

November 10th 2023

PROMISES MADE; PROGRAMS DELIVERED

Introduction

During the Parliamentary debate on the 2023 Budget, our Minister of Finance, Hon. Camillo Gonsalves delivered a classic analysis on the philosophy of the opposition NDP that is in play today. It is as relevant as it is evident, since it lays bare the all-out “war” waged against truth, decency and nobility in an attempt to secure an electoral win in the next General Elections. At the core of the NDP’s struggle is the fact that the ULP remains extremely popular among voters and especially so among youths because of the success of the government’s policies. When the ULP made its proposals to the voters in 2001 through its manifesto, there were a number of fresh, new ideas that voters approved, as has been the case every election after that. The confidence of voters in subsequent elections since 2001, is due to the efficient delivery on the programs they voted for that have produced life-changing results and remarkable economic development. The quandary for the NDP is that on every instance, they not only critiqued the plans of the ULP, they opposed them and told the worst lies about their implementation and success. With the programs of the government proving to be extremely successful and popular among Vincentians, the NDP is now facing an uphill battle to win the confidence of voters, especially as they are unable to come up with credible plans of their own. They have however not allowed this reality to awaken them. They have decided instead to pursue a philosophy at the heart of which resides more lies, dishonesty and deceit.

Five Stages of NDP Opportunism

Comrade Camillo's exposé on the philosophy of the NDP under the caption, "the five stages of NDP opportunism" explained the hypocrisy and dishonesty of that party and it shows how their positions on matters of national importance shift over time. In *stage 1*, which is usually a response to the announcement of a policy/program by the ULP, and the NDP's immediate response has always been, "it's a lie" or "it's an election gimmick". During this stage, they do their best to convince anyone who would listen that the program will never be implemented; that it's just talk to fool Vincentians.

Once the program is implemented, making liars of the NDP so that they can no longer say it's a lie, they then adjust their position and move to *stage 2* where they now scream victimization. Here every effort is made to discredit the program by suggesting that only supporters of the ULP benefit, since by now they can no longer ignore its existence.

It's not long before they enter into **stage 3**. At this point, the program is in full swing, Vincentians have accepted the program and are very supportive leaving the NDP alienated, so they pivot to a position of interest. Stage 3 sees them pretending to show some interest in the program/policy and are now asking for more information, greater transparency, possibly the establishment of committees to oversee the continued implementation of the program.

Stage 4 is next. It's close to another general elections and the very popular and successful program/policy is naturally one of the issues of the campaign, so they now embrace the program, admitting that it's a good program that they have always supported. The program is now integrated as part of their party's manifesto with their full endorsement and a commitment to improve on the once heavily criticized program.

Stage 5 is the most dubious and exposes the absolute dishonesty of the NDP, when, in an effort to gain traction with voters regarding a ULP program, (that they previously said was an election gimmick and opposed in parliament), they claim boldly that said program was their idea in the first place. The turnaround is finally complete and now the message is that the ULP stole the idea from the NDP, a completely false narrative, but they tell the big lie shamelessly.

How They Criticize, Copy, then Claim

The most recent example of NDP opportunism was on full display during their recently concluded “Big Lie Tour” of North America where they made some ridiculous claims that were easily debunked. Their recent love affair with the Youth Empowerment (YES) Program is an obvious attempt to gain some traction among the youth population that has long lost any interest in what they have to offer. To counter this failing, they have made a 180 degree turn regarding the YES program making claims that are outrageously false, going through all 5 stages of opportunism. Firstly, the NDP criticized the YES program, referring to it as the youth exploitation service, and this criticism was done at the very top of leadership. No doubt, this unfair and crude criticism casted a negative light on the program and prevented some of their supporters from applying it. As the program got popular and hundreds of young people were benefitting from the training and experience offered, the NDP started saying that only ULP supporters were being placed on the program (stage 2). Once stage 2 failed, they moved on to stage 3 where they then suggested that the implementation by the Youth Department was inadequate and didn't offer much oversight of the program, so the government needed to change this to something more transparent. This was clearly a smoke screen. During the last elections, they vowed to improve the stipend paid to the YES interns, and most recently when they launched their

youth guarantee pledge that offers to the youths, things that they already benefit from under the ULP, the YES program featured prominently. They are speaking supportively of the program, as if this was always their position and now claim that they will improve it for the benefit of the recipients. Quick fact: the YES program has been a 12-month program from its inception, involves the private sector component and the stipend amount was recently increased.

The NDP is now making overtures to move on to stage 5, where they would make the outright claim that the YES program was their idea initially. So far, they have made subtle suggestions that this or that element of the YES program was initiated by the NDP administration, but are yet to make the all-out claim that it was their idea and the ULP stole it. It's just a matter of time, stage 5 loading.