived, yet we are given no reason to hope or expect that there will be the required changes in the right direction. It is clear that these changes will only come about if there is a change

of Government.

10.2. TOWARDS AN ECONOMY WHICH SERVES THE PEOPLE

A Nationalist Government will be an open Government, will take the people fully into its confidence, hide nothing, and conduct its affairs on explicit, clearly defined, lines. We rehearse here the main thrusts of our economic policy in broad outline.

The primary objective of economic planning and policy will be to provide suitable job opportunities for all through the creation of stable new employment prospects as we did up to 1971. Under the present Government there has been an unprecedented job drain, with one job lost for every two new jobs created. In framing our policies as a Government we shall seek to collaborate, and work in association with, the representatives of all groups which go to make up the Maltese community.

We will not achieve this objective by way of the begging routine which has characterised Mintoff's Government, throughout its years of office, or through the negotiation of meaningless commercial treaties with certain countries, which lead to an increase in our imports from those countries without a corresponding and reciprocal increase in our exports to them. Our trading relationships will be biased rather towards those countries which can provide us with the technologies we require and the market outlets we need. A Nationalist Government, considers that the best way of achieving economic fulfilment is by way of membership of the European Economic Community, on such conditions and terms as will ensure that the solution we seek provides a sound and lasting basis for economic progress.

We shall encourage Maltese capital to invest in productive enterprise in its own home base. Maltese capital has nothing to fear from a Nationalist Government. We will not seek to expropriate or exploit private capital; on the contrary we shall as a Government do all in our power to help such enterprises take root, to complement the activities of each other, and to concentrate their endeavours on increasing production for export.

The Nationalist Party appreciates that the commercial community is rendering a valuable service to the country, and that they are better qualified to render this service than any Government department or organisation which seeks to supplant them. We recognise, nevertheless, that the Government has a duty to regulate commercial activities in the public interest, to check abuses, and above all, to encourage the setting up of consumer protection services, through which consumers will be enabled to safeguard their interests, ensure that prices are kept in proper check, and also that the quality of goods provided are of a standard appropriate to their respective price categories.

A Nationalist Government will introduce changes in monetary and fiscal policies (as well as in incomes and pensions policies) and we shall see that all concerned get a fair deal, while also redressing injustices suffered under the Mintoff Administration. We will provide a more appropriate climate for economic development, and will ensure that the proceeds of such development are equitably shared by all sections of the community. Right now the economy has ground to a halt, has ceased growing; it is stagnating, in evident distress. The Government's one objective, one concern, seems to be to extend the tentacles of state control; to progressively restrict the scope for personal, private initiative; to force people into a situation where they become ever more subordinated to the state: its dependants, its parasites even.

We see great scope for tourism, properly restructured, as well as for the rendering of "other services" by Maltese to foreign clients: services in such spheres as transshipment, the distribution and further processing of semi-manufactured goods, support services for oil and other companies operating in the Mediterranean, the provision of educational services for foreigners at all levels, the location in Malta of hospital facilities for old

people and convalescent patients from abroad off-shore banking and other financial services, the siting here of the headquarters of international organisations, information banks, and other institutional facilities of like nature - the need for all of which facilities is constantly increasing in our evolving modern world. Such services can be very rewarding if we equip ourselves, under appropriate Government regulation, to the high standards of proficiency required by prospective clients.

A Nationalist Government (in collaboration with the Church authorities, as far as its own land is concerned) will embark on a programme of consolidation of agricultural land, which consolidation is necessary if contemplated radical reforms in the Agricultural sector are to be accomplished. We envisaged the sector being more mechanised, better irrigated better organised on a cooperative basis; with more emphasis given (to glass horticulture, to the education of farmers (especially the young farmers) in more modern practices, to the improvement of the social condition of our farming community, to relieving farmers of the inequitable burden thrust upon them as a result of the way they have been slotted in to the National Insurance Scheme by the Mintoff Government. We will provide water supply for agriculture at less prohibitive rates will once again give assistance to farmers giving into glass house constructions, and will assist agriculture in a great many other ways as well. We are, no less, concerned to see that our fishermen are enabled to lead better and more fruitful lives in pursuit of their equally vital calling.

We abhor State Capitalism. Our alternative is the Christian Democratic idea: the route to economic development and progress which emphasises personal as opposed to State initiative; the route that respects the right of all people to be consulted and involved in the shaping and implementation of national development plans and policies, at all levels and in all branches of the economic institutions of the country.

Economic development provides the means through which social justice can be more equitably practised, the means through which inequalities can be corrected and everybody can be enabled to partake in fair measure of the fruits of progress.

10.3. NATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

We do not accept as binding the recently enacted Development Plan which Mintoff's Government released in its dying days of office: a Plan which cannot be taken seriously, if only because it so obviously betrays the tired and stagnant state of mind of the Government which brought it out.

A Nationalist Government will, in its earliest days, set up a National Economic Development Council. The Council will be composed of representatives of all sections of the population, according to their respective roles in the social and economic life of the community: not only trade unionists, employers, economists and Government employees, but also pensioners, housewives, youth organisations, etc.: so that all, together, can participate in the framing and shaping of a new Development Plan.

The Council will be serviced by a competent staff and will be provided with all the information and specialist advice it needs. It will be able to commission experts to produce special studies on particular problems. It will take an active part in the formulation of the new Plan and, after the Plan has been approved by the Government and Parliament, the Council will have a monitoring role to exercise, to see that the Plan is properly implemented, and to propose to Government whatever changes or measures it may consider appropriate to keep the Plan at all times suitably up-dated and in line with changing developments and circumstances.

The Council will be empowered to propose guidelines for a national wages policy, as well as guidelines for the fixing of profit margins and commodity prices by the Authorities concerned. The Council will see that a new Cost-of-Living Index is drawn up which will more adequately reflect the real extent of price movements,

and their effects on the cost of living. It will be empowered to propose criteria for the introduction of productivity incentive schemes. It will monitor economic developments abroad which could have a significant impact on our position in Malta. The Council's participation in the economic management of the country will be a major step towards meaningful economic democracy, through the direct involvement in economic planning of representatives of all parties concerned.

10.4. MEMBERSHIP OF THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY

Mintoff's Government cannot get itself to take the bold leap of a full membership approach to the Common Market problem. All it keeps on coming up with are temporary expedients and solutions: half-way measures which will not get us very far. Hesitation and undue delay at this stage can be prejudicial to our vital interests.

A Nationalist Government is firmly convinced that Malta's place is in the European Economic Community. It will, therefore, strive to obtain for Malta appropriate terms and conditions of membership, that will over an agreed and extended time-scale give us the opportunity to adapt and put ourselves in a position to reap full advantage from membership status.

We are already close to Europe economically. Most of our industries produce for European markets, and a large number of them are affiliated or otherwise integrated with European countries. Entry into the Common Market will give us additional market advantages in Europe, both by way of access for our products and through the technology transfers which may flow from closer relationships with European partners in the van of technological progress.

A Nationalist Government will help those Maltese industries which need help to adjust to the prospect of change, as a result of our Common Market policy, and the increased competition this policy may expose them to.

11. INDUSTRY

11.1. MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES

Employment in the Government sector has gone up by around 5,000 over the period from 1973 to 1980; while job losses in the Manufacturing sector alone over the same period, have been of the order of 10,000. The sector is in great distress, industries are collapsing like nine-pins, many have gone bankrupt and others are in a precarious state. Our whole development strategy in this area seems to be disintegrating.

A large portion of total shareholding is in foreign hands, and of the Maltese shareholding portion, much the greater part is held by the Government. The size of the Government's total portfolio reflects, and accounts for, the wariness of Maltese private capital. The object of policy has been to involve private indigenous capital to a greater extent. It has failed, despite the ample financial resources available, possibly because of a lurking fear in investors' minds that a successful enterprise, once established, may become prey to the socialist Government's acquisitive instincts.

Mintoff's Government built up a sizeable number of industries (styled People's Industries in 1976) ostensibly to generate revenue, through profits, with which to pay for social services and other benefits. Most of these industries have contributed next to nothing to the public purse: decision taking was over-centralised, they were further hampered by the heavy hand of bureaucracy, but incompetent management and by the scope provided for corrupt practices, and this sort of situation was not conducive to profit making. The present Government is now seeking to sell off these industries to private enterprise, or to enlist the support of foreign

partners with the required expertise. There has been no real attempt to have Workers Participation tried out in earnest in these industries - the People's industries - and there has been no profit sharing with the workers even when there were no profits to share. One worker's representative on the Board of Directors is no way of bringing the wishes of the workers to bear on decisions, when all important decisions tend to be taken by the Mintoff Government anyway, whether in exercise of its shareholder's rights or through its compulsive urge to interfere in everything.

11.2. DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

If investment in Manufacturing is to be encouraged, the constant shifting of policy positions by Government must stop. Policies need to be clearly and firmly laid down. Entrepreneurs need to know where they stand and confusing signals from Castille do not help at all. Uncertainty simply breeds caution and reserve. We will revert to a basis of steady Government known principles and professional handling of the affairs and interests of the Manufacturing sector.

The Development Corporation, set up after Independence in 1964 to spearhead the development of the sector, will be given the task of rehabilitating it, of re-establishing it along sounder, more lasting lines. The emphasis will again be on industrial promotion, and on the administration of the incentives programme.

The industries we need now are enterprises of a new breed, a new generation, working to more advanced technological processes, which will provide employment on a more lasting basis and also provide a greater measure of job satisfaction at all levels. The Corporation must be in a position to offer, as its main promotional inducement, a new and altogether more attractive and relevant package of incentives. The required package will be formulated and approved by the Government, after consultation with the National Economic Development Council. Its implementation will be entrusted to the Corporation which will have full authority to administer without any sort of leaning or interference from Government.

11.3. LAME DUCKS

One of the Mintoff Government's most damaging mistakes was to seek to attract industries to Malta by dangling the "cheap labour" carrot. It was wrong to base our strategy on cheap labour and in any event industries attracted by this consideration quickly transfer operations elsewhere as soon as we cease to be cheap: they pack up as easily as they came here in the first place.

Employment in such circumstances is unstable and therefore undesirable. We need a newer generation of industries which can create the productivity margins to support higher wage levels. This implies the upgrading of wages, and the need for labour with higher skills. Our proposed educational reforms will ensure that the required skills are provided.

11.4. MULTI-NATIONAL ENTERPRISES

We recognise that, in our experience, the industries which really succeeded have been those with multi-national affiliations, because of their access to the right technologies, and the multi-nationals' ability to provide ready markets for the output of their Maltese subsidiaries. We will continue to welcome such industries, provided:

(a) there is a more ready inclination on the part of such international companies to enter into association with Maltese capital in the setting up of local establishments;

(b) they bring to Malta the most advanced technologies;

(c) they undertake to train our people not only in the use but also to understand and grasp the intricacies of the technologies brought to them;

(d) they involve Maltese personnel in all aspects of the work of the enterprise, including research and marketing. In this way we shall not only profit from the multi-nationals' ability to set up industries with appropriate technologies and assured markets, but also from the exposure of our people to the skills and other specialised activities which are a feature of multi-national operations.

11.5. EXPORT PROMOTION

We contemplate taking various measures to support exports:

i. National Export Board will be set up, on which the various interests concerned with the promotion of Maltese exports will be represented. The Board, suitably backed by supporting staff, and by the Government, will give the industrial sector a dimension it has hitherto lacked: the machinery to tackle the export problem on a cooperative and organised basis, working to a coordinated plan and availing itself as well of the services of overseas promotional stations.

ii. We will also establish a system of cheap export credit finance, and will provide, as well, what the Mintoff Government undertook to provide but failed to provide, despite an electoral undertaking in 1971: export credit guarantee facilities; so that our exporters who take risks in supplying certain markets abroad do not expose themselves to crippling losses through possible default arising from either political or commercial circumstances.

iii. Sea Malta will be required to provide our exporters with the infrastructural service they require - at competitive prices and with the required frequency of trips to the ports they serve.

11.6. EFFECTS OF WORKERS' PARTICIPATION

A Nationalist Government will ensure that workers' participation is introduced in manufacturing and other enterprises on a meaningful, genuine basis. Benefits expected to stem from this reform, would include:

a) improvement of relations between Management and workers at "human" level.

b) enhanced productivity arising from the increased commitment to the success of the enterprise which could result from greater involvement of the workers in decision taking. This however is not the main object of having workers' participation. The theme is dealt with more extensively later in the Programme.

12. DRY DOCKS

12.1. MALTA'S LEADING INDUSTRY

The Dry Docks has been and remains Malta's leading industry, and a Nationalist Government will give it every encouragement to further develop both its ship repair capacity, and its small ship building capability within the present Dry Docks precincts, along with relevant and similar work which will make profitable use of plant and equipment during periods when they would otherwise be underutilised.

We will take an early opportunity to dispose of certain matters relating to the Drydocks in respect of which decisions have been left pending far too long: matters such as the delimitation of the Drydocks perimeter line, the adaptation of our legislation to take account of changes in IMCO regulations regarding the admission of

vessels carrying inert gases, etc.

12.2. DRY DOCKS: WORKERS' PARTICIPATION

Despite all Mintoff's talk about workers' control having been introduced in the Dry Docks, the Corporation is still not effectively being run by the representatives of the workers. The Council today is not autonomous in the true sense of the term. It is subjected to directives from the Government, and Ministers interfere in the running of the enterprise, even in administrative and purely technical matters.

A Nationalist Government will not, at any time seek to impose its will on the Dry Docks in this sort of dictatorial manner, which contradicts the spirit and essence of meaningful autonomy. On the contrary it will, in consultation and dialogue with the workers themselves, strengthen by appropriate amendment the provisions of the Law relating to the Dry Docks' Council and its functions, so that the Council will in future be insulated from the sort of political interference it has been hitherto subjected to. Another amendment envisaged stems from the need to clarify the relationship between Council, Management and Unions, in order to strengthen industrial democracy in the Dry Docks sector.

We repose full confidence in the maturity of the Dry Docks worker, and confidently anticipate that the right sort of atmosphere can be generated in the dry Docks which would permit every worker to develop his talents, and exercise to the full his ability and capacity to bear responsibility in the performance of his duties, thus contributing to a further increase in the productivity of the enterprise.

12.3. MARSA SHIPYARD

Mintoff's Government has continued to leave us all completely uninformed on vital matters relating to the Marsa Ship Building Yard. A Nationalist Government will establish all the relevant facts concerning this project and inform the people as to just what has been happening there.

It seems evident that this particular dream of Mintoff's, like his other one concerning the Kalafrana project, which not a single other country would touch, was unfortunately timed. There is a world-wide glut of ship building capacity and most companies in this line of business are having a hard time. All we know about Marsa is that very large sums of money have been spent. Although there are huge workshops (not being used) the project is nowhere near ready. Yet prices are escalating and tenders for plant and equipment have been allowed to lapse. Each delay means that if we are going ahead with this project it will be progressively more costly to do so. The Maltese people are having to pay dearly to see Mintoff's dream realised and for all we know it is money going to waste.

A Nationalist Government will consider what use can be made of the facilities at Marsa already available, and now lying idle, so that the investment can at least be put to some productive purpose as soon as possible. We note in the meantime that no steps have been taken to train workers in certain types of skills which would be needed if the shipbuilding scheme materialises. This sort of training takes a great deal of time. Nor has anything been done to set up certain specialised services (financial services) which are part of the "infrastructure" of shipyard operations.

The Government and people of Malta must have a clear picture of all the facts relating to this project as soon as possible, so that, while putting to the best possible use whatever we now have at Marsa which is usable for profit, we do not, until properly advised, dive deeper into financial commitments regarding this project than we can afford to or should.

13. TOURISM

13.1. AUTONOMOUS BOARD

Mintoff's Government suppressed the old Tourist Board, and we have a Minister directing operations in this sector, echoing the wishes of his political master; a Minister not much given to dialogue or open to persuasion.

A Nationalist Government will again set up an autonomous Board, on which all interests operating in the tourist sector would be represented. The Board will be financed partly from Government sources, and partly by levies raised, from tourist enterprises. The Board's first task will be to draw up a Master Plan for the further planning and restructuring of the sector. After discussion in the National Economic Development Council, and after having been approved by Government and later by Parliament, the Plan will be implemented - under the Board's supervision. The Board will be responsible for the running of what is now the National Tourism Organisation.

13.2 BETTER QUALITY TOURISM

A Nationalist Government's policy in the tourist sector as in other fields, will be to encourage, coordinate and guide rather than do things itself. Our object will be to ensure that developments in the sector supplement and complement each other, in the overall national interest. We shall not be competing with private enterprise, nor shall we allow further discrimination against private enterprise in this field, whether in the provision of bank finance or in any other way.

We shall, in the national interest, and in accordance with the wishes of the tourist trade itself, take appropriate initiatives to trigger off development of tourism in future along different lines. While doing nothing to hamper today's type of tourist business, our object of policy will be to encourage a gradual transition from quantity to quality. If we manage to do this, and increase our takings from tourism by way of quality rather than numbers, we shall benefit not only economically but also culturally: higher quality tourism will improve the quality of life of our own country.

The transition will not be easy or quick. The publicity slant adopted during the Mintoff Government's time, and certain other failures of the Government (such as the water situation, the shortage of goods worth purchasing in our shops today, the poor cultural image we project) are not calculated to appeal to tourists of quality.

A Nationalist Government will strive to bring this desired change about. Mintoff's Government recognised the need for change but did nothing about it: they were in no position to, because they could hardly have promoted Malta as a quality resort when the quality of life of the Maltese themselves was so evidently and steadily on the decline. It will take a change in national orientation and attitude, a change which must involve everybody and take place at all levels, to provide the necessary impulse for the desired face-lift in tourism.

Mintoff's negative attitude towards resident tourists did much to drive them away. This was short-sighted because these people as a rule provided steady flows of substantial income into the country on a year-round basis, while also contributing to the enrichment of our lives in other ways. It will be our policy to provide a broader spectrum of services and attractions to bring quality tourism here - to cater for people who are not just sun-seekers but who also interest themselves in the cultural life of our country and in what Malta has to offer during the Winter months.

13.3. A BROADER SPREAD OF TOURISM IN OUR ISLANDS

One of our objectives will be to give Gozo greater prominence as a national tourism attraction. Under Mintoff's Government Gozo did not get its fair share of the proceeds from tourism. Most of the expenditure incurred by tourists going to Gozo on day trips, as well as in the purchase of goods made in Gozo, ended up as profits in the pockets of foreigners or in the hands of Maltese resident in Malta. A Nationalist Government will seek to have Gozo promoted as a place with its own identity, quite distinct from Malta, and it will entrust the promotion of tourism in Gozo to the Gozitans themselves.

The emphasis on Gozo will be part of a wider programme of geographical diversification, so that the proceeds of tourism will be as widely dispersed, as evenly spread as possible, all over the Island, with the Southern parts getting their due share along with the more established Northern areas.

13.4 AIRPORT

The Mintoff Government has built a new runway and has also enlarged the existing terminal building. There were errors in planning and execution and the public has had to pay much more than was really necessary: because somebody, as usual, felt he had to meddle, dictate and control. Yet to this day the terminal project remains unfinished, and the arrivals section provides inadequate facilities for the welcoming of incoming passengers. A Nationalist Government, conscious of the need to improve and complete facilities at the airport, and aware that we cannot expect quality tourism in conditions such as we now provide, will ensure that our airport provides an infrastructural service of the highest standard.

We have already referred to the airport in a national security context, and shall be referring to Air Malta and other matters relating to the airport later in this Programme.

14. OTHER SERVICES

The Services sector of our economy tends to generate more foreign exchange earnings per man employed than manufacturing industries; because the import content of such services as a rule is lower than in manufacturing processes, and the locally provided value added correspondingly higher. The skill content of services rendered also tends to be higher, and attracts higher reward.

One is inclined to think of services in terms of tourism but there are in fact a large number of other forms of service we can provide for foreigners - services a Nationalist Government will develop with a greater sense of commitment and urgency than has been shown by the Mintoff Government. This Government has spent so much of its time and energy trying to move in on the industrial and commercial sectors, that it had little time to do what a Government should do: to establish an appropriate climate and infrastructural frame-work which would encourage our people to develop their potential and to seek out opportunities in all fields.

There is scope for greater involvement in the area of services. The sort of services we refer to here include:

14.1. TRANSHIPMENT AND PROCESSING:

we will press on with much greater effort and commitment in bringing to fruition the project we started back in the 1960s of developing Malta as a transhipment base and export processing zone for re-distribution of goods to markets in Europe, Africa and the Middle East.

14.2. FINANCIAL SERVICES:

we will develop further banking and financial services for foreign individuals as well as companies; both in Malta and on an off-shore basis. Our education system generally, and the University especially, will equip itself to teach the skills relevant to the provision of services of the sort envisaged.

14.3. OTHER SERVICES:

a Nationalist Government will help to set up clinics, where foreigners can come to Malta either for special medical attention or to convalesce in a hospitable climatic environment. Also envisaged are educational facilities in Malta for the training of foreigners in particular branches of learning; the setting up of 'information banks' and other projects of like nature where the emphasis will be on the provision of skilled services in Malta.

15.AGRICULTURE

15.1. IMPROVEMENT OF SOCIAL CONDITIONS

We fully appreciate that Agriculture in our Island has an importance, from a national standpoint, which cannot be measured merely in terms of the economic value of its contribution to domestic product. The farming community has not been given the recognition it deserves in our scale of national social priorities: its role must be more appropriately acknowledged.

Judging by what the 1981-85 Plan says on the subject, one might well get the impression that Mintoff's Government imagines that the teaching of agricultural skills can most appropriately be done by means of television programmes, even though there has in fact been little if anything done, via that medium to educate farmers in the modern techniques of their profession. Certainly television can help, but it is not enough.

A Nationalist Government would reform the Agricultural School, and slant it not only towards the teaching of the subjects directly bearing on the practice of agriculture, but also towards such related aspects as the use, repair, and maintenance of agricultural equipment. The School will also give basic education in reckoning costs and prices of agricultural inputs and produce, as well as in the keeping of books of account.

A Nationalist Government will do all it can to encourage farmers' children to remain on the land, and to take an interest in developments in agriculture abroad. A scheme will be devised to enable them to go abroad to study their calling and see for themselves how things are done in other countries. We will rehabilitate the Extension Service of the Department of Agriculture. The centre at Ghammieri, now used as a production unit, will again revert to experimental research aimed at increasing productivity. The technical experts of the Department of Agriculture will be encouraged and enabled to improve their proficiency and keep abreast of progress in every aspect of agricultural science.

Farmers will benefit from other measures envisaged in our Programme, especially measures relating to taxation and pensions. As a first step towards closer integration of the farming community with the rest of Maltese society, we will establish the facts relating to farmers and farming by means of a properly devised census: the present so-called annual censal exercises do not give a true picture of the situation. Nevertheless, we are certain the trend is towards increased part-time farming, that the full-time farming population is both on the decline and increasingly composed of aging men and women. We will encourage young men to go back to farming as a full-time occupation. We can do this if we bring about a situation which provides farmers with opportunities for a better economic and social life.

15.2. LAND CONSOLIDATION

A Nationalist Government would wish to see farmers whenever possible owning their own land, but fragmentation of land should not be carried too far. We shall enact legislation to facilitate the sale of leased agricultural land to those farmers who actually work it, and to facilitate as well the forming of agricultural cooperatives, so that more modern methods of agriculture can be practised economically. We shall draw up a

plan for the better utilisation of agricultural land, and for improved access facilities to farms.

A land consolidation Plan will be drawn up. Among other things this Plan will provide for the restoration to productive use of small plots of land which have been abandoned either because they are too small in context to be separately worked, or because they are remotely situated from the main farm land tilled by the farmers who own these small plots. Consolidation makes it easier and more profitable for groups of farmers who work in collaboration, preferably as cooperatives, and would also permit the use of mechanised techniques appropriate to the area of consolidated land. A Nationalist Government will give affect to this plan on Government's own land to start with, and will encourage its extension to other land in the light of experience there.

15.3. CHEAPER WATER SUPPLY

A Nationalist Government will devise a comprehensive plan for the irrigation of dry land, so that as much of our rain-fed land as possible can be brought under irrigation. If reclaimed water under the Sewage Purification Scheme is to be of benefit to farmers it has to be provided at subsidised rates. Farmers will be encouraged and assisted to introduce "drip irrigation" methods which make more sparing use of our scarce water supply, but water for farming must be cheaper, otherwise farmers will not be able to afford it. Piped water supply will once again be supplied in farmsheds, on the firm understanding that those who abuse of this facility will be exposed to the full rigours of the law and the penalties which the law contemplates.

15.4. GLASS HOUSE CULTIVATION

A Nationalist Government will once again encourage the extension of glass house cultivation. In our climatic conditions, and given the scarcity of agricultural land, this is a form of agriculture particularly suited to our circumstances.

The Minto Government's prejudice against glass house production is inexplicable. During the nine years of Nationalist Government, from 1962 to 1971, we spent £M210,000 in the setting up of around 200 glass house units: the corresponding figures for Minto's Government over 1971-80 are £M30,000 and 20 glass houses. The glass houses put up by the Nationalist Government for experimental purposes, mostly in the growth of tomato crops, are now being used either as sheds for the storage of animal fodder, or are being used for the production of crops for the Government itself, instead of for the benefit of the farming community as a whole.

A Nationalist Government will again provide financial assistance for the further development of glass house production, with the active collaboration of foreign countries who may be prepared to help in this area. We will provide a modern crop sterilisation service; we will again resume experimental work at the glass house laboratories at Ghammieri; we will, using Air Malta's transportation capability, assist in the exportation of flowers, and (if there are enough for export) also tomatoes and possibly other agricultural produce as well.

15.5. MARKETING

A Nationalist Government will provide farmers with all the technical assistance at its command to enable them to seek profitable export outlets for their crops. Farmers will not be deceived or kept in the dark about facts relating to the sale of produce abroad. Vital decisions concerning exportation should involve the farmers themselves, through the medium of a "Marketing Board". We will also encourage cooperatives to play a more active role in the importation of materials required for the development of agricultural production and for the growth of Agricultural produce.

A Nationalist Government will ensure that farmers are in future paid more promptly for the produce they

export and will require them to pay for the seeds they order only on the receipt of their consignment of seeds. We will distribute fertiliser and pesticides received as donations from foreign countries without making any profit on the distribution, as has often been the case, and we will seek to hasten the importation of inputs, and other material used by farmers, whenever they are needed. We shall improve the facilities at the Pitkali centre: by extending the area of covered space and by providing cold storage facilities for agricultural produce.

15.6. COOPERATIVES

A Nationalist Government will encourage farmers' cooperatives in every possible way. Mintoff's Government enacted a law which was ostensibly meant to help and encourage cooperatives to collaborate with each other, but blunted the whole exercise by keeping the administration of financial aid to cooperatives under Ministerial control, instead of allowing it to be administered by the representative Board of Cooperatives.

We shall review this law, and increase the incentives it offers for the formation of cooperatives. Cooperatives will be given favourable terms of lease of Government land where consolidation has taken place. Opportunities will also be given for members of cooperatives to acquire experience abroad in the working of agricultural cooperatives.

15.7. ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

A Nationalist Government will strengthen the Government's veterinary services, so that our herds can be immunised against disease, and protected against further outbreaks of disease which wrought such havoc on our farm-animal population during Mintoff's Government.

Special zones will be designated for the rearing of such animals. Animal health regulations will be tightened and implementation will be more strictly enforced.

The Civil Abattoir will have to be seen to again. Although relatively new, the Abattoir put up during Mintoff's time is not sufficiently modern or efficient and will need to be brought up to standard.

The Milk Marketing Undertaking should not continue to be run as a Government Department. We envisaged the setting up of a new modern milk processing plant, able to produce sterilised milk which can keep for long periods: the plant will be run, possibly, as a cooperative. The new system of milk sterilisation and the production of milk of long-keeping quality will be of advantage both to farmers and consumers: farmers because quotas will be done away with, and consumers as they will no longer have to take reconstituted milk or "mixed" milk.

Our proposals concerning the protection of farm-animals against disease apply no less to the protection of poultry farming. We will do all in our power to eradicate disease prevalent among poultry animals.

15.8. BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

A board of Agriculture will be set up composed of representatives of the Department of Agriculture, of the farming community, of the Pitkali operators, of the sellers of agricultural produce, and of the consuming public, as well as of the farmers' cooperatives and of other interested parties. The Board will be charged with the task of drawing up a plan for the development of agriculture in our Islands, and will supervise its implementation when the plan is approved.

The Board will be empowered to consider ways of improving the practice of agriculture: through the pulverisation and composting of refuse, and other systems of soil enrichment, as well as through the granting of loan finance on special terms.

The Board will concern itself generally with all aspects of agricultural production. It will consider introducing uniform systems of grading and packing produce, and it will also look into the possibility of setting up an Agricultural Credit Bank to provide farmers with loan finance for the purchase of machinery and other capital outlays. The Bank could well be run on cooperative lines as well.

16. FISHERIES

16.1. BOARD OF FISHERIES

A Nationalist Government would wish to see the consumption of fish in our Islands increase very considerably. We want to see an increase in the quantity of landed fish, a reduction of imported fish and a return to the fishing trade of those former fishermen who have left it, and an improvement in the conditions of work of those engaged on a full-time basis. A Board of Fisheries will be set up with terms of reference roughly as follows:

- a) to ascertain what the true state of affairs is in the fisheries sector today, and
- b) to draw up a comprehensive plan for the development of the sector along the desired lines.

This Board's functions will be more or less analogous to those of the Board of Agriculture already referred to.

16.2. AIDS TO FISHERMEN

Among the measures which the Board of Fisheries will be considering for the further development of the sector will be: the need to see that all professional fishermen are provided with efficient radio equipment to enable them to contact land while out at sea; the building of houses and stores for fishermen in appropriate locations, the provision of material and equipment used by fishermen in the exercise of their trade, and the proper maintenance and modernisation of facilities available to fishermen in the ports which our fishermen use as their operational bases.

16.3. ICE-MAKING PLANT

During the Mintoff Government an ice-making plant was provided, and deep facilities were built or otherwise adapted for the storage of fish. Most of the storage space so provided is in fact still being used for other purposes. A Nationalist Government will offer the management of the ice-making plant to the fishermen's cooperative, which will be helped to run it, along with the cold storage facilities originally earmarked for the storage of fish. These facilities will be put to their intended use, or others provided. We will also assist cooperatives to purchase surplus fish in the flush season for cold storage and later release in times of scarcity.

16.4. MARKETING

A Nationalist Government will see that the markets where fish is sold are suitably modernised and provided with proper weighing scales. Prices will be regulated so as to permit both fishermen and fish vendors to earn reasonable margins of profit. The rates of return, fixed eleven years ago, and still in force, will be revised:

16.5. TRAWLERS

The Mintoff Government's trawlers fishing project has failed because it was over-ambitiously conceived. It was run on the basis of too many trawlers, against the advice of experts and of the Nationalist Opposition at the time. For six years this scheme has done nothing but lose money, Maltese fishermen have not been taught

the techniques of trawler fishing, and today these trawlers, when used, are usually crewed almost entirely by foreign fishermen. It is understood that the Maltese Libyan Trawling Company is in a state of virtual collapse, and only two of the Company's vessels remain sea-worthy.

A Nationalist Government will revive the project on the basis of one vessel to start with, and have this one vessel properly manned with an experienced crew.

The vessel will be used to trawl for fish as it should:

in fishing zones further afield than are normally reached by the traditional Maltese fishing craft. The vessel will be required to continue active trawling throughout the periods when it is at sea. The trawler will be essentially a "training" vehicle and we have no intention whatever of using it to compete with other fishermen on the local market.

16.6. AQUA-CULTURE

A fish-farming project was started several years ago, but the Mintoff Government did not give it the support it merited. A Nationalist Government will revive this scheme on a more substantial basis, and will seek to channel investment finance into it, because we are convinced that this is a line of fisheries development that offers bright prospects for the future.

16.7. SOCIAL ASPECTS

All the projects referred to in this section on Agriculture and Fisheries are designed not only to benefit the farmers, herdsman and fishermen, by enabling them to produce more and earn ~ fairer return for their products and labours, but also the consumers- through the increased amount of produce that will come on to the market, and the more stable regime of prices that an increased and steadier supply situation would permit.

17. COMMERCE

17.1. IMPORTATION AND PRICES

The Mintoff Government invaded the commercial field following the failure of its industrial initiatives to generate any sort of income flow by way of profits. The setting up of its Bulk-buying division was rationalised on the argument that large scale purchases of essential commodities would lead to our getting these commodities at cheaper unit prices; and on a more 'secure' basis. Things haven't quite worked out that way. Procurement procedure were so inefficient, and so irregularly conducted (giving rise to suspicions of malpractice which preoccupied even the Minister of Finance) that we have stumbled along from one commodity shortage to another, we are having to pay for the Government's mistakes by way of higher prices, and the quality of goods we are getting seems to be getting ever shoddier: exactly what the Bulk-buying scheme was ostensibly designed to ensure did not happen.

A Nationalist Government will not compete with established businessmen in the import trade, and still less will it seek to stifle them. It will remain responsible for the provision of essential commodities such as wheat and oil products, and where state intervention in the procurement of supplies is needed to ensure adequate supplies it will do so according to established principles and in the most open manner possible. The sole importing rights which Mintoff's Government has arrogated to itself, in various commodity lines, will be opened up again: colour television imports included. The earliest opportunity will be taken to do away with unnecessary controls, though this will inevitably be a phased operation in view of the pent up demand which has been allowed to build up over the past years. The dismantling of trade barriers will be effected in

consultation with interested bodies, so that everything can be seen to be completely above-board, and there will be provision for appeal to an impartial tribunal should any party feel that his legitimate interests have been adversely affected in the process.

Corruption must be suppressed, uprooted, completely in this area of Government operations. The Bulk-buying division of the Department of Trade will cease to function, and the Price Stabilisation Fund will also be wound up. In our trade regime there will be no place or need for them. We will nevertheless undertake a searching enquiry into the way the systems in question have been managed in the past, so as to fully expose to public view all that was done and how it was done. Irregularities brought to light will be appropriately dealt with.

17.2. CONSUMER INTERESTS

The Mintoff Government labours under the impression that it is better qualified to determine what the housewife and other consumers need, and should buy, than they are themselves. Whether it is food-stuffs or almost any other type of commodity purchase - it is our paternal Government which decides what we should get, what quality, what sort, what choice if any we should be allowed, and at what price we should get it. It does not allow that the consumer is the best judge of his own interests, and that these interests are in fact best served by a market situation where a buyer is free to choose on the basis of need, taste, quality and price.

A Nationalist Government will be particularly concerned to safeguard consumer interests. An institutional framework will be set up to enable consumers to express themselves on matters concerning the adequacy of supply, or the quality of the goods commonly purchased by them. The institution in question will actively investigate market situations to which its notice has been drawn, and will avail itself of the powerful resources of the Broadcasting media to provide consumer information generally, and to stimulate consumer awareness of what the market has to offer. Advertising will be closely watched to see that the qualities and characteristics of goods brought to public notice are not misrepresented, to the prejudice of consumers falling prey to such misrepresentation.

A Nationalist Government will honour its undertaking to the citizens of Valletta to provide them once again with the amenities of a central market. We will also undertake a nation-wide survey to establish the needs of the various localities for a sufficient number of shops and other commercial establishments to provide for their normal requirements, and the issuing of trading licences will be determined on the basis of the findings of this survey.

18. BANKING SECTOR AND TAXATION

18.1. BORROWING AND INTEREST RATES

The Seven Year Plan led us to expect that monetary policy would play a determining role in fostering economic growth, that the Central Bank would use its statutory powers to determine appropriate bank deposit rates which would mop up surplus liquid cash in circulation and channel it on to productive investment. In fact we have had the same interest rates for around twenty years and there has been no attempt whatever to direct surplus funds to those areas which could have profitably used them.

A Nationalist Government will lay down rules and criteria for a discriminating lending policy to be followed by Commercial and Investment Finance Banks. Money going into areas of activity or forms of investment enjoying a priority rating in terms of public policy will be obtainable on cheaper terms. Lending policy will take account of both type of investment and the degree of Maltese participation involved. Maltese

participation not falling short of a stipulated minimum will entitle a project to better terms than would normally otherwise be obtainable.

The launching of a Capital Market is one of the functions which the Central bank should have taken in hand. The law requires it to "foster the development of a Capital Market and promote a sound financial structure in Malta." We will require the Central Bank to tackle this task. A Nationalist Government will not borrow unless it needs to. If we require loan finance, our preference (in contrast with Minto's borrowing policy) will be to tap local savings, even at moderately higher rates of interest than what can be obtained elsewhere. We will borrow abroad if the terms are exceptionally favourable, if foreign exchange problems develop, or if considerations of public interest clearly so warrant. But the general rule will be not to look abroad if we can get what we need at a reasonable price here. Local borrowing is repayable in Maltese currency, and the interest rates payable on it keeps the money within the local income stream.

18.2. BANKS

The Minto Government has not allowed our banks to play as influential a role in economic development as they might have done. There has been too much political interference, this has impaired operational efficiency, and the resignation of a large number of highly qualified bank executives has contributed to a further lowering of standards.

A Nationalist Government will not use the banks as instruments in pursuit of the end of State capitalism. We will, in consultation with people having relevant knowledge and experience of the working of the banking sector, seek to restore standards of efficiency and reorganise the banks, possibly along self-managing lines if this should prove feasible.

We will allow the banks to run their own affairs, without political leaning towards either quarter. If there is evidence of injustices having been committed in the past these will be redressed, in the light of the contemplated reform of the banking sector generally.

We will, in the same light, also determine whether, and under what conditions, it might be of benefit to the Maltese economy to allow new foreign banks to set up here.

A Nationalist Government will not consider itself bound to implement the recently imposed amendments of the Central Bank Act. We find it particularly hard to comprehend why it should have been considered necessary to set up an Investment Committee, distinct from the Board of Directors of the Bank, unless we are to take it as an implicit vote of no confidence in the present Directors of the Bank.

18.3. INCOME TAX

A Nationalist Government will review the law relating to Income Tax, and will amend it in terms of the principles and guidelines rehearsed below:

A) Firstly, we will -

- i) exempt from liability to tax all persons whose total income from all sources does not exceed the National Minimum Pension.
- ii) exempt from liability to tax all married persons whose total income from all sources does not exceed the National Minimum Wage.
- iii) exempt from liability to tax all persons in receipt of National Assistance benefits, or who are in receipt of

non-contributory Old Age Pensions.

iv) raise the personal deductions threshold for all who are liable to pay tax.

v) exempt from liability to tax such amount as is paid by way of rent of leased premises in which a taxpayer resides, and likewise exempt from liability to tax the imputed income value of premises which are owner-occupied.

vi) allow, by way of further personal deduction, a reasonable portion of the total income of a married couple where the wife is also gainfully employed.

vii) exempt from liability to tax contributions subscribed to philanthropic institutions, up to a certain limit.

viii) step up, by 20 per cent over the normal rates, the personal deductions that may be claimed by handicapped persons, and by newly wed couples during the first two years of their married life.

B) Secondly, in order to expedite tax collection procedures, we will

i) exempt from the obligation to send in annual returns those whose income, over a number of years, has consistently tended to fall below the exempt limit, or who are on a steady and readily ascertainable income and personal deductions level: this measure will affect some 30% of those who now have to submit annual returns.

ii) allow more reasonable time limits for the submission of tax returns in those cases where the returns have to be accompanied by audited accounts.

iii) unless there is evidence of deliberate withholding of information bearing directly on the individual's liability to tax, deem an assessment once raised to be final and not subject to review.

C) Thirdly, so that the administration of income tax law shall be more fairly conducted, we will -

i) set up a Board of Equity, empowered to look into the way the Commissioner of Inland Revenue exercises the very considerable discretionary powers vested in him by the law, and to report to Parliament on the subject from time to time: the Board will also be empowered to decide whether a disputed tax assessment should be paid or held in abeyance pending the outcome of appeal procedures; and it will likewise have power to authorise payment of interest on refunds due to taxpayers in respect of amounts overpaid, if repayment is unduly delayed.

ii) do away with the system of *ex officio* assessments raised on the earnings of self-employed persons which, as currently practiced, is totally immoral (It offends basic justice, since it is quite inadmissible to presume that a person has earned an arbitrarily assessed amount unless he can prove that he did not, and it departs from the principle of taxation according to means since it imputes income on a formula of fixed standards which makes no allowance for the different earning capabilities of persons within any broad category or grouping. The result has been a huge accumulation of 30,000 cases of disputed tax which the Department cannot possibly handle objectively and rationally. A Nationalist Government will raise assessments in future on the basis of a taxpayer's own declaration of income, but will review all cases where deception comes to light, and in that event the full rigours of the law will be applied.

18.4. CUSTOMS DUTY

A Nationalist Government will review the Customs tariff, and the principles on which it is based, so as not to

allow it to further fuel inflation when non-luxury consumption goods come in at higher imported costs. Educational and Sporting equipment imported by recognised voluntary associations will be duty exempt in future, as will all equipment imported for use by handicapped persons.

18.5. OTHER FISCAL REFORMS

Taxes are not raised simply to finance the expenditure of Government; they also have the no less important function of serving as instruments of economic management and regulators of development. We will accordingly review the tax structure generally:

to make it more conducive to the encouragement of investment in productive activities, and other activities of public benefit; and also to pave the way for the restructuring and adaptation which will have to take place as we shape up to join the Common Market.

19. INFRASTRUCTURE

A Nationalist Government will strengthen the vital sectors of infrastructure which have been so irresponsibly neglected by the Mintoff Administration.

19.1. WATER

All necessary steps will be taken to ensure that we never again have to live through the nightmare experience of a critical water shortage, such as has been our lot these past two years. The situation is entirely of Mintoff's making and need never have arisen. Mintoff on coming to power in 1971 cancelled the order for two additional distillers which had been placed by the outgoing Nationalist Government. These two distillers, along with others previously installed, would have secured our water supply for years to come; the programme was embarked upon on the advice of experts who saw no alternative if we were to cope with the anticipated increase in demand for water; and Mintoff was fully aware of expert opinion on the subject. But he insisted on cancelling, even though it meant hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of damages arising from abortion of contract, all of course payable out of public funds.

Against all expert opinion Mintoff determined instead to increase the rate of extraction from ground water sources. The result has been a serious deterioration in the quality of water being served to the consumer, despite mixing with distilled water; and the water tables have been severely over-exploited to the point where they may now possibly have been irreparably damaged.

Mintoff left the existing Malta distillers idle too long, and had to spend substantial sums of public money to get them working properly again; even so they are now being so over-worked, and under-maintained, that their capacity to continue functioning efficiently much longer is in serious doubt. He had also to disburse (out of public funds) very large sums this year to get water from Gozo to supplement Malta's depleted supplies (after spending further large sums, as well, to get the Gozo Distiller working). Now, ten years too late, he has finally come round to the realisation that there really is no alternative to desalination.

A decision has been taken to purchase other desalination units, but of course costs have risen immensely since 1971 and we are going to have to pay a very heavy price for Mintoff's obstinacy and irresponsibility. The prospect of having to pay several extra millions compounds the injury caused by the hardships and privations arising from the water scarcity, and by way of the damage done to the aquifers (damage which may prove very difficult to correct) which are the most valuable natural resource we possess.

A Nationalist Government will provide our people with an adequate water supply, of good quality, and will do all it can to enable the damaged water aquifers below ground to recover to an acceptable degree, if Mintoff's policies have not already caused them irreparable harm.

19.2. ELECTRICITY

Despite the two old generators which Mintoff's Government has obtained at no cost from Italy - generators which have yet to come into operation - the electricity supply situation today remains extremely grave. It is conventional practice almost everywhere abroad to have a total installed power generation capacity which (even with its largest generator rested or out of action for one reason or another) can still meet system demand at peak load.

Former Nationalist Governments invariably ensured that firm capacity (total installed capacity less the capacity of the largest station generator) sufficed to meet peak demand. Mintoff's Government however has simply sought to cope with maximum demand at total capacity level. Demand is expected to increase by 7% per annum over the coming years and we run the risk of having even total capacity unable to cope with demand. Yet the extraordinary thing is that in its new Development Plan for 1981-85 the Mintoff Government does not intend to correct this imbalance, to remedy the problem. It plans to carry on as it has done, courting trouble and carrying us to the brink, quite pointlessly and again (as in water) quite irresponsibly.

Industries are not likely to set up in Malta if their power supply is not assured; just as tourism is unlikely to thrive if there isn't enough water on tap. A Nationalist Government will ensure that immediate steps are taken to build up our electricity power supply capacity to the required safe levels.

19.3. ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF ENERGY

A Nationalist Government will pursue the search for alternative sources of energy with greater determination. It will also consider what ways and forms of regulation and inducement (tax exemption, subsidies, etc.) are likely to prove most effective in getting such systems introduced and adopted in our islands: systems such as solar heating, wind energy and wave power for instance.

19.4. OIL EXPLORATION AND PURCHASING

The Mintoff Government allowed itself to be so totally preoccupied with the median line controversy with Libya that it neglected far too long to take off-shore exploration initiatives in our other waters. It has only recently started up in earnest in the North, and nothing at all seems to have yet been done in respect of our Western waters.

A Nationalist Government will give top priority to oil exploration in the course of developing its plan for the better exploitation of the resources of the sea and of the sea-bed. These resources are not just oil, but other valuable minerals as well, which are known to be available in Central Mediterranean waters. Just as a former Nationalist Government broke historic ground in launching its memorable initiative in the United Nations regarding the resources of the oceans, so too a future Nationalist Government will take equally bold initiatives in the framing of a politically acceptable policy for the exploration and exploitation of our own seas.

In regard to oil purchasing - we have much to learn from the negative aspects of the Mintoff Government's experience. A Nationalist Government will ensure that we get all the oil supplies we need, at best obtainable prices, and will be guided in this complicated area of market operations by the advice of those who have specialised knowledge of such operations and are competent to advise. Our object will be to secure supplies, not to try our hand at oil trading where it is as easy to make losses as it is to make profits on the side. Oil trading is no game for amateurs, more so if what is being put at risk is public money.

19.5. PORT AND TRANSPORT SERVICES

We fully recognise that properly run port and public transport facilities are as important to industrial development and tourism as they are to the social well being of our own people. We will ensure that the interests of public transport operators are safeguarded - so that, for instance, when the require modernisation of our fleet of public buses takes place, along standard lines as we wish it to, no prejudice is suffered on account of those buses, now forming part of the service, which were brought over and put on the road by the Mintoff Government in the course of its strike breaking operation last year.

19.6. PUBLIC CORPORATIONS AND OTHER STATE OWNED ENTERPRISES

The Mintoff Government has not been too particular about the way it has sought to Integrate into the Government system the various enterprises, of different sorts, which have in the course of time found their way into the Government stable. Some a ready there, others were thrust into it by this Government. It didn't seem to matter to this Government that both on efficiency grounds, and also because in many cases the law so stipulated, the relationship between each of these enterprises and the Government could not be standardised, rendered completely uniform. Yet as far as Mintoff was concerned they were all to be dealt with in the same way, rather in the manner of a cook who has but one pot and one recipe.

A Nationalist Government, unable to accept the incongruous matching of the Police and Armed Forces, cannot see the service, either, of coupling the telephone and telegraph services on the one hand with Broadcasting on the other, under one umbrella corporation - Telemalta. The telephone and telegraph services, like those of water and electricity supply, are vital to the social and economic life of our country and every Government must have a direct say in how they are run - but it doesn't follow that they should be run as Government Departments, because one also has to take account of the fact that in some measure they are commercial enterprises as well.

A Nationalist Government will give this type of enterprise a legal character appropriate to public corporations of a commercial nature: the law regulating them will in other words, while safeguarding the public interest as necessary, give them a large degree of freedom of operations, so that they can function with the efficiency one expects of commercially orientated enterprises.

We shall review the laws of 'statutes' of the various other enterprises under Government control and will adapt the statutory character of each according to the particular nature of the undertaking. The relationship of each with Government has to be clearly established and defined.

There are a host of Manufacturing industries which are simply commercial enterprises, and present no features which would in ordinary circumstances warrant the Government taking direct responsibility for their running. These are ostensibly (and legally) owned by the Development Corporation - but in practice are controlled by the Minister of Industry. The situation here is irregular, confused and confusing and it must be re-ordered. Elsewhere in this Programme we have referred to the Banks and to the tourist-oriented commercial enterprises now owned by the Government. We have also mentioned the Milk Marketing Undertaking. There are others, some rather importing, others not so much, all of which have to be examined separately and an 'ad hoc' solution devised for each. This will be done on the basis of the guiding principle that the ownership of property should be as widely dispersed as possible, that participation in the control and running of the enterprises, as well as in the profits generated, should be similarly widespread, and that the public good must take precedence over private gain. This is the principle which

III SOCIAL AFFAIRS

20 EDUCATION.

20.1. THE BASIS OF A SOCIETY BUILT ON DIALOGUE

One of the objects of education should be to instil in everyone an awareness and appreciation of the importance of dialogue. Our future citizens should, from their earliest formative years, be groomed to democratic ways, and taught to seek solutions through rational discussion and interchange of viewpoints rather than through the exercise of brute force, imposition and vocal aggression. A Nationalist Government considers that there is no better way of safeguarding our future than by investing in people, that the best way of ensuring future economic progress is through the development of human progress. Mintoﬀ's Administration has unwisely neglected the educational field, and we see this neglect reflected in the reduced share of national financial resources deployed in this sector.

We will urgently seek to correct Mintoﬀ's ill-conceived educational reforms, the worst excesses of which we see in such measures as the requirement of sponsorship as a pro-requisite for admission to certain courses of study; the irrational way in which the choice of the type of school children should go to is determined; the enforced exile of some teachers, and the lack of consideration and respect shown for the teaching profession generally and its unions; the permitting of children to leave school and seek employment before they are properly qualified in any particular line or calling; the parsimonious attitude shown in providing education with the funds it needs (except when it comes to the employment of expatriate "yes men", when money is apparently no object). A Nationalist Government is prepared to introduce radical reforms and will seek to involve parents, teachers and students in the shaping and implementation of these reforms at all levels of education.

20.2. PARTICIPATION OF PARENTS, TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

A Nationalist Government will recognize that parents have a primary role to play in the education of their children, a role which is both a right and a duty. The choice of school is the parent's prerogative. Parents will be assisted in the education of their children by the Government and its trained teachers, but their involvement should be nevertheless an active and continuing one.

We recognise that as children grow older they are entitled to express themselves, to be heard on matters relating to the way their own futures are being shaped and determined by the educational process as it affects them. We do not subscribe to the view that teachers engaged in the exercise of their profession are simply instruments of Government, puppets expected to do their master's bidding. On the contrary we think the Government should seek to exemplify, through them, the dignity of the human person, the thinking man who acts rationally and with full sense of conscientious responsibility. The example teachers can set in this respect is one of the most valuable aspects of education, because the individual's social awareness, and his capacity to develop as the good citizens we want him to be, cannot be adequately formed unless it is grounded on sound moral principles.

It is the Government's responsibility to give students a religious and moral formation, with full respect for the parents' wishes in this regard. A Nationalist Government will, as the majority of the Maltese people clearly wish it to, co-operate with the Church in providing children with spiritual and religious guidance as part of their standard curricular programmes.

20.3. THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN A NATIONAL SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

The Government has an obligation to ensure that proper standards are maintained in all educational institutions. An early priority of a Nationalist Administration will be to review the law governing education in Malta, so as to make it binding on both Government and citizen, to give the system stability and a firm sense of direction. The all too frequent changes of the past ten years have done nothing but confuse and unsettle. The Government will monitor the working of the institutions, and will provide technical assistance as necessary. The Government's capacity to render such technical assistance will be strengthened, especially in those areas where individual schools do not as a rule have the resources to provide adequate services of their own: such things as audio-visual programmes (films), which are an important medium of instruction and which can be used by all schools in turn. Examination systems have also to be standardized on a national basis. A Nationalist Government will once again give emphasis to education in an extra-curricula context, such as was being done prior to 1971, when a Youth Service Organisation was set up to run activities of educational content outside the school environment - a service which Mintoff proceeded to disrupt.

A Nationalist Government will not seek to monopolise education. It will not abuse the system for political ends by seeking to pro-condition students' minds to its own ideological viewpoints. It will emphasize, rather, the importance of students having an open mind. Children today are exposed to information and influences from sources other than the schools they attend. They must be taught to discriminate, to develop their own evaluative and critical faculties, to think and decide for themselves, so that they will be less vulnerable to the seductive appeal of whoever might seek to exploit them for his own ends.

Education must not only prepare students for the working life which lies ahead of them, it must also teach them how to use their leisure time as creatively as possible. It was a mistake to place sports and culture under the jurisdiction of Ministers having predominantly extraneous interests. A Nationalist Government will set up an institutional framework to further develop activities in the fields of culture and sport, and will provide appropriately equipped residential centres for courses of instruction in those areas. The centres will work in close collaboration with voluntary associations and bodies, and will help these voluntary organisations in any way they can.

20.4. GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS: CULTURAL CENTRES WITH THEIR OWN DISTINCT PERSONALITIES

A Nationalist Government will practise the concept of 'subsidiarity' in the educational field as well: the policy will be for decisions to be taken at the lowest possible level rather than imposed from above, and as close as can be to the persons who are likely to be affected by them. The authority of Heads of Schools will be strengthened, and School Councils will be set up composed of representatives of parents, teachers and of the students themselves. Every school should develop its own distinct identity, its own personality, which should reflect the needs, wishes, and characteristics of the community it serves. It will be up to the authorities in each school to shape and adapt their educational approach on as flexible a basis as possible, within the framework of binding national guidelines of action.

Schools should not simply be places frequented by children, they should be the cultural centres of their respective district communities. Efforts should therefore be made to integrate with, and to enrich, the cultural life of the cities or villages where they are situated. Each school should have a well stocked public library, and should organise courses of "continuing" education for adults who wish to improve or refresh their minds. Schools should be properly equipped with gymnasias, where physical fitness and training in sporting activities can be organised, and should also provide an environment, and the facilities, where people seeking creative and recreational release in their leisure time, can find it.

20.5. PRIVATE SCHOOLS: DIVERSITY AND SPECIALISATION

The Mintoff Government has chosen to declare war on private schools. A Nationalist Government will not however seek to destroy or eliminate private schools; on the contrary we recognize that they have every right to exist, and that the community profits from their existence. It will therefore help them in a substantial manner to further develop, so that parents can exercise an effective choice of the sort of school they want for their children, having regard to the different educational biases, each good in its own way, which private schools tend to provide. A Nationalist Government will consider encouraging and enabling particular private schools to specialise in educational disciplines which cannot be easily, or feasibly, provided in state-run schools.

We will extend to the students of private schools the medical and socio-psychological aid services which the Government provides for its own schools, if this is desired.

20.6. FIRST EDUCATIONAL LEVEL: KINDERGARTEN AND PRIMARY SCHOOLS

A Nationalist Government considers it essential to enlist the active co-operation, in embarking on its programme of educational reforms, of teachers, parents and students. It will do this through encouraging free and open dialogue. The reforms will affect the whole system at all levels: we refer here to some of the changes we envisage, and which will be further matured through dialogue, so that decisions can be taken on them which are not half-baked and command widespread public support.

Kindergarten schools are currently run in a chaotic and undisciplined manner, mainly because the teachers in charge are not adequately trained, have poor conditions of service, and receive no support and direction from above. All this must change. Kindergartens are there to give children their first taste of education and disciplined social behaviour, which is necessary in some instances to offset disadvantages arising from the home environment being not quite what it should be. These schools should also teach children the basic principles of personal hygiene and health care; they should provide an opportunity to spot talent in its earliest stages, and to diagnose possible physical or mental handicaps, so that appropriate encouragement and medical corrective action can be provided according to the potential or need of the individual child; they should teach children to work together, to collaborate with each other, rather than to look upon each other's as competitors. The "rat race" syndrome [...sic]

At Primary level, a service will be provided for backward children, run by teachers specially trained to handle and guide children of less than average intelligence or application, so that nobody will in future leave school without, at least, being able to read and write; the school medical service will be reinforced (there are at present only three doctors for all Government schools); libraries will be provided, suitably stocked, and will be available for use by parents as well as children; a specialist counselling service will be set up to help children (and their parents) where educational progress is being impeded on account of domestic or other external circumstances; children who are physically or mentally handicapped will be given particular care and attention, in appropriate surroundings, to offset or alleviate the disadvantages they suffer from.

20.7. SECOND LAYER OF EDUCATION: SECONDARY AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS

A Nationalist Government introduced Secondary schooling for all in 1971, but the Secondary school system today is in complete disarray, as a result of the continuous upheavals to which it has been subjected by Mintoff's Government; the rampant indiscipline which has been allowed to go unchecked far too long; the changes in school syllabi, and the imposition of subject choices which take too narrow a view of what education is about; and insufficient preparation of students before admission to Secondary schooling.

A Nationalist Government will recognize Secondary education on the basis of an initial three year 'common'

course for all in the course of which a student's aptitude and inclination should be readily discernible. Schooling thereafter, in the upper forms, will be streamed along three main routes: (a) courses for those students who intend to go on to University studies at either professional or technical level; (b) courses catering for those who will not be going on to tertiary education but who wish to attain proficiency in particular trades; (c) courses designed to equip students with other (non-trade) skills leading to careers in commerce or business. Our aim is to see that nobody leaves school, even after getting to the official school-leaving age of sixteen, until he acquires some sort of qualification which would make it correspondingly easier for him to work with dignity.

Even at the stage when students have been streamed into trade or 'other' schools, the school syllabus should be sufficiently broad to give all students at least a measure of continued general education, which will help develop in the child those qualities of creative thinking and social awareness one expects to find in 'rounded' individuals, in good citizens. This applies to those going to Agricultural schools as well.

Children who find themselves unsuited to the educational course they have started will be enabled to switch to whatever other course is considered more appropriate to their particular talents.

Trade schooling for girls should be on a par with what is provided for boys. At present girls are effectively being discriminated against. Teachers in Trade schools should have conditions of service no less attractive than those given to teachers in other schools.

The School for the Blind will be re-established and will take students of all ages. Special schools will be set up for the physically handicapped, and the buildings will so planned and structured as to take account of the particular problems and needs of these students. Institutions caring for mentally handicapped children will be given all possible aid, especially in the provision of educational tuition to those who can benefit from such tuition, so that those who develop their faculties to a sufficient extent may even be able to consider leaving the institutions which have sheltered them.

20.8. EDUCATION AT TERTIARY LEVEL: THE UNIVERSITY

We commit ourselves to legislate back into existence the University which was set up in 1592 and taken over by the Government in 1769, and this will be done to nullify the legal consequences of the Act of 1980. We will do this without prejudice to the legitimate interests of members of the staff of the present "University". which interests we undertake to safeguard.

The University will belong to the people of Malta: not only because the tuition it provides and the research undertaken under its auspices are open to all, and serve not just those who are directly involved but also the public interest in its broadest construction, but also because the University will be 'available' to the Community as a whole (industries, etc.). People will be encouraged to look to it whenever there are problems to be solved, and the University will be duty bound to help within the limits of its capabilities, and with the collaboration and assistance of others who may be in a position to help in supplementing the University's own resources in the provision of such consultancy services.

Although the University will be essentially Maltese in character, it should be open to foreign students and foreign teachers; and it must not exist in isolation, but cultivate contacts with other Universities abroad. The University will be encouraged to specialize in those areas where Malta has particular advantages or needs, while maintaining its customary high standards of tuition in the traditional main disciplines. The Medium of instruction will continue to be the English language, as a general rule, but we will do our utmost to encourage the use of Maltese wherever this is at all possible and indicated.

A Nationalist Government will re-establish the University's right to operate as an autonomous body, subject only to directives of policy from time to time. The Government will be able to represent the public interest through the persons nominated by it to seats on the governing bodies of the University, and it will through these nominees be able to maintain a continuing dialogue between the academic world and the Government's own administration, without need to intrude in anyway on the institution's autonomous existence.

The student-worker system will in future be dropped in so far as it is geared to such requirements as alternating work-study periods of six months, the sponsorship of all students by prospective employers, and other similar unacceptable features. Where contractual relationships have been entered into, which cannot equitably be dissolved, we will see to it that nobody is permitted to suffer hardship or undue prejudice. Instead of the student-worker system a Nationalist Government, which made University tuition free for all during its last term of office, will introduce a new basis, in terms of which-

- a) Students will be financially assisted by means of payments made to them during their period of study
- b) Students will, in circumstances where they enter into periods of employment directly related to and bearing on the nature of the studies they are undergoing, receive full pay for the job they are doing, while they are doing it (and will not be exploited as they have hitherto been under Mintoff's Student-worker scheme)
- c) Students will be assisted by means of special programmes to find employment on full payment (or on a voluntary basis, if they so prefer) during periods of vacation.

Bursaries will be provided to encourage students to embark on studies which may be deemed, in the public interest, to warrant such encouragement.

The University will once again restore such Faculties of study as have either been dispersed, such as the Faculty of theology, or have been suppressed under the Mintoff Government's shortsighted policies of so-called reform (such as the Faculties of Arts and Science). It will also take in those Faculties which were previously based on MCAST, and the Colleges of Education, and will re-establish Preparatory Courses for admission to the University. A Nationalist Government will permit a measure of flexibility in the early years of Academic study, and will allow students to switch courses in the event of their failing to make the grade in one course, while showing evidence that they have the ability to make it if switched to another course. This will require that the early phases of the Degree courses should not be too rigidly or tightly specialized., We shall in this way be giving practical application to our belief in the right of the individual to develop his talents to the full, in the light of the particular endowments which make him the person he is.

In addition to the 'normal' University Faculties, additional schools and institutions will also be set up from time to time in other branches of learning, when and as the need for them is felt, emphasis will be given to evening tuition, and other courses tailored to the needs of those who feel the urge to come to the University late in life, or who wish to return there to recharge and renew their intellectual batteries. Past initiatives which have been shelved will be taken up again: initiatives such as the proposed setting up of a Centre of Mediterranean studies which, in spite of UNESCO aid, this Government failed to proceed with; the grafting on to our University of a branch of the United Nations University to specialize in matters relating to the sea and its resources; the institution of an International Centre which would concern itself with problems of the Aged, a project which Mintoff failed to follow up in spite of the extensive ground work done by our former Nationalist Government before leaving office.

Our University must regain its stature and again be worthy of the international ranking and recognition it formerly enjoyed; it must again be permitted to serve the country as a University in fact and not just in name. A Nationalist Government will want the University to broaden its interests, and to spearhead a thrust designed

to spread higher learning in all possible ways to those of our people who are receptive to it, through the broadcasting media and by way of the facilities which our widely spread school system can provide.

20.9. ADULT EDUCATION

Education is a life-long process, and although we tend to think of it as something associated with growing children and young adults, it should be open to all citizens of all ages. Those who, in their time, did not have the opportunity to benefit from it should be free to seek it at anytime, and likewise those who may have had their opportunities in the past, but who may feel the need for refresher courses, in view of the unceasing changes and developments in all areas of knowledge. The University has responsibility in this area, but the Department of Education will also concern itself to provide facilities relevant to the needs of adult education - through broadcasting, through district libraries, and through special courses laid on from time to time.

A Nationalist Government will recognize, encourage and aid those private institutions and bodies which are doing good work in this line of 'permanent education.

21. FAMILY LIFE

21.1. CHILDREN'S BENEFITS

Government interference in family affairs is not uncommon, especially in totalitarian states, and we see evidence in those states of family policies being determined not on the basis of what is best for the family, but on what best conduces to the end of public policy as determined by the state. The Soviet Union, for instance, at one time was concerned to increase the country's population, and went to the extent of giving special awards and financial inducements to mothers having as least ten children. Mintoff's Government, on the other hand, wants us to limit family size, and it has arbitrarily decided that families with more than three children should not get allowances for any additional children. The Nationalist Party believes in responsible parenthood, but we cannot allow or accept that the Government has any right to bring pressures to bear on parents and effectively tell them how many children they should or should not have. We will therefore amend the law relating to children's allowances, along with that relating to maternity allowances and remove this inequitable and unacceptable distinction based on family size.

21.2. MARRIAGE LAW

While a Nationalist Government appreciates the need for legal provisions to permit and regulate civil marriage, the law as it stands presents unnecessary difficulties, and involves the couple concerned in excessive costs. We will, in consultation with interested parties, therefore amend the law and make it more suited to the real needs of our citizens, especially by making religious marriages also valid from a civil point of view, and likewise by giving similar effect to marriage annulments determined by the Church Authorities

21.3. WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Mintoff's Government has regulated the affairs of women with the inconsistency which so typifies its actions. Some laws which needed changing were changed, but the process of removing discrimination did not go far enough. Indeed, for a long while, Mintoff's Government itself added another discriminatory dimension when it ordained by regulation that a woman could not be employed to fill a post vacated by a man, which was a complete mockery of its professed respect for the principle of equality between the sexes.

A Nationalist Government will ratify the UN Convention relating to the removal of all forms of discrimination

against women, and will set up a Commission (on which women will be substantially represented, as indeed they will also be on other Government Boards) to consider what changes need to be made in our Constitution, and in the laws of Malta, to give men and women equal status in a truly meaningful manner.

21.4. HELP FOR WOMEN WHO WORK, WHETHER AT HOME OR OUT OF HOME

A Nationalist Government recognizes that a married woman has every right, if she so wishes and without any form of compulsion, to seek employment away from home. It will provide a married woman, who retired from active employment when rearing small children, facilities to enable her to return to work if and when she wishes to do so after the children have grown up (through preferential rights with regard to the vacated job, retraining courses, etc.).

We also recognize that a married woman has the right to elect to be a housewife instead of seeking employment outside the home. We will consult with associations and bodies who are knowledgeable about and concerned with problems in this area, and will take appropriate measures to give expression, by way of appropriate practical and financial aids, to our belief that a mother who gives full time care to her young children is rendering both a social and an economic service to the community.

21.5. DOMICILIARY SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

A Nationalist Government will set up a system of domiciliary help which will be provided by way of social assistance to those who are entitled to it. Persons entitled to such help may well need to be institutionalised, but this must be regarded as a measure of last resort, as something to be avoided if at all possible, because every person is entitled to continue living in his or her familiar environment, close to the family, but without being a burden on them, to an extent greater than they are able to bear.

This domiciliary help will be available to those families which, for whatever reason, experience difficulty in raising their children; for example, if these children suffer from some physical or mental disability, or if one of the parents is no longer around. Families with somebody who is either old or infirm, and who needs specialized attention, will also be eligible, as will other cases which clearly qualify for this form of assistance owing to some particular circumstance.

The social workers engaged in this field must be taught to recognize and respect the wishes, needs and capabilities of the people they are there to help. The training up to professional standards of this type of worker has been neglected by Mintoff's Government, which even went to the extent of shutting down the Department of Social Policy in the University. A Nationalist Government will give urgent priority to the training of workers in this field of social assistance.

21.6. HOME OWNERSHIP FOR ALL

It is the Nationalist Government's long-term aim that everybody should be enabled to own the home he lives in. The housing situation is complicated by various anomalies - the enormous difference, for instance in the rents being paid for new houses as compared with what is paid for old ones. Old houses are being allowed to deteriorate because neither landlord nor tenant has any incentive to effect proper maintenance and improvement: the landlord cannot afford it because the rent is too low, and the tenant is not prepared to do it himself because the property is not his. The solution would seem to be for the property to be made over from landlord to tenant, under government regulation and assistance.

Mintoff's Government put up some proposals regarding the sale to sitting tenants of old properties belonging to the Government, but the response appears to have been cool. A Nationalist Government will seek to establish why this was so, and will then re-present the proposal on a basis better designed to secure the

desired response. In regard to new Government buildings, we will introduce the principle that the premises should be let on what would amount to hire-purchase terms, instead of the conventional rental basis. Payments would be required over an extended period of time, on the completion of which the house shall be deemed to have been bought.

In order to put all lessees of rented premises in a position where they can acquire title of ownership over houses they occupy, a Nationalist Government will review the Home-Ownership and Home Improvement Schemes, and give financial assistance by way of loans and grants, even to those who have no resources of their own. The project will be extended to cover the sale by owners of private houses of properties occupied by the respective tenants; and we will extend aid as well to those who wish to build their own houses on private land, on lines analogous to the aid being extended to those who wish to build on land sold or leased to them by the Government.

In the planning of new houses a Nationalist Government will see to the particular needs of old people and handicapped persons. A comprehensive plan will be undertaken for the 'renewal' of houses situated in those zones in various districts now regarded as slums. Where necessary these slum areas will be demolished and rebuilt, but where the slum concentrations can be improved without resorting to demolition, steps will be taken to reduce over-crowding, to put in modern sanitary amenities, to effect necessary structural repairs and other works required to upgrade the quality of the housing areas concerned in line with modern community standards.

21.7. SOCIAL CHARTER FOR YOUTHS

Our legal system is fairly comprehensive on matters relating to young children, as well as on those concerning adults and the aged, but it does not seem to provide adequately for persons in the youth category. This group; has very special characteristics of its own, and the role of youth in society needs to be better recognised and more specifically provided for; especially at the age when they are physically able to set up a family of their own, but not psychologically or socially, since they are usually still preparing themselves for a responsible job in the contemporary social context of developed countries.

A Nationalist Government will introduce legal reforms designed to take account of the many problems encountered by youths in the difficult years of transition from childhood to adult status. Projects specifically devised for youths will be financially supported; favourable conditions will encourage and assist them to take a more active part in the cultural life of the country; they will also be assisted through specific fiscal measures (such as that in our income tax list of reforms), and changes in the regulations governing conditions of work so as to enable those within a defined age-band who wish to continue their studies to do so; etc.

A National Youth Board will be set up to draw up a co-ordinated plan embracing wide-ranging measures designed to assist persons in this age category, and particularly those who are passing through a difficult phase (such as drug-addicts, delinquents or others who for one reason or another have become social drop-outs). This plan will be submitted to Government and in due course to Parliament; and when approved its implementation will be monitored by the National Youth Board. The Board will include representatives of the various youth associations and of the Federation which co-ordinates them.

We recognize that, although the people of Malta and Gozo still lag substantially behind the standards of living attained by the more developed countries in Europe and elsewhere, there are countries immeasurably worse off than we are. A Nationalist Government will encourage Maltese youths and others who may feel so inclined, to volunteer to go to these extremely poor countries of the world, and be of service in some capacity, to help alleviate suffering and misery, and in some way promote the development of these countries. A Fund will be established to finance the scheme for voluntary service abroad.

21.8. SENIOR CITIZENS

In various parts of this Electoral Programme (Housing, Family Assistance, Information) we show our concern and regard for these senior members of our society, and express the desire that they should be enabled to continue giving us the benefit of their experience and maturity even after normal age of retirement. With this in mind we will be amending the Pensions law (see following section).

We feel that the participation of these senior citizens can best bear fruit if it is properly co-ordinated, and we therefore propose to establish a National Council of Senior Citizens, which will include representatives of the spectrum of associations concerning themselves with problems of the elderly. This Council will be required to look into all matters bearing on the needs of our older citizens, make recommendations to Government, and monitor the implementation of the measures proposed after they have been approved by Government.

A Nationalist Government will concern itself not only with the physical but also with the psychological health of the elderly. It will give its full backing to any project proposed by the National Council with these ends in view. Our educational reforms will provide for the training of a number of social workers, and some of these workers will be required to specialize in the problems of aging and its consequences. This is essential if we are to give practical effect to, and derive the benefits we expect from, our concept of 'personalizing' the social services of our country. The dimension of personalization includes domiciliary help, including help in such matters as maintaining the cleanliness of the home, and in the preparation of meals. Just as we contemplate giving the handicapped priority in the provision of telephone service, so too we consider that the senior citizen is entitled to special consideration in the provision of a telephone connection at home.

It was a Nationalist Government, when last in Office, which first roused the international conscience to the importance of heeding the problem of old age, by way of the initiative it took in the United Nations. We will not fail to continue the good work we triggered off in this field. Minto's Government chose not to pursue further the Nationalist initiative, and though they have now come back to it, the matter is being handled in a way which scorns the active participation of those most interested and best qualified to advise, the aged themselves and the associations which represent them.

21.9. PENSIONS

Three years ago Minto's Government introduced the so-called 'two-thirds pension for all'. At that time (1978) all subscribers to the National Insurance Scheme had a vested right to a pension of £M12.50,0 per week (married rate) and the Minimum Wage was around £M 17.40,0. Most employees on higher incomes also had other pension rights related to higher pension scales. The proper thing at that time would have been to guarantee a two-thirds pension to those who had no other entitlement to it, but this is not what Minto's Government did.

Under the law as enacted nobody who receives an occupational pension can now receive more from the National Insurance Scheme than will top up that occupational pension to the two-thirds level, which means that if the occupational pension is itself two-thirds or more the person gets nothing to all from the National Insurance Scheme.

As a result thousands of pensioners are now actually worse off than they were before - those who were Government employees, employees of the British Services, of the Drydocks, of the Banks, and of various other private enterprises. Thousands have been denied pension increases for years, and remain so denied to this day.

This has meant that the National Insurance Scheme subscriptions have ceased to be insurance subscriptions in

any meaningful sense, but have become no more than tax levies, the proceeds of which are devoted not only to the payment of pensions but also to the financing of Health Services, Children's Allowances, the payment of Bonuses to those who are not gainfully occupied, and other extraneous commitments.

Other anomalies have been created:

- a) Sickness and injury benefits are not being paid to the self-employed, although this category subscribes to the scheme just as all others do
- b) A pensioner under the age of 65 loses his entitlement to a pension if he derives earnings from other gainful employment, or if he (or any other member of his family) has a business licence, even if he does not in fact use that licence.
- c) Widows are supposedly now entitled to a pension of 4/9 of the late husband's pay, but this rate is abated if they have some other pension deriving from a husband's former job. Widows over the age of sixty actually have their pensions decreased on reaching the age of sixty.
- d) The non-employed have been fused into one omnibus category along with the self-employed; and while employees pay a subscription rate related to their income from employment, the self-employed pay a rate related to their total income from all sources including private income from non-work-related sources.

A Nationalist Government will seek to preserve what is good in the present law, while taking an early opportunity to correct its anomalous features. The ultimate intention is to have a new law altogether, without the unnecessary complications which are a feature of the present law (so much so that quite often it isn't at all easy to discover what your rights are, under the law as it stands).

We propose to reform the present system along the following lines. In the first place, the obligation to subscribe will be limited to those who are gainfully occupied and have an income from such employment not below the minimum wage, or an income from all sources in excess of the minimum wage; men below the age of sixty one, and women below the age of sixty, who are not gainfully occupied, and whose income does not exceed the minimum wage, will be exempt from the obligation to subscribe, but they will nevertheless be credited with subscriptions for all purposes of the Scheme. Persons in receipt of an invalidity pension will also be deemed to have continued paying in subscriptions as far as the two-thirds pension Scheme is concerned. Self-employed persons, such as farmers, fishermen, herdsmen, or others who are members of cooperative societies, will be required to pay a special rate of subscription (distinct from that otherwise payable by self-employed persons) on the basis of criteria to be determined.

A Nationalist Government will look upon the two-thirds fraction as the minimum rate of pension to which a subscriber to the National Insurance Scheme is entitled, and not as the ceiling beyond which pensions may not rise. When the law is changed, therefore, any subscriber who gets a pension or gratuity from some new scheme will not have such pension or gratuity abated from the two-thirds pension. In order to rectify the anomalies which the Mintoff Government's policies have given rise to, a Nationalist Government will undertake to continue paying pensioners who have an occupational pension of two-thirds, the National Insurance Pension as envisaged by the law at the time it was changed (1978): a £M12.50,0 in the case of a married subscriber, and £M7.40 in the case of a single person. Cost of living increases will be payable to all, reckoned on the basis of the occupational pension being enjoyed. These increases will also be payable to those who retired before the Mintoff Administration's law was enacted, even if the pension rises above two-thirds as a result of this. A National Government will determine by law that the National Minimum Pension should be 4/5 of the National Minimum Wage prevailing at any time. In practical terms this means, at today's rates, an increase in the National Minimum Pension of around £M1.10,0.

A Nationalist Government will take account of the fact that different people may have differing views as to the point in time at which they wish to retire from work. We also do not consider it quite right that a person should be required to carry on working at full stretch up to the time of retirement, and to cease work abruptly thereafter. We will therefore introduce the concept of a flexible retiring age. Persons who wish to retire on pension, before the date on which such retirement would normally be due, will be permitted to do so on reaching the age of fifty-five; but in that event (unless the retirement has been owing to health considerations) the pension taken will be discounted to take account of the fact that it is being prematurely claimed. Persons so retiring will be allowed to seek alternative gainful employment without abatement of pension.

We will also provide for 'phased' retirement, by permitting a person coming up to pension age to work shorter hours and to shed some part of his normal workload, as he gets closer to the due date. The process of phasing out should be gradual. Persons opting for phased retirement will have their pay from work, and their pensions later, appropriately adjusted. Phased retirement will be optional, and entirely at the employee's discretion. In any event: persons who take a pension on reaching retiring age will be permitted to carry on in gainful employment without abatement of pension.

A Nationalist Government will end the irrational discrimination between widows over the age of sixty and those who are under. Those who reach the age of sixty will no longer have their pensions reduced, and those who are already sixty or over will have their pensions adjusted upwards.

Widows entitled to a pension of $\frac{4}{9}$ of their husband's retiring emoluments ($\frac{2}{3}$ of their husband's pension) will in future receive the full rate of pension, without any abatement on account of any pension or gratuity they may receive, under any new scheme, from the husband's employer, on account of a husband's service with that employer.

As under present arrangements not all widows are entitled to a pension of $\frac{2}{3}$ of the deceased husband's pension, a Nationalist Government will extend the entitlement to a $\frac{2}{3}$ pension to all widows.

By extension of the same principle which will allow other pensioners to carry on working without abatement of pension, on reaching retiring age, widows over the age of sixty will be allowed to work, or to carry on a business activity, without any abatement of their widow's pension.

Government pensioners who are not in receipt of a pension under the National Insurance Scheme, because they were never subscribers to that Scheme, will be given an immediate increase which will raise their pension to $\frac{2}{3}$ of the current salary of the post they held on retirement.

Since 1979 pensioners have been denied payment of National Insurance Benefits on being hospitalized. A Nationalist Government will see that they are no longer denied these benefits.

Other amendments of the National Insurance Scheme are required. The specific changes referred to are by no means a comprehensive list, but simply identify the more glaring anomalies, illogicalities and injustices. Such further changes as we will be introducing, will be discussed with interested associations and bodies before final decisions are taken.

21.10. THE HANDICAPPED

The law obliging employers to take on to their pay-roll a number of handicapped persons was enacted by a former Nationalist Government. Simply other benefits, such as the pension now payable to the blind, were Nationalist measures. We now further extend our commitment to the welfare of the handicapped by formally undertaking to abide by the declaration of the United Nations regarding the "Rights of the Handicapped". We feel most strongly that handicapped persons are entitled to live lives as near to 'normal' as possible, that they

should be given every opportunity to enrich their lives by active participation in the social life of the community, that they are entitled to be protected against exploitation or abuse in any shape or form.

We shall be extending social assistance into the homes of families with handicapped members, through domiciliary aid provided by nurse and trained social workers; we will be providing advisory and information services to help these families; we will likewise help financially to effect structural alterations in the houses where handicapped persons live; and we will help as well in whatever other ways we can according to the particular circumstances of each case.

We will enforce implementation of the law enacted in 1969 concerning the employment of handicapped persons; we will help set up a cooperative for the organisation of work done by the handicapped, and will guarantee to find markets for their products. Appropriate benefits will be made available to those handicapped persons who are unable to do work of any sort. We have had the handicapped persons very much in mind when framing our proposals regarding pensions, income tax, customs duties, etc.

Handicapped persons will be given priority in the provision of telephones and will also be given preferred treatment as regards rights of traffic access and parking facilities. We will take their needs into account in improving the means of transport normally used by them. Government Departments will be instructed to treat them with particular consideration, especially when they wish to avail themselves of public services, and their participation in activities undertaken or organised for commemorative or other public purposes will be facilitated.

Persons who are mentally handicapped will be placed under the tutelage of a suitably qualified person or mentor, appointed by the Second Hall of the Courts of Law: the mentor will have full rights to ensure that the interests and well-being generally of the handicapped person are being appropriately safeguarded.

There are proposals about special schools for the handicapped in the section of Education.

22. HEALTH

22.1. CHANGES WHICH SHOULD HAVE BEEN EFFECTED BUT WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN

There was need for an overhaul of the Health Services in Malta, particularly in view of the great social and other changes that have taken place since the war: the number of persons in the upper age brackets has increased; there has been an increase of mental illness caused by the strains and stresses of modern life, by the problems which an industrializing society brings in its wake; has been an increase in sickness arising not from poverty or insufficiency of food but from unbalanced diets. Increased emphasis in education is needed on problems relating to health and hygiene; it is becoming increasingly important that all persons and families should be enabled to take greater and more responsible care of their own health; there is increasing scope for the application of preventive medical measures, and for increased specialization in such aspects of medicine and industrial and social health.

Mintoff's Government has failed to adopt the necessary measures, to effect the necessary changes, because it was more intent on pursuing its quarrel with the Maltese doctors, with feuding with the nurses and other employees in the health sectors. The Government's solution was to bring in foreigners to replace Maltese doctors. Even these foreigners are themselves working in an uneasy environment: an unhappy, uncertain, unsettled environment. In this sort of situation no Government can possibly set up a properly functioning health service.

In view of progress in medicine, there has been an increased tendency in most developed countries, these past few years, for Governments to devote ever increasing portions of the national product to the provision of health services (from 10 to 15%). The trend in Malta has been quite the reverse. Under Mintoff's Government expenditure in health has gone down to the point where it is now no more than some 3.50% (1981). This is a measure both of the neglect that has been allowed to take place, and of the size of the problem which lies ahead, of the lost ground which has to be recovered, when a Nationalist Government takes office.

22.2. REHABILITATION OF THE HEALTH SERVICE

A Nationalist Government will put into effect a plan, already formed, to ensure that no crisis develops in the health service following a change of administration, and a switch-back from foreign to Maltese doctors. We will never resort to petty retaliation: but we must ensure that the doctors discharged by the Mintoff Administration are duly rehabilitated, and that other posts are filled by the persons best qualified to fill them.

We will take all necessary steps to restore to our Medical School the international recognition it forfeited when it was destroyed by Mintoff's Government: we will also do all we can to ensure that doctors who have graduated in the meantime are likewise enabled to secure international recognition of the qualifications they have attained.

The Medical Council will be reconstituted, and again vested with the powers that Mintoff's Government abrogated. The structure of the administration of Health Services in Malta will be reviewed.

A Nationalist Government will give practical expression to the recognition that Private Hospitals run by religious orders have in the past given invaluable service to the community and people of Malta. It will accordingly once again permit them to re-establish themselves under licence,, and it will also permit other private clinics to function, under regulation and subject to appropriate conditions.

22.3. AN INTEGRATED HEALTH SERVICE FOR MALTA

A Nationalist Government will embark on the setting up of an integrated and comprehensive Health Service in Malta, in the light of the most modern medical concepts, and the needs of today's society. We will seek and welcome the collaboration of all those who wish to help ensure that the edifice we build is structured on sound lines. The project will be open for public discussion, and the free exchange of opinions and viewpoints, before it is presented to Parliament for legal enactment.

22.4. HOME MEDICAL SERVICE

A Nationalist Government would like every citizen to have the right to free medical attention, even at home. The system we set up will entitle everybody to select his own doctor. The doctor in turn will be entitled not only to fair remuneration for his services, but also to conditions of work which would permit him to give his patients the best possible attention. We will therefore be prepared to subsidize the improvement of doctors' clinics, help new doctors, and encourage older ones to go on refresher courses, while doing all that is necessary to ensure that the Health Service we provide is both personal and up to the highest standards of the profession.

22.5. DISTRICT HEALTH CENTRES

A sick person should not be required to suffer more than he has to. Inevitably patients referred to hospital are subjected to restrictions and a degree of regimentation, and just as inevitably these restrictions increase the sense of isolation and depression that all patients experience on admission to a large institution, away from

their familiar environment. We propose to set up a network of District Medical Centres, where patients who are not quite hospital cases can receive medical attention; and we will also provide domiciliary nursing for those who are sick at home, and who need trained care and attention, as well as for the aged and the handicapped living at home. We wish to decentralize the Health Service, as far as we can in line with our policy of decentralising the administration of Government generally.

22.6. NATIONAL HOSPITALS

Despite all we can do to decentralize the Health Service there will always be need for fully equipped Hospitals to handle certain types of conditions and cases. There is in these Hospitals the void to be filled by the enforced departure of Maltese doctors, and the shortage of nurses, both of which problems are the direct result of the misguided policies of Mintoff's Government. There is also the need for more specialized services in a number of medical departments.

22.7. FREE MEDICINES

The way we see it - if there is to be a free Health Service the provision of free medicine should be part of it. The present system as regards medicines is open to gross abuse. While therefore the supply of essential medicines free of charge will be a feature of the comprehensive Health Service we plan to gradually introduce, such supply will be under strict control with safeguards against waste and abuse.

22.8. SELF-HELP

A Nationalist Government will give priority to the application of preventive medical and health measures. Education can help a great deal in this regard, and people should be taught how to avoid putting their own health at risk. The social causes of ill-health need looking into in greater depth, and ways must be found to counteract the ill-effects generated by social causes.

22.9. THE WORK ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS OF HEALTH

A Nationalist Government will strengthen the medical services which relate to the preservation of health in a work environment. Special Medical Clinics will be set up in the main industrial centres, and employees will be encouraged to have medical check-ups on commencement of work, during employment, as well as on termination of employment; appropriate records will be kept; standards of hygiene and cleanliness will be supervised, and possible health hazards will be anticipated and controlled; first-aid facilities will be provided; the fitness of particular types of people for particular types of work will be assessed, and appropriate advice given. The team of doctors in these Clinics will monitor the effects of noise on health, as well as the effects of stress, monotony, and unduly prolonged over-work (under unit work systems of production for instance) on the mental health of the workers. Where ill-effects are diagnosed appropriate remedial action will be recommended.

A Nationalist Government will re-introduce the system of medical certification by family doctors in respect of absences from work on account of sickness. There are appropriate remedies for doctors who certify absences abusively.

We will establish lines of policy to regulate over-time work, so that nobody is required to perform such work to an excessive extent, under compulsion, or in circumstances where the employer's object in resorting to regular overtime is manifestly to avoid having to take on additional labour.

A Nationalist Government will make it obligatory for all employers to insure their workers against possible accidents, so that those suffering injuries while at work, or their families in case of fatal accidents, will be

eligible for substantial financial relief.

23. CHANGES IN THE WORLD OF WORK

23.1. FULL EMPLOYMENT NOT HIDDEN UNEMPLOYMENT

A Nationalist Government will aim at providing employment for all who wish to work. The provision of full employment will be the central objective of the new Development Plan we shall be drawing up in place of that which Mintoff's Government has recently published, and which (as conceived) will not attain this desired objective.

We will recognize that workers have a right to give up jobs of their own accord for a sufficiently good reason (physical or mental health for instance), and that on so doing they are entitled to register for fresh employment without being discriminated against under the rules established by Mintoff's Government.

For those who find themselves unemployed - what we offer is not Labour corps under military discipline, which provide no lasting solution, but training or re-training programmes, so that the persons seeking jobs can be equipped with the trade or other skills and qualifications for which a market demand exists at good rates of pay.

23.2. IMPROVEMENT IN CONDITIONS OF WORK

A Nationalist Government will require employers shedding labour to give their employees redundancy payments on termination of employment, when a job is being terminated in circumstances where the employee is not at fault and has been in the employer's service for a number of years. We will introduce a system of Supplementary Payments in circumstances where workers in an enterprise which is passing through a difficult phase are obliged to go on short working weeks for a limited period of time. These supplementary payments to employees will be made out of a Fund to be established, and on the basis of rules, criteria and scales to be determined.

A Nationalist Government will make a forty-hour week obligatory in all sectors of employment and for all employees. We will also introduce, wherever feasible, a system of work based on the concept of flexible time. We will encourage resort to flexible hours of work where this can be appropriately introduced without prejudice to the output and efficiency of administration of the enterprise or organisation concerned.

23.3. INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Trade Unions - those unions at any rate which have managed to maintain their separate and autonomous identities, and have not allowed themselves to become the subservient tools of political forces - have managed, without uprooting the capitalist system, or forcing labour and capital into a situation of irreconcilable conflict, to inject a spirit of dialogue and social justice into the area of industrial relations. A Nationalist Government will respect those unions which have been able to respect and safeguard their own independence, even where these unions represent minority groups. Immediate steps will be taken to implement those provisions of the Industrial Relations Act which was approved by Parliament years ago, and which Mintoff's Government has still not brought into effect. The law itself will also be improved, inter alia by strengthening the provisions safeguarding a worker's right not to be arbitrarily dismissed, and by giving every worker the right to determine for himself who should assist or represent him in any matter affecting his interests brought before the Industrial Tribunal. We will not tolerate industrial action which is not concerned

with securing legitimate union objectives, but is manifestly aimed at bringing about a situation of political and economic disruption.

23.4. WORKERS PARTICIPATION

As committed by its Party Statute, a Nationalist Government will actively promote the development of workers' participation in both the running of, and in the sharing of profits made by, the enterprises they work in. Our guiding principles will be common sense and social justice.

We will not seek to exploit workers by using participation as a pretext for requiring sacrifices from them, in circumstances where an enterprise is critically situated. Mintoff's Government has done this, while neglecting to introduce participation schemes in cases where industries were operating under easier circumstances. Nor will we seek to use industrial democracy as a cloak for the furthering of political ends under the guise of participatory measures. The system of participation is above all a practical expression of recognition of the dignity of the worker as a human being.

A Nationalist Government will work to a flexible plan of action which will permit systems to be introduced (according to the nature of the enterprise, who owns it, and having regard to the wishes of the workers themselves) and gradually phased. It would be wrong to try to legislate in an area such as this in full detail right way, and seek to impose solutions of universal application. We need to build up step by step: starting with general principles and consolidating later by further, more detailed, legislation in the light of practical experience in the working of such systems as are found to suit our circumstances best.

Mintoff's Government has done next to nothing, outside the Drydocks, to give meaningful participation even to its own workers in the para-statal and people's industries sectors, whether by way of association in the decision making process with management, or through some form of profit sharing; and even in the Drydocks the Prime Minister retained the right to interfere in decision making as and when he chose to - a right he fully exercised, though his interventions were not always helpful, and there were times when he had to withdraw from ill-considered positions impulsively taken.

Workers' participation cannot take proper root unless implicit reliance is placed on the workers' intelligence and ability to think for themselves, and unless it is introduced on the basis of a soundly conceived, progressive, plan which allows scope for different forms of participation to suit different types of situations. The fact that an enterprise is owned by the Government rather than by some private capitalist does not of itself imply any radical difference. A Nationalist Administration will proceed cautiously yet with a firm and constant sense of direction.

23.5. WORKERS' CO-OPERATIVES

The concept of workers' participation does not apply to enterprises which are of small size, particularly those which are family owned and operated. It is only in the case of larger industrial concerns that it is necessary in order to humanise work-relations.

A better way of securing participation in the farming, fisheries, handicrafts and small industry sectors is the co-operative method. A Nationalist Government will amend the law relating to co-operatives, to prevent its being further abused for political ends, and will further aid those types of enterprises by providing them with technical and financial assistance. Two areas which lend themselves especially to co-operative organisation, and where such organization should be encouraged, are those relating to consumers as a group, and the building sector. A Nationalist Government will encourage people to specialize in the area of co-operative organisation, so that further fruitful initiatives can be taken to promote this type and form of collaboration.

23.6. PARA-STATAL CORPORATIONS AND PEOPLE'S INDUSTRIES

We will introduce appropriate forms of participation in those enterprises which are Government owned. These reforms will be carefully planned, suitably phased in, and reviewed as necessary from time to time so that the participants can learn to work the system effectively, and experience can be gained in the actual running of these enterprises on a participatory basis. It is in the light of such experience that systems best suited to the particular types of enterprises that come under the Government's broad wing can be devised. A Nationalist Government will also actively encourage, by offering substantial advantages, the introduction of workers participation systems in those enterprises where the state has a shareholding, as well as in all the larger privately owned enterprises.

24. PROFITABLE USE OF LEISURE TIME

24.1. PUBLIC FESTIVITIES

Mintoff's Government has placed the organization of all activities connected with the traditional "Imnarja" Festivities, the running of the Regatta, the celebration of Republic Day, as well as other occasions such as these, under the overall charge of the Carnival Committee. This Committee is composed of various persons, not all suitably qualified, and has not been particularly successful considering the large amounts of public funds that have been put at its disposal for the organizing of these events. We recognize that it is popular participation in these festive occasions which makes them what they are, and that it is the Government's responsibility to see that they are run the way the people want them to be run, and not as somebody may in his wisdom decide: somebody perhaps who has lost touch with the people and who possibly sees things as a foreigner would, rather than as a Maltese should. A Nationalist Government will seek to involve more closely the various voluntary associations which have continued to give invaluable support in this area, and will set up new committees on which they will be represented. We will not cut down on financial assistance from public funds towards the proper celebration of these popular festivities, we will add to it, but we will also see the sharing of total financial resources provided from public funds as between different festivities is more appropriately determined in future.

Mintoff's Government, without any sort of consultation, arbitrarily struck off ten of Malta's traditional feast days, along with two other no less traditional carnival half-days. In this way an extra 88 hours of work per annum have been squeezed out of the workers without any form of compensation being given for such extra work. This step has been all the more discordant because the trend all over the world is for the number of working hours to be reduced, and the situation today is that nearly all other countries have more public holidays than we have (only six). A Nationalist Government will once again restore those public holidays which are a vital link with our cultural past- the feast of St. Paul's Shipwreck, Imnarja, the 8th of September, and the 8th of December. The removal of other feasts which have religious rather than cultural overtones, has been accepted by the Ecclesiastical Authorities. A Nationalist Government will again permit religious feasts to be celebrated on week days.

24.2. VACATION LEAVE

A Nationalist Government does not look upon the worker's annual vacation leave as loss of time. Leisure time should be seen as providing not only the opportunity for rest, but also the opportunity for the worker to do all the things he normally has no time for, things which go to complete his identity and fulfill his personality as a human being. In the light of this consideration, and taking account as well of trends in most countries abroad, a Nationalist Government will increase the vacation leave entitlement of all workers from 20 to 25

working days. The object of this is not to increase the duration of the annual shut-down of factories and other productive enterprises for vacation purposes, but rather to give workers the opportunity to opt for another five days, in the course of a year, when they can also request release from work on full pay.

A Nationalist Government will introduce a system of long service leave: which will be additional paid leave, on top of the standard entitlement, which may be claimed by workers who have been with the enterprise which employs them over a very long period of time; with the entitlement to additional leave increasing on the basis of scales related to length of service.

We propose to introduce as well, a system of "Cultural leave" for a limited period of time, which leave may be claimed by workers who wish to attend courses, study sessions or other occasions of cultural or related content which may be held in Malta or abroad.

24.3. CULTURE

Our understanding of the term "Culture" does not limit its meaning to erudition, art, and other supposedly ancillary enrichments of life. We take it to mean those unique features of a way of life which distinguish it from those of peoples of other countries.

A Nationalist Government attaches particular importance to the cultural dimension, because it sees in this dimension the elements which go to make us the nation we are, because it has always resisted our being assimilated into and absorbed by any other large nation, which would have meant losing our distinct identity in the process. Culture is not something 'dead', something to be found in museums alone. It is something alive which is progressively enriched with the passing of time while maintaining its essential links with the roots of its past.

We will seek to involve all our people, not just the intellectual elite, in a more active awareness and appreciation of culture, so that everybody in his own way can contribute creatively towards the cultural life of our community, so that the quality, the dignity, of our communal life will be enhanced.

A Nationalist Government will seek to make greater use of the Maltese language in the administration of Government, and will give full backing to initiatives taken for the development of our native tongue. The more we develop our language, the better we communicate with each other, the better we can understand each other's needs, aspirations and opinions, the more likely it is that we shall strengthen democracy in our land and "the culture of dialogue".

A Nationalist Government will help all those who contribute to the conservation and development of the various other ways in which the spirit of Malta finds expression and release in the cultural life of our country.

24.4. COUNCIL OF ARTS

Mintoff's Government did away with the Council of Arts that had been set up by the last Nationalist Government. The Council will be reestablished, vested with adequate funds and supported by an appropriate backing staff, so that it can again fulfill its task of stimulating the creative instincts of our Maltese artists, and awaken in our people a more appreciative interest in art in all its various forms.

24.5. EDUCATION OF ART

Mintoff's Government managed to get technical and financial assistance from certain foreign countries to set up two schools: a School of Music and an Academy of Dramatic Arts. These schools were well run while they were under foreign experts, but have since lost all public confidence and esteem. A Nationalist

Government will merge the two schools and broaden the scope of the unified institution further by adding a third section for the teaching of ballet. The University will be invited to collaborate with the new Academy and take it under its wing as part of the University's involvement in the sphere of cultural development and propagation. The 'connection' will be designed to link and teaching practice of these cultural pursuits, on the one hand, with the education of the general public in the appreciation and understanding of manifestations of art in these forms, on the other. The Academy which may become an integral part of the teaching establishment of the University, if this is considered appropriate, will maintain close links with the broadcasting media.

A Nationalist Government will also support and strengthen the School of Visual Art, enabling it too to hold course of an advanced nature; possibly in association with the University.

24.6. NATIONAL THEATRE

Mintoff's Government has managed to completely demoralize the resident orchestra of our National Theatre. A Nationalist Government will strengthen and enlarge this orchestra, and will also see that the musicians are paid a decent salary commensurate with the levels of their professional skills and accomplishments. A Nationalist Government will sponsor and actively aid the production of performances of works of quality, of Maltese authorship, but will not allow the dignity of our National Theatre to be debased by the production of works totally devoid of all artistic quality or merit.

24.7. CINEMA AND THEATRE

The development of native cinematographic and theatrical art in Malta has been largely the work of dedicated individuals, who have given much of their time and energy to the cause.

A Nationalist Government will encourage the promotion of amateur activities in these two fields, in accordance with its declared intent of helping all voluntary associations; but, just as in the musical sphere we took the initiative in setting up a National orchestra, so too we shall encourage those engaged in amateur film making and theatrical productions to develop their proficiency up to full professional standards. We would wish to enlist the experience and talent of our leading exponents in these forms of artistic expression, and couple it with other available resources in order to set up an institutional framework for the further promotion and encouragement of these types of activities.

In regard to film shows: the Mintoff Government has allowed our standards to sink to an unprecedented low level, and has actually contributed to the decline by allowing certain organizations set up under para-statal auspices (in competition with commercial enterprise) to bring in and distribute material of utterly degrading artistic and more quality.

A Nationalist Government will not permit anybody to further harm and undermine the values which form the basis of our national culture, and will take steps to see that our commercial film establishments, along with our visual Broadcasting media, in selecting films for public showing, take not just material and commercial considerations into account, but act with full awareness of their duty to safeguard our social, moral and cultural standards.

24.8 SPORTS

Mintoff's Government has tried to bring all sporting activities under state control, and has injected into the sporting arena a spirit of political divisiveness which is totally alien to the spirit of sport. The unifying influence of sport has thus been undermined. The Government should have kept away from the organising of competitive sporting activities, and should have concentrated instead on those forms of physical exercise

which are relevant to the health and the well being of the individual, to the formation of attitudes such as team spirit, to the exercise of self-discipline and restraint by the individual. A Nationalist Government will give its full backing to such proposals as the Centre for Educational sport which Mintoff's Government ousted from its place at Marsa.

A Nationalist Government will not seek to supplant the established sporting associations and their respective federations. On the contrary these associations and federations will be given full recognition. It will assist in the provision of necessary equipment, it will help our coaches to be suitably trained, and ensure that sporting activities of one sort or another are made available to all sections of the population.

We have referred in our section on Education to the importance of cultivating physical fitness through education, to the importance of having schools properly equipped with gymnasia for this purpose, and to the fact that we would like to see this equipment used not just by the students frequenting the schools, but also by the local communities in which these schools are situated.

A Nationalist Government would wish to involve in sporting activities not just those athletes who are talented in particular lines of sport, and in their peak physical condition, but all peoples of all ages.

A Nationalist Government will set up a National Sports Council,¹ on which the Ministries of Education, Health and Tourism will be represented, along with representatives of all the various branches of sport. This Council will be responsible for providing technical assistance to the various areas of sport which require it, particularly where activities are involved which reflect on our national prestige. The National Stadium should be used to best advantage, and certainly it is quite wrong that any Government should seek to make access to its facilities a matter of political pressure or blackmail, in an endeavour to bring certain sporting associations to heel. Even when the National Stadium is fully operational there will be a continued need for the Marsa Centre, which should be improved and modernized. The Marsa Centre can be developed to provide more facilities for indoor sport.

A Nationalist Government will settle urgently the dispute which has arisen affecting the use of the Marsa racing track, as a result of financial demands being made by Mintoff's Government. It will also be prepared to help provide pool facilities suitable for use even in the winter months, so that aquatic training and sports can continue on a year round basis. We will assist those organisations which represent motor racing, motor-cycle racing, and bicycle racing enthusiasts by providing appropriate facilities for their use, and also with a view to making the activities of these bodies a tourist attraction. We will provide centrally situated premises which can be adapted for use as a General Headquarters by all sporting associations. The legal provisions bearing on corruption of sportsmen will be strengthened.

25. ENVIRONMENT

25.1. ARRESTING DETERIORATION

Under Mintoff's Government the environment has been ruined in various ways: by the wasteful use of the limited space available to us in our country, by the Government's failure to implement the law enacted by the Nationalist Administration, regarding town and country planning, by the granting of building permits in respect of lands and areas where building activity should never have been allowed, by the construction of eyesores such as the hotel at Selmun, the container centre, and a whole lot of other environmental offences which offend all common sense and aesthetic sensibilities.

A Nationalist Government will set up a statutory Authority for the preservation of our historical heritage and

natural environment so as to give practical effect to one of the principles enshrined in our Constitution. In this connection it will review the legal status and functions of those statutory bodies which exist to prevent just the sort of ravaging of our environmental heritage that has in fact taken place, damage which is now virtually irreparable. We will concern ourselves to ensure that no further damage is done.

25.2. PRESERVATION OF NATURE

A Nationalist government will ensure that the laws regarding conservation of soil are more actively enforced, and further than reclamation, measures will be taken to salvage those agriculture areas where surface soil has lost much of its fertility, as well as other areas where the soil has been eroded.

Mintoff's Government has planted many trees under its afforestation programme, but often this has been done in ways and during seasons contrary to the advice of its own experts. A Nationalist Government will ensure that future tree planting is done on a more scientific and lasting basis, not according to the whims of somebody who knows little but nevertheless, wields power, but in areas and in numbers which the Department of Agriculture can cope with and can thereafter suitably cultivate.

A Nationalist Government will protect the unique features of our Maltese landscape, especially our coastline, which will, throughout its entire length, remain public property, with a suitable part of it set aside for development as a Marine park and possibly also as a bird sanctuary.

25.3. HISTORICAL AND ARTISTIC HERITAGE

A Nationalist Government will review the building legislation now in force. Among other considerations we shall place more emphasis on the need to ensure that any new construction blends well with the environment in which it is situated. Malta's heritage is not to be found only in isolated monuments, but rather in the quality and integrity of certain environmental complexes. These must not be destroyed for the private gain of some privileged individuals.

25.4. PHYSICAL PLANNING

A Nationalist Government will once again set up a Planning Commission, and the task of this Commission will be to draw up new criteria on the basis of which building permits can be allowed without prejudice to the preservation of our environmental heritage. Until such time as the Commission is set up and does its work, clear guidelines will be established so as to immediately leave no scope for further abuse.

25.5. VALLETTA

Mintoff's Government has gone out of its way, and done all it could, to diminish the importance of Valletta as Malta's capital city. A Nationalist administration undertakes to restore to Valletta those administrative and other functions which would again make it Malta's capital city in fact as well as name. We will respect and protect the historical and architectural treasures located in the city.

Every Maltese should see in Valletta, a symbol of the sense of partnership, respect for order, and national dignity, which should be our ideal as a nation. For Valletta to properly measure up to this image it is necessary that it should not only be an administrative and commercial centre, but also a place (suitably provided with car parking space and a market) where a representative cross-section of the Maltese population resides; a place where our people both work and also celebrate.

25.6. OTHER CENTRES

A Nationalist Government will ensure, through the system of administrative decentralisation that is being proposed, that every district of Malta gets its fair share of public works. We will endeavour to preserve and emphasise the particular identity and traditional characteristics of each area. We will help the Local Councils to so order the affairs of their respective territories (in addition to their role in the community, use of schools, of centres of information and advice, of district medical centres and other services of a local nature referred to elsewhere in the Programme) as to seek to integrate material environment with social needs, and to allow the community they represent full scope to express its true identity and character as a distinct entity.

25.7. ROADS AND DRAINAGE

Mintoff's Government still keeps most of our streets dimly lit; may be so that, during night time at least, their state of repair and the dirt which litters them can be hidden from public view.

A Nationalist Government will keep our streets and roads in good repair and will construct new road systems where needed. The Civic councils will be assigned specific responsibilities in the area of street-road maintenance and repairs.

We shall take all necessary measures to ensure that no part of our islands is left unprovided with a public sewerage system. In addition we will ensure both that all outlets (not just the one outlet at Wied Ghammieg) are situated at a notable distance from the coast in order to avoid pollution risks, and that there is no risk of salt water infiltration that might endanger the sewage purification project.

26. GOZO

A Nationalist Government is determined to see that Gozo, along with Malta, partakes in equal measure of the benefits of development. Differences in living standards between our two islands are totally inadmissible and it will be an urgent object of policy to correct existing imbalances. Gozo will not continue to be the economic back-water of our islands it has hitherto tended to be.

26.1. MINISTER

A Nationalist Government recognises that Gozo requires particular attention, because the channel which separates Gozo from the Maltese mainland gives it its own individual and distinct characteristics. We propose therefore to appoint a Minister with responsibility for Gozo, whose task it will be to coordinate the activities in Gozo of the various other Ministries whose functional responsibilities extend to that island, as well as to take initiatives and to put up proposals for specific project conducing to the welfare of the people of Gozo.

26.2. AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES

Agriculture in Gozo will benefit from the various measures we are prospecting for the developing of agriculture generally in our two islands. In addition we will assist the co-operative movement in Gozo to function without political interference; we will encourage the extension of glass house cultivation; we will set up an agricultural experimental station in Gozo, which will, apart from testing the application of modern methods of agriculture in a Gozitan context, aid farmers in the solution of such practical day to day problems as they may encounter; and we will (as envisaged in our 1976 Electoral Programme) also provide free carriage service for farm products and fish catches between Gozo and Malta. A Nationalist Government will ensure that Gozitan farmers and herdsmen get their requirements of animal fodder and feeding stuffs at prices no higher than those prevailing in Malta. Gozitan fishermen, likewise will get their requirements at Malta prices. It will be our policy to see that Gozitan farmers get a water supply adequate to their needs.

26.3. MANUFACTURES

Gozo owes its industrial origins to a Nationalist Government. We set up the one and only industrial estate there is during our earlier term of office. We shall endeavour now to broaden the industrial base so as to provide more job opportunities for the young Gozitans. Manufacturing industry in Gozo will benefit from a more assured supply of power, through a strengthening of the electricity service, as well as through the provision of storage facilities for fuel or liquid gas. We will promote the further development of manufacturing in Gozo on a 'cottage industry' basis; we will also encourage Gozitans engaged in such activities to set up a cooperative, and help in the sale of their output, especially in overseas markets.

26.4. TOURISM

Gozo is expected to play a larger role in the future development of tourism, and this will be recognized administratively by the setting up in Gozo of a branch of the National Tourist Board. The Gozo branch will be situated in Gozo and will devote itself entirely to the Tourism problems of Gozo, with its own budget, its own promotional programmes, and with responsibility for the protection of the Gozitan environment, as well as for ensuring that the services rendered by the tourist trade in Gozo are up to the required quality standards. The Gozo organization will report periodically to the central organization regarding progress being made towards the attainment of national planning and policy objectives.

We will also establish an air connection between Malta and Gozo (by way of a helicopter service based on Luqa Airport). The service will be available to all those who wish to use it, but will be particularly useful in a tourist development context and benefit Gozo especially by making travel between Gozo and Malta that much quicker and more reliable.

26.5. CULTURE

Gozo has the two largest theatres in the Maltese islands, and there are recreational centres in several of the villages. All these facilities have arisen from initiatives taken by Band Clubs or Parish Associations and have been financed by them as well. A Nationalist Government will actively encourage the good work being done by these bodies in the cultural field, and will assist such activities as are deemed to make a substantial contribution to the further enrichment of Gozitan culture. Gozo and its affairs need to be more closely associated - integrated - with the life of our Maltese nation, so that the sense of isolation which now prevails there can be progressively allayed. One measure we have in mind to further this end is the setting up of a broadcasting station in Gozo for the transmission of programmes, produced by Gozitans, which will give expression to Gozitan views and outlook.

26.6. POLICE AND JUSTICE

Under a Nationalist Government Gozo will again be a Police District (as opposed to just a Division), it will have a senior Police Officer, not below Superintendent rank, stationed there permanently and the number of Corps personnel doing duty in the island will be reinforced. The drive against drug trafficking will be intensified, and the police will give special priority to the suppression of drug plant cultivation. Gozo will have its own mobile squad, equipped with the latest devices, to enable crime to be dealt with more effectively. A helicopter, and a patrol boat, will be stationed there - mainly for emergency use but also available for routine purposes. Village Police Stations will again be open all day, and where necessary also at night-time.

A Nationalist Government will see to it that the Magistrates Courts in Gozo hold regular sessions, and that the Appeal tribunals handling Gozo cases also convene as often as they should.

26.7. HEALTH

A Nationalist Government will see to the completion of outstanding works at the Gozo Hospital, and will strengthen the staff complement of resident specialists, as well as add to the number of specialists who visit the Hospital occasionally. The Gozo Hospital was never meant to be just an emergency Hospital, as Mintoff's Government has made it; we shall turn it into a general Hospital as was originally planned -with all facilities for the treatment and care of Gozitan patients.

26.8. GOZITAN WORKERS AND STUDENTS IN MALTA

We have referred elsewhere in the Programme to the proposed introduction, whenever possible, of 'flexible' working time. This would enable hundreds of Gozitan employees in Malta to adjust their working schedules so as to allow them to return to Gozo more often and for longer stretches.

In 1969 the Nationalist Government then in office introduced a system of allowances for Gozitan students who were attending study sessions at our University, or who had to come over to Malta for studies which could only be pursued in Malta. We will encourage Gozitan youths to go on to tertiary education in larger numbers. The allowances will be increased, a hostel will be provided for Gozitan students and employees in temporary residence in Malta, and they will be entitled to reduced fares when travelling to and from Gozo.

26.9 COMINO

A Nationalist Government will develop to better advantage the potential of Comino.

27. CONTINUATION AND STRENGTHENING OF DIALOGUE

27.1. IN THE LIGHT OF SOUND PRINCIPLES

This programme has been drawn up on the basis of the "dialogue" which the Nationalist Party in spite of all obstacles, managed to conduct with all sectors and group interests of the Maltese population, in order to give everybody the opportunity to participate in the formation and shaping of its electoral policies.

Naturally it has not proved possible, in the necessarily brief context of an electoral programme to make provision for all the viewpoints, ideas and suggestions put to us, but all these have been recorded, noted, and will be further examined and pursued by a Nationalist Government.

When we have a state of affairs where the Government, and not just the Opposition, believes in dialogue, we shall then be able to build a new society on the basis of the following guidelines:

1. The principle of free and full information
2. The participation, in the framing and implementation of a National Plan, of people representing all shades of interests who will both discuss solutions to problems of national interests and decide on recommendations for implementation.
3. The prevalence of social justice, which requires that those who are born disadvantaged, or who have been disadvantaged by circumstances, should be enabled to participate with others in our society on equal terms; though equality in this context is something quite distinct from sameness: nobody will be allowed to suffer privation, and particular care will be taken to prevent anybody coming to avoidable harm, so that as far as possible the quality of life generally can be enhanced for all.

4. The prevalence of the rule of law, and of the human and moral values cherished by the Maltese people, so that our historical heritage can be preserved, and a future can be shaped to which our children can look forward with anticipation in confidence and security.

27.2. WITH THE PARTICIPATION AND SUPPORT OF ALL OUR PEOPLE

A Nationalist Government will be a truly national one, at the service of and close to all, a Government which has full faith and confidence in the people of Malta and Gozo.

We will open up new vistas for the young, give them a brighter future to look forward to. We shall be a Government with new ideas, with the will and determination to give effect to these ideas. Mintoff's Government is a spent force. It is tired, still obsessed with fighting yesterday's battles, a Government which has no specific place for our young citizens in the society it has sought to shape.

Our pensioners and 'senior citizens' will get the grateful appreciation of the society they have served so well for so long. Mintoff's Government has treated them shabbily, denied many of them benefits rightly due to them. We will heed their pleas, give them the assistance they require, in their own homes, each according to his need.

Women will have their full rights finally recognised - whether working away from home or as housewives and mothers dedicated to the upbringing of their children. Housewives and mothers will be entitled not only to a children's allowance for each and all of their children, but also to a 'personal allowance' for themselves - because a housewife renders a service to the community no less valuable than any other.

Workers will experience what true participation means and how it should really work. The Mintoff Government's way of setting about it has been a complete travesty. They said they would be making over control of state owned factories to the workers, but never actually did so. What we saw was a string of failures and disposal of enterprises through sale, suddenly determined upon, without the workers being even told about it or consulted before decisions were taken.

Government employees, civil servants, members of the police and armed forces, teachers, nurses and others will once again be enabled - will feel free - to give of their best. Initiative will not be frowned upon, and those who know best how to do a job will be allowed to get on with it, without interference. Patronage, political cronyism, corruption will have no place in the new order. Government service will regain the prestige which has traditionally gone with it.

Our doctors will return, and our patients will again have the best possible treatment under the care of doctors who speak their own tongue, understand their needs better than any foreigner can, and who will be deployed to render a comprehensive and free Health service, which will also include the provision of medicines free of charge.

Government schools will be raised to standards of teaching proficiency second to none; private schools on the other hand will be free to continue serving the community, free of the uncertainties which have threatened their future for so long; we shall again have a University we can be proud of, a University which will again attract foreign students to its campus.

Commerce will be released, and we will see shops once again well stocked with quality goods at competitive prices, instead of the scarce high priced goods we have been having as a result of the presumptuous incompetence of the Mintoff Government's agents, and the inefficient procurement systems they have resorted to.

We will no longer be denied water as and when we want it, because of the irresponsible obstinacy of one man; we will not have to face cuts in our electricity supply because this same person has neglected to take the necessary measures to strengthen the power supply system; we will be spared the uncertainty in our foreign affairs of never knowing exactly who our friends are, or are supposed to be, and who our enemies.

Young couples about to get married can look forward to owning their own home; they know that they can expect substantial income tax relief during the first couple of years of their wedded life; they know that any children they have will come into a world where they can breathe freely, in an atmosphere freed from the influence which have made life so oppressive for all of us these past years, where violence and crime has gone unpunished, and where crisis has followed crisis, and tension and uncertainty has been all-pervasive; with nobody knowing quite where he stands or what comes next.

All Maltese will again be free to celebrate our traditional public holidays, holidays which Mintoff quite arbitrarily struck off the calendar without any sort of consultation with the free Unions. These Unions, along with other bodies such as religious organizations, cultural and sporting associations, long subjected to the dictatorial whims of a Government which brooks no opposition, will again be able to resume their normal functions. We shall all - together -celebrate Independence Day, the day Malta finally cast off its colonial shackles, the day we took fate into our own hands and overcame prejudices and undergrounded fears. Reason will again prevail, we shall all again rediscover and reassert own sense of responsibility and right to exercise freedom of will; we shall be able to do so because we shall, once again, be free under a Nationalist Government, which, together with all the Maltese people, will work to secure for all a better life.