

# HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW NATIONAL PARTY

By

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Following the collapse of the People's Revolutionary Government (PRG) in October 1983, many Grenadians welcomed the opportunity for the democratic process to return to the state once more. The PRG had seized power by way of a coup d'état from the democratically elected government of then Prime Minister Eric Gairy on 13<sup>th</sup> March 1979. The PRG led by Prime Minister Maurice Bishop then ruled Grenada unconstitutionally for four and a half years up to 19<sup>th</sup> October 1983.

Soon after the demise of the PRG, five political parties emerged. There were the two old ones: the Grenada United Labour Party (GULP) led by Sir Eric Gairy, the Grenada National Party (GNP) led by Mr. Herbert Blaize, and three new ones: the National Democratic Party (NDP) led by Mr. George Brizan, the Grenada Democratic Movement (GDM) led by Dr Francis Alexis and the Christian Democratic Labour Party (CDLP) led by Mr. Winston Whyte.

Because there was a general concern that the votes would be split up too much at general elections and therefore pave the way for the GULP led by Eric Gairy to get back in office, many Grenadians pushed for all the parties, with the exception of the GULP, to come together to contest the general elections. There seemed to have been a genuine fear that if Sir Eric Gairy was to become Prime Minister once more that some would use this as a pretext to cause further unrest in the country.

As a consequence, with support from certain regional leaders, three of the political parties reached an agreement to form one party in order to contest the then upcoming general elections. These parties were the GNP, the NDP and the GDM. The new party was founded in August 1984 and was called the New National Party. The party under the leadership of Mr. Herbert Blaize, went on to win the December 1984 general elections with 14 seats with the GULP winning 1 seat. Mr. Blaize became Prime Minister.

The new party then settled down, formulated and adopted its Constitution. The Committee which did the first draft of the Constitution comprised: Mr Lawrence Joseph (Convenor), Mr Ben Jones and Dr. Francis Alexis.

The Preamble to the party's Constitution is worthy of note. It stated as follows:

**WHEREAS** the people of the State of Grenada have experienced tremendous political, social and economic upheavals for the last three decades;

**AND WHEREAS** such upheavals have fundamentally shaken the bed-rock of Democracy in the State of Grenada;

**AND WHEREAS** the people of the State of Grenada have determined that they wish to live under Democracy;

**AND WHEREAS** Democracy requires adherence to the Rule of Law, respect for Human Rights, belief in a Higher Being, Peace and Social Justice;

**AND WHEREAS** there is a real need for a new political party in and for the State of Grenada to help promote the NEW BEGINNING in the building of Democracy in and for the State of Grenada

**BE IT RESOLVED** therefore that a new political organization be created to address the above mentioned needs and aspirations;

**AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that this political organization, to be named and known as the New National Party, be dedicated to the continued political, economic, social and cultural development of the State of Grenada.

The Aims and Objectives of the party are as follows:

1. To organize and maintain, in the State of Grenada, a truly democratic Party. (“State of Grenada” means Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique)
2. To develop the Nation politically, socially, economically, morally, educationally, culturally and in particular to :
  - (a) Protect and uphold the Rights of the individual as enshrined in the Constitution of the State of Grenada;
  - (b) Build and foster parliamentary Democracy in the State of Grenada based on the principles of:
    - (i) Equality of Opportunity
    - (ii) Respect for the Rule of Law
    - (iii) Full, free and fair elections, based on the principle of “one person, one vote” in accordance with universal adult suffrage
    - (iv) People’s participation at all levels of Representation including Government

The Principles of the Party are as follows:

1. The Party stands for Parliamentary democracy in its totality.
2. The Party will seek to ensure that all Members are in good financial standing at all times and that members of Parliament meet their financial obligations to the Party.
3. The Party believes that certain Basic Economic and Social Needs must be met.  
These include:
  - (c) A job for every able-bodied man and woman willing to work.
  - (d) Decent housing for every family.
  - (e) Universal Primary and Secondary Education (including technical subjects, creative arts and sports) of quality for every child; Tertiary Education for as many children as possible and Special Education for the Physically and Mentally challenged.
  - (f) Adequate medical care for the whole population regardless of level of income.
  - (g) Adequate Social Security especially for Senior Citizens and for the Physically and Mentally challenged.
4. The Party will strive, unceasingly, to improve the economic and social conditions of workers.
5. The Party is opposed to all forms of victimization, discrimination and favouritism in the work place. Likewise, the Party will not support indiscipline by individuals and/or groups.

The Motto of the Party is:

**“Working in Unity for our Nation’s Prosperity”**

The Symbol of the Party is **“The House”** depicted as indicated:-



The Official Colour of the Party is Green, depicting the lush green vegetation of the State of Grenada and its potential for optimum development.

The Official Party Song is as follows: **“You Can Count On Me”**

“Oh you can count on me

Working for my Party,  
Faithful I will be  
I will fight with all my might  
Working for the NNP”

Following the party’s first National Convention, Mr. Lawrence Joseph was voted as the first Chairman, Mr. Herbert Blaize as the first Political Leader and Dr. Keith Mitchell as the first General Secretary.

In January 1989, at the party’s second Convention, Dr. Keith Mitchell was elected as Political Leader however Mr. Blaize remained as Prime Minister. In 1990, the party lost the general elections to the National Democratic Party (NDC) under the leadership of Mr. Nicholas Brathwaite.

In 1995 the NNP again became victorious at the general elections and Dr. Keith Mitchell became the Prime Minister. The party won two subsequent elections in 1999 and 2003 under the leadership of Dr. Mitchell. In 2008, the party lost the elections to the NDC under the leadership of Mr. Tillman Thomas. However the NNP won again in February 2013 winning all 15 seats as was the case in 1999, under the leadership of Dr. Keith Mitchell.

Dated this 1<sup>st</sup> day of December 2015.