Forty years ago Malta and Gozo were faced with a serious crisis because the Medical Association of Malta (MAM) clashed with the incumbent Labour Government headed by Mr Dominic Mintoff A. & C. E. and organised a general medical strike. The strike stemmed from the:

1. Inadequate salary structure of government employees doctors and specialists;
2. Lack of agreement on the shortening of the three-year obligatory work in government hospitals medical graduates had to perform before being granted the warrant to practice medicine.

A MAM account of the action, ably authored by Mr Lino German FRCOG, had long been published.

Dr Nazzareno Azzopardi FFARCS felt that posterity should acknowledge the efforts of the Forty-Five Signatories who kept performing their medical duties within the government service during the action despite a professional boycott and even physical threats; in fact, one of the participants lost his daughter in a letter bomb.

It was also the first time that medical doctors and specialists from neighbouring Mediterranean states and Pakistan arrived to bolster the efforts of the sorely tried ‘Forty-Five Band of Brothers’. It was also the first and last time that the Medical Council had its prerogative of granting warrants to practice lawfully subverted by the incumbent Minister of Health.

It was the first time that Maltese graduates enjoyed the experience and qualifications of European post-graduate medical schools.

The duration of the action, a full ten years, lasted as long as the Labour Government was in power and ended on the day when finally, a change of administration to a Nationalist one occurred.

As a final word the author cautions MAM to forego politics in dealing with Trade Union issues.