



ANDREW ON WEDNESDAY

The gift of the gab

If you had to try to interpret the current political landscape, you would soon notice that politics has now become more complex and less straight forward.

Previously, parties represented an ideology and it was an 'us' versus 'them' contest. In a way, it was easy to fit, either because of one's family background or else because 'you' assent to the values and the cause represented by that respective party. The Left, the Right all had economic models and a value system that one could clearly choose to subscribe to.

Now it has all changed. This has been coming for some time.

Fenech Adami knew that this was going to happen and in fact his success, among other things, could be attributed to the fact that he created a coalition of social backgrounds. Joseph Muscat continued to strengthen this model with the 'moviment tal-progressivi u moderati'.

This has turned everything topsy-turvy, transforming the political scenario into a very complex phenomenon because a political party now represents a spectrum of ideas (or the absence thereof) rather than ideologies. People are emancipated and know what they want for themselves. The party has become a gizmo; discretionary but not indispensable. Political parties are consequently trying to attract people in their midst by promising an improved family economy and better jobs. Give people the reassurance that they can have a holiday every year, enough money for a meal on a Saturday night, enough cash to fix the house or to go on a family vacation and the needs are automatically met - people are content.

As a matter of fact, the current government is generating that reassurance; there are more jobs



than we can call for, more work opportunities and additional money to spend. If the government keeps reinventing itself, engenders the economy, if money keeps seeping into the family economy, then people will more likely keep on voting for this government. This in itself will soon 'trash' the idea that a government has a ten-year cycle.

And then there is leadership. It is a known fact that elections for party leaders have always been a bit scruffy and this time round, when it comes to the election for the Nationalist Party leader, it's no exception. I believe that in more ways than one this is a natural situation, especially with a party that is reeling from such a disastrous election result. Enriched party structures and

better financial conditions are not enough to iron out the turbulence and uneasiness. Staunch party supporters want to win and they will push and press on anyone who can lead them to this objective.

But that is not all.

A political party needs the gift of the gab, a communicator that can float out the ideas and initiatives that package the vision of the party. If you do not have that, then you might as well pack up. I will not go into the merits of how Simon Busuttil fared in this task, nor will I indicate my preference between Delia and Said. I believe that the Nationalist Party *tesserati* need to sit serenely and think about who is best placed to lead the troops, knowing well enough that communicating a

message is fundamental.

We all agree that having a solid Opposition will counterbalance the government, it is good for the Opposition, respectable for the government and above all virtuous for the people.

So if I had anything to say to the Nationalist Party, it would be to have less drama and more discussion, less theatrics and more argumentation. This party that brought the term 'dialogue' in our political backcloth deserves better conduct from its leaders (MPs and people directly involved in the party structures). Putting forward an idea is fine, showing preference to one candidate over another is perfectly legitimate, but mud-slinging and shit-stirring is ludicrous, uncalled for and distressing.

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6 September 1977

~~Diana's~~ ~~funeral~~ ~~watched~~ ~~by~~ ~~millions~~

Britain and the world have said farewell to Diana, Princess of Wales, at the end of an unprecedented week of mourning.

A four-mile procession brought her coffin to Westminster Abbey, where politicians and celebrities joined the Royal Family in a subdued congregation.

Over a million people lined the route of the funeral cortege to the abbey and along her final journey to the Spencer family home in Northamptonshire.

The day began at 0908 BST, when the coffin left Kensington Palace on a gun carriage.

Some of the crowd wept, some applauded quietly, but most watched in silence.

On top of the coffin was a poignant reminder that this woman loved by millions was also a mother - a card to "Mummy" from one of her sons.

The two princes, William and Harry, joined their father, grandfather and the princess's brother walking behind the coffin.

Other members of the Royal Family watched the funeral cortege pass from the gates of Buckingham Palace.

The union jack on top of the palace was lowered to half-mast for the first time ever.

Both Diana's sisters read tributes to her at the funeral service and Elton John played his re-worked version of Candle in the Wind.



Her brother, Lord Spencer, made a funeral address in which he described as Diana the "very essence of compassion, of duty, of style, of beauty".

He used the speech to blame the media for her death, calling her the "most hunted person of the modern age".

The grieving earl also pledged to protect William and Harry and prevent them suffering a similar fate.

The sometimes controversial oration was greeted with spontaneous applause.

A very public day of mourning ended with a private ceremony when Diana was finally buried on an island in the heart of her family estate at Althorp.

Diana's death resulted in an outpouring of grief never before seen in the UK.

It was estimated that a total of 2.5 billion people watched the princess's funeral, a testament to her global celebrity.

Her image remained as iconic in death as it had been in life, and within weeks of her funeral there was worldwide demand for memorabilia of the princess.

The French authorities concluded their investigation into the crash two years later.

It found the driver, Henri Paul, to be three times over the drink-drive limit and breaking the speed limit.

The photographers chasing the car were severely criticised for their behaviour, but no criminal action was taken against them.

An inquest into the princess's death was opened in the UK in 2004. It has been adjourned while the Metropolitan police carry out an investigation into the crash.