

FRESH HOPE FOR ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES UNDER THE ULP

BY

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THE ISSUE

It is absolutely remarkable that after more than 21 years in government (March 2001 to August 2022, and continuing), the Unity Labour Party (ULP) continues to deliver fresh ideas, fresh initiatives, innovative policies and programmes within the context of a compelling developmental narrative for St. Vincent and the Grenadines. All this has been evident from its praxis — its theory and practice — of excellent good governance which derives centrally from the following: its people-centred vision; its philosophy of advanced social democracy as applied to the circumstances of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the Caribbean; its socio-cultural matrices focused on the further ennoblement of our Caribbean civilisation; its quest to build a modern, competitive, many-sided post-colonial economy which is at once local, national, regional and global; the pursuance of its commitment to an alive constitutionalism and popularly-based democracy; its mature regionalism in our Caribbean and our America, and its conjoined internationalist solidarity grounded in the foundational precepts of the Charter of the United Nations and the national interests of St. Vincent and the Grenadines; and the delivery of desirable outcomes in every sphere of public policy and collective human endeavours in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

These seven core features of the ULP's praxis constitute the basis and the exciting platform from which flows the fresh hope for St. Vincent

and the Grenadines consequent upon the convulsions, dislocations, and extreme challenges arising from the COVID pandemic, the volcanic eruptions, Hurricane Elsa of July 2021, drought, and grave turmoil in the global political economy. All this is in the context, or against the backdrop, of the historical legacies of underdevelopment, (colonialism, slavery, native genocide, etc.) and the extant challenges or limitations, and possibilities, in the structural condition of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, inclusive of those connected to its small size in material particulars, its islandness, and its location in the vortex of monopoly capitalism, globally.

PUBLIC DOCUMENTATION

There is an abundance of documentation published by or through the ULP and its government, or by way of independent or other official sources on all of this, and more. Currently, a book authored by me on this very subject is at the publishers; it should be published soon; it is entitled aptly: A Time of Repair: Beyond COVID, Volcanic Eruptions, Hurricane Elsa, and Global Turmoil — Fresh Hope for St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE ULP: SUCCESS AND FRESH HOPE

The foundation document of the ULP, the Constitution and By-Laws of the Unity Labour Party, adopted at the Party's founding on October 16, 1994, provides the rock upon which our party and our nation's success has been substantially built over the past 21 years in government. It is the foundation document, too, for fresh hope. I shall, in these respects, highlight two aspects of this foundation document, namely: (i) Aims and Objectives of the ULP; and (ii) the Rights and Obligations of Individual Members.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE ULP

Article 2 of the ULP's Constitution states ten "Aims and Objectives" of the Party as follows:

- “(i) The defence of the national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.
- (ii) The preservation of the unity of the State of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.
- (iii) The building of a society in accordance with the principles of participatory democracy, basic human rights as enshrined in the Constitution of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, free institutions, social justice, equality before the law, and human dignity.
- (iv) The fostering of the pursuit of just economic rewards for labour.
- (v) The development of people’s talents and skills to the fullest extent possible through training and education.
- (vi) The especial protection of those sections of the society who are disadvantaged, weak and defenseless.
- (vii) The sustained improvement of the material, social and cultural level of living of the people as a whole.
- (viii) The promotion of our Caribbean civilisation and the deepening of the process of regional integration and any viable thrust towards Caribbean nationhood.
- (ix) The active pursuit, in conjunction with the international community, of a just international order and lasting peace internationally.
- (x) The practical affirmation, in every sphere of human activity, of the view that the Nation is founded upon the

belief in the supremacy of God and the freedom and dignity of man and woman.”

RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF MEMBERS OF THE ULP

Article 5 of the Constitution of the ULP establishes the rights and obligations of individual members of the Party as follows:

“Rights

Every individual member of the Party shall have the rights:

- (a) To demand that the Party’s Constitution, programme, and decisions and resolutions be observed.
- (b) To participate in the meetings of the Party which he or she is entitled to attend; to discuss all matters fully and to vote on them.
- (c) To be eligible for election to offices in the Party and as a delegation to the National Council and National Convention.
- (d) To afford himself or herself of any right including the right to vote at the elections of Party Offices.”

[Elections at the National Council and National Convention are by elected delegates from the Constituency Councils and other units of the Party].

“Obligations

Every individual member shall be charged with the following obligations:

- (a) To be disciplined and to be committed to the Party's work, principles, and decisions.
- (b) To strengthen and extend the relations between the Party and the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.
- (c) To practice the virtues of humility, honesty, integrity and fraternal love for one's fellow man and to struggle against selfishness, arrogance, and conceit.
- (d) To be critical and self-critical within the Party so as to eliminate mistakes which can be harmful to the Party.
- (e) To refrain from making public statements contrary to the declared principles and policies of the Party and from doing anything which is inconsistent with the interests and policies of the Party.
- (f) To be bound by the decisions and policies of the Party.
- (g) To pay dues promptly and regularly as laid down by the Party."

OTHER VITAL PROVISIONS

There are other vital provisions of the ULP's Constitution and By-Laws, including those pertaining to the "Qualifications of Candidates for Parliamentary Elections". The fifteen listed qualifications are quite instructive in pursuance of fresh hope.

FINAL COMMENT

The Unity Labour Party, from its very foundation, represents the best hope for St. Vincent and the Grenadines. It has chalked up an impressive record of achievement. And it offers fresh hope, now!

Indeed, no other political entity in St. Vincent and the Grenadines offers such hope, good works, and love for the people!