

Jan 17<sup>th</sup> 2020

## The ULP's 24<sup>th</sup> National Convention

### Introduction

As political conventions go, this was a peach of an event. It was everything a political convention should be well-organized, energetic, full of life and entertainment, massive crowd, very impressive speeches, and of course supported by modern technology, to allow persons who could not attend, to get a chance to view the event.

As a convention, it sent a strong message to all and sundry, including the opposition New Democratic Party, that the ULP was stronger than ever, a force to be reckoned with, and an organization that is ready to rumble, when the Comrade Leader rings the bell.

It was a massive turn out, constituency by constituency. It showed that the General Secretary, Julian Francis, is still the best political organizer in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Indeed, this convention is an indication that Julian Francis has not lost his touch when it comes to political strategies, something that the NDP and its principal ally, Strategic Communications Laboratory, should pay attention to.

### The Convention Message

The message that the ULP was sending, is that the party was going to win the next general election for the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The truth is that the ULP has chalked a record of outstanding and unprecedented achievements which benefited every family, and the nation as a whole. Many of these accomplishments have been secured in the most challenging circumstances, when you consider the resourced-challenge nature of our country.

It is the ULP with its people-centered vision, and with the policies and programmes which have transformed this country. Now the party is looking forward to 2020, and to uplifting further, the quality of life of all Vincentians. That is why the slogan for the convention is "The ULP, winning again for SVG".

Party Leader and Prime Minister outlined many of the achievements of his party, which have positively impacted the lives of all Vincentians. He then spoke about many of the new programmes which will be implemented over the next two years. It is imperative that the ULP wins the next general election if Vincentians are to

benefit from the geothermal project, the expansion to Port Kingstown, the new city at Arnos Vale, the acute referral hospital, and the many hotel projects which are on the verge of taking off. It is clear that the NDP will turn back these projects if Vincentians make the mistake of electing that party to office. The country will simply fracture.

So the message out of the convention was clear; keep the NDP out for the sake of the country.

The ULP must feel confident given the energy displayed at the convention, and further by the number of young people who attended the event. Clearly this was the largest convention hosted by the ULP, an indication that the party's base is still intact, very strong and dedicated to the ideals of the ULP, and ready to rumble when the Comrade rings the bell.

### **New Candidates**

Of great interest at the convention was the presence of the four new prospective candidates who will be running on the ULP ticket for the 2020 elections. In Central Leeward we have Orandi Brewster, a young professional who is already creating strong waves in that part of the country. He is being coached by the veteran Sir Louis Straker, the Deputy Leader of the ULP, and also the Deputy Prime Minister.

Then there is Dr. Minerva Glasgow, a veteran public administrator and community activist who is creating a storm in South Leeward. Minnie, as she is affectionately called, has already galvanized the ULP supporters in South Leeward, and we look forward to the return of that constituency, to the ULP column.

Another youthful candidate is Dominic Sutherland, a businessman, who is also causing a stir in Central Kingstown, and giving the NDP candidate St. Clair Leacock, severe nightmares. Dominic Sutherland has already captured the imagination and support of the people of Central Kingstown, and this is going to be an interesting electoral battle in 2020.

The fourth candidate is the former teacher and headmaster of the Grammar School, Curtis King. He is expected to contest the West St. George constituency on the ULP ticket. Curtis King is a solid Vincentian, an intellectual with a strong community spirit, and he is expected to do well.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, the leadership of the ULP, along with its members and supporters must feel quite happy and satisfied with the outcome of the 24<sup>th</sup> convention. The future looks good for the ULP, leading up to the 2020 election, when it is called.

Above all, the important issue of leadership has been settled firmly in the corner of the ULP. It is clear to all and sundry that Ralph Gonsalves is light years ahead of Godwin Friday, or anyone else in the NDP. In fact it is St. Clair Leacock who said on radio, early in 2017, that Ralph Gonsalves is far ahead of all the leaders in Caricom, among other things.

It is the ULP that possesses the quality leadership that has been tried and tested in the extremely difficult circumstances of the worst global economic crisis for 100 years, and in the face of several natural disasters. The leadership of the ULP has made an immense difference for the better.

All this is well known and is embedded in the consciousness of the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, even within the hearts and minds of the opposition NDP. That is why the ULP will win again in 2020, to secure the socio-economic development of our beloved country.