

Campaign on Agriculture, Agro-Industry and Electricity An Alternative Politics of the Economy

LALIT has mobilized around this Program since 2004-5
when Mauritius went into a systemic crisis
following the end of protection for sugar and textiles by the European market.

We need to think big.

The Mauritian economy is in big enough trouble to warrant it.

Introduction

For 200 years the Mauritian private sector bosses have been in charge of the economy. They have kept a tight monopoly control on big capital. They have taken all major decisions as to when to invest in what and how much to invest in it. They have kept a tight control on investment in what they refer to as “labour”, meaning one of the inputs into production. So, it has been the private sector bosses who have decided how to create jobs, in what sectors and under what conditions. This same capitalist class has kept a monopoly control over most of the land, deciding all by themselves what to plant and how to organize production. So it is that the bosses take all the decisions about how to feed us. In the past 10 years, this monopoly situation has, if anything, deteriorated. When the rate of return to private investment has started, as usual, to go down, the private bourgeoisie has sent its tentacles out into the public sector. It has taken over control of Mauritius Telecom, which was a department of Government. It is trying to get control of CEB and CWA, thus adding electricity and water to its list. It is bent on controlling pension funds, and has already started investing in health and education. It has gone deeply into muck-collection, and has even gone into policing. Private security guards can be seen everywhere. Whole zones, like Caudan Waterfront, are policed privately now. Tax and customs have, since 2004, begun the process of “privatization”. So, the private sector monopoly control has worsened.

We, the people, have left all this power in the hands of the private sector. Well, we have done so, so far ... Government after government has perpetuated this state of affairs. From colonial times through the Labour Government of the 1960's and '70's, up until the MMM and MSM Governments during the 1980's and 90's, and until today, all Governments have organized everything so that the bosses continue their rule, continue taking decisions off their own bats. At most, the government has sometimes intervened so as to ensure a bit of extra profit from cane and sugar for the bosses. For example, government has organized pre-payments to small planters for their cane. It has set up the "factory area" system, to share planters out amongst mills. And it is governments who negotiate sugar prices with European governments and the EU.

And whenever workers have risen up in rebellion against the bosses and the Government, then and only then has the Government seen fit to intervene; the colonial Government introduced the first old-age pensions and the Village Election system after the rebellions of 1937 and 1943; then around the mobilization for Independence, it introduced permanent employment on sugar estates from 1964; and nationalized one sugar Estate, Rosebelle, and the CEB; new labour laws and the system of Awards were introduced; under pressure Government forced the bosses to recognize the sugar sector trade unions SILU and UASI after the August 79 general strike; laws were introduced to prohibit the estates from having their own shops for their workers, and later forced the estates to close down the system of tied housing.

But, it is still the bosses that continue to take all decisions of importance for the entire people and our survival on the planet. And they do it single-handed. They continue their monopoly on land control, on capital, and on decisions about how to deploy “labour” and what jobs to create or not.

And now today, the bosses and the Government have come forward to begin to *admit* that their project is a failure.

The sugar industry is already in a deep crisis. And for the three next years, this same crisis will deepen further into a cataclysm. The “Sugar Protocol” under the Lomé Convention has reached its limit. So, the crisis is, in some ways, “the chronicle of an anticipated crisis”. Everyone with any nouse knew the crisis was coming. But those who take decisions persisted in doing absolutely nothing to prevent it, avoid it, or transcend it. They could not. The Government has allowed mill after sugar mill to close down, with more and more job-losses leaving the countryside without any serious employment prospects at all. Instead of

Government forcing the sugar bosses to convert their mills into other kinds of factory (for food production for export and local consumption, for example), and to keep their workforce in agricultural work that was better organized and with better conditions, the Government has helped the bosses destroy employment in the countryside.

When the bosses tried their own means to get out of their crisis, this also failed time and again. They took all the capital they had bled from Mauritian workers over the centuries, and went and invested in exploiting workers in Mozambique, the Ivory Coast and Gabon, and then too, lost everything. We suppose the MCB and other banks just went and announced "bad debts" of Rs 800,000,000 for each economic disaster.

The free zone textile industry is also at the beginning of an absolutely major crisis. Many factories have already shut down. The Multi-fibre agreement ends now, in January 2005, making this crisis yet another "chronicle of an expected crisis". This kind of export processing zone was doomed from its very inception to be a non-sustainable type of so-called "development". It was always a "stop-gap". Now, all the profits produced by 30 years of workers' sweat and tears, flies off to be invested elsewhere, leaving no profound traces of economic development in Mauritius. When the first place the textile bosses ran to was Madagascar, they bumped into a major political crisis, and there too, lost everything. Another "written off" debt?

This lack of deep economic development is one of the tragedies of capitalism. Over the past 30 years, productivity of labour has increased 50-fold. Agricultural production has been helped by mechanization, and the mills and textile factories have been helped by centralization and the introduction of electronic machinery.

So, how on earth, at times like this can the Government and bosses have the cheek to come and announce that "unfortunately" old age pensions as a right are no longer affordable? How can they announce that Government can no longer afford to pay 1/2 the SC and HSC examination fees as of right? That certain hospital services may need to be paid for by the patient at the moment of the service? And yet they do it. Paul Bérenger and Pravind Jugnauth have even set about destroying agricultural land now.

Instead of building a Cyber-City on rocky land somewhere, they spread concrete all over the finest land in the country at Ebène. So long as the sugar estate bosses get lots and lots of money for selling their land. Instead of developing agriculture and industry to assure food security and food for export, they go ahead with a slave-minded plan to attract the millionaires of the planet to come and build big villas here, thus reducing Mauritian citizens to being virtual servants on a permanent basis.

What kind of bankruptcy are they admitting to for their very own development strategies?

It is an important moment to think about political economics. It's already late. Bérenger, Ramgoolam and Jugnauth, all of them have contributed to bringing us to the brink of a grave economic crisis, one on a scale never known in the history of the country prior to this. There is ruin looking us in the face. And it is not too far away either. It threatens to strike in the next 2-3 years.

And it is not just *Lalit* that says so. The bosses and Government have finally come around to agreeing that that is the case. The sugar industry has no future. Free Zone-style development has none either. There will be further mass sackings with new VRS (the so-called Voluntary Retirement Schemes that are all but compulsory) and with further mill closures. Unemployment can be expected to continue to rise. Recently Prime Minister Bérenger was so het-up about the rate of unemployment that he took to blaming the Central Statistical Office for it, accusing them of not calculating accurately.

It is in such a context that *Lalit* is launching this campaign on a national level to force the Government and the bosses and their lackey-ideologues to open their eyes and look at what the future holds for all the humans of this land. For the broad masses of people, for all of us, there is, in fact, no alternative: we can only defend our right to survive on the planet. That is what the *Lalit* program is designed to help us all do.

A key moment in history

As long ago as in 1983-84, *Lalit* was already in the middle of a campaign to warn of the dangers of leaving the Sugar Oligarchs to dictate agricultural politics of the whole country. What happened then, was that we bumped into State repression. We had prepared a Slide Show and Talk Series called "*Disik, Ki Lavenir?*" that was touring towns and villages of Mauritius. We were, even then, proposing a legal framework that would oblige the Sugar Estates to plant their rows of cane in a format that allows inter-line cropping of food crops *every* year, and not just when there is new cane planted every seven or so years. This way the predictable collapse of the sugar industry that is now happening could have been cushioned by gradual diversification to food-crops for export. We were, even then, proposing a law (or tax framework) to oblige Sugar Estates to plant food crops on a given percentage of their "*plennter*" land as well. We supported the Export Levy on Sugar for the same reason. This tax was originally designed to force diversification into crops that are more long-term-useful than sugar. In our campaign against '*fermtir sovaz*' of Sugar Mills, which had only just begun, we were, even then, envisaging forcing the Oligarchs to convert all mills closing

down into agro-industries of modern types (canning, freeze-drying, freezing, transformation into juices, soups, etc).

The MSM Government did not take kindly to our Slide Show and Talk Series. The Sugar bosses were furious too. So, what happened? The police banned the Slide Show.

They laid charges against us because of a Slide Show, if you can believe such a thing, on the subject of sugar prices, the end of the Sugar Protocol coming, beet-sugar, sweeteners, health issues around sugar, etc, etc.! They alleged that we had not been through the Board of Censors. So, we prepared our defence. We would have won, because the law was clear: Slides did not have to go before the Board of Censors. So what did the State do then? They came up with a Bill, nipped it through Parliament. And what was in it? That '*Slide shows*' have to go through the Board of Censors. So, they forced us to fight repression with the very resources we had put into this key economic question.

In the meantime, successive Governments have gone and let mill after mill close down.

In the meantime, successive Governments have gone and pawned the country's Independence and its soul, through agreeing to the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and its conditions, ironically in exchange for nothing for the people of Mauritius.

Now, when it is almost too late, when the Government has permitted so many mills to close without forcing them to convert to other forms of production, when the Sugar Oligarchs have even gone and aggravated the situation by producing electricity from cane bagasse, now the Bosses and the Government, twenty years too late, find themselves in a blind panic.

And they are about to make worse errors. If we do not prevent them, that is. They will rush headlong into the IRS (Integrated Resorts Schemes) strategy and a savage set of new hotel plans that will ruin our coast-line forever, reduce our country to a "playground for world playboys" (if not the actual mafia), and that will incidentally reduce the entire people to a nation of domestic servants, who will be cooking for the master, sweeping and dusting for the master, washing up after the master, gardening for the master, playing music while the masters eat, child-minding for the masters, taking the masters out in pleasure craft, and in general, getting us back to being slaves.

In *Lalit*, we call for a generalized conversion to producing food – for export, mainly, but also for us all to nourish ourselves on. It is a very secure investment, and a guarantee against future famines that present-day globalization is so good at provoking. Our country is a natural producer of the finest vegetables and fruits, of a mind-boggling variety.

We call on Government to get out of the rut of a 'Sugar Authority' and to break away from its obsession with sugar (an obsession which seems to blind them) and to think big for once. What we need, in organizational terms, is something like an 'Optimal Land Utilization Authority' that proposes and helps research into crops that, for example, produce harvests three times in one year. Instead of a "Mauritius Sugar Industry Research Institute" (MSIRI), we need a "Mauritius *Agriculture* Industry Research Institute" (MAIRI).

The Mauritian climate and soil is ideal for this kind of diversified food crop. In the past what has kept us stuck to sugar and molasses? Nothing but vested interests of Sugar Estate Owners, the Liverpool Tate & Lyle Refinery, plus the Government's Sugar Protocol agreements and other colonial treaties that have kept the economy locked into a subservient role on the pretext of guaranteed prices and quotas. These three interests all conspired to keep the economy stuck blindly to sugar. The peoples' interests were never served by this kind of blinkered thinking.

Slavery, Indenture, wage slavery and the need for agrarian reform

Today, more than anything, we need to get everyone's creative thoughts on how and what to plant. In particular, we need to tap the millennial knowledge of the planting community in Mauritius and Rodrigues. And we need to be very wary of the plans of Pravind Jugnauth to destroy traditional agriculture.

Frankly, if those with a monopoly of the ownership of land, that is to say the Sugar Estates can't put the land to use in a way that serves the peoples' interests, they should be made to give up their control over the land. It goes without saying that their legitimacy as land-owners is very precarious, being based on various crimes, ranging from colonial plunder and theft to human slavery, under the Code Noir, and to indenture. And when slavery was outlawed, everyone knows that it was the slave-owners who got compensation, not the slaves. And what did they do with this compensation money? They invested it in setting up the Mauritius Commercial Bank. So the process of fattening up capitalist companies went one from then, in 1835, through indenture until the early 20th Century, when wage slavery replaced it.

The land must go to those who can develop it so that we can produce enough food to then process in factories, which can be run by those with the will to run them. Food production for export should become the

backbone of our economy. Then, of course, we would be in a position to also develop less labour-intensive sectors like IT at the same time.

We in Lalit say that those who can develop the land and a really modern food industry for export and for consumption, that is to say people who work and who need jobs, must take over. This is how we see that the land reform that never took place during the battle for universal suffrage, nor at the time of Independence, can now be contemplated. It is never too late for a good development.

Let us now turn to the sugar industry in a bit more detail, so that we can see the depth of the crisis that it is in.

Structural Crisis in the Sugar Industry

The sugar industry has gone into a crisis so deep that it cannot be alleviated by the depreciation of the rupee, nor even by a devaluation. The measures the Government and bosses are proposing now will not have any really positive affect, and this neither in the short nor long term. This kind of crisis has dangerous social repercussions in addition to the obvious economic effects. Even when there are tourist hotels and free zone factories in the countryside in Mauritius, it is still, until today, life around the sugar mill and cane plantation that provides the social cohesion of village life.

The crisis in the sugar industry today is a direct and predictable result of the introduction of WTO rules and of the restructuring of agriculture in a European Union, which is growing in size all the time. The protectionist regime under which the sugar industry grew and survived in colonial times, is now being dismantled really fast: there will no longer be the same quotas and guaranteed prices that ex-colonies like Mauritius have had when they produce for and export to Europe.

The background to the Crisis

We all know about the times of the “sugar boom” in the mid '70's which quickly became the economic crisis of the late '70's, when the revenue from sugar was no longer enough to assure the cost of imports of basic needs, and when there were two devaluations which aimed at making workers and ordinary people bear the brunt of the crisis.

Instead of thinking about what long-term future the sugar industry really had, the ruling classes just went into textiles and tourism, while gradually giving more and more tax concessions to the sugar bosses, mainly reducing the Sugar Export Levy. We all remember the notorious 57 million rupee “tax relief” that the first MMM-PSM Government introduced. Instead of diversifying agriculture so as to assure food security and to increase the productivity of agricultural land, the sugar companies went on planting cane and investing in textiles and tourism for the short-term profits these offered *them*. Later these companies would take the surplus made by Mauritian workers and go and invest in other countries, where often they lost all that social capital.

In the '80's, the export levy on sugar was further reduced, until it disappeared altogether. At the same time mill concentration and mechanization of the fields went ahead full steam, supposedly to lower production costs. But once again it was just that the working class was being made to bear the brunt of the crisis, because jobs themselves (not just individual workers' salaries) were being lost ever.

Already, the price sugar was bringing was not increasing in real terms, nor in comparison with increases in the price of imports. But the sugar industry went on surviving because of the protectionism that Europe offered through the Sugar Protocol.

In Mauritius, successive Government have initiated and encouraged a series of measures to absorb the reduction in real prices that sugar exports were fetching with a sole aim: to keep the profit levels of the sugar companies, that is to say of the “estates” themselves. Here we note that the government encouraged the separation of milling and planting into different companies. It encouraged land-parcellization, conversion to non-agricultural status, and the sale of agricultural land. Government encouraged the acceleration of centralization, mill closures, and getting rid of mill workers; the government also encouraged the production and sale of electricity by the estates at a price higher than what CEB can produce at. All this to float the profits of the sugar bosses.

Under the present MMM-MSM Government all this has accelerated further: rapid mechanization of planting and harvesting has brought the VRS, which destroyed some 10,000 labourers' jobs; a mill on average has closed each year, with a reduction in mill workers' jobs; piece rate “speed-ups” for labourers and mill workers continue, while the salaries and bonuses of the management remain a secret; the IRS (Integrated Resorts Scheme) projects are converting thousands of arpents of good agricultural land into holiday camps for millionaires from abroad. All these measures aim at nothing else but floating the profits of the sugar estates, without the least regard for the futures of the 30,000 to 40,000 small cane planters, let alone the workers.

But, as early as 1995, with the setting up of the WTO and all its new trade rules, it had become clear that the subsidies that the beet-producers of Europe as well as the ACP (Africa, Caribbean and Pacific) countries got, would be bound to become illegal. It was eminently predictable.

That is precisely what is happening today. Under pressure from countries that produce sugar for the world market and earn about one-third of what the producers for Europe earn, countries like Australia, Brazil, and Thailand, the WTO has declared the subsidies on beet sugar “illegal” under WTO rules, because Europe sells some of this very sugar on the world market, thus helping depress its price further. Another factor that has accelerated this process is the fact that Europe has grown from 15 to 25 members now, and has to decrease its agricultural subsidies, especially as many of the new members are agricultural producers. So when the European Commissioners come and propose a reduction of 37% in the sugar price they will guarantee over the next 2 years all we can say is that such a proposal was eminently predictable. And all the measures in the world to assure short-term profitability for the sugar estates will not suffice to rectify that scale of price reduction. For small planters, this scale of price fall will be a veritable catastrophe.

What are we proposing?

Already the rupee is depreciating rapidly relative to the Euro and the Pound Sterling and this is bringing inflation; is the Government feeling tempted to precipitate a devaluation so as to increase the sugar revenue in rupee terms to absorb the price reduction? At the moment, Government is putting all its efforts into “diplomacy”, to try to put off or decrease the amplitude of the price reduction that Europe has already announced, and to negotiate some sort of temporary “compensation”; they are also working on a new speeded up “re-structuring” plan. This will mean more of the deadly job destruction of VRS and mill closure. Until almost all employment in the sugar industry will be seasonal and casual, with lower wage rates than at present. No doubt the Sugar Syndicate (The bosses organization in charge of the sale of sugar in general) will demand a price increase for sugar sold in shops in Mauritius. But this will be difficult because the shop-keepers will be able to import sugar cheaper from the world market and sell it at the same price as it is now. The long-term proposal to use molasses to make ethanol for energy production to replace some of the imported petroleum products is also problematic under WTO-type logic. Will Mauritius be able to produce it cheaper than it can be bought from other big producers like Brazil?

Questioning the basics

Has the time not come to put into question why we grow cane and make sugar?

Is it not time to start thinking instead about if we are using our agricultural land and our climate in an optimal way when we persist with this cane and sugar?

Is it not time to consider other agricultural and agro-industrial production that creates jobs, for now and for future generations?

There is no doubt that unemployment has already become the most urgent and most basic question in the country: it is not possible to go on looking at the sugar industry without considering diversification and new agro-industries which have potential for job-creation.

But before looking into agricultural diversification in more detail, let us look at what kind of institutional “backing” it is that has kept everyone believing that sugar is the best thing, when it is only (and maybe that too is not true) good for the “sugar oligarchy” as a class.

Governmental Backing for the Sugar Industry in Mauritius

For decades the sugar industry has benefited from an array of supports, set up from before Independence and on until the present. This support is what gives the appearance that sugar and cane are “the best thing” for “Mauritius” to be investing in.

In 1951 under the *Commonwealth Sugar Agreement*, the sugar industry benefited from a guaranteed market for sugar. This agreement was included into the “Sugar Protocol” under the LOME Convention in 1974 when Britain Jointed the European Economic Community. The Mauritian sugar bosses thus remained couched in the “comfort” of a guaranteed market, and were not interested much in agricultural diversification or in food production.

The sugar industry bosses thus continued pocketing their short-term profits year after year. Plus they benefited from all sorts of State aid, mainly through a series of institutions and fiscal concessions.

The “bureaucracies” and political nominees at the head of all these institutions, in turn, for their own “comfort” developed a kind of vested interest in the continuation of the Sugar Oligarchs’ profits. This means that these very bureaucracies and political nominees have always been colluding with the bosses and government in attacking jobs and in threatening the future of the people of the country, as a whole.

The Institutions and Concessions set up before and after Independence

1853 Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture

1919 Mauritius Sugar Syndicate, which got a new status in 1951

1921 La Ferme dam built to irrigate sugar in the West

1925 Opening of the College of Agriculture, later to become the University of Mauritius in 1965

1926 La Nicolière dam built to irrigate sugar in the North

1939 Cane Planters' and Millers' Arbitration and Control Board (which manages relations between planters and millers)

1946 Cyclone and Drought Insurance Fund for planters

1947 Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund

1953 Mauritius Sugar Industry Research Institute (MSIRI)

1956 Sugar Industry Pension Fund

1965 University of Mauritius, Faculty of Agriculture and Engineering which at first catered almost exclusively to the sugar industry.

1974 Sugar Planters Mechanical Pool Corporation

1980 Mauritius Bulk Sugar Terminal (VRAC) comes into operation

1984 Mauritius Sugar Authority

1986 Farmers Service Corporation (nine centres that offer services to planters)

Fiscal concessions that have benefited the Sugar Industry directly and indirectly

1979 Labour Government devalues rupee by 30%.

1981 Labour Government devalues rupee by 20%.

1982 MMM-PSM Government gives tax concession of 57 million rupees on Export Levy.

1986 Minister Deerpalsingh's restructuring, allows parcellization of cane land and 100 million rupee tax concession.

1987 Sugar Industry Efficiency Act, tax concession for diversification. Estates benefited but did not diversify.

1994 Amendment of the Finance Act 1994, remove the Sugar Levy altogether.

2001 "Illovo deal"- Huge concession to estates on land conversion.

2001 Sugar Sector Strategic Plan, MMM/MSM/PMSD/FTS plan for mill closures and massive job destruction in sugar industry.

It was this institutional support, arbitrarily handed out by Governments and regimes, one after the other, to pump up sugar profits, that has been a brake on the kind of agricultural diversification that would have averted the present crisis.

History of the debate on agricultural diversification

In the past, there have been numerous attempts to put the question of agricultural diversification on the agenda. During the 2nd World War, the Colonial Government took a number of measures to assure food crops, so as to assure food security, since shipping was interrupted. In 1944 the Colonial State had a *Land Resettlement Scheme* (a kind of land reform plan) to allow small planters access to land for food crops. But the capitalists who controlled most of the land and who were attached to sugar production did not agree and forced the State to abandon this plan very quickly.

The Meade Report: an enlightened report in favour of agricultural diversification

Before Independence, the State appointed Prof. Meade to study the economic and social structure of Mauritius. His report, published in 1961, outlined the danger of a mono-crop economy based on cane and sugar. He explained how this kind of economy would not be viable in the long term. He said that if ever the sugar quotas were called into question, this would have a very serious effect on the whole country's economy. He referred to existing studies that showed that the land and climate in Mauritius suggested many other forms of agriculture than cane and sugar.

He proposed that the State should discourage and limit sugar production and encourage diversification.

Among the measures he proposed was the Export Levy on sugar. To encourage diversification he proposed institutions like what would later become the Marketing Board.

Why no diversification then?

The historical bourgeoisie, which owns and controls most of the land and especially most of the prime agricultural land did not agree to diversify. They were too attached to their sugar. But they were not the only ones with a vested interest. Towards the end of the 19th Century, there was a change when the estates got together to form companies and began the process of modernization and centralization. This increased their output so fast that they became “hungry” for cane. This means the estates had a vested interest in small planters supplying cane to keep their mills running. The increase in the number of small planters also meant that the estates gained a “reserve army” for the cane cutting season.

At the end of the 19th Century there thus came the time of “parcellization” when estate sold marginal land to planters who would provide them with cane, in return. The production of vegetables would thus fall considerably. In fact, it did fall drastically between 1881 and 1901. From 1900 the number of planters continued to grow. Planters thus developed a vested interest in the sugar industry.

The working class had its interest elsewhere. Agricultural diversification was in its interests. This would keep employment stable, and bring food security. This would have created the basis, in turn, for the development of a modern economy. The workers in the years 1930-40 were organized in unions, and also politically in the Labour Party and the Bissoondoyalist movement. But the colonial State used repression systematically against workers. On the other hand, the associations of small planters became stronger and developed a political voice through the *Advance Group*, a team led by SS Ramgoolam, who stood *against* the Labour Party in the 1948 elections, and would later actually “take over” the Labour Party. *Advance* represented the voice of a petty-bourgeoisie in trade, planting and in the professions, whose rise was blocked by the alliance between the sugar oligarchs and the colonial State. This group also wanted to accumulate capital.

As, from about 1950 the Labour Party in fact represented the planters who were partly in conflict with the Estates but who also had an interest in the continued production of sugar. All this helps explain who even after Labour was in power, even after Independence, there was no political will to reform land nor to diversify agriculture. A section of Labour’s base was dependant on sugar production, which was dependent on the Estates.

Debate on agricultural diversification after Independence

After Independence, the working class re-organized: the MMM, between 1969 and 1982, became its political voice. The first political programs of the MMM put a lot of emphasis on the need for land reform, on nationalization of the estates and on the need for diversification (*Pour une Ile Maurice possible 1970*, *Socialisme et Developpement 1971*). The MMM’s governmental program for the 1976 General Elections still put emphasis on job creation through diversification and industry, and on the development of marine resources and the need to nationalize 5 estates and 20,000 arpents of land for the purposes of this diversification.

Debate falters on "self-reliance"

Early in 1979, a group in the MMM called “Lel Gos” (Madan Dulloo, Jack Bizlall, Habib Mosaheb, Rama Poonosamy, Rajiv Servansing, the late Siven Chinien) brought out a program for self-reliance. They said it was an economic strategy based on local resources. They did not intend reducing sugar production, but thought it needed to be limited. They sought an alliance for the working class with a section of the capitalist class (against the imperialists) for their plan for a “national reconstruction” project. Mauritius was to produce food for its own needs, and at the very most develop a common market for the Mascarene zone. Their project was not convincing because it persisted in seeing agricultural diversification only in terms of national production, separate from the rest of the world. This kind of “isolationism” was not on, and at the time *Lalit* criticized their plans, as nationalist in the extreme.

There was at the time a small section of the bourgeoisie interested in diversification. Mr. Michel de Speville, director of *Food & Allied*, pleaded publicly for diversification in order to assure food security, to assure foreign exchange, and to decrease imports, keep inflation down and get more value-added. He also warned of the possible end to the Sugar Protocol under the Lomé Convention, and said that war could also isolate Mauritius and leave us without our food imports. He called on the State to encourage food production, agricultural diversification through subsidies, marketing, and to tax imports. He estimated that 13,500 arpents of land would suffice for self-reliance in food.

The MMM leadership quickly picked up on the class collaboration involved in the Lel Gos line, and announced that there were indeed “*Patron du progrès*”. The MMM made “self-reliance” its reason for land reform.

In *Lalit* we have a different philosophy. We believe it is necessary to develop diversified agriculture and agro-industry not just for “self reliance” but as part of an export strategy as well. At the time, in *Lalit de Klas* we criticized the concept of “self-reliance” as one that was back-ward looking.

In historical terms what happened was that, because the “self-reliance” project was not viable, and it took centre-stage in debates, the debates on agricultural diversification came a cropper.

Soon the MMM abandoned the concept of self-reliance and by the time they came to power in 1982 they were already the best defenders of the sugar oligarchy that the oligarchs had ever had.

After 1982

Lalit has always worked for land reform, for agricultural diversification and for the development of a modern agro-industry. Since 1982, *Lalit* is really the only political force to have systematically warned against the kind of economic strategy based on sugar, free zone and tourism. Today we are being proven right. Over and over again. Today we are campaigning for an economic strategy for a modern alternative, which is based on already existing knowledge in the field of agriculture. We believe that our strategy will only materialize if there is a major mobilization to challenge decision-making about land, about capital, about labour.

What form this will take is the politics of the future.

Agriculture, scientific breeding, preserving food

In Mauritius, work in the agricultural sector has always been associated with hard and heavy labour due to the semi-feudal working conditions, which characterize labourers' work on the sugar estates. In fact, the economic policy applied by different governments has perpetuated this situation. Working conditions in the agricultural sector stayed archaic compared to other sectors. It is not surprising to find much more work accidents in this sector. This has greatly contributed to discouraging people from working in agriculture. Alternative agriculture does not only mean a “return to the soil” in a romantic fashion as was promoted by people like Rousseau in Europe long ago. In our modern times it will be agriculture based on scientific methods of cultivation and breeding, built on existing traditional knowledge, and for the amelioration of working conditions and production. It will also mean the integration of the preserving of agricultural products into the sector. Nowadays satellite photos are being used in some European countries for an assessment of the better use that land can be put to. This technology is even used on tractors.

But technology and science does not necessarily mean better working conditions: it depends on who has the economic power and on, what social class has control over the economy. Therefore all new forms of agriculture must include the question of how to bring more democracy to the workplace, how to establish democratic control and free circulation of knowledge on agriculture, how scientific progress can bring about the welfare of every human being and the protection of the environment from pollution.

Knowledge that we already have

In Mauritius some people already have a profound knowledge about farming, including cow-keeping, other animal rearing and planting all sorts of food crops. But the government has consistently attacked small scale agricultural production, especially compared with sugar production. To give just a few examples. In Montagne Ory, for example, chicken rearing by people in the locality has decreased because sanitary inspectors have forbidden shops to stock chicken feed. Instead of arranging for people to get access to this commodity, the State just uses repression to cut out small producers. This reminds us of how dholl puri sellers were driven away from Port-Louis by the authorities at the exact time when MacDonald's was opening its fast food there. There is a political will on the part of the government to destroy all that is traditional, and they tend to turn to the new WTO-style phyto-sanitary controls as their main pretext. They want to destroy all sectors that they qualify as "inefficient". Instead of developing the will to modernize and rationalize this traditional form of agriculture, the MMM-MSM government's economic policy relies on slogans like "bio-technology", which, in the way they intend to use it, will in fact bring about the destruction of this sector.

Pravind Jugnauth's positions on traditional methods of cultivation, when the law on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO's) was being passed in Parliament clearly demonstrates this. They want to "eliminate" small planters, for example, and thus risk losing all the already-acquired knowledge possessed by them and passed from generation to generation, sustaining humans on the planet. Their political will, as far as we can decode it, is to destroy the knowledge on the preservation of seeds, and the transmission of seeds "free", so as to replace this system by the system of seeds produced by Monsanto and sold in cans. In fact Monsanto seeds have the feature very often of being “terminator”. This in turn endangers (through cross-pollination) seeds that small planters have been using for years. It is true that some forms of cultivation and cattle rearing can be done on a large scale and that big investments are needed, even if small scale farming is to develop. But it does not mean that the knowledge and tradition that has been developed in this sector must be "eradicated", as the Government intends to do. Traditional cultivation and cattle rearing must not be

eliminated. We must use already acquired knowledge and experience. The MMM-MSM government's true drive is to produce as per the WTO philosophy, not with and for scientific progress. Only commercial considerations, that is a narrow definition of productivity and efficiency, and short-term profit are their only motivation.

The link between agriculture and transformation of agricultural produce is not new in Mauritius. It already exists here, even though it is on a small scale.

One advantage that we have in Mauritius is that we already have a long tradition of knowledge in the preservation and transformation of food. People know how to make jam, pickles, chutneys, and preserves from a diverse range of fruits and vegetables. It is based upon this know-how that certain family enterprises have started to commercialize jam, jelly, fruit juice, crystallized fruits, pickles, chutneys, sometimes on a semi-industrial scale: either in cans, in bottles or plastic bags. These technologies are already mastered, and are very successful. As for cattle rearing, the situation is similar. Nowadays there are factories, which produce pasteurized milk, yogurt or ghee. There is also a great diversity of products from chicken, pork, fish and shrimps that are sold in plastic bags. Some of those products are exported. These kinds of local produce are the possible basis for a transformation and preservation industry for local, regional, and international demand.

The economical crises that we are witnessing today are certainly creating a new kind of initiative amongst the people to think deeply and collectively about a new form of agriculture and new forms of agro-industry.

What the Government should do?

Facilities should be provided to those who are interested in developing this sector on an industrial and scientific level. For example tax should be removed on all machinery used in this sector.

Non-polluting form of energy, which will also decrease our dependence upon petroleum products, should be encouraged to be used in these small industries.

Research institutes must be encouraged to direct their work towards the amelioration of this industry's products. Exchanges between the University of Mauritius, planters and breeders must be made so as to develop not only traditional but more rational methods.

Facilities should be given to people to learn from other countries like China, Cuba and other countries advanced in this sector.

Necessary facilities should be given to modernize agriculture in Rodrigues.

In sum, we need an economic policy, which will encourage the development of scientific agriculture based on what is already used in Mauritius, which will produce not only for the local market but also for exportation. The government must invest in this kind of industry instead of spending large sums of money for the benefit of the textile, tourist and sugar sectors' capitalists.

The government slogans about "bio-technology" are not solutions, neither are new techniques like GMO, which aims only at guaranteeing the profit of multinationals which has control on this technology.

The threat that GMO represents

In the 90's the multinationals financed laboratories to invent methods of genetically modifying living organisms. They called it GMO (Genetically Modified Organisms). Some traditional and conventional methods have been used over the ages, so as to increase production of plants; but when genetic transfers are being used in food production, it can be very dangerous. They have used this new invention to put patents on living things, and this has been done with the help of the WTO (World Trade Organization). With this new form of agriculture, nature and people's health on our planet earth are in great danger.

The first introduction of GMO in Mauritius has been done by the MSIRI in May 1999 with the presentation of a new transgenic sugar cane, but there was no legal framework in those days. Following this research, Maurice Le Court De Billot, a Monsanto laboratory representative visited Mauritius and declared that the 'Mauritius Sugar Industry Research Institute' is well ahead concerning the utilization of GMO in the sugar cane sector and that they were interested" (From an interview in *L'Express* newspaper 22nd of October 2000). Multinationals like Monsanto, Novartis, Aventis are striving so as to get the monopoly on seeds through control over distribution, thus they will have control over our food supply. The Mauritian Government helped them by passing a law, the "Genetically Modified Organisms Act" in March 2004; this gave legal support for the utilization, marketing and application of GMO's in the alimentary and agricultural sectors. We must stress that this law is in conflict with the United Nations convention on biodiversity called 'FAO Concept of Farmers' Rights', which points to the necessity of the "Precautionary Principle", which allows the concerned parties to refuse to produce and commercialize GMO's as long as it has not been proven to be harmless to health.

An organism is genetically modified when genetic materials from other or from the same species are added to it. Through this process, the organism will produce new proteins, which will give them new functions.

Those who promote GMO's are saying that its quality and quantity will increase, that it will be more resistant to bacteria, parasites, and climatic conditions. They also say that GMO will wipe out hunger from the earth. What they are keeping secret, is that

* No GMO commercialization concerns increase in food production. It is always in the interest of the multinational's profit. With 99% of the seeds produced, the firm produces herbicides and insecticides, which can be used only with their seeds. This means they will also sell more of their different kinds of poison. Thus they will control each stage in the food production chain. They will only produce GMO's that will be resistant to their herbicides. This also means that it will encourage people to use more herbicides and pesticides, and thus we will consume more herbicides and pesticides.

* Most of the GMO seeds can be used only once, implying that for us to get seeds for the next season, we won't be able or we won't have the right to use seeds from the fruits of our previous harvest. So we will be forced to go back to Novartis each time we sow, and they will probably have the monopoly on this species and the price will thus depend only on them. They name this "Intellectual Property Rights" or "Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights" (TRIPS).

* Research has shown that with the wind and pollinating insects, transgenic plants contaminate other plants nearby. This can risk endangering the ecological balance by killing species of insects and plants. It is not only a danger to our ecology but also to cultivation as well, where GMO's are not used.

* No research has been done on the effect of GMO's on human health in the long term. A scientist who studied the effects that genetically modified potatoes had on rats, observed that the consumption of GMO's during 3 weeks has shrunk the brain, increased the volume of the pancreas and affected the immune system of these animals.

This process cannot be reversed because these plants will keep these genetic manipulations forever.

All this goes to show that GMO utilization might in fact end up increasing hunger in the world because of the risks to nature and to people's health. Even if the catastrophe scenarios do not occur we will live under the slavery of these multinationals, which will control our food supply.

In the feudal period the lords controlled the peasants by proclaiming themselves as the owners of the land, nowadays their descendants are proclaiming themselves to be the owners of plants' seeds, and as if this was not enough they are setting about destroying our planet earth.

But today there is an international movement fighting this theft of the multinationals over agriculture: a movement regrouping peasants, planters, cattle breeders, progressive unions, left political parties, ecologists, women and youth organizations. In Mauritius, we have seen these types of organizations group together to protest against and to warn the MMM-MSM Government against the utilization of GMO seeds and products, at the time that the Government brought in its own GMO's. *Lalit* was one of the organizations in this movement. Even though there have been protests, the law was passed in the national assembly in March 2004.

COMMON PROTEST AGAINST THE GMO BILL (GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS)

Given that there is sufficient food production for everybody on planet earth and that the problem of hunger and famine is instead due to the politics of distribution;

Given that 99% of the research on GMO's is done by private multinational companies which aim at profit-maximization for their stake holders;

Given that multinationals which are engaged in the production of seeds (MOSANTO, etc), produce 99% of GMO seeds so as to tolerate their herbicides (poisons) such as Round-up or to transform the tree itself into insecticides (more poison), that is they are increasing the dangerous products dosage in food;

Given that multinationals aim at a monopoly on the production of seeds, they made it illegal to re-use their seeds (with WTO agreement), or impossible to use it more than once (due to the fact that it is a 'terminator' seed and it cannot reproduce itself);

Given that studies done in the United States of America have shown that American food production has been contaminated in a more vast way than scientists had predicted, in fact through wind and pollination insects;

Given that pollinating insects can be affected by it, this results in great risk of contamination for agricultural reproduction of other foods;

Given that nature itself (beyond agriculture) is being affected by the GMO's, which are not being controlled;

Given that the WTO allows private companies to take out "patents on life", this means that food security of the world's people is critically under threat;

Given that the consequences on human beings and human health, on animals, are totally unpredictable, and given that recent studies in United Kingdom show an increase in "allergic" reactions due to GMO's;

Given that the change brought about by GMO's can be irreversible because it deals with genetic materials;

And in Mauritius,

Given that there is a risk of popular boycott of our sugar in Europe if it is not “GMO-FREE”,
Given the awareness of tourists on GMO contamination,
Given that Mauritius is constituted of islands and Archipelagoes, we have the possibility of an agriculture,
which is really “GMO-FREE”, thus giving it a great commercial value,
Given that the first GMO's that have been manipulated by the MSIRI has been done specifically to make
sugar cane resistant to Round-Up herbicide,

We the undersigned:

- * Denounce all the propaganda of multinational companies and local private companies, which say that GMO's are designed to decrease suffering in the world,
 - * Demand a prompt withdrawal of the bill proposed by the MMM/MSM/PMSD/FTS/LES VERTS government.
 - * Demand that the government come forward with a new bill which:
 - a) Insists that imported food should be labelled “GMO-FREE”
 - b) Insist that all research and development be done by the government without any influence or funding from the private sector or the multinational companies
 - c) That all commercialization of all future GMO plants, which are not necessary in our world, should be done under the ‘Precautionary Principles’, that is it is the duty of the company, which is selling something to the public, to prove that it will not have any harmful effect on any future consumer.
- The list of organizations which endorsed this common protestation in March 2004: Institute for Consumer Protection, Ledikasyon Pu Travayer, Rodrigues Government Employees’ Association, Muvman Liberasyon Fam, Mouvement pour l’Autosuffisance Alimentaire, Lalit, ABAIM, Federation of Pre-School Playgroups.

In the past, due to the fact that cultivation and cattle rearing had been done only on a commercial basis for profit, there has not been enough thinking on how to integrate different types of plant cultivation and also cattle rearing within the same project. According to the narrow-minded capitalist economists, sugar produced by the sugar industry must be profitable, inter-line cropping done by planters must be profitable, cattle rearing must be profitable. The absence of any thought on the development of an integrated agriculture is very serious for Mauritius, given that our resources in terms of the amount of arable land is obviously very limited.

Integrated agriculture

The present system evaluates agricultural production on the amount of “profit” that land owners make. There are other ways to evaluate agricultural production.

For example it is essential to assess whether this production can be maintained over time. This is called “sustainable agricultural production”. It also questions whether this agricultural production takes into account our environment, our ecology? Furthermore, it is necessary to take into account human knowledge, that of planters and cattle breeders, and guarantee the continued transmission of this knowledge from one generation to the next.

There are many experiments that have been done on different kinds of agriculture, which in fact do respect these criteria.

For example “integrated farming” in China, where profit-making is not the main motive, but other questions are taken into consideration. Whether water supply in the long term is protected? Whether there is misuse of resources? Then, they can actually re-allocate resources when necessary; for example, they can increase or decrease the proportion of workers on the farm, or in the related industries. Researchers are also closely linked into production. The proportion of researchers can also be changed – if the ‘integrated nature’ of this approach is respected. Researchers are directly linked to the real needs of those who cultivate the land, and those working in the agro-industrial factory. It is not unconnected like in the ordinary capitalist system. The scale is also immense. There have been 100 million of workers that have shifted from ‘on farm’ to ‘off farm’ in China’s agro-industry, without diminishing agricultural production. On the contrary, food production in different forms has increased: in cans, frozen, freeze-dried, pickled, dried, and preserved in all forms.

The capitalist system is always on the look-out for a quick “profit”. But what is even truer is that they are always looking at profit in the short term only. In the long run even capitalist production will lose out, in lots of ways: the soil will get impoverished; the environment spoilt; underground water supplies will decrease drastically; the capitalist negligence will destroy insects and animals which contribute to the perpetuation of life on our planet. In the mid-west of the United States, the soil has been so impoverished (through uncontrolled cultivation and petrol exploitation), that today there is desertification over there.

In Israel in the 1950’s the Kibbutz cooperatives developed integrated farming with an adapted irrigation system in the desert of Negev. This shows how cooperation and integrated development can develop a new

agricultural system. Planters and farmers in regions where there is a scarcity of water like in India and Australia have also carried out this experiment.

To cultivate in deserts and arid and semi-arid regions, is worthy twice-over. Firstly it is worthy, because it allows the development of seeds, which can resist the desert climate, and it allows cultivation in regions where water is scarce. Secondly, it helps to prevent desertification.

These kinds of long term vision will not be possible with agriculture based on the profit motive.

In Mauritius there have been experiments on cattle rearing, cultivation and fish breeding. The St Martin project has been one of those experiences, where waste from one production unit is recycled naturally into the next stage without it being of any cost (e.g. chicken waste becomes fertilizer). This is an advantage because it increases the value of one waste product, and makes it become useful, replacing the need for fertilizers which cost money, pollute the earth and water, and can be harmful for the flora and the fauna. This kind of production (like in China or Mauritius) can be done on a large scale or can be done through the link between different projects (small planters and cattle breeders, cooperating in the same process). See references at the end of the book for articles on cooperative like the *Plaisance & La Ferme Mixed Farming Society* and on experiments in China.

This system brings the land ownership question into focus. Landowners have short-term interests; more profit can be made through speculation very often, than through agriculture. For example IRS (Integrated Resort Schemes) will seem more profitable to land-owners than the development of the food sector, even though the latter would enhance the economy for everybody. As long as land will be under private control, it will be very difficult to get the degree of food security that is essential for the people. We must move towards a collective control and ownership of land.

The consequence of private control of land is that most human beings have no access to land at all. This means that their contribution toward agricultural and economic development is absent, and thus our overall production of ideas is impoverished. Productivity growth is limited. Dynamic development comes through research, observation and the transmission of millenarian knowledge.

There is urgency in this work. If we lose this millenarian knowledge, we will never get it again. This means that we, the people of the planet, could be under the direct control of the big multinationals, registered in the United States, and which want to make profit through registering patents on life (seeds and animals), and where our food security will be endangered.

In the present context, it is important that we put the question of the production of energy together with agriculture and agro-industry. The traditional petroleum sources of energy (fossil fuels) are becoming more and more expensive, and represent a serious and irreversible threat to our ecology. Thus it is necessary to think on a new politics for the supply of energy. All modern production is dependant on energy.

Renewable energy

In *Lalit's* campaign, we are linking two-or-three important issues into the debate. Firstly, we believe it is a fundamental human right to have a power supply in one's home. At the same time, we believe that the new generation of "ecological rights" gives us a basic right to an unpolluted environment. This means we do not think the debate should be limited to the question of the selling price of what is a "factor of production" for some consumers and a mere "commodity" for others. We are dealing with human rights.

With the increases in our electricity bills coming so regularly, with a number of families being burnt to death because of having to use candle-light in times when the precautions for these are no longer even known, with increasing unemployment, and with work that is here today gone tomorrow, the right to electric supply in the home (as well as other things like running water, telephone, public transport) has to be respected. If this means subsidy, it must be subsidized. We must point out that Mauritius is a signatory, and that since 1976 to the UN Convention on Social and Economic Rights.

At the same time, with the pollution being caused by "fossil-fuels", and with the Sugar Industry (responsible for bagasse) imploding; *Lalit* is thus launching a double element in this campaign: No to privatization of the CEB! And pressure for CEB to turn to research and massive investment in sources of modern, clean and genuinely renewable energy. Let us not now, as we finally get free (forcibly, as it turns out) from the prison of sugar, become prisoners of cane-for-bagasse. Land must be freed for the huge food production for export that is necessary.

Renewable sources of power create employment as well as keeping the environment in harmony. As everyone knows, a serene tourist industry has one minimum requirement in a place like Mauritius: an unpolluted environment. The future lies in renewable power sources.

In the USA, the biggest ever *Wind Farm* took only one year to set up. It produces 3,000 MW. In 2002, Wind Energy produced 1,200,000 MW in the USA. 1,700,000 jobs were created to set up the industry, and many more needed to keep it going than for other forms of power production. Wind Power is already cheaper than coal-produced power (if you include as a cost the health bills of miners.)

In 2010, 10% of the power of Europe will be from Wind Farms. In the next 15 years, the cost of production of Wind Farms is expected to decrease by 50%. Mauritius, Rodrigues and Agalega are blessed with constant South East Trade Winds that make wind energy very easy.

There is also power production from the movement of the sea, which is ideal for islands like Mauritius, Rodrigues and Agalega. There is both Wave Energy (one type of technology, where turbines are turned by the coming and going of each wave near the edge of the sea) and there is Tidal Energy (the constant rise and fall of the tide turning turbines). Britain has recently invested 1.1 million pounds in a Tidal plant.

And then there is Solar Energy. In Mauritius we already use solar heaters on our houses for water. We also already see some solar panels for some street lights. Solar panels can be used for domestic purposes too, to cover running radios, TV's and lighting. There are also immense plants that, with the aid of huge reflecting mirrors, heat up water, turn it into steam and then turn turbines the same way coal does.

So, instead of Mauritius continuing to accept old technology (and often 'dumped' technology from Europe and elsewhere), we propose massive investment in new, modern forms of power-production.

Lalit's demands

Here are the true alternatives that we, in *Lalit* are promoting in our campaign. Everywhere in the world as well as in Mauritius and Rodrigues, the public is fed up with development, which is only in the interest of some capitalists' short term profits. We are fed up with governments which act as facilitators for these capitalists who are making profits.

Lalit is proposing to mobilize the public, and particularly working people and those who work the land, on these demands which will allow us to get out of the "economic catastrophe" that we about to experience. We believe that the people should aim to implement a truly democratic and socialist transformation of our economy, no less. In the present context, people will easily understand the transitional nature of our proposals. That is, they are not only reasonable but they are necessary. The present system will be put into question when we put forward these eminently reasonable demands. The present system cannot deal with these demands. Simultaneously they are demands, which will only be possible when the political and economic balance of power gets to be in favour of the working class and the people, and when we will be able to make the ruling class to bear the brunt of the present crisis where there economic policy has brought us.

Here are our demands and propositions:

* A conversion to a *massive food production* through 'organic' and 'green' method on a big scale, for our local needs and for exportations. (This big scale can be either 'big unity' like the sugar estates are nowadays, or composed of many 'little unities' that work together like a true cooperative.) Thus Mauritius will be able to deal with the disaster of the sugar industry faced with the dismantling of the Sugar Protocol, and at the same time be the avant-garde of a "GMO-free guarantee" food producer. This will create employment and at the same time protect Mauritius' natural heritage. The fact that Mauritius is constituted of several little islands can protect us from contamination from GMO.

* The compulsory conversion of all sugar mills that are closing into agro-industrial factories, especially for massive exportation. This will create employment and can decrease the perilous effect of globalization that is threatening every country in the world.

* In the fisheries, *Lalit* proposes that the government compels the private sector into investing in fishing on an industrial level, or the government might itself invest in this sector. We must claim our rights on our Economic Zone around all the islands of our Republic, including Chagos and Tromelin. Chagossians must have the priority to work in every economic development in Chagos. At the same time the Government must invest in the Barachois, fish breeding in marine farms, and the transformation of marine products, not only a "Sea-Food Hub" that will be like a fish free-zone.

* The government must use the "European Compensation" for which negotiation are taking place in exchange for the Sugar Protocol dismantling, for this food production campaign, and stop perpetuating a squandering sugar industry.

* We need an "Optimal Land Utilization Authority" instead of a "Sugar Authority" which is obsolete.

* We need to oppose any new WTO "round" and put off the ancient WTO agreement till a "World-Wide Audit".

* No to the privatization of the CEB. This process must be reversed, and the "CEB Bureaucracy" must be replaced by a "CEB under democratic control". Yes to a massive development of 'clean' and 'renewable' energy like solar energy, wind energy, tidal and wave energy. Thus Mauritius (with a well organized CEB) can situate itself as a country at the avant-garde of clean durable and cheap energy production. This will create employment as well as decrease pollution.

* Stop privatization of any new sector and stop the processes of privatization.

* Stop any form of politics, which try to destroy traditional agriculture. – Yes! To politics, which build scientific knowledge on knowledge and experience which planters, cattle breeder and fisherwoman/man had learned and accumulated from generation to generation.

* The University of Mauritius should orientate research towards agricultural production based on traditional knowledge, not on its substitute. This kind of research should become conversant with the agro-industrial sector instead of the main objective of commercialization of product in short run.

* Profit based GMO product must be stopped. The government must change the law on bio-technology so that it will be based on the 'Precautionary Principles'. Mauritius must develop a market for 'Guaranteed GMO-Free' products.

* To begin the immediate processes for the re-orientation of institutions that were set up to support Sugar Industry, to decline the emphasis made on sugar, and put more effort in the direction to develop agro-industry.

* There is an urgency to set up an insurance to protect and encourage planters who engaged in the agricultural diversification production.

Modern Technology

Modern technology had allowed conditions for a greater form of democracy in the organization of the economy. We should be able to have the necessary political mean to demand to ask for more democracy. Technological progress increase the capacity of production in a sufficient amount so that workers who are occupied in production had the ability to run production, instead of only following the instructions from an employee who's only interest is the making of profit.

Our proposals to make this happen?

Basically, Lalit says that the government must compel the sugar factories (and private sectors in general) to create employment, production of food, investing in agro-industries for the local market and also for exportation purposes, and to produce clean and renewable energy.

But however it is not acceptable for people having land to refuse to produce food and that people who wants to produce food do not have land.

It is not acceptable that people who possess capital do not create employment and people in need of a work do not have the capital that they themselves produced.

Eventually this bankrupt capitalist system must be overthrown and replaced by a socialist system where people organize collectively.

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