

Libyan connection risky for democracy in Malta

A Swiss view

BERNE. "BRITAIN would have wished to retain its base in Malta only if this was totally in accordance with the wishes of the island's government. In the case of the present Labour Prime Minister, Mr. Dom Mintoff, this was not the case", according to *Swiss Press Review and News Report*, the Swiss independent weekly press service.

Mr. Mintoff the Swiss agency report adds, "has been anxious that his country should be recognised as belonging to the Third World. In order to achieve this, he has had to bring about a status for his country of neutrality — in the sense of non-alignment — and this meant the avoidance of a military link with a Western Alliance".

It is one of the ironies of the modern versions of non-alignment, comments the Swiss agency, that "military alliances do not need to be eschewed altogether. For the bloc of neutral nations has a built-in slant towards the Communist bloc".

Many of the members of the Third World, the Swiss agency report goes on, "are dictatorships of one kind or another and a number of them — Cuba, for example — are unashamed members of the Soviet bloc. So you can be non-aligned and a military friend of the Soviet Union, but you cannot be non-aligned and remain a military friend of the West. Unfair and unreasonable as this is, it has to be treated as a fact".

Malta under the present government has recognised this, the Swiss agency goes on. "Its neutrality is not armed neutrality on the Swiss model — with its emphasis on national independence — but neutrality based on an alliance with a member of the Third World".

The member of the Third World, chosen by the present Malta Government, is "near neighbour Gaddafi's Libya", states the Swiss Report, which goes on to say: "There is no doubt that the Libyan dictator has been very pleased about this close connection with a European country and he has pushed it much further than Mr. Mintoff has wanted it to go. For instance, the Maltese Prime Minister could have done without Gaddafi's physical presence to emphasize the new order of things as HMS London sailed out of Valetta harbour and the Union

Jack went down for ever. But the fact that Malta had to submit to this treatment shows in itself that some measure of independence has already been forfeited".

The Swiss report remarks that this was not the sort of neutrality explained in the Malta Labour Party's electoral manifesto and pursued by the party in Government. The plan, the Swiss report goes on, was to forge an alliance with "France, Italy and Algeria, as well as Libya"; but "only Colonel Gaddafi with his hegemonistic pretensions — shown in many aspects of his foreign policy — accepted the offer and, as we have seen, with more alacrity than Mr. Mintoff would have liked".

"Is Malta, in these circumstances safe for democracy", asks the Swiss agency report. Malta remains, it adds, one of the few democracies in the Third World "judged by the touchstone that a general election might topple the government and replace it with a new one".

But the Swiss report, whilst considering the Libyan connection as one which makes sense economically, states that the connection is, politically, "an unworthy and dangerous one for a free country".

The Libyan leader, Colonel Gaddafi, the Swiss report concludes, "has learned much from his enthusiastic friendship with the Soviet Union, and if Malta shows signs of wishing to recover its independence Gaddafi would have no difficulty in working out a Mediterranean version of the Brezhnev doctrine: fraternal aid to regimes where the survival of 'socialism' is threatened".

Self-employed's NI contributions

THE Association of Self-Employed and Employers has instructed members who have not yet filled in the self-employed declaration form for the payment of national insurance contribution, to do so under protest.

The Association said yesterday it gave these instructions as it had not yet received a reply to representations to the Labour Minister regarding what it called "discrimination" against this category of workers. The Association also said it was taking important measures to safeguard the interests of the self-employed in this matter.

Plans to redistribute legal work

By A Staff Reporter

THERE ARE reports of plans for the effective redistribution of the work currently done at the Office of the Attorney General for other Government Departments.

Each Department at present sends in its pending claims against private citizens and companies to the Office of the Attorney General for legal action. This usually consists in the issuing of the relative judicial acts according to the circumstances of each case.

Lawyers working at this Office have to cope with a series of queries from all Government Departments and parastatal bodies, besides appearing before the Courts in civil, commercial and criminal actions as well as drafting legislation and administering affidavits. There are at present seven lawyers, besides the Attorney General, at the Office.

In pursuing Departmental claims, judicial costs and fees are initially disbursed by the Attor-

ney General's Office, as in any other private case, to be later collected from defendants after judgment is delivered, if the case is won by the Government Department concerned.

The first Department said to be earmarked for reform is the Lands Department which will in future conduct all its business through its own offices. The Department caters for the administration of Government land and for the expropriation of land for public purposes.

SACS joins UHM

A UNION representing administrative grades in the Civil Service, the Society of Administrative Civil Servants, has amalgamated with the *Union Haddiema Maghqudin*, one of the unions in the forefront of the free trade union movement.

It is the fourth trade union to join the UHM and, according to informed sources, another strong union plans to follow suit. The others were the Workers and Family Union, the University Technicians Association and the Government Printers Union.

When it was set up in 1968, the UHM was a union representing clerical workers in the public service. It was in fact called the Malta Government Clerical Union, but after the amalgamation of the Workers and Family Union, it changed its name to Malta Government Employees Union, to take all grades of Government employees.

The turning point in the MGEU's history was when it opened its door to workers from the private sector, becoming a general union.

The Society of Administrative Civil Servants, which up to last year had some 200 members, decided to amalgamate with the UHM last November. The Society members had resolved to take this step after carefully considering the existing situation in industrial relations.

In their opinion, the free trade unions were facing a serious

MAM lecture

A CLINICAL MEETING, organised by the MAM — The Medical Union, will be held at the Centre of the Federation of Professional Bodies, 1, Wilga Street, Paceville, next Tuesday at 8.30 p.m. Dr. Vinton S. Schadwick will lecture on "The Clinical Diagnosis of Diarrhoea and Malabsorption". MAM members and their guests are invited to attend.

Brussels meeting

MR. J. CALAMATTA, secretary of the Government Section of the GWU, leaves for Brussels tomorrow to attend a meeting of the Public Service International.

The Executive Committee will meet on the first day while the meeting of the European Executive Committee starts on the second day. This will be followed by the Fourth Conference which will discuss various subjects including the creation of jobs in the public sector. The election of the officials to represent the PSL in the European Trade Union Public Service Committee will also be held.

NP claims right of reply to TVM broadcast on EEC

MR. MICHAEL FALZON, MP, Nationalist Party Information Secretary, has written to Mr. G. Craig, Broadcasting Authority Chairman, asking for the right of reply to a broadcast on TVM in the feature series *Malta u Lil Hinn Minnja* (Malta and Beyond).

In a letter to the Authority's Chairman, dated April 14, Mr. Falzon wrote that the broadcast complained of was heard on April 12. Mr. Falzon wrote that in the course of a comment on next June's elections to the European Parliament "an attack was made on the Common Market and comments were also made parts of which may be considered as a reply to what the Leader of the Opposition, Dr. Fenech Adam, recently said on this same subject during a political conference on the broadcasting media".

Mr. Falzon told the Broadcasting Authority's Chairman: "As you are aware the Nationalist Party is proposing that Malta, given the right conditions, should join the European Economic Community as a full member, whilst the Government Party disagrees with this proposal.

"For this reason this is a politically controversial issue and it seems that the above-mentioned programme was used for purposes of party political propaganda against the views of the Nationalist Party".

Finally, Mr. Falzon urged the Broadcasting Authority's Chairman to investigate the case and on behalf of the Nationalist Party he is asking for the right to reply to what was said during the broadcast.

English schoolboys' choir to sing at St. John's

THE 36-STRONG Boys Choir of Widford Lodge Preparatory School will be giving a number of recitals during a two-week visit to Malta and Gozo starting tomorrow.

The visit has been arranged by the Ministry of Labour, Culture and Welfare and the John XXIII Peace Lab to mark the International Year of the Child.

The Choir was formed in 1970, and two-thirds of its members go on tour each Eastertide. They have sung in many famous English cathedrals (among them those of Edinburgh, Bristol, Canterbury and Exeter) and their repertoire ranges from the sacred and secular to many light "jazz"

operas.

The Choir is run on English choir-school lines, rehearsing each morning before the school starts and singing the daily service. Although not attached to any official place of worship, it is Anglican in tradition and sings the official school services at Chelmsford Cathedral.

The head chorister this year is Benjamin Tilley, who is also the school's senior music student. The Choir is accompanied by Malcolm Archer, Assistant Organist at Norwich Cathedral.

The Director of Music is Kenneth Francis.

The Choir will sing at St. John's Co-Cathedral next Thursday at 7 p.m. The programme consists of Faure's *Ave Verum*, *Pie Jesu* and the *Kyrie*, *Sanctus*, *Benedictus* and *Agnus Dei* from his *Messe Basse*, Hurford's *Litany to the Holy Spirit*, Messiaen's *O Sacrum Convivium* and *Alleluiah* by Mozart, Handel's *Let the Bright Seraphim* and the *Magnificat* and *Nunc dimittis* by Kenneth Long. Works by Messiaen, J.S. Bach, and Widor will be played on the organ.

The Choir will make other appearances in Malta and Gozo.

THE TREBLE SOLOISTS of the Widford Lodge Prep School Boys' Choir — Benjamin Tilley, James Rushton, David Ross, Mark Barber, Duncan Gibson and Nicholas Barker.

