



Pamela Hansen

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GWU purge attempt leads to Charles Mizzi's resignation

KARL SCHEMBRI

YET another purge attempt at the General Workers' Union, yet again with explosive consequences. Barely a year since the messy removal of public service section secretary Josephine Attard Sultana and president Francis Buttigieg, followed by Karmenu Vella and Emmanuel Zammit, yesterday it was the turn of the executive chairman of the union's travel and insurance companies, Untours, to resign.

In his five-page, strongly worded letter of resignation, Charles Mizzi, 67 – a veteran union employee for the last 39 years – hit back at GWU president Salv Sammut and deputy secretary general Gejtu Mercieca who had accused him of "irregularities" following an investigation which,

he wrote mockingly, "outshines Sherlock Holmes".

Mizzi, who first made a name for himself as a journalist with I-orizzont and It-Torca, is credited with turning around the two companies from a crippling deficit to a net profit running into thousands of liri in the last four years. His term would have expired next January.

In his letter he calls the union's secretary general Tony Zarb "a close friend", suggesting that he is being influenced by the two GWU officials credited with egging Zarb on for more "militancy" – which invariably ends up being aimed more at the union's own people than against government and employers.

Speaking to MaltaToday, Mizzi said: "Since Mercieca became deputy secretary general he has been surrounded by yes-men who agree to all his

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GWU veteran Charles Mizzi has resigned after being investigated by top union officials. Mizzi was the chairman of the union's travel and insurance companies.

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Police intervene at stormy Ta' Cenc public hearing

JAMES DEBONO

A public meeting packed with employees from the Ta' Cenc Hotel yesterday degenerated to the point that police had to intervene to stop a member of the public from assailing Alternattiva Demokratika chairperson Harry Vassallo, after he alleged that the Ta' Cenc developers were using mafia tactics by forcing their employees to attend the meeting.

The stormy meeting brought both sides of the divide on the Ta' Cenc development under the same roof for public consultation over Victor Borg's proposed de-

velopment at Ta' Cenc.

Borg is proposing the development of a new hotel, 38 villas at the picturesque Mgarr ix-Xini, and 33 bungalows over Ta' Cenc.

Vassallo also clashed with EIA coordinator Paul Gauci after questioning the latter's credentials to speak on the legal aspects of public accessibility to Ta' Cenc.

Gauci accused Vassallo of making political propaganda: "The participation of political parties only serves to degenerate these meetings... You should simply go to a public square if you are here for political mileage."

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Judges decry use of St Luke's as 'a psychiatric gulag'

KARL SCHEMBRI

A Chinese woman was forcibly kept at the St Luke's Hospital psychiatric unit upon orders from the police as they were preparing for her deportation upon former Police Commissioner George Grech's direct intervention, according to shocking evidence presented in court recently.

The case, which resurfaced in a Court of Appeal sentence delivered this year, dates back to November 1998, when Yu-

mei Zhang was admitted to St Luke's Hospital suffering from chest pains, but ended up being locked up at the psychiatric unit against her will.

The court sentence handed down last April by Chief Justice Vincent De Gaetano and Judges Joseph Camilleri and Joseph Filletti, uses strong language against health department officials and witnesses summoned by the authorities and slams the St Luke's administration for using the hospital as a "psychiatric gulag".

In the original civil case filed

by Zhang against the Director of Health, which was decided in 2004, the court heard how Zhang was kept in hospital despite her medical release as she was about to be deported "on fabricated charges".

Zhang was at the time contesting the health authorities' claim that she owed Lm2,070 for the treatment she received in hospital between 22 November and 14 December 1998.

The court had decided that Zhang, who also had work permits intermittently and had eventually

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