

April 12th 2024

NOT YET AT MOUNT ZION

THE ISSUE

Last Sunday night (April 7, 2024), at the Arnos Vale Tarmac, at perhaps the largest political rally ever in SVG, the Unity Labour Party (ULP) celebrated in grand style and compelling content its 23 years of excellent governance continuously, thus far, from March 28, 2001. All the speakers on the platform (Comrade Ralph, Curtis, Camillo, Orlando, Sabato, Keisal, Carlos, and invited guest Damion Crawford of the People's National Party of Jamaica) mapped the amazing developmental journey SVG has travelled under the ULP government, and the work which is still left to be done.

Comrade Ralph, in the concluding speech at the rally, summed it up well in reciting the impactful verse of the “dialect” poem of the Jamaican Linton Kwesi Johnson entitled “Di Anfinish Revalushan”:

*“histri bigga dan mi an yu yu know
Time cyan steal but it can heal
soh shake di dew from out yuh hed
wipe di cobweb from yu face
wi gat nuff wok fi dhu
far wi no reach Mount Zion
yet.”*

As all objective observers at home and abroad know, the ULP embarked in 2001 on a programmatic framework of transformative change, for the better, in every uplifting area of life, living, and production: the economy, job and wealth creation, poverty reduction, good governance, education, health, housing, disaster preparedness, water, electricity, telecommunications, physical infrastructure (roads, bridges, international and jet airports, seaports), social

protection, the citizen security apparatuses (Police, Coastguard, Prisons, Law Courts, Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions), the Public Service, the empowerment of women and historically marginalised groups, the upliftment of youths and the working people, the lifting up of farmers and fisherfolk, the protection of the elderly, sports, and culture, regional integration, and foreign policy.

Transformative, revolutionary policies and programmes have been implemented, in the people's interest, to lift SVG higher. Amazing, uplifting achievements have been effected. They are to be further consolidated and advanced; they are to be done by all of us, in solidarity with each other. We have more rivers to cross; the revolution is unfinished; we have not reached Mount Zion yet! Always, there is more to be done; always the ULP for SVG!

At the Rally, we celebrated our successful journey, thus far under the ULP government; and we outlined the pathways ahead, despite all the challenges and limitations (inherited from the past, those arising in the present, and the prospective ones ahead). We know that we will further succeed because we have been, and we are, harnessing for desired ends our strengths and possibilities (people, landscape, seascape, democratic apparatuses of a free people, regional and internationalist solidarity, and the ULP's strengths in leadership, vision, philosophy, policies, programmes, organization, energy, and will).

HIGH HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

By 2001, SVG had barely entered the lower ranking of Medium Level of Human Development as assessed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) by way of the comprehensive, though imperfect, measurement of the Human Development Index (HDI). Today, SVG has been ranked in the High Level of Human Development. SVG's score in the latest Report (2023-2024) is at 77.2 percent out of a possible 100. The next level above is the Very High Level of Human Development which starts at a score of 80. We are

at a touching distance of the very high of all-round human development.

This is an amazing achievement for a small, vulnerable country which in 2001 was at a place just above Guyana and Suriname which in turn were above the lowly Haiti. Today the story is much different, much better; and we are climbing higher.

REVERSALS ARE POSSIBLE

Reversals in SVG's march to progress and advanced development are possible if we as a people make wrong choices. One terribly wrong choice is, if in the next general elections the people make the cardinal error and replace the ULP by the NDP in government. The NDP has shown that it has no leadership, policies, programmes, and organisation, adequate or sufficient to advance SVG and our people. The NDP is backward; it is led by a bunch of grumpy old men with no credible vision or compelling developmental narrative for SVG. It is a mess of organisational confusion and squabbles. It looks forward to the past in its own knowledge that its future is behind it. It has little or no confidence in, or love for, the people of SVG. It is sailing the metaphoric rough seas on sealed orders from its financiers who are bent on establishing a brand of neo-colonialism and exploitation for their own gain, and some high-ups in the NDP, of our nation's patrimony, inclusive of our passports, citizenship, and material resources.

The tremendous advances of the ULP in job and wealth creation, social protection, education, health, housing, and overall human development will be reversed under the NDP. The Persian, Roman, and British Empires, each existed for hundreds of years, declined and fell; their glory and majesty were reversed.

EMPIRE OF THE MIND

The empires of the past, and overwhelmingly still of the present, have been, and are, based largely on large military forces, huge economies, significant land mass and population sizes, lots of minerals, extensive transportation networks, and accumulated imperial cultural resources. Today, we note that advanced science and technology, inclusive of Artificial Intelligence (AI) are coming more and more to the fore. The presence of Google, Facebook, Twitter, and modern phenomenal advances in biotechnology and information technologies have impacted the world immensely. Small countries can find production spaces for huge advancement in what collectively can be called the Empire of the Mind.

The world tomorrow, and the day after, will consist of “Empires of the Mind”. Our education, training, mindset, and sensible behavior will take us there. The Education Revolution provides a base. Upon that base must be constructed the applied science and technology to interface, and locate an uplifting place for us, in the Empires of the Mind.

FINAL COMMENT

Thanks to all who contributed to a fantastic and impactful celebratory ULP Rally. There has been 23 years of immense progress thus far. Still, we ain't reach Munt Zion Yet. On this earthly city of SVG, it is always the ULP for SVG!