



Labour's 'responsible' drug abuse

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Cannabis is Labour's latest distraction tactic. In its relentless drive to legalise drug abuse, it issued a White Paper with the ridiculously deceitful title: 'Towards the strengthening of the legal framework on the responsible use of cannabis'.

Labour's White Paper is unadulterated deception and dishonesty. It asserts that "Nothing in this White Paper is intended to encourage, promote or lead to consumption of cannabis". But proceeds to do just that.

It presents cannabis as a harmless benign source of entertainment, paving the way for Labour to license close friends to make a quick buck out of drug abuse – at the expense of our youth.

The sugar-coating of a dangerous habit is shameless. The White Paper reassures us that cannabis is nothing new – used for thousands of years by civilisations across the globe. Don't worry, everybody's used it, even our minsters, so lighten up. It claims that criminalisation of cannabis is a recent phenomenon, "a relatively anomalous one".

The entire document is littered with cannabis promotion. It brags that important steps have been taken to combat the stigma surrounding cannabis, that cannabis is not worse than alcohol (so it's fine then?) and most brazenly that "the consumption of cannabis adds to the users' wellbeing". If that is not promotion and encouragement for cannabis, what is? Who wouldn't want to add to his wellbeing?

Couched in pseudo-scientific jargon the White Paper trivialises the real dangers of the drug. Deceitfully it describes "its most common effects", but fails to mention its worst. The proposals, which include increasing legal possession to 7g and allowing cultivation of the plant, are guided by the "individual's freedom to make responsible choices" it fibs.

There is nothing responsible about recreational cannabis use. It's a psychotropic drug – it affects the brain. It changes thought, mood, behaviour and perception. Its effects are not only short term. It alters the senses, sense of time, changes mood, impairs body movements, causes difficulty with thinking and problem solving, impairs memory, causes hallucinations in high doses, causes delusions and psychosis. Psychosis means losing contact with reality – and that is Labour's affliction.

The National Academy of Sciences conducted an extensive review showing that cannabis use is associated with development of psychotic disorders. Psychosis is a frightening experience. Examples include hearing voices, seeing terrifying creatures trying to harm you,

suspecting that even your loved ones are intent on hurting you. Of course, none of this is mentioned in the White Paper.

Neither are the long term effects. Depressingly, Forum Żgħażaġh Laburisti is promoting the legalisation of recreational cannabis when its members, the young, are most likely to suffer its most damaging effects. Until the age of 24 the human brain is still developing and is most susceptible to stunted development. Impaired thinking, memory and learning have all been documented in young people consuming cannabis. In a New Zealand study, young people suffered a significant reduction in their IQ. Lost mental abilities do not recover on quitting.

The Forum Żgħażaġh Laburisti gives the false message that we know all there is to know about cannabis. We don't. Cannabis contains more than 100 chemicals and its interaction with brain cannabinoid receptors is complex and poorly understood. The level of THC in marijuana has increased steadily over recent years. There is little research on the impact of high THC cannabis on young people. Cannabis affects different people differently. It also affects the same person differently and unpredictably at different times and doses.

What we do know is that cannabis use is linked to schizophrenia, depression, anxiety and suicidal ideation. We know that cannabis use during pregnancy is most damaging to the fetus in the first few weeks when most expectant mothers are not even aware they are pregnant. Babies born to cannabis users have lower birth weight, increased risk of brain and behavioural problems, increased risk of preterm birth with associated poorer outcomes.

Withdrawal symptoms of sleeplessness, anxiety, cravings and decreased appetite are not mentioned in the White Paper either. Nor is the psychological dependence on the drug.

A 2021 Cato Institute report on the legalisation of marijuana showed that in Colorado marijuana positive traffic fatalities increased after legalisation. Cannabis use also increased. In States that had legalised cannabis, there was a higher and increasing rate of use prevalence.

Which sane person would remotely consider legalising such a substance? Which caring parent would consider making such a drug more accessible for his children? Why is Labour so intent on ramming this psychotropic drug down our throat?

Maybe because legalisation dramatically increases tax revenue for the government. In Washington, cannabis legalisation generated \$70 million dollars in taxes in the first year – double the original revenue forecast.

Maybe because friendly businessmen from the fourth floor can see a lucrative business opportunity. Robert Abela asked “where can one buy in a legal way?” He admitted he wants to “destroy the black market for cannabis” and feigns concern that our citizens “do not have a source for procuring the drug”. Doubtlessly, Abela has a plan – and willing friends to help him procure the drug.

Of course, the White Paper is an utter waste of time. Abela has already decided he will introduce reforms. “You introduce such reforms because you have the courage, because you are sensitive to the realities of society, and you are not afraid to face those changes” he ululated in self-praise.

In a re-enactment of Aldous Huxley's 'Brave New World', Robert Abela encourages the systematic drugging of his own citizens for the benefit of his Party and their friends. His twin

efforts to push drugs and prostitution ensure that the populace is too distracted to pay attention to his Party's criminality.

Cannabis and prostitution are now instruments of policy used by the State to drown the minds of its citizens in a sea of irrelevance – in an endless supply of pleasurable diversions. Abela's Malta will be a drug-fuelled paradise that trades its liberty and its humanity for pleasure.