CHAPTER V

ETHNICITY AND POLITICS: 1982-87

A new government took charge on the 16th of June, 1982. The composition of this government confirmed the pre-electoral pact signed between the MMM and the PSM. Aneeroood Jugnauth became the Prime Minister and Harish Boodhoo was given the deputy Prime Ministership with additional portfolios of Cooperatives and Information. Paul Bérenger took over the Ministry of Finance, and d’Estrac became the minister of External Affairs and Tourism.¹

Immediately after the result, the first thing that the new coalition faced were the apprehensions and misplaced expectations which it had aroused because of its massive majority and militant ideological campaign. As a proof of its intention to behave constitutionally, the government insisted on keeping the "best loser" system, thus bringing into the House, four Opposition candidates who were defeated. There was a big demonstration before the Government House to do away with the communal basis of the "best loser" system. The demonstrators protested that once the people had totally rejected the old regime and given full mandate to the MMM-PSM coalition, the old guards

should not reappear by constitutional provisions. The framers of the constitution had not realised such a situation could arise. Hence, the Supreme Court had to intervene and the government accepted allocation of four seats to the Opposition to uphold the constitution. Speaking on television on the night of the announcement of the results, however, Berenger affirmed that the constitution would be changed and provisions inserted so that the general elections were compulsorily held every five years. The coalition organised a thanks-giving function after the formation of the government, which was attended by around 3 lakh people. The Prime Minister said, "We do not promise miracle. We say no to communalism and castism. It is a grand fraternity which we should

2 The Electoral Supervisory Commission had decided not to allocate any seats in the light of results. "Manifestation contre les Best Loosers et renvoi des travailleurs", Oodiah, n.1, p.125

3 The Supreme Court allocated two seats to the PMSD, enabling Gaetan Duval and Nicol Francios to return to the parliament and similarly two to the Labour Party, by which Glover and F.M. Royssety came to the legislative assembly. Duval became the leader of the opposition.

4 Later the constitution was amended. The amendment made it impossible not to hold regular general elections, by-elections or municipal elections which were abrogated by the old regime. "La reconciliation nationale", Oodiah, n.1, p.122.

5 Describing the gathering the "Le Mauricien" wrote: "Unprecedented, it was difficult to estimate the number of persons present in the crowd. Practically, the whole of Mauritius had gathered in patriotic fervour to celebrate the victory", 21 June 1982.

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form and maintain". Berenger spoke of the impatience of the militants and sympathisers for taking immediate action against the political heads of the last regimes who committed excesses and atrocities on them. Very diplomatically, he denied any vindictive attitude and said, "We have not forgotten the sufferings, we have not forgotten the injustice, but we will be firm and not vindictive". The very scale of victory and the slogan of "changement" had created apprehensions in the private sector. However, the latter had become so disgusted with the out-going government that it did not fear the worst under a strong government capable of taking non-populist decisions.

The Central question before the government was 'Which change to effect and with what speed?' (Quel changement opérer et a quel rythme?). After the controversy over the best loser system was over, the government had to decide about 21,000 workers who were recruited on the eve of the election, by the former regime. The new government took the first unpopular decision to discharge them and appointed a commission to investigate into the legitimacy and propriety of

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6 "Le Plus grand rassemblement de l'histoire", Oodiah, n.1, p.123.

7 ibid., p.124.

8 "One cannot dissociate economic progress from its political environment. The political situation over the past five years led to economic stagnation" was the reaction of the Chairman of the powerful Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Mauritius. See The Courier No.77, Jan-Feb 1983, pp.13-32.
their recruitment. A government, which came on the slogan of class struggle and as a representative of the working class had to face the first demonstration against it by hundreds of workers against this decision.

Inside Parliament, it took steps to make generals and bye-elections regular. Election could be postponed if only a resolution to that effect was unanimously passed by Parliament and approved by a referendum, with 75 percent of the votes. Further, two select 'committies' were appointed to reexamine the Industrial Relations Act and the Public Order Act. Many amendments in the constitution were effected under Articles 59 and 66. A Deputy Prime Minister was created. The posts of the Parliamentary Secretaries, under article 66, were removed. Article 94 of the constitution was amended to make it mandatory for all political appointees, those who were appointed without

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9 The Commission was presided by Judge R. Lallah. In December 1982, it ruled that the recruitment was illegal as it was against the 'People's Representation Act'.


11 Technically, it was still possible to modify this constitutional provision by a simple 3/4 th majority of the parliament.

12 The parliamentary secretaries, whose number was not to exceed 5, were from the members of the Legislative Assembly and their function was to "assist the minister in the performance of their tasks". The constitution provides for only 20 ministers and one Prime Minister (maximum). But by amending the provisions of Article 66, five more ministers were added to meet the political needs of the party.
the involvement of the Public Service Commission, to vacate their office after the new general elections.\textsuperscript{13} In 1983, it abolished the system of communal enumeration in the Census. It decided that for the purpose of allocating the 'best loser' seats the 1972 Census could be taken as a guide. It abolished duty-free import by ministers and reduced their salaries. Besides, all members of parliament had to declare their assets to the public.

To implement its election promises, the government established new institutions such as The State Trading Corporation, The Agricultural Diversification Corporation, and Cargo Handling Corporation for handling of goods at ports. The area of activity of the National Transport Corporation was extended. Many new projects, like the development of Rodrigue, the fight against tax-evasion and unemployment allowance were initiated\textsuperscript{14}.

The Minister of Justice, Aumeeruddy, was given charge of the project to convert Mauritius into a republic. Cosmetically, this marked a departure from the colonial period. Ceremonial gowns, wigs and pompous dresses disappeared from the House. Photographers were now allowed to go to the bench meant for Members. The National Anthem was sung at every sitting of parliament.

On the economic front, the government announced its

\textsuperscript{13} In 1982, after coming to power the MMM-PSM coalition government had to remove the political appointees of the previous government.

\textsuperscript{14} See \textit{Week-End}, 12th June 1983, p.6.
decision to negotiate with the World Bank and the IMF, which it had described in the past as imperialist tools.

On foreign policy, the denouncement of capitalism and imperialism became a thing of the past. A most cordial relation was established with India since Ramgoolam had lately turned pro-American on the issue of Diego Garcia. Besides, before the elections of 1982, Bérenger, Jugnauth and K. Bhayat had met Mrs. Indira Gandhi and the foreign minister of India, Vasant Sathe. The Indian government of the day was more inclined to see a party in power which was vocal on the issue of Diego Garcia and more in tune with the Non-Alignment policy.

However, the new government did not set any time limit for the return of Diego Garcia. Mrs. Indira Gandhi visited Mauritius in July 1982, for establishing stronger Indo-Mauritian relations and promoting South-South cooperations. The parliament decided to declare Diego Garcia as an Mauritian territory and to stop supplying goods to the American base.

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15 See *Le Mauricien*, 20 July, 1981. Also Chapter IV.

16 At the time of 1982 general elections, it was no secret that the Indian High Commission in Mauritius, which has a strong influence on the Hindu voters was not averse to change and that it did not consider the MMM either as anti-India or anti-Hindu. Based on interviews.

17 *Le Mauricien*, 2nd August, 1982. See the statement of the Prime Minister: "Nous sommes pour la dimiliterisation de l'Ocean Indien et contre la base americaine de Diego Garcia. Si nous militons pour le respect de ce principe nous ne pourons negocier des transaction commerciales pour l'approvisi onment de la base de Diego Garcia."
The technical adviser of Francois Mitterand visited Mauritius and Bérenger discussed the prospect of increasing aids from France. The controversial issue of the sovereignty of the Tromelin was avoided by both the sides. On the presence of France in the Indian Ocean, and under the proposed Indian Ocean Commission, d'Estrac explained that France was a 'pays riverine de l'Océan Indien' (a water side country of the Indian Ocean) and hence, its presence was justified.

In international relations the principle of non-alignment was confirmed. The government recognised African National Congress (ANC), the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO), the South-West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) and the Shaharwadi Republic of Polisario in Spanish Sahara. It established a committee to examine the circumstances under which Diego Garcia was ceded to Britain by an order of Council on 8 November 1965 when Mauritius was having administrative autonomy and was at

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18 On Tromelin, G. Penne, the technical adviser of Mitterand, said, the priority of Mauritius is to search for the solutions of her economic problems. d'Estrac said later that he does not think it is necessary to internationalise the problems of Tromelin. See "Cooperation regionale, Diego Garcia et non-alignment", Oodiah, n.1, p.130. Earlier, it had organised many demonstrations and marches for a total break. France was reassured that Mauritius had no intention of interfering with the internal affairs of the Réunion.

the verge of decolonisation. It affirmed Mauritian sovereignty over Tromelin also. But unlike Diego Garcia, it was against internationalising the issue.

One lasting decision of the coalition government, which remained for nine months only, was the establishment of the Indian Ocean Commission - an organisation intended to enhance regional cooperation within an institutional framework. In July, the Minister of External Affairs outlined the project, in a press conference, while he was on a mission to Seychelles. The commission was to include Mauritius, Seychelles and Réunion. The left wing of the MMM was apprehensive about the presence of France in the Commission, but d'Estrac defended its presence by

20 The work of the select committee illustrated as how the then coalition government led by Ramgoolam agreed with the détachement of Diego Garcia from Mauritius. Though the finding embarrassed the Labour Party, it weak-end the claims of Mauritius on Diego Garcia. The Committee discovered that a telegram addressed by the Governor of Mauritius to the Colonial Secretary of State in London states that the Council of Ministers "confirmed agreement to the detachment of Chagos Archipelago in conditions enumerated", though the ministers of the PMSD had objections on the ground that the compensation was not sufficient. In another document, the select committee found that its Council (of ministers) that Secretary of State should be informed of their agreement that the British government should take necessary legal steps to detach the Chagos archipelago". The minutes of the constitutional conference of 1965 specify that "The Secretary of State asked whether he could inform his colleagues that Dr. Ramgoolam, Mr. Bissoondoyal and Mr. Mohamed was prepared to agree to the detachment of the Chagos archipelago". See Week-End, 12th June 1983, p.6.

21 "Il y a une volonté politique d'activer les chose pour cette commission puisse permettre la création d'un cadre de manière a favoriser cette operation, See Week-End, July 11, 1982.
saying that the French department was in the Indian Ocean. Yet another decision of lasting nature and in a way, the root cause of the split in the MMM, was acceptance of the terms of World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. These terms carried conditionalities for collaborating more closely with the private sector, removing food subsidies meant for the poor, cutting surplus labour for effecting 'productive employment, and other measures which went against the MMM programmes.

Though the involvement of the World Bank and IMF heralded an unprecedented economic boom in the later years, its immediate fall-out helped to create dissensions in the rank and file of the MMM.

COLLAPSE OF THE COALITION

In its election promises, the MMM and MSP had assured a massive employment project, control of the economy, a check on debt and eradication of poverty. But they had underestimated the magnitude of the problem. The severe economic crisis forced the socialist ideologues to go for loans from the World Bank and I.M.F. Bérenger was caught unhappily between ideological commitment and economic realities. Though he opposed a third devaluation favoured by K. Bhayat, Minister for Industry and Commerce, he had no alternative but to accept the terms of the World Bank and the IMF. But this surrender to financial institutions was not acceptable to others in the Cabinet. These conditions were indeed very unpopular. They involved reduction in food subsidies, a check on the rise of wages and salaries, and a ceiling on the government's expenditure. Bérenger's first budget,
which had to meet these conditionalities, precipitated the crisis in March 1983, resulting in a split in the ruling coalition and holding of new general elections. Under the budget of 1982-83, 75 million rupees in tax reduction were given to the estate-owners, supposedly to increase employment and rejuvenate sugar industry. Berenger’s critics made it appear as though he was siding with the Francophone ‘sugar-barons and squeezing the purse of deprived Indo-Mauritians. Harish Boodhoo was the most vociferous critic of Bérenger, who was projected as a man who cut subsidies on rice and flour, imposed ‘Sales tax’ and increased the ‘Stamp Duty.’\textsuperscript{22} All this affected the poor Indo-Mauritians. Any adverse effect on them affected also the vote bank of the PSM. The racial overtones such a charges renewed the ethnic forces which were left dormant since 1982.

The PSM’s campaign against MMM leaders especially Berenger, exacerbated sectional and personality conflicts inside the government. But it was not the issue of economic policy as such, (over which there was little option to go other way), which brought about cleavages in the coalition. Other contentious issues cropped up such as enhancement of the Creole language,

\textsuperscript{22} For the Budget speech of Berenger (1982-83), see Legislative Assembly Debates, 30 July 1982, Col.1347-1410. The subsidies on rice and flour, accounted for 9 percent of the budget, the export tax on sugar (23 percent of the turn over) got the relief of Rs. 57 millions.

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the role of the National Broadcasting Corporation, appointment of new ambassadors and opening of embassy in Libya etc. These issues assumed ethnic overtones. By the end of July, the Legislative wing of the MMM met to examine massive recruitment of old Labour Party workers in the PSM. It opposed the entry of members from the old regime in the ruling coalition. In September 1982, the question of appointing new ambassadors came up. The MMM decided their selection and posting all by itself. In October, the difference between the MMM and the PSM came to the open on amending the Mauritius Broadcasting (MBC) Act of 1970. The amendment of 'MBC Act' which was under the ministerial charge of Harish Boodhoo, was discussed in the cabinet. The amendment was opposed by the MMM inside the cabinet on the ground that it went against its electoral promises for full autonomy and democratic principles which it claimed to stand by. The amendment was criticised heavily in the MMM-PSM meeting and in parliament by Berenger. The MMM newspaper, *Le Nouveau Militant* reacted by saying "MBC is not the property of Harish Boodhoo or the government; MBC belongs to the people and will have to serve the people". Yet another

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23 Harish Boodhoo reacting to such opposition said, "Je suis entièrement libre d'organiser des réunions avec les ou autres...le PSM est libre...de recruter des membres sans obtenir l'aval de certains", *Le Mauricien*, 2nd August 1982.

24 "MBC Act", Oodiah, n.1, p.130.

problem arose two weeks before the scheduled voting on the MBC Amendment Bill. The MBC announced a new programme in which the major change was introduction of a 30 minutes news bulletin in Creole and to produce a major part of its programmes locally. The 'MBC New Look' sparked a public debate. Paul Berenger spoke of breaking the stronghold of conservatives. A 'Muvman Pu Kiltir Popiler Morisyin' (MKPM) was established, by the MMM supporters which adopted in a public gathering- 'the new look of the MBC'. As the MBC was under the charge of Boodhoo ministry and Boodhoo, the MMM adopted the tactics of applying public pressure on the Minister. The Director-General of MBC, Gaetan Essoo, favoured the MMM line and used his office to push these changes knowing well that the Minister would oppose them.

In the meantime, Berenger and K.Ruhee, the PSM Minister for Planning, returned from Washington and Paris, after negotiations with the IMF and the World Bank. It followed a debate on liberalising the bank.

26 An announcement of the MKPL appeared in Le Nouveau Militant of 19th October, 1982. It was in Mauritian Bhojpuri dialect: "Nyan Bhulayya: tohar prezans neseser ba" (Do not forget, your presence is necessary).

27 Harish wanted to sack Essooo, but the was a junior partner in the coalition. Though for the time being, this problem was ignored by Boodhoo, but later on this precipitated the crisis leading to the split in March 1983. For details of controversy see, Week-End, 17th October, 1982.

28 Le Militant, 4th October, 1982. See "Mission fructuseuse et positive à plus d'une titre".
interest rate and attaching the Mauritian Rupee to a new basket of international currency. The Minister of Finance published three documents regarding the economic situation, and his negotiations with the World Bank and the IMF.

On 12th October 1982, there was a public meeting at Bell Rose where Berenger called for holding general elections if there was opposition to his line of action. The PSM group took it as a threat. Prime Minister Jugnauth was also irritated by Berenger's reference of fresh general election.

In a meeting of parliament members of the PSM-MMM, on 18th October, Berenger expressed his serious objection on leakage of the proposed increase in prices of rice and flour, which was lower than what he had suggested. He held K. Bhayat responsible for this and criticised him for hob-nobbing with the PSM, for his appearance on television to announce the increase in the price of gas, which was against the 'political pedagogie' exercise which he had initiated to explain the economic situation to the public. Berenger resigned from the cabinet. Explaining his decision, he said that to start with, it was an economic issue, but it also involved the style of functioning of the government, "of back-stabbing

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29 Berenger said in the meeting, "le gouvernement n'a pas l'intention de gouverner dans l'arrogance et de pratiquer la répression. Si le peuple, ne veut pas de ce gouvernement, il y aura alors de nouvelles élections générales", see Oodiah, n.1, p.133.

30 "Paul Berenger démissionne", ibid, p.133.
and treachery". K. Bhayat and Jugnauth adopted a reconciliatory approach. The next day the political Bureau of the party met. At the meeting, Jugnauth commented, "The people of Mauritius are waiting for a heroic act from Berenger and the political Bureau demands Berenger to resume his function". On 21st October, a meeting of the MMM parliament group took place in which members of the Political Bureau also participated. In this meeting, the PSM was held responsible for creating friction and conflict within the MMM and in the government. It was unanimously decided to part with the PSM. Jugnauth went straight to the Governor General to inform him about the rupture and his intention to form MMM government which had 42 members in the Assembly and the support of two OPR MLAs. In this way, Jugnauth succeeded to bring Berenger back to the cabinet by involving the Political Bureau of the party.

Berenger had a strong hold over the party but in the government Jugnauth, as Prime Minister, had the main say. Jugnauth did not allow Berenger to have

31 Berenger said,
"Toute a buté sur une question économique mais il s'agit surtout d'une question de fonctionnement du gouvernement, du travail d'équip, de coup bas que moi j'appellerai traitrise", see Le Express, 19th October, 1982.

32 "Le peuple Mauricien attend un acte héroïque de la part de P. Bérenger, le BP demande à P. Bérenger de reprendre ses fonctions", see 'P. Bérenger dismissionne', Oodiah, n.1, p.134.
proportional influence in the government. Inside the party, it was Berenger, whose line was followed. As a result, there developed a personality clash. In the process to strengthen his grip on the government, Jugnauth looked beyond the party and tried to gather forces including the ethnic ones, which had on many occasions made Berenger own the liability of his white skin and French descent.

While the Bureau Politique unanimously favoured rapture with the PSM, Jugnauth insisted that in that case, "C'est moi et moi seul qui nommerai le nouveau cabinet", (It is me and me alone who will nominate the new Cabinet members). Berenger declared that the root cause of his resignation was not differences with the PSM which had anyway approved his economic strategy. He announced that the coalition was between Jugnauth and himself, centering on economic question.

On 22nd October, Political Bureau met in the absence of the Prime Minister, who was unwell, and decided that the next meeting would be held on the following Monday for "the party and the Prime Minister working in consultation for the selection of ministers".

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33 'Rupture MMM–PSM', Oodiah, n.1, p.134.

34 The PSM and MMM had jointly approved the economic strategy in a meeting held on 11th October. ,ibid.

35 Le Mauricien, 21st October, 1982.

36 "Flottement négociations et 'petition'", Oodiah, n.1, p.135.
Boodhoo approached Jugnauth twice to form a joint commission of the parties and then to part honourably as brothers Jugnauth accepted the idea and, as a result, the ministers of the PSM delayed the resignation till a combined meeting. In the next meeting of the parliamentary group and the Central Committee of the MMM, the list of the names of all ministers was decided. The announcement was delayed till the next day.

But, at the same time, a meeting was held by the MMM at Eden College, where the issue of replacing Jugnauth, as the head of government was discussed.\(^{37}\) Boodhoo met Jugnauth many times and expressed his confidence and faith in him.\(^ {38}\) Jugnauth was being cornered in his party. In the Political Bureau, Jugnauth asserted that to choose ministers was his prerogative. Dr. Ramgoolam, who was watching everything closely, expressed his opinion that according to the Mauritian Constitution, the party cannot dictate the Prime Minister.\(^ {39}\) On 2nd November, 1982, the Prime Minister announced his decision to maintain the same team for the government. He justified the step as,

\(^{37}\) For minute interesting details of the day, see the statement of Cassim Utteem of the MMM who was all through present with the Prime Minister in Oodiah, n.1, p.136.

\(^{38}\) Harish Boodhoo reiterated his "Confiance dans le leadership et la sagesse du Premier Ministre. Quelle que soit sa décision, je suis convaincu qu'elle sera dans l'intérêt supérieur du pays", see Le PSM obtient gain de Cause, Oodiah, n.1, p.137.

\(^{39}\) Week-End, 24 October, 1982.
"morally we cannot govern alone, the expulsion of the PSM would be unjust". He asserted that the 'constitution must prevail on the party' and that he had decided to act on 'the authority and prerogative which the constitution of the country confer on him as the Prime Minister'.

Now it was a rift between the statutory provisions of the party and the constitutional provisions of the country. The Political Bureau met to seek solution of the problem. In the ensuing tussle, it was the constitutional provisions that prevailed. A joint committee of the PSM/MMM, which was scheduled to take place to say good bye to each other, reaffirmed 'complete solidarity' on the main programmes. The PSM demanded the resignation of K. Ruhee and J. Seenyen -both PSM members- who had kept themselves aloof from the PSM in all these problems but again, Jugnauth refused to oblige the demands of the PSM. The PSM was left with only three ministers—K. Deerpal Singh, Harish Boodhoo and R. Beedassy.

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40 See "Le PSM obtient gain de cause", Oodiah, n.1, p.138. According to the MMM constitution, it is the assembly of delegates that choose the Prime Minister, finalise the choice of other ministers, can reprimand and ask resignation of any minister. On the other hand, according to Articles 59 and 60 of the Mauritian Constitution, it is the Prime Minister, holding the majority in the Parliament, nominates and revokes his ministers in agreement with the Governor-General.

41 Le Mauricien, 4th November, 1982.

42 The PSM-MMM accord had given five ministers to the PSM, but on the request of Jugnauth, the PSM continued in the government with only three cabinet seats. On 1st December, 1982, the PSM started its paper, 'Socialist' through which it gave its version of the crisis.
On 12th December, the elections to all the five municipalities was to take place. The PSM gave a principled moral support to the MMM but it did not contest the elections. The main contenders for these elections were the MMM, the PMSD supported by the MPM,\(^43\) and the Labour Party. Just before the elections, Gaetan Duval initiated a censure motion against the government. In the debate that followed, Duval took his position in favour of Jugnauth and Boodhoo, but criticised other ministers of the MMM. Public response to the election was very poor. Less than 40 percent voters took part in the elections. The MMM got 56 percent of votes and 92 percent of seats (115 out of the total of 126). The PMSD emerged as the main urban opposition force. The MMM came to control all the five municipalities and became confident in making it alone in any eventual election. After the municipality elections, the campaign of the PSM against the MMM intensified. Now, the PSM was armed with a new paper, Socialist, which gave a wide coverage to the censure motion against the government. Le Militant also spoke of the profound disgust among most of the MMM members.\(^44\) It charged the PSM for collaborating with the PMSD, in its attempt to replace Creole from the MBC and in the slander campaign.

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\(^43\) After the defeat of the 1982 elections and Ramgoolam’s unwillingness to hand over the leadership of the Labour Party to Satcama Boolall, some members of the Labour Party, led by Bolell ha founded the Mouvement Patriotique Mauricien (MPM).

\(^44\) Le Militant, 7th January, 1983.
against the MMM. The Central Committee, which met on 8th January, 1983 was of the opinion that if the PSM does not behave in proportion to its strength, a new general election should be held. Reacting to the charge against the PSM and prescription of the general elections, Jugnauth said that the problem did not concern the PSM. For him, it was a power game within the MMM. He charged, "an impression has been created in the press that I am not the real Prime Minister. I do not want to submit myself to such humiliation".

Jugnauth was openly charging his detractors in the MMM. He gradually adopted increasing left position and criticised IMF and the World Bank. He threatened to take the case of the Director of MBC/TV, Gaetan Essoo, to the Cabinet as Essoo was complaining against the professional freedom and lack of autonomy. In this tug of war for power, the private secondary colleges of Mauritius went on strike protesting against the IMF prescription. Three major unions, the GWF, which Berenger himself had headed and had used successfully against Ramgoolam, the FTU and the FPBU, decided to form Front Syndical de Gauch (FSG) for mobilising the people to stop government from implementing the conditions imposed by the IMF and the World Bank.

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45 ibid.
47 "Power game au MMM", Oodiah, n.1, p.140
48 See "Fin de la trêve syndicale", Oodiah, n.1, p.141.
On the occasion of the fifteenth anniversary of the Independence Day, the MMM decided to give this occasion a 'national' look. Rama Poonoosamy was given charge of the Committee to organise a festival. The Committee decided to play national anthem in the 'national' language, i.e., Creole. Jugnauth was abroad attending the Non-Aligned Conference and Berenger was the acting Prime Minister. Berenger supported the broadcasting of the national anthem, 'Moris·nu Pai' (Mauritius-our country) in Creole. Boodhoo took strong objection to this. He argued that neither Creole was the national language nor Berenger had the authority to change it from form English to Creole. Boodhoo did not let the Creole national anthem go on air. Berenger charged that the cultural policy of the government was undergoing the same sabotaging process as the economic policy. On March 22nd, Jugnauth dismissed Gaetan Essoo, Director General of the MBC. To Berenger's faction of the MMM, it was a clear signal that the Prime Minister had switched his loyalty to the PSM and no longer relied upon to uphold the MMM policies. Inside Parliament, on the same day, Berenger had an argument with the Deputy Speaker, Ajay Daby, over certain rules. The Prime Minister said Berenger was guilty of contempt of the chair and asked him to withdraw these allegations. Berenger refused and walked out of the House with some

49 See Week-End, 6th March 1983 and 13th March 1983.

50 "La Cassure, Oodiah, n.1, p.143.
other ministers. 51 The next day eleven ministers resigned from the Cabinet and R. Jaddoo, when he returned from Zimbabwe, where he had gone on a mission, also followed their suit. All of them expressed no confidence in the Prime Minister, who was left with five ministers only: K. Bhayat and D. Bundhun of the MMM and three from the PSM.

The central Committee of the party met on the same day. After three hours of discussion, the majority of the 26 members present condemned the statement of the Prime Minister. The majority was against Jugnauth. Outside the ‘quartier general du parti’, where the C.C. meeting was taking place, MMM supporters were hostile to Jugnauth. Many proposals were floated to bring these two factions together. 52

Two resolutions demanded that Jugnauth totally part from the PSM and hold the elections. Berenger’s resolutions

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51 Based on personal interviews, July-August, 1990.

52 On 24th March, another combined meeting of the C.C. and the Parliamentary group took place in the municipality building of Quatre Bornes. Many MMM supporters were waiting outside for the decision. Four motions were formally discussed and voted. One proposal floated by V. Lutchmeenaraidoo was that Jugnauth remains the head of the government and Berenger becomes the party chief. See Le Mauricien, 24th March 1983.

V. Lutchmeenaraidoo proposed the break with the PSM and holding of general elections with the MMM support to the new government of Jugnauth. It was not passed. B. Khodabaux asked for the minister who had resigned to sit as ‘back bencher’ in the government. It was rejected. D. Bundhun asked whether the Prime Minister was ready to expel the PSM and go for general elections alone. The Prime Minister refused and asked to look for some other alternative. Berenger demanded that the MMM should sit in opposition and left free and Jugnauth and the MMM MLAs who wanted to go with him, the PSM and the OPR be allowed to form the government. For details, see Annuaire des Pays de l’Ocean Indien La cassure, Oodiah, n.1, p.144-45.
wanted MMM to sit in opposition leaving Jugnauth and his supporters within and outside the party to form the government.

To Berenger’s motion, which was a very serious threat to Jugnauth, participants decided that it should be discussed in detail by the Central Committee and the Assembly of Delegates. Jugnauth reacted by saying, "Si, je comprends bien, c’est une motion d’expulsion contre moi" (If I understand it rightly, it is a motion of expulsion against me). He made it clear that if his proposals were not ratified by the Assembly of Delegates on 26th March, he would be left with only two alternatives - to hold the general election or to form his own party. After this incident, Jugnauth decided not to have any dialogue with the anti faction of the party. On 25th evening there was a meeting of all those who had resigned from the Jugnauth’s government. The PSM was criticised very severely. Berenger referred to the campaign of Jugnauth to isolate him on the basis of the colour of his skin. All of them spoke against the PSM and Harish Boodhoo. L’Estrac denounced Harish Boodhoo’s

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53 When Jugnauth walked out to get into his car, he was hooted and booed by the crowd which was waiting outside in the municipality hall.

54 "La cassure", Oodiah, n.1, p.143.

55 "Berenger est un blanc,... disent ils mais quand il luttait, n’était-il pas blanc?", See "Le divorce A. Jugnauth/MMM", Oodiah, n.1, p.146
campaign in India against Berenger to Mrs. Indira Gandhi which was based on communal grounds. However, many of the ministers who had resigned refrained from attacking Jugnauth personally.

On 27 March, 191 out of 196 delegates voted for break with the PSM. It was decided that those opposed the break should resign from the MMM. Berenger was designated leader of the Opposition and he started nominating the Chief Whip, President of the Parliamentary Accounts Committee, new members to the Political Bureau and consultation to form a new government. Seven MLAs, elected on MMM ticket, joined the ministry, most of whom were from the Hindu community.

The PSM, on its part, started its campaigning against Berenger to prove him as "defender of capitalists" who gave tax reductions to sugar estate-owners in time of austerity. It charged Berenger of racial and ethnic favouritism in choosing Mervyn Coomber as general manager of Rose Belle sugar estate - the only estate owned by the government and appointment of D. Avramovic as head of a commission to enquire into the health of the sugar industry. The PSM called Berenger an enemy of the Hindus.

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56 ibid.

57 They were Anil Gayan, S. Peerthum, J. Goburdhun, L. Ramasahok, D. Gungah, M. Ulchanah, S. Michael and V. Lutchmeenaraidoo. Jean Claude Bibi was given the ministry of Justice which can be given to a non-parliamentarian, if he is a man of law. Except V. Lutchmeenaraidoo, all others had become minister for the first time.

58 Based on personal interviews, September 1990.
hand charged the PSM of sabotaging the coalition and Jugnauth as an amateur, spineless person.\textsuperscript{59} Jugnauth launched his new party, Mouvement Socialiste Militant (MSM) in April 1983 which proclaimed the same philosophy as the MMM’s but claimed to be left of Berenger.\textsuperscript{60} Jugnauth accused Berenger of being "a crook, a liar, dictator, aggressive and thirsty of unlimited power".\textsuperscript{61} He expressed his confidence, in an interview with the Le Mauricien saying the MMM could win elections without the PSM and Boodhoo but not without him.\textsuperscript{62} Gaetan, having resigned as the leader of Opposition, approached Ramgoolam to form a common front. Harish Boodhoo also met Ramgoolam many times. Polarisation against the MMM was intensifying. Boodhoo merged his PSM with the MSM on April 29th, 1983 announcing that "we have decided to dissolve the PSM and to merge it with the MEM to defeat the dictator".\textsuperscript{63} Jugnauth declared, "entre deux maux, je choisis Ramgoolam" (Between two odds, I choose Ramgoolam).\textsuperscript{64}

\textsuperscript{59}
"Le PSM a mis les bâtons dans les roues. A.Jugnauth a laissé faire et encouragé le PSM, il est un Premier ministre amateur et sans envergure", Oodiah, n.1, p.148.

\textsuperscript{60}
He said that Berenger was "un grand Bâtisseur qui peut prendre 10 mois pour construire une maison mais qui peut aussi détruire cette maison en un seul jour", ibid.

\textsuperscript{61}
See, Le Mauricien 8 April 1983.

\textsuperscript{62}
"Le MMM aurait gaggé les elections seul, sans le PSM et Boodhoo mois pas sans moi", ibid.

\textsuperscript{63}
Oodiah, n.1, P.148.

\textsuperscript{64}
ibid.
A by-election took place in the constituency of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill in May 1982. The emerging anti MMM front supported the PMSD on two grounds: (i) that the MMM was anti-Hindu party and (ii) that its candidate Gerand Ahlee was an executive in the Ireland Blyth Limited (IBL), a multinational company. The PMSD got 56.6 percent whereas the MMM could muster only 42.8 percent of the votes. Gaetan Duval asked for fresh general elections without any delay. In regard to the MMM, a common front was developing between the PMSD and the Labour Party. On the other hand, the MMM started its election campaign in a meeting on 11th June 1983 with the slogan "Vrai changement" (True Change). In 1988, its slogan was "Changement" alone. Jugnauth was exploring the possibilities of an alliance with the Labour Party, but was not ready to concede the Prime Ministership to Ramgoolam. The Parliament was dissolved on 18th June and the new general elections were announced for August 21st. When the results were announced the MMM got 46 percent of the votes polled and 19 Assembly seats. The alliance could win 41 seats and got 51.4 percent of votes. The Secretary, the chairman and the Parliamentary leader of the MMM - all lost their seats. Berenger lost by a very narrow margin in the Belle Rose/Quatre

65 "Partielle, sondage et stratégie", Oodiah, n.1, p.149.
66 Finally, the Labour Party and the MSM entered into an alliance. This alliance had also reached an electoral adjustment with the PMSD. In the electoral arrangements the PSM contested for 35 seats, the Labour Party 16, and the PMSD was allotted 11 seats. ls2
Bornes constituency. But he managed to enter Parliament through the best loser system.

ELECTION RESULTS: 1980

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MSM/MLP/PMSD</th>
<th>MMM</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VOTES(%)</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>46.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEATS</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>19+2(OPR)</td>
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</tbody>
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Gaetan Duval became the Deputy Prime Minister with the charge of the Ministry of Justice.\(^{67}\) The OPR which had expressed its solidarity with the MMM before the elections, was also accommodated in the ministry. This was a gesture which Ramgoolam used to show to his adversaries during his tenure as the Prime Minister. France Félicité of OPR was given the Ministry of Rodrigue and Islands. No Muslim was given any Ministerial seat because Jugnath was agreed as Muslims had openly and in block sided with the MMM.\(^{68}\)

The post election period was dominated by two main issues— converting Mauritius into a republic and, secondly, tackling the economic problems. The issue of republic was related to the internal

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\(^{67}\) Kadar Bhayat was expecting to get this post, but because of the internal politics within the MSM, while Bhayat was aspiring to become the Prime Minister, he was reduced to the status of a minister only. See Christian Louit, "Ile Maurice: Chronique Politique et Constitutionnelle", Annuaire des Pays de l'Ocean Indien (1982-83), p. 428.

\(^{68}\) Muslims were kept out of government during the entire tenure of this parliament. There were charges that Muslims returning from Haj were severely harassed on government instruction. Only in 1990 during a bye election that Jugnauth again appealed to Muslims, promising them to give fair representation in government. Jugnauth candidate won because of their support. Thereafter Muslims got seats in Ministry and at other important posts.
internal dynamics of the alliance. Each partner, wanted to prove that the alliance won majority of seats because of its individual contribution. The MSM and the Labour Party clashed over their respective contributions each claiming credit for victory of the alliance. The MSM wanted Ramgoolam as first President of the proposed Republic.

By the end of September, the government came out with a bill to convert Mauritius into a republic with the provision of a President, Vice-President, and a Supreme Court. The government underwent many rounds of discussion with the opposition parties for suggestions and amendments as the government required three-fourth majority in the House. Negotiations with the MMM forced the government to concede changes in the

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69 The MMM had also made the question of republic as an election issue. They had put it higher on their political agenda. In the election of 1983, Berenger had projected himself as the future Prime Minister. To assure the majority Hindu Community, he was emphasising that the post of the President would go to an Indo-Mauritian, if his party would come to power. To counter the allegation of the alliance during the elections that Berenger would be a threat to democracy, he had changed his stand on the power of the President in the proposed republic. Earlier, the MMM wanted to have an 'Indian type' President who would be only a titular head. It wanted the President to be elected by a majority of three-quarters of the legislative assembly members. He was to share the power with the government in establishing thereby 'national unity'. See, *Week-End*, 16 October, 1983 and also 27 November, 1983.
earlier proposals\textsuperscript{70} but the MSM refused to agree with the MMM on the extent of power which the President should enjoy.\textsuperscript{71} Finally the government could get only 47 out of 70 votes. Jugnauth, however, nominated Ramgoolam as Governor General of Mauritius on 28th December 1983 in place of Burrenchobay. But problems remained. Harish Boodhoo floated the idea of merging Labour into the MSM in January 1984. This idea brought rifts into the alliance. The new leader of the Labour Party and Minister for Economic Plan and Development, Sir Satcam Boolell, was charged with hob-nobbing with the MMM. He was expelled from the government in February 1984. However, other

\textsuperscript{70} The government proposed that the President and the Chief Justice would be appointed for seven years. Initially the President and the Vice-President were to be nominated by the Prime Minister and were to hold the office irrespective of the term of the Parliament. The Supreme Court was to be constituted with retired judges of High Court. Ramgoolam opposed the proposal on many counts. He did not want the Governor General to be nominated by the Prime Minister. He further wanted to maintain the Privy Council as the highest court of appeal. Later on the government amended the proposal with the provision of appointment. The President was to be appointed by a simple majority of the Parliament and the President and the Vice-President could be replaced by vote of a simple majority. Earlier the function of the Vice-President was to be specified by the Prime Minister but it was changed to leave this job to the President. The programme for establishing a Supreme Court was dropped. After the conversion to republic the Privy Council was to be called "Judicial Committee" in Mauritius. See, "L'échec de la tentative de insaturation d'une république", by Christian Louit, "Ile Maurice: Chronique Politique et Constitutionnelle" Annuaire des Pays de l'Océan Indien (1982-83), p. 429-30.

\textsuperscript{71} The MMM had presented 12 amendments to the government's proposal related to the conversion of Mauritius into a republic. The MMM charged that all the amendments presented by it were rejected by the government. The MMM, as a result abstained from voting in the Assembly on the proposed bill. The government could not muster three-fourth of the assembly members. The Bill was dropped. See, "Bilan des 100 jours et République", Oodiah, n.1, p.156.
Labour Party members remained in the Cabinet. They formed a separate party called Rassemblement des Travailleurs Mauriciens (RTM). Sir Satcam Boolell managed to get the leadership of the Labour Party but he could not replace Ramgoolam in terms of authority. He was also alleged to have shown disloyalty to the alliance by having secret talks with Bérenger. Boolell defended that in the interest of consensual politics such talks should be encouraged rather than condemned.

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73 After the defeat of the Labour Party in 1982, Boolell had himself created a split in the Labour Party and had formed a new party Mouvement Patriotique Mauricien (M.P.M.). Soon before 1983 elections he had come back to Ramgoolam again after a seven months gap. The MPM was dissolved on the home-coming of Boolell on 22nd May 1983. Boolell was made the President of the party and deputy leader. Ramgoolam remained the leader of the party. The traditional rival of Boolell, V. Ringadoo, opted out of the leadership contest after the 1982 defeat of the party.

Till the breakup of 1982, the Labour Party had a perpetual internal power struggle. Ramgoolam was accepted as a leader by all. The main two contesting power groups were the old guards comprising of Ringadoo, Jagatsingh, Burty David, Badri, Ghurburren and the group of Boolell, which included Malherbe and Purryag. See "La groupement des dissidents autour de parti travailliste", Christian Louit, "Ile Maurice: Chronique Politique et Constitutionnelle" in Annuaire des Pays de l'Océan Indien (1982-83), p.415.

74 Boolell and James Burty David were opposed to move aiming at merger of the MSM and the Labour. When merger was finally decided Boolell used his influence on party's executive committee to expel Ghurburren and 10 other MPs from the party. The expelled group led by Ghurburren had formed RTM. After Boolell it was turn of Sylvio Michel the minister of Local government to go out of the government. He was from Organisation Fraternelle which claimed to represent the same vote bank which Duval was also claiming. He claimed that real head of government was not Jugnauth but the "gang of five". Without naming anybody he said "it was composed of a high ranking diplomat, one official of the Ministry of Information, one foreigner married to a Mauritian, one parliamentarian and an adviser to a minister. Michel alleged that the group was "responsable de la politique l'extrémisme et d'affrontement du gouvernement envers la forces de l'opposition" Week-End 6 May 1983.
The two main political controversies which involved the government of Jugnauth were the attempt to muzzle the press and the menace of drug trafficking. On the former count Jugnauth showed his ruthlessness and aggressiveness which was interpreted by the Opposition as dictatorial but on the later, he came increasingly under heavy pressure. The controversy on press freedom started when some of the newspapers printed libellous articles against some government members.  

The Jugnauth government rushed a legislation in April 1983 amending the 1983 newspaper and Periodical Act with the provision to prohibit 'unbecoming' press reports on ministers and MPs. It further laid down that newspapers have to deposit Rs. 500,000 as security money. This was a huge amount and some of the small newspapers and periodicals faced the threat of closure. The MMM appealed to the Governor General not to give consent and to the Supreme court to scrape the legislation. Journalist and press establishment also took to the streets to oppose the move. The press got support from many other quarters including the Commonwealth Press Association. Protests and demonstrations continued and many journalists and the MMM supporters including former External Affairs Minister, Jean Claude de L'Estrac were arrested.

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75 When they have to face with payment of the compensation they went underground and soon reappeared under new names.

76 Oodiah. n.1, p.158

77 Ibid.
The government agreed to put the Act before a Joint Commission of Enquiry comprising representatives of the press and government. The Commission recommended withdrawal of the legislation which the government accepted. Charges against the arrested Journalist were dropped.78

However the government introduced a similar bill in March 1985. By this bill any person found publishing or saying anything judged to be damaging to the ministers or government and not having concrete and substantial evidence to support accusation would be committing a crime liable for imprisonment. It generated again a fresh wave of protest. An inter party committee comprising the MMM, the Labour party, the UDM and FTS was formed to oppose the amendment.79 But despite the wave of the protest, the government did not relent and the bill got through parliament. This 'gagging' law joined other controversial Acts - Public Order Act and Industrial Security Act, which despite promises by successive governments were not replaced.

After the split and defeat at the hustings, the MMM was shaken. It found itself on defensive.80 The new

78 See "Mauritius: Recent History" Africa South of Sahara. 1988 p. 683

79 This committee was neither a programmatic nor an electoral alliance. The committee decided to coordinate its plan for debate in the parliament. It also decided to form a legal sub-committee to examine the legal and anti-constitutional aspects of the bill and for organising a public meeting at the municipality of Vacoas/Phoenix.

80 Jugnauth faced strong opposition within the MMM before he formed the MSM. The MSM leadership along with the PMSD, the traditional vote rival of the MMM, tried to thwart the MMM's move on any issue and in any forum, be it trade unions, press, parliament or party politics.
Secretary General of the party A. Gonoo emphasised the consolidation of the party. A youth wing was created and the women wing strengthened. Bérenger assured external investors that MMM would do nothing which could harm the economic growth of the country.

The ruling coalition, beside being tough with the MMM, also launched a 'hate Béenger' campaign. Bérenger was projected as an anti-Hindu and anti India. The Hindu activists of the MMM were denounced as "Jati Bechwa" (one who betrays his community) during election time. The MMM on the other hand charged ruling coalition with sectarian approach to politics.

In an interview with a magazine, Jugnauth asserted that Hindus were under-represented and formed a minority in the economic sector, except in the sugar.

81 "Relance du parti" Oodiah, n.1, p.155.

82 "Travailleurs debout" Oodiah, n.1, p.159. The MMM accepted the defeat and responded with restraint to the economic policy of the government. "le MMM choisi délibèrement de donner au pays le temps de souffler ... Nous n'allaient pas rechercher l'affrontment...." Week-End, 1st April, 1983

Earlier the MMM had paralysed and crippled the economic sectors in early 70s during Ramgoolam Prime Ministership. After serving as the Minister of Finance for eight months, Béenger had understood the fall out of the strikes on the national economy of micro-dependent state. Now when in opposition he was criticising the surrender of the government before IMF and World Bank an act which he initiated and defended and which was one of the main reason for split and ouster of the MMM government.

He criticised government for putting all the eggs in the same basket by being exclusively dependent on foreign investment. He denounced the "Capitulation totale du gouvernment MSM/PMSD devant le secteur prive et les investisseurs étrangers" and that the government" est à genoux devant le FMI et La Banque Mondiale" quoted in "Béenger et l'economie", Oodiah, n.1 p.158

83 Week-End 28 October 1983.
cane field, despite their being in majority in the island. Also they were oppressed.\textsuperscript{84} Bérenger criticised Jugnauth by saying that the victims of oppression were not the Hindus alone. That Jugnauth was fomenting ethnic divisions.\textsuperscript{85} Bérenger asserted that the MMM had majority support in the rural areas also.\textsuperscript{86} The political bureau and leadership was countering the campaign of ruling coalition that the MMM was based on an anti-Indian vote.\textsuperscript{87} The MMM launched its counter campaign to advance the thesis that the coalition government was under the thumb of the PMSD. It further charged that Duval and Boodhoo had formed the extreme right wing of the ruling coalition.\textsuperscript{88} Jugnauth aggressive and assertive approach towards his ex-colleagues in the MMM was in contrast to earlier political style in Mauritius. Ramgoolam had been a votary of consensual politics. He was ready to

\textsuperscript{84} "Le MMM, les Hindous, l'unité nationale" Oodiah, n.1, p.165

\textsuperscript{85} ibid.

\textsuperscript{86} "Le MMM est le Premier parti à la campagne aussi" Le Nouveau Militant 23rd February 1985.

\textsuperscript{87} "nos adversaires essaient à tout prix et cela systematigument, de demontrerque le MMM et un parti anti - Hindou et anti - Indé... Le MMM est, un , parti à vocation nationale, et nous nous refuson de faire duclotelism ethnique... L'est , un crime pourun parti politique à Maurice de se poser comme le de fenseur d'un seule group eihrique"See the interview of A.Ganoo in the Week-End, 28 October 1984.

\textsuperscript{88} "Le Chief Whip de l'Alliance et Le MMM" Oodiah, n.1, p.160.
accommodate his severest political rivals. The MMM government in 8 months of its rule had publically declared 'not to be politically revengful' to the earlier government. But Jugnauth's government after 1983 election became authoritarian, high handed and on many occasions dictatorial. The ruthless suppression of Opposition—be it the press, political parties or the MLAs—was a contrast from the earlier period where democratic conventions were respected to a greater degree by the government. The MMM charged the MSM of turning Mauritius into an island of fear. 89 The press was up in arms against any attempt to amend the press law but the government passed the Criminal Penal Code Amendment Act which had repercussions on the press. Boolell and S.Mechel were shown the door when Jugnauth had little political differences with them. The leader of opposition was suspended in parliament around mid June 1983. 90

After the voting on Criminal Penal Code Amendment Act Jugnauth said, "If I so wish, I can get the law passed for hanging. You can not commit crime against the society, If I had been at the place of Sir. S. Ramgoolam in 1971, P. Bérenger could have been hung. With me that type of thing would not be allowed. One should not forget, I am

89 J. Cuttaree, member of polite Bureau described the island situation"Le Paradis démocratique devenu l'ile de la peur""Bilan def 100 jours et République" Oodiah, n-1., p.156.

90 In November 1985 the speaker Ajay Daby suspended Bérenger again who used the word 'batchra' and 'Satan' against the chair. C. Uttem and R.Bhagwan were also suspended for using the word 'dictator' against Jugnauth.
not Sir. Ramgoolam, myself is Jugnauth\(^\text{91}\) Democratic freedom became an issue for the Opposition. On May Day of 1984 'liberty and justice' was the main slogan of the alliance. This arrogant and undiplomatic attitude of Jugnauth continued till his defeat in Municipal election and the arrest of four ruling coalition MPs at Amsterdam airport on the charge of drug trafficking.\(^\text{92}\) Elections for all the municipalities of Mauritius was to take place on 3rd December 1985. The MMM and the Labour party were trying for alliances but this did not materialise. The MMM and the Labour party went to polls separately. The MMM gave the slogan "Gagner en 1985 pour gagner en 1988" (win 1985 for winning 1988).\(^\text{93}\) For the ruling coalition, Harish Boodhoo was chosen the campaign manager. His slogan was "Alliance in the government, alliance in the municipalities." The MMM accused the coalition of being on the pay roll of drug mafia and behaving like a bully.\(^\text{94}\)

\(^{91}\) "...S'il n’en tenait qu’à moi, je ferais voter les lois pour pendre. Vous ne pouvez pas commettre de crimes contre la société. Si moi j’étais à la place de Sir S. Ramgoolam en 1971, P. Berenger aurait été pendue. Avec moi, ce genre de chose ne passera pas... il ne faut pas oublier, je ne suis pas Sir S. Ramgoolam moi, je m’appelle Jugnauth." Oodiah, n.1, p.169.

\(^{92}\) They were carrying heroin worth 700,000 pounds allegedly destined for South Africa.

\(^{93}\) The next scheduled general election for Legislative Assembly was due in 1988.

\(^{94}\) Le Nouveau Militant 5 November 1985.
The campaign was marred by angry accusations from both sides. It had all the vigour of a general election and the voters turnout was 60 percent, compared to 40 percent 1982. The Opposition gained a sweeping victory in all the municipalities. It captured 118 of the total 126 seats. The MMM alone got 60 percent, while the alliance of MSM - RTM and PMSD got only 30 percent. Despite resounding victory, Bérenger said that he was not asking for resignation of the government but if the ruling alliance did not learn the lesson form its defeat the MMM was free to come out on the streets to demand its resignation. It warned the government to change its domineering attitude and to curtail activities of the National Intelligence Unit (NIU), misuse of radio and T. V. and to do away with the process of employing and promoting staff in the public services on caste considerations. Boodhoo on the other hand expressed his satisfaction with the fact that the Labour party of Boolell had disappeared from the scene and noted that "Labour Party voters preferred RTM". He further stated that MSM would absorb the entire Labour Party by the next general election and still accused the MMM of promoting communalism in the urban areas. 95

No sooner had the municipal election of 8 December rocked the ruling coalition, the entire country experienced two successive shocks. Ramgoolam died on 15 December and four MLAs of the coalition were arrested on 31st December at

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Amsterdam air port for carrying 20 kg. of heroin. Jugnauth tried to salvage the situation but things went from bad to worse. Four ministers resigned accusing the Prime Minister of failing to bring drug-traffickers to book. He had rather promoted two of traffickers to the Polite Bureau of the party. This group demanded the Prime Minister to expel the PMSD from the government. Jugnauth said in an interview "Despite the pressures coming from various sides I do not think of expelling the PMSD from the government. This idea does not appeal to me" Harish Boodhoo, who was in India, rushed to Mauritius. He presented to the Prime Minister a memorandum to salvage the situation. Jugnauth took it as an ultimatum. He dismissed Boodhoo as the 'Chief Whip' and appointed D. Ramjuttun in his place. It was now the turn of the MMM to take initiative. It organised public meetings and press conferences to demand the Prime Minister's resignation. It charged the government with involvement in drug trafficking, in fraud and in corruption. On the day the Parliament

96 The four ministers were:- K. Purryag, Minister of Social Security; Anil Guyan the Minister for External Affairs; K. Pillay the Minister of Industry; K. Bhayat the Minister of Trade and Shipping. Purrgay remained faithful to the Labour Party while the other three MSM ministers, led by Guyan were joined by two other MLAs of MSM and they moved to opposition.


session began, it demonstrated outside the parliament against the retention of seats by the three MPs who were back from Amsterdam. The suspended MPs of MMM decided to give an apology letter and participate in the proceedings. Bérenger met and expected the dissident MLAs of ruling coalition to vote against the government. He gave a call for 'Conscience voting' irrespective of party affiliations. All the MMM members voted for the motion. Boodhoo, K. Deerpalsing, R. Beedaysec, R. Soobader, whose vote against the motion was being doubted, voted with the MSM. Boolell, Gunooosing, Gungarum, G. Candahoo, Y. Mohammed and S. Michel abstained from voting. After the defeat of the motion the MMM asked for the establishment of a commission to enquire into drug rackets. It was joined by Labour in this demand. Harish Boodhoo also made the same demand saying that entire population wanted an enquiry commission. He wanted government "to disclose information on the activities of alliance members available with the

100 Jugnauth, defended the retention of their seats saying "les trois députés retrouveront leurs sièges au parlement parce qu'ils sont innocents" Week-End 21st January 1986. But the MMM protested that the speaker Ajay Daby was allowing these MPs to continue but the five MLAs of the MMM especially Bérenger, Uteam and L'Estrac were always kept suspended from the parliament. Inside parliament he allowed selected question on the Amsterdam affairs.

101 He said " sera l'occasion pour que chaque député assume ses responsabilités selon sa conscience... il est arrivé un moment où les considérations de tactiques doivent céder le pas aux principes" See Motion de censures : tactique et principes" Oodiah; n.1, p.186.
police". 102

After consistent pressures from the Opposition and the press, Jugnauth established a Commission of Enquiry by a non controversial Supreme Court judge, Sir. Maurice Rault. The commission boomeranged on Boodhoo. Allegations were made that he had received US$ 5,000 from a drug trafficker. 103 A drug trafficker, Rafick Peerbaccus, who had turned as government witness in the investigation accused Duval of being involved in the drug deal. Opposition and press asked for removal of Duval from the government. But Jugnauth defended Duval and charged that the witness, Peerbaccus, was not telling the truth and the deputy Prime Minister had his complete confidence. 104 Jugnauth was trying to save the government without MMM help. The MMM was exploring the possibility of alliance with Labour. Its strategy was to isolate Boolell in the Labour party by negotiating with the youth wing of the Labour. It wanted Navin Ramgoolam, the son of late Sir. S. S. Ramgoolam, to

102 Socialist (Port Louis) 28 Mai 1986.

103 Boodhoo's defense was that as a party campaign manager he used to receive funds from many organisation and individual. He had lunched a bitter campaign attacking Prime Minister that the mafia leader was seating on the front bench and that drug dealer had been used to finance party activities.

104 On the basis of evidence of Peerbaccus 39 persons had been found guilty for participation and collaboration but Jugnauth was giving Duval a clean chit. See the interview of Jugnauth in Le Mauricien
enter politics and each offered him the post of Prime Ministership. But Navin was indecisive. Harish Boodhoo showed his unwillingness to side with the MMM. He gave the hint to leave politics altogether. Boolell found a good opportunity and in his haste to the government, MLP split. This move was severely criticised by MMM. In the budget session of 1986-87. Jugnauth hinted an early election. Jugnauth could have delayed the elections till the scheduled time. But his party was undergoing continuous internal crisis.


106 A wing of the MMM which called itself the "groupe ideologique" was asking for alliance with MSM group led by Jugnauth dissociating Boodhoo. It was advocating that if there is choice of alliance between Boolell and Jugnauth the MMM should go for Jugnauth. Bérenger strongly opposed the proposal and the move was dropped.

107 Boolell negotiated the MSM. He joined Jugnauth government again. In August 1986 he was given post of one of the three deputy Prime Ministers. In his haste to join the government, he did not take his party executive, which had taken anti government stand, into confidence. Moreover this group was being approached by the MMM for alliance excluding Boolell. This group disapproved the dictatorial way of the Boolell’s move of joining the government. Led by AnilBaichoo and S. Teelock, it formed the Mouvement des Travaileurs Democrats (MTD).

108 The MMM denounced the move saying "Tous savent maintenant que le Prr de SSB n’est que opportuniste et – c’est pourgnoj plus que Jamalis devant une till sitatitve le MMM apelle tous ceux et celles porque La politique est affine de principe et de programme de se ressambler aree er deuríéru Le Mauricien

109 He said that with the budget he was launching the election campaign "Nous viendrons de l’avant avec ce budget la et nous nous lancerouns la campagne électorale." Le Mauricien 26 July 1986.
Four coalition M. P.s had withdrawn their support after the censure motion. Because of the accusation of involvement into drug dealings two MLAs were expelled and vacated their Assembly seats. In August, three minister again resigned expressing disgust over the way the problem of drug trafficking was being dealt with by the government. Jugnauth was shaken, but Boolell's return gave him some relief at this stage. Soon the report of M. Rault Commission was released. Boodhoo was found to be implicated in the scandal. Boodhoo had already encurred the wrath of Jugnauth by his 20 point memorandum. At this stage he was implicated by Drug Enquiry Commission also. Jugnauth expelled him from the party and he resigned along with two other MPs. The coalition was left with a total of 30 in a 70 member parliament.

Some of the expelled MPs from the ruling coalition sided with the MMM while others remained non-committal. Government had to hold by-election for the MPs who had resigned from the parliament seats. These by-elections were to test the public mood of the country. But Jugnauth announced in January 1987 that the elections would be held on 30th August 1987 (instead of 1988 as scheduled). January to March 1987 saw the continuation of political crisis in the MSM. Fresh allegations were made against Duval for involvement in drug deals. Jugnauth defended

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110 The three minister who resigned were R. Sobadhar, Minister of government, R. Beedessy and K. Deerpatsing, the Minister of Agriculture.
Duval again and refused Duval's offer of resignation. Another minister, Diwakar Bunshun, lost his cabinet post following his criticism of Jugnauth, though he decided that he would continue to support the coalition. Another MP Ramjutten was charged in a court with raping a minor girl and then subsequently paying huge sums to the family to hush up the issue. Politically Jugnauth's government was in a deplorable situation.

The only credit Jugnauth had was the miraculous economic performance during his rule. That became the campaign theme of his coalition. There was an anti-Indian coup in Fiji just a few weeks before the election. However despite the hopeless situation, the ruling alliance won the election. But how party coalitions, issues and other factors effected the result, would be examined in the next Chapter.

ELECTION RESULTS: 1987

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MSM Alliance</th>
<th>MMM Alliance</th>
<th>OPR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SEATS</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VOTES(%)</td>
<td>49.27</td>
<td>47.53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the new government that followed the MSM got 12 cabinet posts, the Labour 4 and the PMSD 2.

111 The pro-Indian elected government led by Bavadra was toppled by army which opposed pre-dominance of Indo-Fijians in power.