CHAPTER IV

PARLIAMENT AND POLITISS: 1976-1982

In 1976 election no party got majority. It was a hung parliament. There was an attempt for alliance between the MMM and the Independence Party. V. Ringadoo and H. Walter favoured such an alliance. Ramgoolam was offered to retain the Chairmanship of OAU and first presidency of Mauritius as a republic. But finally the Labour did not go for MMM, it rather preferred its old partner, the PMSD.

The PMSD, on its term, was also negotiating with the MMM. But the MMM, owing to inexperience, handled the negotiations very badly. Instead of sending senior leaders like Berenger and Jugnauth, it sent young activists of the party to discuss the issue with Duval. Duval interpreted this as non-serious attitude and thus ended all negotiations. Finally, Labour and the PMSD decided for coalition on certain conditions.

1. *L'Express*, 24th December 1977
3. "SSR n'a jamais pensé à une coalition avec le MMM. En décembre dernier le MMM était prêt à constituer gouvernement minoritaire en proposant à Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam la Présidence de la République. Il a refusé et a créé ce gouvernement de coalition" See, M.D. Oodiah *Quelle voie Choisir?* Mouvement Militant Mauricien: 20 ans d'histoire (Port Louis, 1989), p.79.
4. Based on personal interviews with activists of the PMSD, July 1990
5. A group in the Labour headed by S. Boolell wanted alliance with the PMSD.
This coalition had a majority of two seats only. In sharing power and privileges, out of 27 ministrials seats, the PMSD got four: Justice, Local Government, Town and Country Planning and Rodrigue. It was also assured diplomatic assignments in Australia and Europe.

Ramgoolam justified the coalition on the ground that 60 percent of the electorate had voted against radical changes and therefore the Labour-PMSD alliance had the mandate of the people. Duval accepted the verdict but complained that the Russian Embassy was interfering in the internal affairs of Mauritius and that had he been the Prime Minister, he would have stopped all this.

The MMM wanted to form even a minority government. As the largest party in the Assembly, it sought invitation to form the government. But when the Governor-General gave first chance to Ramgoolam, the MMM walked out in protest from the first session of the Assembly and decided to force elections within a year.

FACTIONALISM AND DEFECTION

Ramgoolam was unhappy with the performance of his party. He appointed a committee headed by Ringadoo to

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6 This was going to be the third Labour-PMSD coalition government. It had the first coalition during 1964 to 1965, when Ramgoolam had formed a national government. The second coalition was from 1969 to 1973. This time the coalition had 36 seats against 34 of MMM.

investigate the failures of the Party.\textsuperscript{8} This report gave rise to internal dissent and there was demand for a change of leadership. Eight deputies threatened to resign. This resulted in the election of a new executive with James Burty David as its president.

The MMM could not get power, but after 1976, it got a platform in parliament to fight against the old guards. The arrival of the MMM as a strong opposition with clear-cut policies made parliament more effective. Its proceedings and debates changed. Earlier, because of the consensus among the coalition parties the laws and the budget were passed as a routine. But with the MMM in opposition, every point was keenly contested. As the government had earlier cracked down the strikers and the MMM, the latter made maximum utilisation of the parliament to expose the government and its policies. As the government was having a very thin majority the voice of the opposition, the institution of parliament, the acceptance and difference to diverse opinion became institutionalised.\textsuperscript{9} Parliament as an institution became activated. At the same time, MMM deputies, who

\textsuperscript{8} For findings of Ringadoo Report, see \textit{Annuaire des Pays de l'Ocean Indien}, 1977. The Ringadoo Committee identified a number of reasons, most of them were tactical. It attributed the party's failure mainly to (i) The lack of hold among the trade-unions, (ii) The wrong electoral campaign tactics, where the party was always on the defensive, (iii) Wrong selection of candidates and wrong allocation of constituencies for good candidates, and (iv) the growth of communalism. Also see, \textit{Week-End}, 5th February, 1978.

\textsuperscript{9} Based on interview with the Speaker, Mr. Ajay Daby August 1990.
were new to the Legislative processes also got training in the parliamentary affairs and norms. The General elections of 1976 was followed by municipal elections. All five municipalities went to the polls on 24th April 1977. For 126 councillors, the LAbour-PMSD coalition fielded 125 candidates of which 52 belonged to Labour and its traditional partner, CAM.\textsuperscript{10} The MMM put up 126 candidates. Besides them, some small parties had also fielded their candidates. 206,000, voters comprising around 40 percent of the Mauritian population, were to cast votes. But their turn-out was lower than in the general elections.\textsuperscript{11} The MMM got 50.5 percent of votes, the alliance could manage only 45.5 percent. Sixteen M.L.A.s were elected as councillors, of which 14 were from MMM. Seven MLAs of the MMM were defeated including Paul Berenger. Gaetan Duval was elected and got the post of the Mayor of Curepipe. Each side got 63 elected members. The MMM got a majority in three municipalities -- Port Louis, Beau Bassin/Rose Hill and Vacoa-Phoenix. The PMSD got majority in the French and Creole dominated area of Curepipe. The Labour and PMSD together got 14 seats out

\textsuperscript{10}Christian Louit, "Ile Maurice: Chronique Politique et Constitutionnelle" \textit{APOI} (1977), pp.371-82.

\textsuperscript{11}In 1976 general elections, turn out was 90 percent. In this election it was 70 percent. Seventy-five percent turned out at Curepipe and 60 percent at Port Louis.
of the total of 24 seats Quatre Bornes municipality.

RESULTS OF MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS-1977

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MUNICIPALITY</th>
<th>MMM</th>
<th>MLP</th>
<th>PMSD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PORT-LOUIS</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEAU-BASSIN/</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROSE-HILL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>QUATRE-BORNES</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VACOAS/PHONENIX</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUREPIPE</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

A comparative counting of the votes of the Legislative Assembly and these municipalities shows a slight increase in the MMM's vote but a decline in support of the MLP-PMSD. After removing the area not falling in the municipalities of all the Legislative constituencies covering these municipal area, a break-up of votes was done by the *Week-End*\(^\text{12}\) The decrease

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elections</th>
<th>M.M.M.</th>
<th>Alliance (PMSD + Labour)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Municipal</td>
<td>74,000</td>
<td>65,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislative</td>
<td>71,000</td>
<td>74,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

in the support of the PMSD and Labour was attributed to the low turn-out of voters sympathetic to these parties\(^\text{13}\).

\(^{12}\) *Week-End*, 1st May, 1977.

\(^{13}\) ibid.
However, these elections did not put to an end the speculation that the next general election was imminent and that Ramgoolam was to be replaced. To the surprise of everyone, the government formed with a majority of two lasted for full term despite the the fear of defection. It is not that there was no defection and hobnobbing between the dissident groups of the alliance and the MMM. In July 1977, Ramgoolam tried to invite the MMM to form the national government, as he had done twice in the past. This had initiated a debate in the MMM. Those frustrated by their inability to form government were in favour of it. They were "so near and yet so far from getting power". In August 1977, three ministers leading a dissident group in the Labour got in touch with the MMM to form a government. They threatened to resign and join the MMM. All plans were discussed. A tentative ministry list was formulated. But these efforts were frustrated when five MLAs of the MMM defected one by one to the Labour party. The first jolt was given by Suresh Mourba, who had defeated Gaetan Duval in 1976. Haris Ramphul and others followed suit. Paul Berenger's leadership was not acceptable to every one.

**Dissension within MMM** In the aftermath of the 1977 elections, when the MMM had acquired another forum in

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14 Personal interview with MMM activists, September 1990.

parliament for its struggle, some of its members saw the party as getting dominated by "bourgeoisie elements". In the 'Central Committee' of the party this wing called "aile gauche" (left wing) was in a majority and wanted a new election of Bureau Politique (Political Bureau) for 1977. Four main leaders of "aile gauche" in the Bureau Politique decided to resign. They were Jack Bizlall, Rajiv Servansingh, S. Chinien and H. Mosaheb. Another member of the central Committee, d'Herré Massson, resigned from the Central committee in August charging that the MMM of having gone for electoral strategy for change rather than class struggle. He further saw the workers as devoid of representation at the top and being ignored by their leaders.

In January 1979, Jack Bizlall, Madan Dulloo, R. Poonosamy, N. Sadien and other members of "aile gauch" published a document in the Le Mauricien reflecting on the general strategy of development of the MMM. In response to the independent projection of the policy matters, the Central Committee (C.C.) met on 20th January 1979 to decide on the right given to its members to opine on the policy matters. The C.C. decided that the right of expressing opinion existed but it laid down two conditions: (i) that if different opinion exists, all of them have to finally agree with the majority decision of the "assembly of

16 Remous au sein du MMM, Oodiah, n.3, p.79.

delegates or of the Central committee or of the Parliamentary group and, (ii) if there is any difference of opinion between the parliamentary group and the central committee, the latter’s opinion was to be binding. The "aile gauche" again gave an interview in the *Week-End* where it criticised the party’s functioning, its policies and programmes and its political approach. It criticised the party for toeing the USSR and not protesting against its imperialistic policies and militarizing the Indian Ocean. It equated the policies of the USSR with those of USA, Britain and France. To it, the socialist stance of the MMM sounded like state capitalism.

The detractors of the ‘left wing’ described it as an extension of Chinese influence in the Indian Ocean. But unlike the group of Suresh Mourmba and Ramphul, this group was not blaming the party to leave it. It aimed at countering and opposing ‘deviation’ in the party from within. The MMM leadership reacted to this wing at two levels - first, the secretary general of the MMM, Paul Berenger, contested the analysis of the Bizlall group and placed the group as the right wing of the party. He criticised the fallacy of their economic formulation and


20 ibid. p.3.

21 *Le Peuple* 1st February 1979
defended the plan and the policy of the party. At the second level, where the MMM leadership attempted to fix the left wing was, the election to the Central Committee. Berenger gave the ultimatum to the National Assembly of delegates (NAD) that if the 'left wing' was elected, the whole leadership of MMM would resign. Fifteen members were to be elected by the NAD to the Central Committee. Of

Organisational Structure of MMM

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Political Bureau
  | 10
  |
35 CC
  | 15
  |
NAD
  | 20
  |
20 Regional Committees
  |
Local Branches
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the total 35 members of the Central Committee, 20 were to be elected directly from 20 regional committees of the MMM spread all over the country.

In the election by the NAD, in February 1979, not even one member of the 'aile gauche' was elected. Bizlall, who got the highest votes among the 'aile gauche'
members, got 60 votes—two short of the last successful candidate. This wing decided not to contest through the regional branches for 20 seats. As a result, it became dormant. Unlike other disenchanted members, this group accepted the verdict of the party and did not decide to break away despite the fact that it was ousted from the Party's decision-making bodies, even while representing one-third of the party's strength.\textsuperscript{22}

**Augustave and Coonjan affair** Another jolt which the MMM got from within was from Jean Claude Augustave, one of its founding members. In February 1979, he launched an attack on the MMM and the 'aile gauche'. He denounced the opportunism of the 'aile gauche' and the dictatorship of the Polite Bureau. He was the seventh MLA of the MMM who openly challenged the policy and the leadership of the party.\textsuperscript{23}

Doctor Coonjan, another dissident, was once associated with the IFB. He was approached by Berenger

\textsuperscript{22} "Ile Maurice: Chronique Politique et Constitutionnelle", \textit{A.P.O.I.}, (1979), p.313.

\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Week-End}, 18th February. The paper said that he was "the seventh MLA of the MMM who had openly ventilated his grievances against the leadership in two years: (of the other six) Moorba and Ramphal had already shifted to the Labour Party, Dr. Coonjan was in open opposition to leadership since the last six months....Bizlall, Servansingh and Duloo recently contested the leadership on what should be the fundamental doctrine of the party".
Berenger before 1976 elections to contest from the MMM platform. After the elections he behaved as an indisciplined parliamentarian and coveted the post of the Chief Whip which was given to d'Estrac. In March 1978, he became vice-president of the party. He then started opposing the leadership on several issues. He tried to get elected to the Central Committee in 1979 but despite the support of the 42 branches, he could not succeed. Unlike Augustave, Coonjan was more ambitious and more concerned for personal gains.

The Polite Bureau decided to expel these two in February 1979 and this decision was confirmed by the Central Committee in March. The 'aile gauche' raised objection in the next meeting of the Assembly of Delegates on the process to expel these two members. It contested the decision to expel on the ground that they were not given a chance to defend themselves. After a long discussion, 56 out of 119 branches of the MMM supported the stand of the 'aile gauche' that it was a wrong procedure. Seven of the ten members of the Central Committee threatened to

24 He was leading civil right movement before he was contacted by Berenger. In 1976 election he defeated Yousuf Mohamed of CAM.


26 Comité Central et Assemblée des délégués, Oodiah, n.3. p.98
resign and call for a new election to the Committee. The more urgent and important works, such as the by-election of the Municipal Council made the delegates avoid a change of leadership. They decided to take the matter in the next meeting of the assembly of delegates. Coonjan, therefore remained in the Party till June. He left at the time of the budget debates.

The act of expulsion of these two members by the Polite Bureau and the Central Committee refuted the charge that MMM was communal. It was alleged that MMM "always expelled the Hindus from the party". It showed willingness of the MMM leadership to deal strongly with the dissidents within the party. After their expulsion, Jugnauth affirmed that, "MMM will expel all other Augustave and Coonjan who behave in the same manner".\textsuperscript{27} The expulsion however aggravated the delicate position of the MMM in parliament. Its strength was reduced from 34 to 30.\textsuperscript{28} On the other hand, the 'aile gauche' succeeded in cornering the leadership on the high-handed dealing of the dissidents. The new constitution of the party, which followed immediately after these internal wranglings, reflected in detail on all these aspects. In the chapter on the "discipline et droit de tendences" (discipline and right of dissent), it emphasized that 'no party could function

\textsuperscript{27} \textit{Week-End}, 25th February, 1979.

\textsuperscript{28} Moorba and Ramphul were already in the Labour party.
without party discipline'. It recognised the right of opinion and leaning, but it should be within the limits of party disciplin and confirm to the majority decision, class strategy and general line of the party etc. It prohibited organising parallel meetings of regional branches or national assembly. On the issue of defection, it asked its members to resign from parliament, if they resigned or were expelled from the party. The basic structure, organisation and the hierarchy remained the same.

Despite inclusion of these provisions in the party constitution and the heavy-handed dealing with the dissidents like Coonjan and Augustave, the MMM could not do away with problems. In November 1979, Shiela Bapoo, one of the oldest members resigned from the party. She was not satisfied with the list of mayors for 1979. She charged the leadership for succumbing to the pressure of the communalist.

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30 The pyramidal structure of the party: Polite Bureau-Central Committee-Assembly of delegates remained the same. For the general elections, the list of candidates was to be prepared by the Central Committee, in collaboration with the local and regional authority, which was to be appointed by the assembly of delegates. See Annuaire des Pays de l'Ocean Indien, (1979), p.315.

31 "Ce que je ne pardonne pas aux dirigeants du MMM c'est d'avoir capitulé devant les pressions communali stes pour le choix du Mairat 1979... La direction est devenue prisonniere du communalisme...." Demi sion de Sheila Bapoo, Oodiah, n.28, p.95.
Vijay Jandoosing was also one of the oldest members of the movement. He was in jail during the stormy days of 1971-73 and was an active organiser in the General Workers' Federation (GWF). He abstained from voting in the parliament not siding with his party colleagues affecting business interests. His family had financial interests for permanent permits in transport. As a result, the MMM expelled him in November 1980.

Another member, Vijay Venkatasamy, M.L.A. from Stanley/Rose Hill, was disappointed with the MMM leadership. He felt that the party was being monopolised by a small clique of activists. He denounced the clique as wanting people to blindly follow the party line, on moral or personal issues, without reference to conscience. He supported Jandoosing against expulsion and asserted that there were many more in the party who felt uneasy with the situation. He resigned in November 1980. The next year they joined the Labour party. This brought the tally of defections to six. By the time of the next general elections came, one more M.L.A. left MMM, thus bringing the total to seven.32

Later on when the party entered into alliance with the PSM, it had to face strong internal opposition. The move for alliance with the PSM in 1981, was opposed by the left wing and the trade union General Workers Federation (GWF). 'Lalit Travayer' led by Jean Claude Bibi, an MLA, and Serge Rayapolle who was a member of the Central Committee, were opposed to such alliances. 'The Christian Movement for Socialism', a MMM sympathetic organisation was also opposing it. See Annuaire des Pays de l'Ocean Indien, Christian Louit, "Ile Maurice: Chronique Politique et Constitutionnelle" Annuaire des Pays de l'Ocean Indien 1981 p.297
The MMM, however also witnessed the homecoming of its early founding members. The Mouvement Militant Mauricien Socialist Progressite (MMMSP), the extreme left splinter group of the MMM led by Dev Virahsawmy, gave a call for uniting all the opposition forces which included the MMM, Party Socialist Mauricien (PSM), UDM and the IFB as a democratic and patriotic front with a view to presenting an alternative alliance to the ruling coalition. MMMSP decided to merge with the MMM. Dev Virahsawmy defended his party decision by saying that "for saving the country only the MMM has got programme, structural organisation and competence, which is needed." MMMSP was a Marxist-Leninist party whereas the goals of the MMM was "a socialism with a human face".

The merger of this group in the MMM strengthened the lobby which was opposed to any alliance with Labour Party.

**Disension within coalition parties**

The alliance parties too had internal problems. Duval himself had refused to join the government after 1976 general elections as Minister of Justice. His party had lost support of the working classes, Creole Muslims and

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33 After a week of the issue of this call, it noticed that the PSM and the UDM had "intellectual inadequacy". *Week-End*, 4th November, 1979.

34 *La réintégration du MMMSP*, Oodiah, n.3, p.106.

Tamil Hindus. It was reorganising itself to face the imminent general elections. Time and again, it denounced a section of the Labour Party (David Burty-Jagatsing Kher group) and the concept of "Ramgoolamism".

The one option was to break the uneasy alliance with the Labour and give chance for a Labour-MMM alliance. Another was to support unpopular measures of the government (like devaluation, deficit budget etc). But Duval took the liberty of criticising the government.

The PMSD also suffered internal dissensions. It was shaken by the resignation of its president, Gaetan Raynal. He charged that the PMSD had remained only an "empty shell" without any force and its responsibility lies on its leaders.

During second parliament, the Labour Party, which had been very disciplined so far became involved with internal wranglings. There were many reasons. Ramgoolam had grown old and there was no clarity about successor. Secondly, the party had stayed in power for a long time and developed a coterie of leadership. Young entrants were


37 Week-End, 20th May, p.3.

38 Week-End, 20th May, p.5.

not allowed access to this coterie. They were frustrated and became rebellious. Further the Labour Party had become corrupt and complacent in politics. In such a situation, the talents of Ramgoolam and his personal appeal to the cadre had limited effects. The minister of Economic Planning and Development, Rabindrah Ghurburnn openly expressed his dissatisfaction with party functioning. He was opposed to the distribution of Chairmanship, scholarship and top jobs to those who had brought untold damage to the Labour party. A group of young M.P.s, which included Dr. Rohit Beedassy, Premdath Doonghoor, Radha rishan Gungoosingh, Mooneeswar Hurry, led by Harish Boodhoo started a strong campaign to clean the party from within. This group started pressurizing the government for various reforms. In January 1978, when Ramgoolam was in Bangladesh, it gave an ultimatum to withdraw support to the coalition government.40

Because of government's thin majority, this group was made its presence felt and bargained with the entrenched leadership. It threw open challenge to Ramgoolam during 1978-79 budget session. It refused to vote for three

40 This group had presented a long list of complaints and suggestions. It included overhauling of the diplomatic services, securing of more informations on matters affecting the government policy, greater efficiency in government services and reduction in governmental waste, cut in the ministerial travels abroad, greater supervision and control over semi-government organisations and more power and participation in the local self government. It also demanded the sacking of the corrupt people who had been abusing their authority in the government. Ramgoolam had later on set up a party's working committee to examine the demands.
cultural attaches posted for Mauritius missions in London, Brussels and Islamabad.\footnote{Their salaries exceeded that of the trained diplomats abroad. These three posts were to be filled by two former deputies of Duval and the secretary of the CAM.}\footnote{Boodhoo was also against Ramgoolam's delegating undue power to the Secretary General. Based on the interview with Harish Boodhoo. August 1990.} Ramgoolam had to personally persuade the group to save the government in voting before the group gave away.

Harish Boodhoo was very critical of the party general secretary Kher Jagatsingh for his failure to organise the party regionally. Boodhoo opposed the double charge given to Jagatsingh as the Minister of Economic Planning and Development and the General Secretary of the party.\footnote{Le \textit{PTr et la contestation}, Oodiah, n.3, p.84.} In the absence of Ramgoolam, the Secretary General appointed his own men in important government departments Boodhoo wanted to become Secretary General. Explaining this, he said, "I want to be at the service of the Labour Party. I have given the proof of my organising capacity in the last eight years in the Seva Shivir ...and in organising the Holi festival in 1973 where we had gathered more than 100,000 people of the Hindu community".\footnote{It was seventeenth time that Jagatsingh was elected the secretary general. ibid, p.94}

Within the party Boodhoo was being supported by Satcam Boolell. But Ramgoolam was in no mood to let down Jagatsingh. He ordered his executives to express confidence in Jagatsingh. Boodhoo lost the contest.\footnote{44}
Jagagat Singh branded Boodhoo's group as extreme rightists, but Ramgoolam perceived differently. He called it as a "grave digger of the Hindu unity". Harish Boodhoo had actively worked among Hindus through the Sheva Shivir camp. After his challenge Ramgoolam took it on himself he was the one who symbolised Hindu unity. Any threat to him was therefore, an attempt to destroy the Hindus.

On 2nd August 1978, Boodhoo took the issue to the people. He started a "political pilgrimage" across the country and by 3rd November 1978, his group the 'Contestataires' had addressed 180 public and 200 private meetings. It charged the government of squandering public money, corruption, favouritism and inefficiency. It reiterated that if Ramgoolam did not respond to the aspirations of the people, he must go. It highlighted the corrupt practices and favouritism of Labour Ministers Lutchmeeprasad Badry (Social Security) and Ginadeo Daby (Co-operatives) and asked for a commission of enquiry against them. Under the pressure, Ramgoolam announced a commission of enquiry headed by Victor Glover, a Supreme

45 Speaking at a seminar in M.G.I. he described them as "fossoyeurs de l'unite Hindoue", ibid.

46 Oodiah, n.3, p.94.

47 "SSR fasse ce qu'il faut s'il ne peut répondre aux aspirations du peuple", Oodiah, n.3, p.95.
Court judge, against two ministers. The Contestataires very actively cooperated with the Glover Commission. The Commission gave its findings on 22nd May 1979. It found the two ministers guilty on many counts.\textsuperscript{48} Having been vindicated Boodhoo group intensified its campaign against the corrupt leadership. Boodhoo demanded a new commission of enquiry to investigate charges of "corruption, fraud, abuse of power, irregularities, misutilisation of public funds and interference in the administration" against Kher Jagatsingh and Harol Walter, the Minister of External Affairs, Tourism and Emigration.\textsuperscript{49} Ramgoolam defended his two ministers against these charges. Jagatsingh in turn accused the PMSD partners in government of interfering in the internal affairs of the Labour Party.\textsuperscript{50}

In the budget session of 1979-80, Contestataires openly opposed fiscal proposals of the government. It joined the MMM in voting against the budget proposed of the Finance Minister Veerasamy Ringadoo. It voted


\textsuperscript{49} \textit{Week-End}, 27 May 1979, p.1 and 6.

\textsuperscript{50} See, \textit{Week-End}, 3rd June 1979, p.2; In the past, Boodhoo had sought support of the PMSD leader Duval at personal level for his political activities and moves, see \textit{Le Militant}, 12 November, 1978.
more than 20 times against the government in the budget session. Further it supported the motion introduced by the MMM to censure the government. The Labour party could not take anymore. It expelled Boodhoo, Gungoosingh and Beedassy from the party. On 16th September 1979, Contestataires held a meeting and established Party Socialiste Mauricien (P.S.M.). Since 11 years of independence the Labour Party had lost only one member through defection. It had encouraged defection from other parties to Labour party to remain in power for a full term. By the end of 1979, after defections and floor-crossings, the parties positions were as follows: Labour/PMSD coalition- 35, MMM-30 seats and Independents-5.

Another significant crisis within the Labour Party brewed over the issue of succession to Ramgoolam's leadership. The potential candidates were Veerasamy Ringadoo and Satcam Boolell. Ringadoo, coming from the minority group of Tamils, mobilised the left wing of Labour. He had the image of being the intellectual ideologue of the party. Besides, he was a close associate of Ramgoolam since the colonial days. Boolell, coming from the Bhojpuri group, drew his support from the majority community. In 1975,

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51 Elizer François had defected to the PMSD.

52 The Tamil group was opposed to the 'Hindus' since the colonial period. Tamils were also Hindus but by Hindus they meant Bhojpuri speaking section of Hindu community.
Ramgoolam had decided to nominate Ringadoo to take over. It drew protests from the Hindus and the right wing of the party.\footnote{Based on interview with Ringadoo, Governor General's office, Réduit, August 1990.}

To preserve unity of the party, Ramgoolam avoided choosing his successor. However, by 1979, Ringadoo had bungled budget, when Boodhoo and the MMM harassed the government. Boolell issued a statement around this time to say: "it is certain that we are looking for someone who can not only rally the majority behind him but also provide stability to the country".\footnote{Week-End, 7-8 July, 1979, p.2.} After his performance in the budget, Ringadoo was not fit on either counts. On the other hand, Satcam Boolell was the Minister for Agriculture since the last 20 years. He interacted with the small farmers and farm labourers, who formed the core of the support-base of the Labour Party. He was the number three man in the party - next to Ramgoolam and Ringadoo. He had the chance of being the care-taker Prime Minster on many occasions when the Prime Minister was abroad. Besides, he had support from Boodhoo.\footnote{Boolell was 'one of the rare members of the party, who used to clap when Boodhoo criticised the government in the parliament. Christian Louit, "Ile Maurice: Chronique Politique et Constitutionnelle", Annuaire des Pays de l'Ocean Indien, (1979), p.320.} The PMSD too was more inclined towards Boolell than anyone else. In October 1979, Duval
said "the minister of agriculture is the only one who can be the successor in the future. As the interim Prime Minister, he had successfully suppressed the general strike of the GWF in the month of August. He had also adopted a firm attitude in suppressing a prison revolt which won public appreciation. His rivals, Ringadoo and Kher Jagatsingh reacted against the emergence of Boolell by talking the language of reform and counter-offensive at various levels.

Boolell was charged for diluting the socialist programme of the party and policies related to the private sector and press. He was held responsible for failing to check the anti-nationalistic action of the PMSD partners in government. The MMM also branded Boolell for ganging up along with the private sector and preventing Ramgoolam from implementing progressive reforms.

56 Week-End, 2nd October, 1979, p.2.

57 The government refusal to recognise two unions - the Union of Artisan and Sugar Industry (USAI) and the Sugar Industry Labourer's Union (SILU) led to strike in sugar industry. It was soon joined by many other Unions including GWF. It paralysed the country. Ramgoolam wavered in his dealings with Berenger and had aged to call parliament to settle the issue. Boolell faction criticised Ramgoolam's approach and forced him to deal strongly with strikers. Public Order Act was enforced to control it. The strike ended without much success. Finally SILU and USAI remained un-recognised.


59 "en conclusion pour moi aujourd'hui, Sir S. Ramgoolam n'est plus qu'un loque politique, prisonnier de plus en plus consentant d'une coalition de droit SSB/PMSD/ sectem prive", Week-End 19th August, 1979, p.4.
PARLIAMENT AS EXECUTIVE

The government's thin majority and the presence of a strong Opposition made the former underplay the parliament's role. At times, parliament had to witness very peculiar situation. One was when both government and Opposition had equal number of votes while the casting vote was that of the Speaker, who was not an elected MLA.\(^{60}\)

By constitution, the speaker has the casting vote when there is a tie between government and Opposition. However, given his unique position, Vaghjee had assured that in practice, he would exercise his casting vote only on very rare occasions.\(^{61}\) Had Ramesh Jeewoolall, the Deputy Speaker, a Labour member, faced such situation, the Labour would have lost the majority.\(^{62}\)

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\(^{60}\) After the defection of Moorba and Harris Ramphul to the Labour Party, the MMM had 32 and the Labour/PMSD coalition had 38 seats. But the presence of three 'Contestataire' MLAs in the Labour, who were voting against the government on many issues, especially on the 1979 budget, gave the government as well as the opposition 35 votes each. This gave H.Vaghjee, the speaker of the Assembly, a right of casting vote. Vaghjee was the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly for the last 18 years. He was not one of the elected parliamentarian, though the constitution provides that one of the elected member is to be elected as the Speaker by a majority vote. At the time of independence, a clause was inserted in the constitution that Vaghjee would remain Speaker, and only when he was succeeded, by someone else, then that person had to be an elected member. Christian Louit, "Ile Maurice: Chronique Politique et Constitutionnelle", *Annuaire des Pays de l'Ocean Indien*, (1979), p.324.

\(^{61}\) For details of the communiqué issued by the office of the Speaker, see *Week-End*, 27th May, 1979, p.6 & 22.

\(^{62}\) The independent, neutral person, as a speaker could not be appointed, as it needed two-third majority to amend the Constitution. Later Jeewoolall became the Speaker but only after the passing of the vote on budget and a censor motion against the government, in July 1979. Robert Rey was appointed as the Deputy Speaker.
maneuvering permitted the coalition government to retain power. Secondly there was a difference in the Labour Party on the issue of modifying the Industrial Relations Act. Yousouf Mohamed, the Minister resigned because of this difference. He was later sent as an ambassador to Egypt. But it did not damage the coalition government. Yousouf was elected through "Best Loser System"\(^{63}\) Therefore the person replacing him had to come from the same party and the same community.\(^{64}\) The period 1978-80 witnessed many defeats of government proposals and motions in parliament. The situation was so fluid that a group of three members (Contestataires) or a few defectors could decide the fate of any motion in parliament. With their co-operation, the MMM could force the government to fix tariff on water and the price of flour as well. But when a censure motions was being moved, the same members bailed

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\(^{63}\) Yousouf Mohamed had contested from Moka/Q. Militaire constituency, where he got the fourth highest vote and was later inducted into the Assembly by the "Best Loser System".

\(^{64}\) In case any assembly seat, filled by "best loser system", falls vacant, then the Electoral Supervisory Commission fills the seat by selecting

1. (a) the most successful candidate who belongs to the community and the party to which the member belonged to at the time of the election; or

   (b) where vacancy relates to the seat of a member, who is not regarded as the member of any party, to the most successful unreturned candidate (if any) who is not regarded as a member of any party, but who belongs to the community to which the member belonged.

2. Where the seat cannot be allocated under (above paragraph), it shall be allocated to the most successful unreturned candidate (if any), who belong to the community to which the member belonged, irrespective to the party to which he belonged.
out the government. On 1st December 1978, the Labour Party was supported by the Contestataires, but on 12th December, it was reduced to a minority on the question of establishing a National Transport Agency. In the budget session of 1979, the first Money Bill submitted by the government, was passed by a majority of only one vote. The Opposition launched a Civil Disobedience Movement which was joined not only by the MMM and Contestataire but also the PMSD. The budget which was conventionally passed in the month of June was dropped for fear of defeat. It was eventually presented in July but the fragility of the government was clear. For every vote, which it negotiated it had to change the budget. The coalition was subjected to harassment by its partners. The PMSD criticised the budget severely though voted against the censure motion.

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65 There was a new majority (MMM + Contestataire) as many subsequent motions sponsored by the government in the parliament were being defeated. See Oodiah, n.3, p.96.

66 The movement was being organised by "the group of thirties" trade unions, political and professional organisations, all led by the Contestataire, See Christian Louit, "Ile Maurice: Chronique Politique et Constitutionnelle", Annuaire des Pays de l'Ocean Indien, (1979), p.325.

67 The Constitutional experts were speculating and examining the constitutional and legal aspects of such a failure. ibid.

68 If censure motion was passed then under the Mauritian constitution it is provide that if "Prime Minister does not, within three days, either resign from his office or advises the Governor-General to dissolve the parliament within seven days or at such later time as the Governor-General acting in his own deliberate judgment, may consider reasonable, the Governor-General acting in his own deliberate judgment, may dissolve the parliament".

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Four ex-ministers Badry, Deby, Coonjan and Augustav voted against the censure motion, but the government had to negotiate their crucial support. Another censure motion was moved in November and was defeated in the same manner as the earlier one. The MMM utilized the parliamentary procedure of 'motion of disallowance'. By this provision the Opposition moved motions for altering various policy decisions of the government. On many such motions, the defectors in the parliament sided with the Opposition. It was thus that prices of rice, flour and installation of parking meters were decided.

In one session of 1979, the Opposition posed 1298 questions which was a record number. The opposition fully utilised the provision of 'private notice questions' which are put in the beginning and government had to answer them on the same day. The government used many ways

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69 Coonjan was in the Federal Republic of Germany at the time of voting.

70 See L'Express, 18 November, 1979, p.1.

71 Many times the government could stall such opposition's assault only with the help of the casting vote of the Speaker.

to meet with the situation. The government allowed only safer matters at the stage of the Select Committee. Parliament, as a privileged forum for discussing major issues and policies, was systematically denied this role. There were long gaps between sessions, ridiculously brief sessions— with all familiar tricks to avoid debates on questions of national importance.

Despite all this, in the second parliament, 3305 questions were asked, some 203 laws were enacted, and two censure motions against government were placed. The Opposition showed procedural ruthlessness in dragging various issues into parliament, which government tried to evade. But surprisingly, in a free and frequent play of defection, parliament could last for five years and Ramgoolam’s

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73 The government retracted on most of the policy issues to avoid grilling. It tried to utilise all possible measures to limit the role of the Assembly. Inside the parliament, the ruling coalition had twenty one ministers and ten parliamentary secretaries and two Chief Whips from each of the two parties to maintain the discipline. Thirty three MLAs of the ruling coalition, out of its total strength of thirty-six (a maximum number at any point of time), were executive and around thirty-three MLAs were to control these executives. Paradoxically, the structural provision of the government and the parliament was such that the number of people holding the executive posts and that of those who were to check and oppose it was the same.

74 Various issues like the discussion on the Glover Report, nationalisation of ports, construction of new airport, the Industrial Relations Act, the provisions of "standing orders" of the Assembly, etc were rejected at the Select Committee level itself.

75 *Week-End*, 11 Nov. 1979, p.2.

government with a majority of two could last for the whole term. It was always the politics of defections that provided stability to the government during these five years!

**MMM OUTSIDE PARLIAMENT**

The active role of the MMM was not confined to parliament alone. Outside it kept the political issues and activities alive. It organised demonstrations on national and international issues and engineered strikes by the trade-unions in "Jardin de la Compagnie". It staged the first political mass protest against Steve Biko's killing, a black South African. It campaigned for a total break with the apartheid regime of South Africa. Similarly, it demonstrated against the visit of Princess Alexandra of the U.K. Berenger said that it was a symbolic protest against the presence of monarchy in Mauritius.

The MMM wanted to turn Mauritius into a republic with a titular president and a parliamentary government. On 16th November 1977, it organised demonstration against militarisation of the Indian Ocean and sent memorandum to the French embassy to return Tromelin island to Mauritius,

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77 The MMM asserted that Mauritius was heavily dependent on the Apartheid regime and that South-African investors had a strong grip on the Mauritian economy.

78 "Nous avons voulu protester contre la présence de la princesse Alexandra pour lancer une campagne en faveur d'une république à l'indienne", Politique étrangère et lutte anti-imperialiste, Oodiah, n.3, p.85-86.
to U.K. and U.S.A. to return Diego Garcia, and to the USSR to get lost from the fishery zone of Mauritius. Besides it asked all the above countries to quit the Indian Ocean. It boycotted the Assemble'e générale de l'Association Internationale des Parlementaires de Langue Française (General Assembly of the International Associations of French-speaking Parliamentarians) to protest French imperialism. It stood for progressive regionalism free from the super-powers.79 A conference of South-West Indian Ocean countries was held in February 1978. These early initiatives finally precipitated the creation of the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) during the term of the MMM government. In 1980, the MMM offered full support to the government if it was to make sincere efforts for the return of Diego Garcia. However, it did not want to side with the Soviet Union either. It condemned Soviet intervention in Afghanistan (1979), identified itself with the Non-Aligned countries, China, and a few Arab countries. India, Australia and Scandinavian countries were considered more friendly by the MMM.80 K. Bhayat, and the leader of Opposition, Ameeroodh Jugnauth had met Mrs. Indira Gandhi, in June 1980. Both had appreciated each other's stand on the issue of Diego Garcia. Paul Berenger also had a long talk with Mrs. Gandhi and the


Indian Minister of External Affairs, M.R.D. Sathe in July 1981.\footnote{Indian Express, 20 July 1981.}

Another front on which the MMM was active was cultural. It pledged to promote Mauritian culture, common to all ethnic and religious groups.\footnote{This integrating aspect was not cultivated during the colonial period. In colonial times, it was the mobilisation of the Hindus and the Creole for and against the independents that had excluded any socio-political initiative on integrative aspect of the culture.} The first such decision was taken when the MMM decided to introduce Creole language in the deliberation of the Municipal Councils under its control.

In December 1977, it organised a National Cultural Festival (Fet Kilterel) where it exhibited photographs, poster T-shirts and organised songs, poems and musical gatherings, displaying various facets of common Mauritian life. It was a unique cultural event. It was a show of history of Mauritius since 1721 till the present day...and from the success of this festival was born Group Kilterel Maurisiene (Mauritian Cultural Group)\footnote{’Intensifier la lutte culturelle’, Oodiah, n.3, p.86. One of the activists of the MMM, H. Mosaheb explained the importance of such cultural festivals as,“Le processus de décolonisation, a ces stade, passe essentiellement par la consolidation d’une culture authentique et Mauricienne, base principale pour le développement et la consolidation de l’entite mauricienne”, ibid.} Next year on the 10th anniversary of independence, the Port Louis Municipality organised another festival in which the main
show was again by the Group kilterel maurisiene. Beau Bassin Rose Hill municipality witnessed the same to establish what was typically Mauritian.

The MMM adopted many other methods to keep political momentum. It installed a statue of Manilal Doctor, the early fighter for the cause of the Indo-Mauritians. All three municipalities under its control celebrated the emancipation of slaves on 1st February 1835. The Contestataires went on a political pilgrimage across the country to organising meetings against the government.

Yet another line of political challenge came from trade unions strike. When Yusuf Mohamed, Minister of Labour, initiated a move in 1977 to change the Industrial Relation Act. All trade unions opposed

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84 It tried to bring out the common elements of Mauricien life - the common suffering and a common history under the Colonial Rule, the permissiveness of Creole language, its songs, music and poetry and the art forms which had evolved in Mauritius.

85 Another cultural group 'Soley Ruz' a wing of the MMMSP was equally active for the search and consolidation of the same time of cultural identity. It included M. Virahsawmy, Bam Cuttayen, Rosemay Nelson, Menoir and Nitish Jaganna.

86 See Chapter I for details on Manilal.

87 Between 2nd August and 3rd November, they organised 18 public meetings and 200 private parleys. See, Oodiah, n.3, p.94.

88 Yusuf Mohamed wanted to reduce the financial strength of the trade unions and initiated the move to change the law governing the payment of membership subscription fee of unions and to abolish compulsory 'check-off' system of works. See, "La crise et le Mouvement syndicale" by Oodiah, M., in Histoire du syndicalisme Mauricien (Port Louis, 1990) and also "Le MMM et la lutte syndicale en 1977", Oodiah., n.3, p.80.
the move. Against the hue and cry raised by the trade unions, the government dropped the idea. In August 1977 again when government decision on increased salary was opposed by trade unions because it was very marginal. They decided to go on strike. Ramgoolam called parliament and referred the subject to a select committee. This was a diversionary tactic but trade unions decided to abstain from strike.

Since 1976 MMM had been campaigning for the amendment of the Industrial Relations Act which had provisions to check the proliferation of trade unions. In 1979 the Industrial Relations Commission refused to recognise two unions (I) the Unions of Artisans—of Sugar Industry (UASI) and (II) Sugar Industry Labour Union (SILU). On 5th August, the UASI and the SILU along with Organisation of Union of Artisan (OUA) went on an indefinite strike with the following demands:

(1) The recognition of trade unions by Mauritius Sugar Cane Producer Association (MSPA).
(2) No closure of the sugar factories.
(3) Five day’s week for labourers and 40 hours per week for artisans.

89 A National Trade Union Front (FNS -Front National Syndicale) was formed to oppose the initiative of the government.

90 This was in sharp content to MMM’s earlier strategy during first half of 1971 when it had gone all out to press the government.

91 This OUA was led by the former PMSD minister Alex Rima.
A productivity linked bonus during harvesting seasons

Increase in salary because of rising prices.

The strike was an immediate success. 17 out of 21 sugar factories were paralysed. 9,000 sugar factory workers were joined by 62,000 cane cutters. The MMM-led General Workers Federation (GWF) called on parliament to amend IRA and to discuss increase in salary. A meeting between Bèrenger and Ramgoolam failed. On 31th of August the Federation des Travailleurs Unis (FTU) and GWF decided to join the strike. Workers of GWF in dock transport and mines stopped work. So did the electricity and bakery workers. Garbage piled up in the capital, electricity was dead and the key sectors in the economy were paralysed. "It was the biggest strike since 1971". Having won over the OUA to withdraw from strike, the government became obstinate and started arresting leaders of the strike. Proprietors dismissed strikers and took

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93 On 12th August GWF and FTU organised the meeting at Place du Quai for mobilising workers for next day strike. 15,000 workers had gathered shouting slogans to support the strike from next day. See "La grève d'août 1979", Oodiah., n.3, p.102.

94 Week-End 26 August 1979.
recourse to court to persecute the 'instigators'. Bérenger again met Ramgoolam but nothing moved. The government had called Riot unit and armed itself with the Public Order Act, arrested strike leaders, placed GWF activists in jail. After a prolonged negotiation between government an 8-point settlement was reached. The government agreed that Industrial Relation Act would be modified and alternative arrangements would be reached for 2000 employees and workers dismissed as a result of the strike. But neither of the two main demands—recognition of SILU and UASI and shorter working weeks—was accepted by the government. Hervé Koenig, President of Mauritius Sugar Producer Association, charged MMM and its associate trade unions with massive obstruction of a fragile economy.

POLITICAL ISSUES
During the second parliament there were certain recurrent political themes, the most important of which was holding the mid-term poll. Defection culture and intra-party

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95 Bérenger presented a petition signed by 30 MPs to Baran Devendranath Burrenchobay, the Governor General asking him to recall parliament but the request was not accepted on the constitutional ground, further Bérenger had two meeting with Ramgoolam but nothing came out of it.

96 For details of agreement see, Oodiah, n.3, p.25.

97 Hervé asserted that 54,000 tones of sugar cane were destroyed by fire while loss to small farmers amounted to 60,000 tones. The MSPA estimated a loss of 9 million rupees and an additional expenditure of around 14 million rupees was to be incurred because of long delay in harvesting. It charged MMM for injecting anarchy in the industrial relation of the country.
groupism, all lent support to this theme. In the beginning of the Information Service of the government conducted an opinion poll about the prospect of the Labour party if an immediate mid term poll were to be held. It estimated a better outcome for PMSD (15 to 18 seats), MMMM and MMMSP alliance was to cut the Labour vote in the countryside and the Labour was to lose to PMSD in urban areas.\textsuperscript{98}

The possibility of the MMM and Labour joining government became a recurrent issue.\textsuperscript{99} Jugnauth rejected all moves for coalition and said that there was no possibility of such alliance.\textsuperscript{100}

A third persistent political theme, though more in term of

\begin{itemize}
  \item See, \textit{Week-End} 11th Feb. 1979, p.3.
  \item Immediately after announcement of 1976 election result all the three parties the Labour, the PMSD and the MMM discussed with each other the possibility of forming a coalition government. Ringadoo, H. Walter and Ghurburrun were for the forming of a socialist government with the MMM. \textit{L'Express} 24th December 1977). Later on also this faction tried many times to form coalition with the MMM. The MMM had offered Ramgoolam the first presidency after turning Mauritius into a republic and to let the MMM form a minority government ("Quelle voie choisir ?" Oodiah, n.3, p.79). But it did not materialise and the Labour formed coalition with the PMSD. In 1979 and 1980 also attempts were made by the Labour Party to draw the MMM into government. Veerahswamy Ringadoo Minister of Finance, floated this idea saying that he favoured the formation of a national government (\textit{Week-End} 4 Nov.1979). But the MMM wanted that its programme should be accepted and implemented by such national government and the Prime Minister should be of MMM. (Oodiah, n.3, p.104.) In February 1980 also Ramgoolam made an offer of alliance after the defection of Boodhoo group from the Labour. He offered 50 percent of the ministerial seats to the MMM (ibid, p.109.)
  \item \textit{Week-End} 2nd March, 1980.
\end{itemize}
rhetoric than as serious, was Mauritius turning into a Republic. The MMM wanted the Governor General to be replaced by a President who was to be a constitutional head with nominal powers as in the Indian constitution.\textsuperscript{101} Besides these, another issue for parties as well as for country, was after Ramgoolam who?\textsuperscript{102}

The next general election was due in the beginning of 1982. All political parties warmed up the climate. Attempts to evolve party alliances became the most important activity by 1981. Gaetan Duval invited all those opposed to the MMM. The MMM was wooed by the left wing of the Labour party led by Kher Jagatsingh and V. Ringadoo. The PSM was solicited by UDM and a right wing of Labour represented by Boolell. Boolell and Boodhoo had a tacit understanding which stood on the way of political alignment of the MMM and PSM.\textsuperscript{103} There were around 87,000 new voters by end of 1981.\textsuperscript{104}

\textsuperscript{101} "Socialisme et Republique", Oodiah, n. 3, p. 84.

\textsuperscript{102} on issue of succession see n. 54, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{103} The PSM was being seen as the rightist force and was perceived to be close to other such forces represented by Duval and Boolell. Bérenger wanted PSM "to clarify its position towards Minister of Agriculture, Sir Satcam Boolell and the PMSD who represented the coalition of rightist." See, (Oodiah, n. 3, pp. 101-102) Reacting later to such apprehension Boodhoo affirmed the independence of his party. "Nous ne voulons pas de Boolell" and pointed the MMM's flirting with the Labour. But all through 1980 they were negotiating for an eventual alliance (Ibid, p. 110).

\textsuperscript{104} There were 450,414 voters in 1976 election. 1981 voter list had 537,423 voters for 1982 election.
Any alliance of MMM and PSM was likely to attract them both from majority Hindu Community and the minorities. Finally the MMM and PSM concluded an alliance. It was not endorsed unanimously by the political bureau of the MMM. Three sections opposed it. They were (I) Lalit de Kla’s; (II) Lalit Travayer and (III) Mouvement chrétien pour le socialisme (MCPS). They said such alliance went against MMM objectives and was a betrayal of fight against communalism.105 A. Jugnauth and K.Bhayat were against it but Bérandé strongly advocated the alliance. When Delegates of the National Assembly met, Jugnauth also joined the pro-alliance lobby.106 The alliance was approved by 90 percent of members.107 However, the support-base and ideological leanings of the two partners108 demonstrated divergences on many issues. One such issue was the role of the Libyan embassy in Mauritius. The PMS denounced the "outrageous interference" of embassy in the internal affairs of Mauritius and promised that if an MMM-PSM government came to be.

105 See "Alliance MMM-PSM" by Oodiah n.3, p.111

106 "A. Jugnauth fait le point" Oodiah n.3 p.112


108 The leader of the PSM, H. Boodhoo was trained under 'Sheva Shivir' of Swami Krishnanand to organise Hindus for their cultural assertion. On the other hand the MMM never failed to proclaim itself as a socialist based on Marxist-Leninst philosophy.
formed it would stop such activities. 109 The MMM, on the other hand dissociated itself on the issue saying that Libya was "a brotherly country in which the next government of the PSM-MMM will open an embassy". 110

On the side of the Labour-PMSD alliance the situation was opposite. The alliance was turbulent in nature, three coalitions in 15 years, two sudden raptures. Many internal rows were followed by embarrassing reconciliations and dictated more by personal interests than by any commonalty of programmes. 111

But within the PMSD itself there arose a serious division. Duval refused to remain in the government and started attacking the left wing of the Labour party. 112

Duval decided to break the coalition, but Cheong Luung and four other PMSD members in the assembly decided to remain with the Labour. 113 In September 1981 the

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109 "Week-End" 20 September 1981, p.2

110 At a public meeting at Bell Terre he accused Libya of "mettre son nez dans nos affaires", of "d'ingérences inadmissibles" of "dicter à Maurice sa politique étrangère" and for buying pages in newspapers for publicity of its country. See Libiye "Premier nuage dans le ciel MMM / PSM" Oodiah, n.3, p.114


112 Internally there was challenge to the leadership of Duval. The president of the PMSD in assembly refused to leave the coalition with the Labour party in 1981.

113 Out of total of 8 members, 5 remained with the Labour. From the four other Eliejer Francois, Kamil Ramoly were ministers, Robert Rey was deputy speaker and the fourth Cyril Guinbeale was MLA from Rodrigues.
government dissolved the municipality of Curpipe whose Mayor was Duval. The defected group came to be known as 'Francois Group' as it was being led by Elijier François who was also Minister of Housing Land and Town planning. Later they founded their own party Known as the Party Mauricien. This was the second biggest jolt for the PMSD; Labour had succeeded in winning defectors on its side till the end of second parliament. 114

The date for 1982 elections was fixed for 15 February. All parties sought suitable alliance partners to present their respective programmes and policies. The Labour Party having failed to persuade Duval, concluded an alliance with its Francois group. Rassemblement Progres et Libertes (RPL) also joined it. It was called National Alliance Party. The erstwhile partner of Labour, the CAM, for the first time was not in alliance with Labour. The PMSD, L'Organisation du Peuple Rodriguais (OPR) and the CAM decided to contest alone, though finally CAM did not contest.

In the elections where 90 percent of electorates voted, the MMM/PSM alliance won all the 60 seats. In Rodrigue too its supporter, OPR won both seats.

114 In September 1981, even from the MMM Siven Chinien, the founder of "Group Kiltirel Morisien" accused the leadership of monopolizing the MMM and of 'dictatorial arrogance' and he defected to Labour.
The Labour party got 33 percent of votes but not a single seat. Ramgoolam and other stalwarts of the National Alliance party had lost. There was a sharp swing from old guards to the politicians of a new generation. Ethnic, caste, religious and linguistic loyalties, so important in the previous elections, seemed to have become defunct in political life. A new socialist government had now come with new leaders, new ideas and a purpose to give new directions to the country. But could this new force ignore the entrenched pluralistic forces? Was it capable to contain the differences between its partners? These were some of the questions we examine in the next chapter.