

Shameful past to live with

From Mr Victor Spiteri
WHEN I listen to Labour's unrestrained and nationally damaging propaganda, I ask myself: who were the traitors of the past and who are the present traitors?

It is my opinion that the sort of vile comments uttered by the president of the Labour Party are overtly intended to harm and subvert any attempt at sustaining our share of tourism, at a very difficult time.

Why should tourists come here? Manwel Cuschieri argues, and he then goes into the usual and familiar litany – Maghtab, the condition of roads, uncompetitive restaurant prices, etc. All of which is a godsend to our competitors who will no doubt seize every opportunity to their advantage. In my humble opinion this loose talk is a betrayal of our national interests.

The modern champions of our sovereignty are the same people who fought tooth and nail to do away with Malta's sovereignty in the past. I am of course referring to the real and consummate loss of sovereignty, which would have been the case if Labour had their way with integration.

Needless to say, they would rather have us forget that episode and the implications their folly would have entailed. They will never explain to their supporters that the British government would have held sway over Malta in perpetuity.

Malta would have never become independent and a republic. It is important to educate the younger generation to the reality and consequence that would have stemmed from this disastrous arrangement.

The Labour Party was prepared to surrender forever any say in foreign affairs, Britain would have had the right to impose direct taxes and impose conscription at will.

But there was a silver lining in an otherwise dismal scenario. This was the representation of three Maltese

members (without any veto power) in a 600-plus British House of Commons and none in the upper chamber.

Make no mistake; this is what Labour's past battles were about. They also plotted and manoeuvred to subvert our independence. It is a shameful past they have to live with.

We owe it to divine providence that Labour's liaisons and affiliations with Communist-dominated AAPSO and North Korea not to mention Ceausescu and other unsavoury characters, to which Labour was drawn like a moth to a lamp, did not result in a tragic disaster for our island.

These are the same people who fraudulently pose as our saviours and champions in retaining our sovereignty.

Manwel opens his programme with *Il-Bandiera tal-Maltin* and then he goes straight into a twisted and damaging attack on the very interests of his beloved nation-state for whom his heart bleeds so profusely.

Manwel and his cronies think that they are doing a good propaganda job for the interest of their party. I can tell them that their excesses and betrayal sicken sane, moderate people. Every programme I listen to confirms my belief that Labour cannot yet be trusted with the governance of our island.

It is a shame that the loss of the vital moderate element from within failed to waken up the Labour Party to a serious leadership crisis.

They are right on course for another disastrous defeat, after bleating as they did about the increased majority promised and predicted by their leader at the last election. As we all know, instead of an increased majority Labour suffered the ignominy of an unprecedented and unmitigated rout. Yet they still have not learnt their lesson. They still underestimate the intelligence of the electorate.

V. SPITERI
Attard.

Origins of INIA

From Mr Joseph Scicluna, general secretary, National Association of Pensioners

I READ with interest Professor Frederick Fenech's contribution (*The Sunday Times*, May 12). However, the description of how INIA-UN Malta came into being misses out on some details.

Apparently few people are aware that the idea of a UN Institute on Aging, in Malta, was first raised by Anthony Darmania, then president of the National Association of Pensioners. While attending the first World Assembly on Aging in Vienna, in 1982, in representation of this association, he proposed the establishment of such an institute in Malta. He was advised that such a proposal would have to come from the government.

On his return to Malta, the association approached Government on this matter. Following discussions, Government made the proposal its own. This association is proud to have been the lever which moved Government and the international community to today's achievement.

J. SCICLUNA
Valletta.

Making a success of EU membership

From Dr Michael Frendo, LL.D., LL.M. (Exon), MP (Nationalist)

MR PRIVITERA'S obvious glee (*The Sunday Times*, May 19) that I stated there is no guarantee of success of our membership of the European Union and that it depends on us to make it work is a sad example of old-fashioned, fanatical politics that this country desperately needs to jettison.

In the course of a debate organised by IVA, I stated that Malta's membership of the EU will not be an automatic success. It can be a failure if we do not work hard, and in the right way, to ensure that it is a success. In other words, it is not only up to us to achieve membership but it is also up to us to ensure that we make a success of it.

Obviously, unless you think that someone owes us a living, nothing in life is a guarantee to success without hard work and proper preparation. So what's the big deal? And where is the "cat out of the bag", as Mr Privitera puts it? What nonsense!

Mr Privitera misleadingly quoted only part of my statement. This is not engaging in proper debate but represents a defunct, sterile way of politicking. Clearly, some of us are still stuck in the "old" politics that is boring the thinking Maltese to tears.

It is obvious to every thinking individual that membership of any organisation does not entitle you to instant success. Membership of the EU is not some panacea to all our ills but simply represents a crucial and major step forward in our collective effort to make this country a modern, European country, and furthermore, membership will take us beyond our insularity and provide us with an opportunity to enhance our sovereignty by meaningful contributions around the decision-making table. (Apologies for the long sentence but putting this same view in two sentences can be politically highly dangerous in this puerile environment).

If Mr Privitera, and his old-fashioned thinking ilk, were to represent Malta around the European table, success of our membership would certainly be highly dubious! EU membership is a major opportunity of development for this country's present and future generations. It is also, for us, a new ball-game in collaborative decision-making which, if approached seriously, maturely and with political substance, can give real meaning to our sovereignty in a world which is, at the same time, interdependent and highly competitive.

M. FRENDO
St Julian's.

Fuzzy, unChristian logic

From Dr George Debono

IN a weirdly reasoned argument Dr Karmenu Mifsud Bonnici (*The Sunday Times*, May 12) implies that the European Union is "unChristian" because the EU Charter on Human Rights specifically provides that a person may not be discriminated against because of his "sexual orientation".

There is a danger that Dr Mifsud Bonnici's convoluted argument and his invalid half-baked conclusions might be taken seriously by some readers.

For the sake of clarity, the councils, courts, conventions, etc., referred to by Dr Mifsud Bonnici are as follows:

1) Council of Europe's Court of Human Rights; 2) Council of Europe's Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

It must be emphasised at the outset that the Council of Europe, to which (1) and (2) pertain, is unrelated to the EU. Malta has been a member of the Council of Europe since 1965.

Dr Mifsud Bonnici's fatuous claim that the EU is "unChristian" is based on a ruling by the Council of Europe's Court of Human Rights (1). This was a ruling in favour of a homosexual who claimed to have been discriminated against in a criminal proceedings case over an act of 'gross indecency'. The court's ruling was based upon the ECHR which

provides against discrimination against homosexuals.

What one makes of the European Court of Human Rights' judgment depends, among other things, on how narrow-minded one is. The principles underlying this particular court decision are those of tolerance and non-discrimination which are both charitable and Christian principles.

The moral or criminal aspect of the case was not the court's brief. Judgment was based on a right to respect of an individual's private life and on the semantics of the wording of the pertinent part of the ECHR. But Dr Mifsud Bonnici insists illogically that the court's ruling ran counter to Christian values.

Now, it so happens that the EU Charter on Human Rights also provides that a person may not be discriminated against on grounds of sexual orientation. This leads Dr Mifsud Bonnici to conclude that EU policies on human rights run counter to Christian values.

Whatever Dr Mifsud Bonnici might conclude about the Council of Europe's decision, it must be anyway remembered that this Council has no connection with the EU. Dr Mifsud Bonnici has no right to transfer his misguided morbid suspicions from the Council to the EU. His argument that the EU is "unChristian" therefore amounts to mere sophistry.

For Dr Mifsud Bonnici's information, the EU is indeed very much concerned with non-discrimination and equal entitlement of all people to human rights irrespective of their race, religion, gender, sexual orientation and social status. And rightly too. This is perfectly in harmony with Christian values. If Dr Mifsud disputes this, he must be living on another planet and he should stop interfering in such a flippant way with our country's destiny.

To bolster his argument Dr Mifsud Bonnici went on to proclaim something else that is totally untrue. He said: "The EU officially advocates policies which legalise abortion, prostitution, and same-sex marriages and that such policies contravene Christian morals".

It has been repeatedly pointed out to Dr Mifsud Bonnici that the EU does not concern itself with these issues and that decisions on such matters are entirely at the discretion of the member countries concerned. What he says here is absolute nonsense because it is totally and utterly false.

Dr Mifsud Bonnici then goes on to cite further imaginary "unChristian" aspects of the EU which we have all heard before, again and again. The falsity of these has already been repeatedly pointed out at length to Dr Mifsud Bonnici, but he persists in his vilification of the EU for cheap propaganda reasons.

G. DEBONO
St Julian's.

What does Le Pen stand for?

From Mr Henry V. Agius

WHEN Jean-Marie Le Pen surprisingly finished in second place in the first round of the French Presidential election on April 21 the French people were ostensibly shocked, but when he was subsequently defeated in the May 5 runoff with Jacques Chirac, they rejoiced. The reason they gave for such behaviour was that Le Pen is a man of the extreme right. He is a racist and a fascist.

I shall now consider exactly what this "monstrosity of a man" really stood for. First, he was for the reintroduction of the death penalty in an attempt to reduce the ever rising crime rate of France. This is, no doubt, a fairly good proposition. Second, he wanted to dislodge and disperse the North African Arabs from the country in

order to give France back to the French. This is another good proposition. Third, he intended to make abortion illegal. This is certainly a very good proposition.

It becomes difficult to understand all the hostility shown against rightists when anyone can so openly declare oneself a communist or an extreme leftist without drawing any condemnation upon oneself.

Here in Malta both our major political parties were founded by extremists after all. One leaned to the left and was all set against the Church, and one leaned to the right and was all set against the Maltese language. Both men have been honoured with monuments in Valletta.

H.V. AGIUS
St Julian's.

A phenomenon?

From Mr Anthony J. Saliba

COULD some statistician of serious criminal cases quote the number of cases whenever a firearm (or a sharp pointed instrument) was used to kill or attempt to kill another human being followed by the aggressor giving himself up to the police?

I surmise that this phenomenon is no phenomenon at all but a way for the oppressor of safeguarding his own life – being detained by the police provides such guaranteed protection – and for the defence lawyers to mitigate on behalf of their defendants when sentence is about to be imposed.

It appears that since the death penalty was removed from our criminal code a person who believes he is aggrieved by another person's demeanour or presumed rights has the right to terminate the other's life.

I call for more strict enforcement of the law and harsher penalties.

A.J. SALIBA
Ta' I-Ibrag.

Truth is the first casualty of war

From Mr Lawrence Attard Bezzina

FOR all those who have followed the media reports of the Oslo War from its initiation by Yasser Arafat in September 2000, the name Muhammed Al-Durra will be remembered.

He was the young child that was "caught" in the middle of a gun battle between Israeli troops and Palestinian "policemen". The boy's terrified face was filed by a camera, steady and waiting, and then shot and killed. The pictures went around the world and symbolised the "brutality" of the Israeli Defence Forces in particular, and of Israelis in general.

The blame was never doubted, even though the head Israeli commander, General Yom Tov Samia went on record as saying that there was no way, from the angles on the battlefield, that Israeli troops could have killed the boy, and Israel "paid the price".

On March 18 this year the German TV station ARD presented research they had done on the subject of who really killed the boy and came out with 100 per cent certainty: Palestinian police had done it.

Israelis are very cynical in their regard to the media and how they portray them and their country. Maybe this is why they think that although the media went along with such a terrible hoax the rest of the world "knows" the truth. They are wrong – the world doesn't.

L. ATTARD BEZZINA
Fgura.

ADVERT