

SAINT LUCIA'S ELECTORAL PROCESS

1951-1982



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SAINT LUCIA

Prior to 1951 constitutional changes, St. Lucia had proportionately one of the smallest electorates of the islands included in this survey. In 1950 eligible voters numbered just 2,553 out of a population estimated at 79,500. Although property and income requirements kept this number small, St. Lucia's electorate was also substantially reduced by the literacy requirements, which worked against the patois-speaking majority. The result of a vote by such a restricted electorate is fairly predictable. In the pre-1951 period, most elected representatives came from the brown-to-white middle class of professional, merchant and planter interests. In 1947 the elected members of the legislative Council- Garnet Gordon, F.J. Carasco, J.L. Charles, L.G.A. Mc Vane, and Allen Lewis were representative of this element.

Somewhat remarkable in St. Lucian case is the representation originating from this class continued to prevail to some extent in the first two elections held under universal adult suffrage. In 1951 there was a party struggle in which fledgling labor interests were represented by the St. Lucia Labour Party, led by George Charles and Carl La Corbiniere, neither of who had their roots in the working class. In opposition was the People's Progressive Party formed in 1950, which was predominantly middle class, oriented.

Despite the presence of party affiliations in the 1951 elections, membership in the rival groups was none too clear. For example, when PPP celebrated their first anniversary in June 1951, among those listed as present were La Corbiniere and J.M.D. Bousquet, both Labour party candidates four months later, and L.G.A. Mc Vane, who ran as an independent. Likewise, although the SLP was affiliated with the St. Lucia Workers (Cooperative) Union, the union's president, Charles Augustin, was bypassed by the SLP and ran as an "Independent Labour" Candidate.

Given this absence of well-organized party structure and changeable individual commitments, it is not surprising that the election results were ambiguous. To be sure, some results were significant. Gordon and Carasco, two of the best known and representative of the old guard, were defeated and retired from electoral politics. The SLP won four of the eight seats and gained another in the person of G.A. Mason, who apparently ran initially as an independent. But the results were nothing like the labor triumphs in most of the other islands, and Labour candidates received less than 50 percent of the total vote, even when Mason's tally is figured in (Table 6.1).

Perhaps the, most interesting event of the election was the success of Walton St George Brown, an "independent labour" candidate for Anse La Raye/Canaries. Brown a Bermudian resident in St Lucia for almost fifteen years had begun to organize a labour union in the Roseau Valley sugar Estate shortly before the election.

Although little action apparently took place before the poll, Brown was overwhelmingly elected against three opponents. When, in March 1952, he led his Roseau Peasants and Workers union out on Strike, It became clear that the RPWU had almost completely supplanted the older SLWCU in terms of allegiances of workers in the sugar industry. During the next week, sugar workers struck in the three main sugar valleys on the island, following Brown's lead. An inquiry headed by Sir Clement Malone took place, during which the role of the SLWCU, the negotiating representative of the sugar workers, was pointedly discussed. The evidence indicated that Brown had moved into vaccum created by the failure of the SLWCU to effectively organize and represents agricultural labour, especially sugar workers.

ST. LUCIA GENERAL ELECTION 12th OCTOBER 1951

TABLE 6.1

POLLING DISTRICT	CANDIDATES	PARTY	VOTES	PERCENT
Central Castries	La Corbiniere, C.G.D.	SLP	660	56.5
Central Castries	Carasco, F.J.	IND.	509	43.5
North Castries	Collymore, H.B.	SLP	1985	70.3
North Castries	Gordon, G.H.	PPP	775	27.4
North Castries	Belizaire, H.	IND	65	2.3
South Castries	Charles, G.F.L.	SLP	1058	60.0
South Castries	Augustin, C.	IND Lab	479	27.2
South Castries	Pilgrim J.H.	PPP	225	12.8
Anse La Raye	Brown, W. StG.	IND Lab	1006	64.7
Anse La Raye	Belmar, H.E.	IND	279	17.9
Anse La Raye	Summer, F.C.	IND	171	11.0
Anse La Raye	King, C.H.R.	PPP	100	6.4
Soufriere	Mc Vane, L.G.A.	IND	1036	45.0
Soufriere	Bousquet, J.M.D.	SLP	751	32.6
Soufriere	Joseph, M.C.	PPP	515	22.4
Choiseul	Mason, G.A.	IND	987	57.1
Choiseul	Jn Baptiste, M.	IND	377	21.8
Choiseul	John, I.G	IND	365	21.1
Laborie/Vieux Fort	Theodore, A.L.	PPP	1213	56.7
Laborie/Vieux Fort	Compton C.A.M.	SLP	929	43.3
Micoud/Dennery	Charles, J.L.	SLP	1418	63.4
Micoud/Dennery	Charles F.G.	PPP	817	36.6

Summary:	Candidates	Elected	Votes	Percent
SLP	6	4	6799	43.3
PPP	6	1	3645	23.2
Independents	10	3	5274	33.6
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	22	8	15718	100.0

TABLE 6.2

ST. LUCIA BY-ELECTION 29TH MAY 1953

Anse La Raye (nomination day).

POLLING DISTRICT	CANDIDATES	PARTY	RESULT
Anse La Raye	Belmar H.E.	PPP	Nominated and returned unopposed

¹ Brown's political success, then, is also seen as an indication of his responsiveness to worker interests.

Brown was not to be a factor in St. Lucian politics for long. In May 1952 it was found that he had been an "undischarged bankrupt" in Bermuda in 1938, had not indicated this in his nomination declaration and was thus in violation of provisions for holding office in the colonies and ineligible to serve in the Legislative Council in St. Lucia. His seat was declared vacant, the RPWU became defunct, and he was obliged to leave the island. In the by-election for his seat, H.E. Belmar, an independent candidate in 1951, was returned unopposed for the PPP (Table 6.2)

By 1954 the SLP still had not mustered the kind of widespread support, especially in rural areas, which one would expect from a party closely allied to a blanket labour union. Moreover, the situation of the sugar industry in St. Lucia remained very unsettled. In March 1953, the company operating the Roseau and Cul-De-Sac Valleys estates and factories went into voluntary liquidation. In October these assets were taken over by a local company Sugar Manufacturers Ltd., with help from the government, which purchased one-sixth (250,00) of ordinary shares and made loans of \$9000,000 to the company. Thus, the 1954 crop was the first where negotiations took place between the SLWCU and Sugar Manufacturers.

Table 6.3

ST LUCIA GENERAL ELECTION 23rd September 1954

POLLING DISTRICT	CANDIDATES	PARTY	VOTES	PERCENT
Central Castries	La Corbiniere, C.G.D.	SLP	735	80.0
Central Castries	Howell, T.D.	PPP	175	19.2
North Castries	Collymore, H.B.	SLP	1655	68.3
North Castries	Matthew, M.G.	PPP	769	31.7
South Castries	Charles, G.F.L.	SLP	683	44.0
South Castries	King, C.H.R.	PPP	654	42.1
South Castries	Palmer, G.D.	IND	215	13.9
Anse La Raye	Belmar, H.E.	PPP	939	62.9
Anse La Raye	Jn Baptiste, M.	SLP	555	37.1
Soufriere	Bousquet, J.M.D	SLP	1226	45.4
Soufriere	McVane, L.G.A.	PPP	1165	43.1
Soufriere	Joseph, M.C.	IND	309	11.4
Choiseul	John, I.G.	PPP	884	44.6
Choiseul	Mason, G.A.	SLP	771	38.9
Choiseul	Francois, H.J.	IND	328	16.5
Laborie/Vieux Fort	Compton C.A.M.	SLP	1435	74.5
Laborie/Vieux Fort	Theodore, A.L.	PPP	492	25.5
Micoud/Dennery	Compton, J.G.M.	IND	1404	51.2
Micoud/Dennery	Williams, L.	PPP	546	19.9
Micoud/Dennery	Charles, J.L.	SLP	402	14.7
Micoud/Dennery	Charles, F.G.	IND	389	14.2

Summary:	Candidates	Elected	Votes	Percent
SLP	8	5	7462	47.4
PPP	8	2	5624	35.8
Independents	5	1	2645	16.8
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	21	8	15731	100.0

The 1954 elections, although the SLP returned five of the eight seats, resulted in the defeat of four of the eight incumbents, representing both parties, again indicating rather independent voting patterns (table 6.3). Of lasting significance was the election of John Compton in the Micoud/Dennery Constituency. Although a member of the SLP, he ran as an independent and outpolled three candidates, including J.L. Charles, the SLP incumbent. Compton later voted with the SLP majority and also was SLWCU representative for the eastern side of the island. He has remained a primary figure in St. Lucian politics up to the present. With the institution of a ministerial system in 1956, George Charles became Minister for Social Services, LaCorbiniere for Trade and Industry, and Herman Collymore for Communication and Works.

The events leading up to the 1957 voting had serious implications for the elections and for the SLP future. In 1956 the SLWCU again tried to lay groundwork for the establishment of a collective bargaining relationship with the management of the sugar industry. The Sugar Association, representative of the growers in the island, rejected the union's claim to representation on the grounds of an insufficient proportion of subscribed workers in the industry. The union did agree to participate on the Wages Council, although their participation was objected to by the Association. The agreement reached by members of the wages Council, with SLWCU representation mostly handled by Compton, fell far short of the original union demands. When, at a subsequent meeting, Martin Jn. Baptiste repudiated the agreement on behalf of the SLWCU, discussions broke off and agreement stood, at least in the view of the Governor and industry representatives. The SLWCU took a different view and in late March, with harvesting work under way, the union called a strike in all three sugar valleys and factories. In the discussion which followed, the union won qualified concessions for workers in the industry.

Table 6.4

ST. LUCIA GENERAL ELECTION 18TH SEPTEMBER 1957

POLLING DISTRICT	CANDIDATES	PARTY	VOTES	PERCENT
Central Castries	La Corbiniere, C.G.D.	SLP	849	53.1
Central Castries	Mallet, G.W.	PPP	695	43.5
Central Castries	Cooper, V. A.	IND	55	3.4
North Castries	Collymore, H.B.	SLP	2212	80.3
North Castries	Emmanuel, M.F.	PPP	451	16.4
North Castries	Doxilly, P.L.	IND	91	3.3
South Castries	Charles, G.F.L.	SLP	2103	72.0
South Castries	King, C.H.R.	PPP	818	28.0
Anse-La-Raye	Jn. Baptiste, M	SLP	1119	56.4
Anse-La-Raye	Daniel, W. StC.	PPP	657	33.1
Anse-La-Raye	Joseph, M.C.	IND	207	10.4
Soufriere	McVane, L.G.A.	PPP	1535	51.1
Soufriere	Bousquet, J.M.D	SLP	1468	48.9
Choiseul	Mason, G.A.	SLP	1310	53.8
Choiseul	John, I.G.	PPP	669	27.5
Choiseul	Matthew, M.G.	IND	457	18.8
Laborie/Vieux-Fort	Compton, C.A.M	SLP	1663	53.2
Laborie/Vieux-Fort	Theodore, A.L.	PPP	1172	37.5
Laborie/Vieux-Fort	Palmer, G.D.	IND	293	9.4
Micoud/Dennery	Compton, J.M.G	SLP	3621	96.4
Micoud/Dennery	Simmons, H.F.C.	PPP	137	3.6

Summary:	Candidates	Elected	Votes	Percent
SLP	8	7	14345	66.5
PPP	8	1	6134	28.4
Independents	5	0	1103	5.1
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	21	8	21582	100.0

Table 6.5

ST. LUCIA FEDERAL ELECTION 25th MARCH 1958.

POLLING DISTRICT	(SLP) Bousquet, J.M.D	(IND) James, D.B.	(SLP) LaCorbiniere	(PPP) Mallet, G.
Central Castries	363	362	637	610
North Castries	770	562	1096	561
South Castries	820	323	896	383
Anse-la-Raye	584	265	687	285
Soufriere	1434	120	1100	1199
Choiseul	1254	128	1275	291
Laborie/Vieux-Fort	904	311	959	839
Micoud/Dennery	2138	346	2238	92
TOTAL	8267 (34.7)	2418 (10.1)	8888 (37.3)	4260 (17.9)

More important, however, was the solidarity demonstrated by union/party leaders in picketing with striking workers, in a few cases to the point where they were arrested along with the strikers.²

The actions of the union leaders in early 1957 galvanized the rural population, and in the elections held in September the SLP was a landslide winner. Only in Soufriere, where no candidate has yet been re-elected, did the SLP lose a contest (Table 6.4). The Election did demonstrate a growing polarization of the St. Lucian electorate. As the SLP swept the countryside and villages, it lost ground in the towns of Soufriere, Vieux-Fort, and the capital, Castries. Again, the most remarkable victory was scored by Compton on the island's east coast, where he won well over 90 percent of the vote.

Table 6.6

ST. LUCIA BY-ELECTION CENTRAL CASTRIES 20th MAY 1958

POLLING DISTRICT	CANDIDATES	PARTY	VOTES	PERCENT
Central Castries	Mallet, G.W.	PPP	781	55.9
Central Castries	Mason N.M.	SLP	616	44.1

The Militancy displayed during the strike and the class divisions became paramount were carried over into the first actions of the new Legislative Council when SLP members objected to the planter interest dominating the Governor's nominated choices to the council.

The federal elections in 1958 represented a virtual repeat of the 1957 voting. The SLP candidates, affiliated with the WIFLP, received between them 72 percent of the vote against two opponents. Again, however, the PPP candidates, George Mallet, ran strongly in the towns. The erosion of SLP support in Castries was apparent in the by-election for LaCorbiniere's vacated seat. Mallet became the PPP's second member of the Council, defeating Maurice Mason in a campaign which emphasized putative ideological differences between the candidates and parties (Table 6.5, 6.6).

The weakness in urban areas was demonstrated again in the 1961 elections held after constitutional changes which enlarged the Legislative Council to ten members. Although the SLP won nearly two-thirds of the vote and nine of the ten seats, they lost Central Castries, where Mallet was re-elected, and narrowly won in Soufriere and Vieux-Fort. On the other side of the coin, this outcome demonstrated the inability of the PPP, engaged in a two-party struggle for nine of the seats, to extent their strength beyond token support in villages and rural areas (Table 6.7).

TABLE 6.7

ST LUCIA GENERAL ELECTION 14th APRIL, 1961

POLLING DISTRICT	CANDIDATES	PARTY	VOTES	PERCENT
Central Castries	Mallet, G.W.	PPP	1027	56.1
Central Castries	Cragwell, A.	SLP	805	43.9
East Castries	Collymore, H.B.	SLP	979	59.7
East Castries	Francois , H.J.	SLP	661	40.3
South Castries	Charles, G.F.L.	SLP	1128	66.2
South Castries	Dixon, E.	PPP	577	33.8
Anse-La-Raye/Canaries	Jn Baptiste, M.	SLP	1235	64.9
Anse-La-Raye/Canaries	King, C.H.R.	PPP	668	35.1
Soufriere	Monrose, V.G.	SLP	1394	50.4
Soufriere	DuBoulay, M.R.	PPP	1372	49.6
Choiseul	Mason, G.A.	SLP	759	36.8
Choiseul	Floissac, A.	IND	484	23.5
Choiseul	Raveneau, R.B.	IND	299	14.5
Choiseul	Matthew, M.G.	IND	242	11.7
Choiseul	Compton, J.A.	IND	180	8.7
Choiseul	Lewis C.	PPP	97	4.7
Vieux-Fort/Laborie	Compton, C.A.M.	SLP	1191	50.8
Vieux-Fort/Laborie	Giraudy, E.H.	PPP	1152	49.2
Micoud/Praslin	Compton, J.G.M.	SLP	1488	93.9
Micoud/Praslin	Theodore, A.L.	PPP	96	6.1
Dennery	Mason M.M.	SLP	1714	97.8
Dennery	Vos, L.	PPP	39	2.2
Northwest Castries/Gros Islet	Bousquet J.R.A.	SLP	1136	71.3
Northwest Castries/Gros Islet	Felicien, I.Y.	PPP	458	28.7

Summary:	Candidates	Elected	Votes	Percent
SLP	10	9	11829	61.7
PPP	10	1	6147	32.0
Independents	4	0	1205	6.3
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	24	10	19181	100.0

Another tendency, far more important for future political developments surfaced in the 1961 election. John Compton's political strength and reputation on the east coast was effectively transferred to his close friend Maurice Mason, who was elected from the northern (Dennery) part of the area, split after 1960. Both polled over 90 percent of the vote and appeared to be the brightest stars of the party. Their great popularity would prove to define the lines which the SLP disintegrated over the next three years.

In 1960 there had been rumors of an impending split in the SLP, rumors which are augmented by stories on an imminent formation of a new party. One occurrence which fueled these rumors was the response of party leaders when, after constitutional changes expanded the number of ministries in 1960, Compton was not awarded one of these posts. Nonetheless, the rumored split did not materialize before the elections, but events occurring shortly thereafter did lead to a serious division in the SLP. Following elections, the delegation of ministerial posts omitted both Compton and Mason, both London-trained Lawyers, and V.G. Monroe, a physician – the “intellectuals” of the party, as they were tabled in the local press. Compton and Mason took up the struggle in the SLP Executive and the split was exacerbated. When the PPP contested the validity of the elections on a technicality, Compton and Mason worked with PPP complainants to validate petitions they had filed. The Colonial Office declared the elections valid and countering demonstration was led by Compton, Mason, and PPP leaders. With the possibility of new elections quashed by the Colonial Office decision, the two dissenters, along with Monroe, broke finally with the SLP IN December 1961 to form the National Labour movement. Thus, what had been a 9-1 SLP majority was now reduced to a line-up with six SLP members, three NLM, and one PPP.

TABLE 6.8**ST. LUCIA BY-ELECTION CHOISEUL. 31ST JULY, 1963**

POLLING DISTRICT	CANDIDATES	PARTY	VOTES	PERCENT
Choiseul	Bousquet, J.M.D.	SLP	1287	61.1
Choiseul	Matthew, M.G.	NLP	752	35.7
Choiseul	Theodore, A. L.	PPP	68	3.2

In the two years which followed, Compton effectively became leader of the opposition. On issues like the Eastern Caribbean Federal Plans, possible demise of sugar in the island, and management of the growing banana industry, he and his supporters took anti-government positions and intensified pressure of the SLP leadership. When, in June 1963, the SLP member for Choiseul, G.A. Mason, died after an accident, the doors was open for further weakening of SLP domination. The By Election was held in late July and resulted in the election of the SLP's J.M.D. Bousquet, a former member of the Federal parliament (Table 6.8). Thus, on the surface it appeared that the SLP had survived another potential crisis and would be able to complete their term of office. However, two of their six-man delegations were the Bousquet brothers, the defection of whom could erase the majority and bring down the government.

The next crisis was not long in coming. Sugar cane cultivation had ceased and been replaced in the big valleys by bananas, which were now the island's most important export crop. In addition to the importance as an estate crop, bananas became very important as a cash crop on small agricultural holdings, creating new levels of prosperity in a number of rural areas on the island. The SLP government favored recommendations of a report which would have the affairs of the industry governed by a statutory body, thus admitting considerable government control. The issue over regulation of the industry became the political hinge leading to the SLP's demise.³

In March 1964 the PPP and the NLM merged to form the United Workers Party and the following day the Bousquet brothers, both representing areas where peasant cultivation of bananas was important, resigned from the government. With the loss of their majority the SLP government fell and new elections were called.

The 1964 elections were portrayed, to some degree, as a struggle between philosophies about the direction of St. Lucia's economy. The SLP, with their strength still in a diminished labor union movement, had not yet grasped the new dynamic in the island's political and economic life, while their opponents galvanized support around the banana issue. In the election the Bousquets, perhaps still hedging their bets, ran as independents, although unopposed by the UWP.

In addition to the SLP and UWP, a minor grouping, referred to as the "Schouton group" after its leading figure, put up candidates for a few seats, picking up votes in some rural districts. In no race, however, did they alter the outcome.

The results gave six seats to the UWP, two to the SLP, and two to the Bousquets, who promptly joined the victorious UWP government (Table 6.9). Compton became Chief Minister and J.M.D. Bousquet was given a ministerial post. On the SLP stalwarts only George Charles and Martin Jn. Baptiste survived as the opposition. On the other side, Monroe was defeated when he abandoned his seat to Michael DuBoulay, his 1961 opponent. He ran unsuccessfully in the SLP stronghold of Anse-La-Raye/Canaries but returned to the Council in a by-election for the safe Dennery seat in 1966 (Table 6.10). The seat was vacated when Maurice Mason died of typhoid fever earlier that year, a serious blow to the UWP.

TABLE 6.9

ST LUCIA GENERAL ELECTION 25TH JUNE 1964

POLLING DISTRICT	CANDIDATES	PARTY	VOTES	PERCENT
Castries Central	Mallet, G.W.	UWP	1181	63.1
Castries Central	King J.B.	SLP	691	36.9
East Castries	Francois, H.J.	UWP	821	52.7
East Castries	Collymore, H.B.	SLP	661	42.5
East Castries	Branch, O.	IND	75	4.8
South Castries	Charles, G.F.L.	SLP	935	48.2
South Castries	Rock, Y.H.	UWP	812	41.9
South Castries	Schouten, S.A.	IND	192	9.9
Anse-La-Raye/Canaries	Jn Baptiste, M.	SLP	1007	55.9
Anse-La-Raye/Canaries	Monrose, V.G.	UWP	705	39.1
Anse-La-Raye/Canaries	Williams, F.B.	IND	91	5.0
Soufriere	DuBoulay, M.R.	UWP	1577	71.4
Soufriere	Raveneau, R.B.	SLP	585	26.5
Soufriere	Joseph, M.C.	IND	47	2.1
Choiseul	Bousquet, J.M.D.	IND	1597	84.5
Choiseul	Phillip, T.L.	SLP	294	15.5
Vieux Fort/Laborie	Giraudy, E.H.	UWP	1114	50.2
Vieux Fort/Laborie	Raynold, J.	IND	606	27.3
Vieux Fort/Laborie	Compton, C.A.M.	SLP	500	22.5

Micoud/Praslin	Compton, J. G. M.	UWP	1532	92.5
Micoud/Praslin	Murry, G.B.	SLP	80	4.8
Micoud/Praslin	Lubin, J.M.	IND	45	2.7
Dennery	Mason, M. M.	UWP	1873	93.1
Dennery	Ambrose, F.	SLP	83	4.1
Dennery	Hodge, L.B.	IND	55	2.7
Northwest Castries/Gros Islet	Bousquet, J.R.A.	IND	781	50.1
Northwest Castries/Gros Islet	Volney, W.	SLP	778	49.9

Summary:	Candidates	Elected	Votes	Percent
UWP	8	6	9614	51.4
SLP	10	2	5614	30.0
Independents	9	2	3489	18.6
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	27	10	18718	100.0

TABLE 6.10

ST. LUCIA BY-ELECTION DENNERY. 9TH DECEMBER 1996

POLLING DISTRICT	CANDIDATES	PARTY	VOTES	PERCENT
Dennery	Monrose, V.G.	UWP	1490	86.0
Dennery	Raynold, J.	SLP	184	10.6
Dennery	Harris, T.	IND	58	3.4

The UWP then, presided over the St Lucian political scene for the next fifteen years, overseeing the economic growth of the banana industry and of tourism, and taking the island through constitutional stages into statehood and independence. In the years following the 1964 elections the SLP fell on hard times. With the departure of sugar the fortunes of the SLWU waned, and in September 1968 Gorge Charles resigned as president of the union. The party was riven by internal power struggles and when Kenneth Foster was selected party leader in 1969, Charles decided to run a separate SLP candidacy in the 1969 elections.

The period of time between the 1964 and 1969 elections saw some significant changes in St. Lucia's economic direction. Although the banana industry grew rapidly and became the most important earner of foreign exchange, other directions were being pursued which would lead to rapid growth in tourism and light manufacturing in the next ten years. The growth of bananas was important development for a number of areas which, because of their unsuitability for sugar cane cultivation, had been economically stagnant until the arrival of bananas. This kind of development also saw the beginnings of what would be rapid increase in the rate of inflation, particularly as land was valorized. On the political front the island passed into associated statehood in relative quiet, the process lacking the considerable politicization seen in other islands.

The 1969 elections were called a few months in advance of the date most anticipated, most likely as a device to catch the SLP unprepared. As it happened, one could argue that it was the UWP or at least some of their candidates, who were unprepared. Running against a party which had been badly beaten in 1964 and defeated in recent Castries Town Council Elections, the UWP managed to lose two seats, including that of their party chairman, E.H. Giraudy. In fact, a very narrow victory by H.J. Francois over the SLP Leader, Kenneth Foster, in East Castries prevented a parliamentary impasse. Another feature of this election is that it marked, for a time, the decline of independent and third party candidates (Table 6.11)

The years between the 1969 and 1974 elections were politically turbulent and full of change. The economy continued to depend more on tourism and construction, mostly associated with the growth of tourist facilities. Light industries, mostly of the assembly type, located near Castries and Vieux Fort, and the service sector grew rapidly. The banana industry was subject to considerable fluctuation, partly caused by weather conditions, and the Banana Growers Association was established as a statutory body, exactly as the recommendation of the 1964 report specified.

On the political front there were numerous significant changes. The limited SLP success of 1969 did not serve to reinvigorate the party and it continued to provide an ineffectual, if often

incendiary, opposition. Some activity along these lines culminated in a series of anti-government demonstrations in late 1969, eventually resulting in a decision of the UWP government in November to ban political demonstrations for three months. At about the same time another movement was taking shape, at first largely directed at public political education. The Educational Forum was launched in Castries in October 1969, and conducted a series of meetings at which themes of nationalism, black pride, and the dangers of foreign control of the island's land and economy were expounded.

TABLE 6.11

ST LUCIA GENERAL ELECTION 25TH APRIL 1969

POLLING DISTRICT	CANDIDATES	PARTY	VOTES	PERCENT
Central Castries	Mallet, G.W.	UWP	1552	62.2
Central Castries	Cenac, N.E.	SLP	944	37.8
East Castries	Francois, H.J.	UWP	1274	50.9
East Castries	Foster, K.A.H.	SLP	1231	49.1
South Castries	Charles, G.F.L.	SLP - UF	1270	57.4
South Castries	Rock, E.W.	UWP	942	42.6
Anse-La-Raye/Canaries	Jn Baptiste, M.	SLP	1168	57.5
Anse-La-Raye/Canaries	D'Auvergne, I.A.	UWP	862	42.5
Soufriere	Saltibus , A.	SLP	1352	51.9
Soufriere	DuBoulay, M.R.	UWP	1253	48.1
Choiseul	Bousquet, J.M.D.	UWP	1461	67.6
Choiseul	Glasgow, V.E.	SLP	701	32.4
Vieux Fort/Laborie	Williams, W.B.	SLP	1471	56.9
Vieux Fort/Laborie	Giraudy, E.H.	UWP	1043	40.3
Vieux Fort/Laborie	Raynold, J.	SLP - UF	72	2.8
Micoud/Praslin	Compton, J.G.M.	UWP	2047	91.7
Micoud/Praslin	Murry, G.B.	SLP	185	8.3
Dennery	Monrose, V. G.	UWP	1634	78.8
Dennery	Edward, V.	SLP	439	21.2
Northwest Castries/Gros Islet	Bousquet, J.R.A.	UWP	1538	66.4
Northwest Castries/Gros Islet	Goddard, J. B.	SLP	779	33.6

Summary:	Candidates	Elected	Votes	Percent
UWP	10	6	13606	58.6
SLP	9	3	8270	35.6
	2		1342	5.8
SLP-UF	-----	-----	-----	-----
	21	10	23218	100.0

Apparently because it was not initially regarded as a political movement, the Forum continued to hold meetings throughout the ban period. Led mostly by university-trained urbanite types, the movement initially sought to influence government and find a voice, possibly within the UWP. Indeed, the early response of UWP leaders, including John Compton, was guarded but favorable it soon became clear that the leader of the group was George Odlum, the Chief Civil Servant Secretariat of the West Indian Associated States, headquartered in Castries. With particular support of Peter Josie, employed in the Agriculture Ministry, Odlum and the Forum contingent took their message to most of the towns and villages of the island. Although the forum's earlier activities could hardly be recognized as partisan--- and SLP leader repeatedly suggested that they were pro-UWP---they came to develop positions which brought them into conflict with the UWP government., particularly with some members of that government. For example, the issue of corrupt practices is, in the abstract, not a partisan issue, but when specific acts are attributed to specific individuals of ministries, these allegations are invariably seen as politically motivated. Thus, some UWP leaders occasionally interpreted Forum statements as politically inspired and pressure was applied to civil servants, prohibited from partisan action, who participated in Forum activities.

In time, the direction of Forum changed even as its participating membership changed. Some early members dripped out, and those who remained took a stronger line critical of the UWP government. In 1972 the leadership dissolved the Forum as a pressure group and, with a number of former SLP and UWP political figures, launched the St Lucia Action Movement as a political party. Apart from the Forum contingent, the new movement included Julian Hunte, formerly of the UWP and Mayor of Castries, and Neville Genac, an SLP candidate in 1969. The original idea also had been to include George Charles as an elder statesman and figurehead leader, but the former SLP Chief Minister drew away at the last moment, content to retire from active political life after his current term in the House of Assembly.⁴

As much as SLAM initially caught the imagination of St. Lucians, particularly in Castries, it never did develop broad-based support throughout the island. After six months of existence, SLAM had

added no new members of consequence and the alliance of interests which had led to its founding was disintegrating. By mid-1973 the non-Forum members had drifted away and SLAM appeared to be politically stalled. Later in that year, discussion took place between factions of the SLP, SLP defectors, SLAM leaders, and others, including retiring Associated States judge Allen Louisy. The outcome was a rejuvenated SLP which, although made up of disparate elements and with serious problems of leadership competition, presented to the voters of St Lucia a formidable opposition to the UWP in the 1974 elections. Julian Hunte did not join the new SLP, nor did he return to the UWP, but Hunter Francois, former UWP Minister of Education and Social Services, left his party and joined the SLP.

The months leading up to the 1974 elections were a time of intense political activity. Economic change and discontent, labor disputes, party political maneuvering, and infighting all continued up to the day of the voting. In addition to this highly charged atmosphere, two other aspects of election procedure itself were significant. First, the number of constituencies had been increased from ten to seventeen, and there was some indication of gerrymandering in the redrawn districts, to the benefit of the UWP. The east coastal area, for example, the stronghold of John Compton, was split so that where there had been two 1969 districts there were four in 1974. Second, the enumeration procedure which produced the lists of eligible voters yielded less than 40,000 names, a figure remarkably low by any calculation.

ST LUCIA GENERAL ELECTION 6TH MAY 1974

TABLE 6.12

POLLING DISTRICT	CANDIDATES	PARTY	VOTES	PERCENT
Gros Islet	Mason, C.G.	SLP	1154	54.6
Gros Islet	Felicien, I. Y.	UWP	947	44.8
Gros Islet	Goddard, J. B.	IND	14	0.7
Castries Northwest/Babonneau	Bousquet, J. R. A.	UWP	1418	66.5
Castries Northwest/Babonneau	Walcott, T. R.	SLP	715	33.5
Castries Northeast	Bristol, H. D. D.	UWP	1700	54.3
Castries Northeast	Cenac, N. E.	SLP	11418	45.3
Castries Northeast	Harris, H. S.	IIND	14	0.4
Castries East	Josie, P.	SLP	1170	51.3
Castries East	Desir, J.H.	UWP	1111	48.7
Castries Central	Mallet, G. W.	UWP	755	56.1
Castries Central	Francois, H. J.	SLP	342	25.4
Castries Central	Hunte, J. R.	IND	250	18.6
Castries South	Odlum, S. N. J.	SLP	835	70.9
Castries South	Bledman, P.A.	UWP	343	29.1
Anse-La-Raye/Canaries	Foster, K. A. H.	SLP	1296	52.7
Anse-La-Raye/Canaries	D'Auvergne, I.A.	UWP	1163	42.5
Soufriere	Alcindor, C. C.	UWP	1009	52.6
Soufriere	Saltibus , A.	SLP	911	47.3
Choiseul/ Fond St Jacques	Calderon E.	SLP	1528	55.7
Choiseul/Fond St Jacques	Bousquet, J.M.D.	UWP	1214	44.3
Laborie/Saltibus	Louisy, A. F.	SLP	1837	70.0
Laborie/Saltibus	Landers, C. A.	UWP	789	30.0
Vieux Fort/South	Giraudy, E. H.	UWP	801	51.1
Vieux Fort/South	Williams, W. B.	SLP	765	48.9
Vieux Fort/North	Williams, B.	SLP	993	82.1
Vieux Fort/North	Celestin, H.	UWP	217	17.9
Micoud/South	Compton, J. G. M.	UWP	1009	81.6
Micoud/South	Flood, F.	IND	227	18.4
Micoud North	Jn. Baptiste, R. A.	UWP	1678	90.6

Micoud North	Flood, R.	IND	99	5.3
Micoud North	Murray, G. B.	SLP	75	4.1
Dennery South	Mason, C. H.	UWP	787	75.2
Dennery South	Regis, L. T.	SLP	214	20.4
Dennery South	Lesmond, R. J.	IND	46	4.4
Dennery North	Monrose, V. G.	UWP	1296	82.2
Dennery North	Raynold, J.	SLP	280	17.8
Castries Southeast	Rock, Y. H.	UWP	1063	51.0
Castries Southeast	Odlum, G.	SLP	1021	49.0

Summary:	Candidates	Elected	Votes	Percent
UWP	17	10	17300	53.2
SLP	16	7	14554	44.8
Independents	6	0	650	2.0
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	39	17	32504	100.0

In an election which produced controversial results and generated Challenges of the validity of the results,⁵ the UWP won ten seats and held the government (Table 6.12). For the SLP, George Odlum was defeated but both Foster and Louisy won, creating a dilemma of parliamentary opposition leadership. Among the SLP delegation, Louisy was chosen Leader of the Opposition. Thus, the SLP Leadership remained confused since Foster was still Chairman of the party and Odlum it's most active and influential figure among the electorate at large.

The failure of the SLP to win in 1974 can be seen in retrospect as the glue which held the party together for the next five years. Having come so close in 1974, the common purpose of SLP members to defeat the UWP in the next election kept internal divisions below the surface. During that time the SLP kept up strong pressure on the UWP government in areas of the economy, labor relations, and governmental corruption. The 1979 campaign began in reality the day after the 1974 elections, and the bifurcation of St Lucian political society along party lines, abetted in the months before the 1974 elections, accelerated over the next five years.

The consequence of the extremely partisan division of the polity was that nearly every issue became politicized. Two of the most significant of these involved the acquisition of lands and construction of a large oil storage facility by the American firm, Amarada Hess, and the decision of the UWP government to seek independence from Great Britain under the terms of the statehood constitution.

In the first case the government trumpeted the Hess facility, with the implication of an eventual refining capacity, as an unprecedented development in St. Lucian economic growth, capable of generating impressive benefits in employment and additional related projects. The SLP opposition dissented, suggesting that Hess was virtually holding the island to ransom, a charge that was given credence when Hess demanded unanimous parliamentary approval of the scheme. Regarding independence, the debate, along strict party lines, revolved around the proper constitutional path and whether or not an election was mandated. The SLP, of course sought new elections on the issue, ostensibly to choose between alternative approaches to independent control of polity and economy.

In the end, both proposals were activated during the term. The storage facility was built, employing a limited number of St. Lucian, and on February 22, 1979, the island celebrated its independence just a few months before the next election was due. The 1979 elections were also preceded by protracted labor disputes involving civil servants and teachers. In the latter case these disputes were seen as politically motivated and some teachers and civil servants, supporters of the UWP government, refused to follow their union leadership in striking against the government.

By the time voting took place, the contest had shaped up as such a clear-cut two-party battle that no independent or third party candidacies were involved. In addition to their incumbents, one of whom did not seek re-election, the SLP had a strong new candidate in Northeast Castries and Soufriere, and a former SLP parliamentarian, Bruce Williams, running in South Vieux-Fort. George Odlum was again a candidate for Southeast Castries, where he had lost in 1974. For the UWP, all incumbents sought re-election except Vincent Monroe, who left politics after years of remoraed splits with John Compton and the UWP. New candidates, with one exception, did not appear to be strong contenders for the seats held by the SLP.

The most important feature of the 1979 election, however, was not the slates of candidates but the new election lists. As a condition of the independence agreement, the lists were carefully prepared with assistance from Barbadian Officials, and the final total of legible voters was 67,917, on a 70 percent increase over the 1974 total, while it has been suggested that there was some over enumeration represented in this figure, it does not appear to be significant. What was significant was that many voters, left off the previous lists and thus deprived of their vote in 1974, were able to cast ballots in 1979. Although the percentage turnout was down from 1974, there were nearly 40 percent more ballots cast in 1979. Thus, despite the magnitude of the SLP victory, UWP candidates actually polled more than 2,000 votes in excess of their 1974 total (Table 6.13)

ST LUCIA GENERAL ELECTION 2ND JULY 1979

TABLE 6.13

POLLING DISTRICT	CANDIDATES	PARTY	VOTES	PERCENT
Gros Islet	Mason, C.G.	SLP	1553	62.1
Gros Islet	Moses, J. M.	UWP	947	37.9
Castries Northwest/Babonneau	Bousquet, J. R. A.	UWP	1706	59.8
Castries Northwest/Babonneau	Gaspard, A.	SLP	1147	40.2
Castries Northeast	Pilgrim, B. M.	SLP	3207	62.0
Castries East	Josie, P.	SLP	2730	58.1
Castries East	Lansiquot, R.	UWP	1967	41.9
Castries Central	Mallet, G. W.	UWP	828	52.8
Castries Central	Gibson, A. G.	SLP	739	47.2
Castries South	Odlum, S. N. J.	SLP	1380	73.7
Castries South	Joseph, J. W.	UWP	429	26.3
Anse-La-Raye/Canaries	Foster, K. A. H.	SLP	1606	56.7
Anse-La-Raye/Canaries	D'Auvergne, I.A.	UWP	1224	48.3
Soufriere	Cenac, W. F.	SLP	1559	65.3
Soufriere	Alcindor, C. C.	UWP	830	34.7
Choiseul/ Fond St Jacques	Calderon E.	SLP	1683	59.0
Choiseul/Fond St Jacques	Charles, S. B.	UWP	1170	41.0
Laborie/Saltibus	Louisy, A. F.	SLP	2254	70.4
Laborie/Saltibus	Juneau, J. G.	UWP	949	29.6
Vieux Fort/South	Williams, W. B.	SLP	1470	64.6
Vieux Fort/South	Giraudy, E. H.	UWP	805	35.4
Vieux Fort/North	Lay, C. H.	SLP	1227	73.8
Vieux Fort/North	Thomas, M. I.	UWP	435	26.2
Micoud/South	Compton, J .G .M.	UWP	1221	72.2
Micoud/South	Flood, R.	SLP	469	27.8
Micoud North	Jn. Baptiste, R. A.	UWP	1870	85.4
Micoud North	James, T.	SLP	319	14.6
Dennery South	Lesmond, R. J.	SLP	747	52.7
Dennery South	Mason, C. H.	UWP	673	47.3
Dennery North	Henry, F.	UWP	1323	54.1

Dennerly North	Michel, F.	SLP	1121	45.9
Castries Southeast	Odlum, G.	SLP	2081	61.6
Castries Southeast	Rock, Y. H.	UWP	1297	38.4

Summary:	Candidates	Elected	Votes	Percent
SLP	17	12	25294	56.2
UWP	17	5	19706	43.8
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	34	17	45000	100.0

For the SLP all their leaders were elected. Louisy, Josie, and Foster were returned with increases margins, and George Odlum won easily. The most surprising victory was that of Remy Lesmond in South Dennerly, making the first time the Compton/UWP monopoly of east coast seats had been broken. For the UWP, Compton was re-elected but he had only the old stalwarts, Mallet and Allen Bousquet, to join him and the winners of the other two east coast seats.

After the election there began a leadership struggle within the victories SLP which eventually led to the dissolution of the government, the party's split, and the electoral downfall of both factions. The struggle turned on agreement which would install Allen Louisy as Prime Minister with the understanding that he would retire from that position by a specific date, handing over the reins to George Odlum, his Deputy Prime Minister. Foster having been frozen out of many party affairs after 1974, was not in the struggle but was given a ministerial position.

When the agreed-upon time for the transfer of power arrived, Louisy hedge, angering Odlum and his supporters, and the affairs quickly escalated into a full-scale intra-party battle. Much as he had done *viz* the UWP when the SLP was out of power, Odlum took his case to the public and the dispute became a referendum on the leadership of the party and government.

The dispute first surfaced when Louisy decided not to resign and became Governor General at the end of 1979. Throughout 1980 the struggle continued between the two factions of the party as the government teetered on the brink of dissolution. Louisy's command of the majority of the party's executive and Odlum's backing by a majority of the cabinet meant that the issue was apparently permanently stalemated, barring some break in ranks. The only thing both could apparently agree on was that there would not be new elections which a resurgent UWP might likely win. In

this effort there were occasional reconciliation and handshakes to punctuate the general animosity which prevailed between the two factions.

In April 1981, after nearly eighteen months of intra-party struggle, Louisy resigned, a move which was designed to promote Peter Josie as a compromise choice to take over as Prime Minister. Still, party members could not agree on the role to be played by the Odlum brothers in a reconstituted government, and Josie and George Odlum, old comrades in the struggle against the UWP, fell out on this point. Since Josie could not be approved, Winston Cenac was chosen to succeed Louisy and, in a move which ousted the Odlums and Mikey Pilgrim from the cabinet, Josie took over as Cenac's Deputy and assumed control of George Odlum's Ministry.

The Odlums and Pilgrim, along with their supporters in the party, lost no time in withdrawing and formed the Progressive Labour Party in May 1981. The SLP government, now operating with a bare majority of one in the House, was beset by both the UWP and the PLP. When the Cenac-led government collapsed with his resignation in January 1982, the issue of early elections was no longer in doubt. An interim government was formed with all parties and other civic interests represented, and with a mandate to prepare for new elections. At the head of this government was M. B. Pilgrim of the PLP. The House was dissolved in February and elections were set for May. In the meantime, the interim government was busy cleaning up the mess created by nearly three years of chaotic absence of leadership.

The 1982 elections resulted from a series of extraordinary circumstances and represented, themselves, an unusual situation. They were contested by three parties which each put up complete slates of candidates for the seventeen seats. There were no independent candidates. Of the three parties, the SLP and the PLP were, for the most part made up of factions of 1979's victorious SLP. With the UWP completely resurgent, there were incumbent candidate in ten races. The UWP actually ran more returning candidates – those who had contested for the same seat in 1979 – than either of the labour parties.

The results were a resounding UWP victory (Table 6.14). The party won over 56 percent of the vote and elected fourteen members to the House of Assembly. Although they finished a distant second in the popular vote, the PLP elected only John Odlum in South Castries. The SLP won two seats, including the Laborie/Saltibus constituency vacated by Louisy, but ran far behind in the popular vote, as nine of their candidate lost their deposits. Some individual candidacies are worth observing. Both Josie and Kenneth Foster, running for SLP, switch constituencies and were defeated, Foster overwhelmingly. Mikey Pilgrim, despite his generally applauded job as interim Prim Minister, lost to his UWP opponent. And George Odlum once again found himself outside the House, losing a close race to Clarence Rambally of the UWP.

ST LUCIA GENERAL ELECTION 3RD MAY 1982

TABLE 6.14

POLLING DISTRICT	CANDIDATES	PARTY	VOTES	PERCENT
Gros Islet	Philip, P. P.	UWP	1558	52.5
Gros Islet	Jules, P.	PLP	920	31.0
Gros Islet	Walcott, T. R.	SLP	489	16.5
Castries Northwest/Babonneau	Bousquet, J. R. A.	UWP	2213	75.6
Castries Northwest/Babonneau	Leonce, L.	PLP	618	21.1
Castries Northwest/Babonneau	Jude, A.	SLP	96	3.3
Castries Northeast	Bristol, J. L.	UWP	2803	51.3
Castries Northeast	Pilgrim, B. M.	PLP	2396	43.9
Castries Northeast	Butcher, L.	SLP	265	4.8
Castries East	Lansiquot, R.	UWP	2907	58.0
Castries East	Pilgrim, V.	PLP	1784	35.6
Castries East	Fell, P.	SLP	322	6.4
Castries Central	Mallet, W. G.	UWP	1088	66.8
Castries Central	Gibson, A. G.	PLP	461	28.3
Castries Central	Modeste, H.	SLP	80	4.9
Castries South	Odlum, S. N. J.	PLP	1070	50.4
Castries South	Brathwaite, D.	UWP	975	45.9
Castries South	Murray, D.	SLP	78	3.7
Anse-La-Raye/Canaries	D'Auvergne, I.A.	UWP	1656	52.8
Anse-La-Raye/Canaries	Jn. Baptiste, C.	SLP	805	25.6
Anse-La-Raye/Canaries	Michel, F.	PLP	678	21.6
Soufriere	Riviere, L. J.	UWP	1095	39.8
Soufriere	Cenac, W. F.	SLP	864	31.4
Soufriere	Augier, S.	PLP	795	28.9
Choiseul/Fond St Jacques	Charles, S. B.	UWP	1602	51.3
Choiseul/Fond St Jacques	Mason, G. C.	SLP	884	28.3
Choiseul/Fond St Jacques	Staney, G.	PLP	636	20.4
Laborie/Saltibus	Cenac, N. E.	SLP	1503	46.7

Laborie/Saltibus	Hippolyte, B.	UWP	1354	42.0
Laborie/Saltibus	Alexander, H.	PLP	363	11.3
Vieux Fort/South	Stephen, E.	UWP	1075	44.3
Vieux Fort/South	Josie, P.	SLP	884	36.5
Vieux Fort/South	Downes, M.	PLP	466	19.2
Vieux Fort/North	Lay, C. H.	SLP	851	49.2
Vieux Fort/North	Thomas, M. I.	UWP	680	39.3
Vieux Fort/North	Bellas, A.	PLP	198	11.5
Micoud South	Compton, J. G. M.	UWP	1529	86.1
Micoud South	Marquis, H.	SLP	169	9.5
Micoud South	Mathurin, S.	PLP	78	4.4
Micoud North	George, L.	UWP	2217	93.5
Micoud North	Fevrier, V.	PLP	113	4.8
Micoud North	Charles, R.	SLP	40	1.7
Dennery South	Mason, C. H.	UWP	844	51.7
Dennery South	Lesmond, R. J.	SLP	693	42.4
Dennery South	Goddard, G.	PLP	97	5.9
Dennery North	Henry, F.	UWP	1818	67.8
Dennery North	Edwin, R.	PLP	826	30.8
Dennery North	Wilfred, P.	SLP	38	1.4
Castries Southeast	Rambally, C.	UWP	1838	52.0
Castries Southeast	Odlum, G.	PLP	1634	46.2
Castries Southeast	Foster, K. H. A.	SLP	61	1.7

Summary:	Candidates	Elected	Votes	Percent
UWP	17	14	27252	56.2
PLP	17	1	13133	27.1
SLP	17	2	8122	16.7
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	51	17	48507	100.0