

GOOD NEWS AMIDST CHALLENGES OF AMERICAN TARIFFS

by

Unity Labour Party

GOOD NEWS

Last week (Sunday March 31st to April 7th) brought several items of good news arising from the developmental initiatives of the Unity Labour Party (ULP) government. Among these were the following: (i) The announcement by Delta Airlines that starting December 20, 2025, Delta will fly non-stop, daily to Argyle International Airport (AIA) out of Atlanta , Georgia, United States of America, over the winter tourism season; (ii) SVG received aid for the poultry industry with a delivery of 17,500 broiler chicks from the ALBA Bank of which SVG is a member, headquartered in Venezuela; (iii) Fisherfolk and seas moss producers in Bequia received vital supplies under the Hurricane Beryl Emergency Response and Livelihoods Recovery Programme through the auspices of the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations and the government of SVG; (iv) the certification of 200 fisherfolks under the Blue Economy of the Caribbean (UBEC) – SVG Food Security Project of the government of the SVG; (v) the continued, and faster roll-out of the Post-Beryl Housing Rehabilitation Project, including the acceleration in the rebuilding process in Union Island with the start-up involvement of a 40-member Construction Brigade of the Guyana Defense Force; (vi) the ramping up of the roll-out of **all** the capital projects and recurrent initiatives of the ULP government across SVG as detailed in Budget 2025; (vii) the holding of the Diaspora Investment Promotion event in London , UK, under the auspices of Invest SVG, at which the Minister of Finance, Camillo, delivered the feature address; and (viii) the official visit of our Prime Minister, Comrade Ralph, to Romania, from which benefits are already flowing; (ix) the continued good governance of SVG, including the averting of serious criminal misconduct; and (x) enhanced regional cooperation amidst America’s tariffs.

Meanwhile, two other sets of activities buttressed, and form part of, the good news, namely: (a) the participation of Vincentians in a host of sporting and cultural activities, at home and abroad; and (b) the composite events (music, singing, dancing, speeches, and popular vending) at the ULP’s massively-attended Rally at Chatoyer’s Recreational Park at Rabacca to commemorate/celebrate our 24th anniversary in government. And then our people, over this period, celebrate the GOOD NEWS of Christ, daily and on the weekend.

Amidst our travails, difficulties, and challenges, we must not forget THE GOOD NEWS of spiritual redemption, and the good news of earthly life, living, and production. Let us highlight a few items of the listed good news in our earthly city, SVG.

DELTA COMES TO SVG FROM ATLANTA

The Atlanta International Airport in Georgia, USA, is reportedly the busiest airport in the USA. It is a central hub in the southern United States. Delta, a major airline, is scheduled to start its daily flights, between Atlanta and Aryle International Airport, SVG, on December 20, 2025. This is a major boost for our tourism industry, and for travel to and from SVG by our nationals. This was the promised magic of AIA; and it is happening before our very eyes.

Delta out of Atlanta means more passengers through AIA; more users of taxis and minibuses; more guests at the hotels and apartments; more purchases of goods and services provided in SVG; more employees at AIA; more jobs in hotels and restaurants; more revenues for government; more money in the hands of hoteliers, workers, farmers, fishers, entertainers, service providers of all kinds. And so forth. All in all, a prosperous SVG!

In terms of international airline connections, SVG now has: Virgin Atlantic out of London; Air Canada out of Toronto, Canada; American Airlines out of Charlotte (North Carolina); Caribbean Airlines, Jet Blue, and American Airlines out of New York; American Airline out of Miami; and as of December 20th, Delta out of Atlanta. As the Comrade had correctly advised: “Build the AIA, and the airlines will come – Build it and they will come.”

The genius of the ULP government in building the AIA which every government hitherto, and the current opposition NDP, had thought impossible must now be fully recognised and applauded by all patriotic Vincentians. Sadly, and falsely, there are those in the NDP who still insist that AIA was not a necessity, and a milestone around the necks of Vincentians. The people must continue to punish the current NDP for its continued folly on AIA. Similarly, the people must continue to reward the ULP and its leadership for its vision, foresight, capacity, and quality governance in **all matters**, large and small.

And, we remind everyone that the same people who now “bad-mouth” the Modern Port in Kingstown are the very same ones who “bad-mouthed” the AIA. Daniel Cummings, Glenford Stewart; and the weakling of a “leader” Lorraine Friday, have no shame. They do not want to see real progress in SVG; they have no uplifting vision; they pull down, they cannot, and do not, build up.

RAMPING -UP HOUSING REHAB

The ULP government has set itself the mammoth task of assisting the people in the repairs, rehabilitation, and reconstruction of some 6,000 houses across SVG consequent upon the passage of Hurricane Beryl on July 1, 2024, and inclusive of a remainder of houses damaged by the volcanic eruptions of April 2021 which have since deteriorated. North Windward, North Central Windward, North Leeward, Bequia, and the Southern Grenadines were mainly affected, but elsewhere too. Beryl destroyed Union Island and severely battered Canouan and Mayreau.

The ULP government, Ian Wace's Gombolimbo group in Canouan and Union Island, and home-owners themselves where able, have been doing a good job of rebuilding houses. All across SVG, some 3,000 or one-half of the 6,000 houses have been already satisfactorily addressed. Of the 143 houses in Mayreau which required attention, only seven (7) or so remain to be rebuilt/repared. In Canouan, practically all the houses have been rebuilt/repared. In Union Island, some 400 of the 1,000 affected houses have been satisfactorily rebuilt/repared; and a ramping up is currently underway in union Island.

The estimated cost of this housing reconstruction is some EC \$450 million. The government does not as yet have access to all this money but we are progressing quite well. And even if we had all the money, there has been a shortage of labour. In any event, there is an insufficiency of money, materials, labour, and time for everyone to get his/her house addressed at the same time. So, patience and a calm is needed by everyone in this exercise. The ULP government has taken on a responsibility that no other government in the world has ever taken on. Our conscience, our philosophy, our humanity, our policies demand of us the taking on of this obligation. The opposition NDP has no moral authority or any other basis upon which to criticise us on this issue; they are a disgrace and a complete waste of time.

Ian Wace's contribution has been vital especially in Canouan. But he will tell everyone that if it were not for Ralph and the government, he would not have been able to do what he has done, and is doing to help. It is Ralph, too, who persuaded him to help also in Union Island. The 20 Romanians who Wace brought to SVG to assist in rebuilding have done a marvelous job. Leadership and friendship matter in Ralph's persuasion and mobilization of Wace and Gombolimbo.

RALPH IN ROMANIA

On Wednesday April 2, 2025, Comrade Ralph and his delegation arrived in Romania for an official; visit; he left Romania on Saturday April 5, 2025. His delegation included: SVG's High Commissioner to Britain, Cenio Lewis; SVG's Minister Counsellor at our Embassy in Cuba, Charmane John; Eloise (wife of the Comrade); and Security Officer, Inspector Irwin Adams. We have been advised that this it he first visit to Romania by a CARICOM leader for over 50 years.

Romania is an important country in central/eastern Europe; it was formerly within the Soviet bloc but is now a vital member-state in the European Union. Comrade Ralph has always considered that it is strategically significant for CARICOM to build diplomatic and substantive links with central and eastern European countries, especially those who are in the enlarged European Union (EU). The Comrade had always considered that over-reliance on Britain as an interlocuter for CARICOM in the EU was risky; as it turned out, Britain exited the EU. It is to be noted that Comrade Ralph secured financial support for the building of AIA in 2014 from the Republic of Georgia, a former member-state of the Soviet Bloc up to 1991.

In Romania, Prime Minister Gonsalves had a one-on-one bilateral with Romania's Prime Minister Marcel Ciolacu, during which matters of global, European, Latin American, Caribbean, and bilateral significance were discussed. Undoubtedly, relations between our two countries are being strengthened in both our countries' interest. The Comrade gave his friend Marcel Ciolacu a plaque with all the 20 names of the Romanian workers who have been helping SVG, post-Beryl, with rebuilding.

During the visit, our Prime Minister signed five Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) — each with the respective Romanian Ministers. These MOUs covered: (i) Disaster Management and Disaster Preparedness; (ii) Health; (iii) Agriculture and Fisheries; (iv) Education and Research; and (v) Foreign Relations.

Currently, SVG has three university students on scholarship in Romania, two of whom have completed their Bachelor's degrees and are completing their Masters' degrees, and the third is completing his Bachelor's degree. A further eleven (11) fully-funded scholarships are now being offered for study in Romania by the Romanian government in conjunction with particular universities in Romania. Details of these scholarships are to be shortly published by our government.

On one of the days in Romania, Comrade Ralph and his delegation travelled to the Transylvania University of Brasov, 2 ½ hours by road from the capital city of Bucharest. Brasov, a city of 300,000 persons, is host to the outstanding Transylvania University which was established in 1948. It is one of the most prestigious universities in Romania; two of our students attend this university; and the third joined us there for a meeting with the university officials and for lunch. The SVG delegation also met separately with our students; they are doing quite well. Two of the students are pursuing studies in the field of natural sciences/engineering; and the third in economics.

24 YEARS OF TRANSFORMING SVG

The independent-minded columnist, fighter for the working people, and patriot Renwick Rose, in his weekly column in The Searchlight newspaper of Friday April 4, 2025, had this to say of the ULP's 24 years in office:

“There is no doubt that the ULP has led a remarkable transformation of the political, economic, and social transformation of our country --- Its accomplishments cannot be denied and holding the celebratory rally at the Rabacca Park, a ULP creation, is by itself one manifestation of its accomplishments, embellished by the recent state acquisition of the historic Balliceaux island to become a national shrine.”

At the same time, Renwick also mentioned “weaknesses” and the “attrition” of time which he considered attend our “long-serving” administration, but his emphasis on the ULP's transformative quality and accomplishments was central to his commentary on our 24 years in office. He commended, too, our people's refreshing of our state for the upcoming elections — at least six new candidates out of 15. Anyone reading this would no doubt conclude that the ULP deserves a 6th term.

Contrast this with the jaundiced bile and negativism heaped upon the ULP by NDP partisans and fellow-travellers, including opportunistic wannabe Napoleons in quest of status and money, and the petit bourgeois sell-outs to backwardness and a dangerous, reactionary political economy masquerading as glitter. Woe be unto Vincentians if they ever give the NDP and this self-serving lot the chance to govern SVG. Real pain and suffering will result.

TRUMP'S TARIFFS

The imposition of tariffs, ranging from 10 percent to 50 percent, on goods imported to the USA from various countries, by the Trump administration portends global economic uncertainty, economic slow-down, unemployment, and inflation. We in SVG (10 percent tariff imposed) and the rest of CARICOM have to work together to stave off the potential hazards to our economies from Trump's global tariffs. More on all this later.

Article for week of April 11, 2025