

Programs/manifestos

- o On Agriculture, Agro-Industry & Electricity page 1
- o New Women's Manifesto page 16
- o On Ecology/Environment page 20
- o On Food Security (Charter) page 25
- o On Electoral Reform page 28
- o On Mother Tongue in Associations (Charter) page 32
- o On Internationalism page 33
- o On Diego Garcia & Chagos (Declaration) page 47
- o On Reparations for Slavery page 49
- o On Aids & Rational Policy on Drug Addiction (Charter) page 50
- o On Education page 52
- o On Labour Laws page 69
- o On Freedom page 70
- o On Police Violence (Charter) page 75
- o On 5-year Report & Program 2005-10 page 76

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 nose 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 Joined 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

1853Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture

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

1921La Ferme dam built to irrigate sugar in the West

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

1926La Nicolière dam built to irrigate sugar in the North

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

1946Cyclone and Drought Insurance Fund for planters

1947Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund

1953Mauritius Sugar Industry Research Institute (MSIRI)

1956Sugar Industry Pension Fund

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

1974Sugar Planters Mechanical Pool Corporation

1980Mauritius Bulk Sugar Terminal (VRAC) comes into operation

1984Mauritius Sugar Authority

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

Fiscal concessions that have benefited the Sugar Industry directly and indirectly

1979Labour Government devalues rupee by 30%.

1981Labour Government devalues rupee by 20%.

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

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

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

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

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

2001Sugar 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 why 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 Poonoosamy, 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 depends 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.

Some references:

1. Integrated Farming Project St Martin, Republic of Mauritius.
2. Listwar ek Analiz “Plaisance & La Ferme Mixed Farming Society”- Revi Lalit de Klas, Mauritius, Feb 1977, Number 4, Page 17.
3. An analysis of the Chinese experience with Integrated Farming in “The State of Food and Agriculture” 1998, Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Rome. 1998. 373pp.

* "Globalization, Food Security and War" by Vandana Shiva, Published by Ledikasyon Pu Travayer, PP 30-31

"New Women's Manifesto"

This manifesto was adopted by LALIT in 2011. It had been prepared by the Muvman Liberasyon Fam (*Women's Liberation Movement*) over a two-year period of meetings (2009-2011) based on some 30 years action, after the process that produced the first Women's Manifesto in 1977.

A rich history

When a women's association like the MLF has existed for 33 years, its history itself can add immeasurably to its strength. This is called "momentum". It means that our past mobilisations give our present actions added strength. Our past collective thinking makes our present ideas run deeper. This momentum was what gave MLF the capacity, for example, in 2009 to spearhead the common front set up so as to suspend the law that criminalises abortion.

Conscious of the power of our history, *Muvman Liberasyon Fam* decided, when we neared the end of 2009, to work towards a "new" Women's Manifesto.

Our first Manifesto that came out in 1977 took us a whole year to produce. It was created collectively by founding members who organised some 12 meetings in neighbourhood women's associations in different parts of the country, as well as weekly association meetings. And even then, of course, we weren't starting from scratch. We knew that for many years before us, the women's movement in Mauritius had already organised to demand the right to vote, the right to education, to contraception, even the right to work, and something as political as the right to live in an independent country.

In our Founding Manifesto, of 1976-77, the main points are:

- No to patriarchy! - No to capitalism!
- The right to contraception and legal abortion!
- Housework must be socialised: there must be day-care for children, women's centres, municipal canteens and laundries, and more "welfare state services" like free healthcare, free education and universal pensions.
- Women must be able to work in all work sectors!
- Equal pay for equal work! – The right to unionise! The right to strike!
- A law that views rape as assault, with emphasis on the aggression not the sexual nature of the crime.
- No to harassment by macho men!
- Equality in the law and in the Constitution! A uniform marriage law for all women!

Women's liberation, we stated, will depend on women's mobilisation. Our 1977 Manifesto has passed the test of time. Then, as large-scale mobilisations unfurled in Mauritius – working-class, Chagossians, youth struggles – especially between 1976 and 1981 – this Manifesto integrated even broader issues into itself:.

- Diego Garcia military base closure, decolonisation and the right of return for Chagossians!
- No to Apartheid! - Free Palestine!
- Yes, to Freedom, No to Repression! Revoke repressive laws such as the *Industrial Relations Act* (IRA), *Public Order Act* (POA) (replaced today by the repressive *Public Gathering Act* (PGA), *Employment Rights Act* (ERiA) and *Employment Relations Act* (EReA).
- Free Public Transport!

These demands are still significant today. And over time, they have been refined by work in different Common Fronts: *Solidarite Fam* (Women's Solidarity) , *Fron Fam Travayer* (Working Women's Front), *Solidarite Morisyen Anti-Apartheid* and *Fron Anti-Apartheid* (Mauritian Anti-Apartheid fronts), *Fron Komen Transpor* (Common Front for Public Transport), *Fron pu Demokrasi* (Front for Democracy), *Rann Nu Diego!* The biggest gains for women took place through women's participation in the August 1979 General Strike movement and the 1980 mass mobilisation that followed. After that period, women were able

to walk relatively freely without being harassed between the end of 1979 up till, say, 1984. The MLF set up the first Women's Centre in the country and ran it for nearly 20 years. We decided to close it down after the Government set up decentralised women's centres all over the country.

In our letterhead of 1984, we stated: "*Aims: To fight for full rights for all women, for true equality between all women and men in all fields, and total liberation of women.*". These aims are still our aims. .

False Interpretation of Women's Demands

What was the content of the down-turn that started in 1981?

- Retrenchment of workers, and their replacement by automated machinery.
- The betrayal of the MMM.
- The rise of Thatcher-Reagan ideology in Mauritius, attacks on the Welfare State.
- The implosion of the bureaucratic Stalinist reign that stole power some 4-5 years after the Russian Revolution, and its replacement by a mafia-type profit-making capitalism.
- Virtual re-colonisation of all ex-colonies by finance capital.

The reactionary forces of patriarchy that had reigned for 5,000 years thus re-established their reign. And they did so by the means at their disposal, i.e. through the bourgeoisie revising our demands, distorting them into forms it can easily contain. This meant basically that they put it out that we were demanding things that aren't our actual demands. Reactionary forces do this, in particular, through the media. And when the women's movement is in a state of demobilisation during such a downturn, we are relatively too weak to re-establish the facts. So, what they say we are is not what we are.

- They say that we supposedly want women to climb higher into "positions of power" within the patriarchal hierarchies. This is false. They are the ones who want this, not the women's movement.
- They say that we are supposedly in favour of more repression and heavier punishment for sexual offences against women. This is false. They are the ones who want this, not the women's movement.
- They say we supposedly want gender equity. They and organisations they fund are the ones demanding this. What we want is emancipation and liberation – no more, no less.
- They say we want men to stay home and do housework. False! We want women to be more active outside the home in public life, not men to participate less in public life. Housework, we say, must be socialised (there are already signs of this beginning to happen, like pre-prepared vegetables in supermarkets and more pre-schools, but this socialisation is not enough).
- They say all we want is supposedly to change anti-women laws. False. What we want is to end patriarchy.
- They say we want to supposedly "make men take their responsibilities". This is not a demand of the women's movement. Our quest is women's liberation.
- They say all we are concerned about is women! False. We are against repression. We are against apartheid. We are in favour of workers right to strike. We are in favour of the decolonisation of Diego and the rest of the Chagos. We are in favour of military base closure. We are against class inequality.
- They say we are supposedly anti-men. They are the ones saying it, not us. In the MLF, for instance, we believe that the majority of men are usually victims of patriarchy and its hierarchies. We ally ourselves with victims of patriarchy, be they men or women.
- They say all we supposedly want is equal pay for equal work. So then, for them it is alright to decrease men's wages in the Free Zone, instead of increasing women's wages.

If we adopt their false interpretation of our demands, we will blunder. It will lead us into alliances with bourgeois forces, even with communal forces. This is why this "New Manifesto" has so much significance for us today – in view of these false interpretations of our original Manifesto.

This "New Manifesto" is the fruit of meetings of the MLF with women from all currents in the women's movement over a period of 14 months: the family planning current, the "human rights" current (women in Amnesty International and other human rights associations), the trade-union current (women in trade unions and trade union federations), the work-site current, women in local women's associations (rural as well as urban), single issue associations, academics.

1. We call into question the present ownership of land and of the means of survival?

We pose the question, "*Why have we been expropriated from the mother earth that nurtures us?*" We pose the question, "*Why have we been disinherited of the fruits of the labour of past generations (capital)?*" Our demand is for democratic control on all land in production and on all the means of survival. We want a system where working people who constitute 80% of the population no longer need to scrounge a job from a boss or a boss-controlled State enterprise. The MLF even organised a Symposium on the theme, "*Who Owns What & Why?*" And we oppose privatisation; we defend the Welfare State when it is under attack. However,

we refuse to stay on such a defensive programme. We want to produce things other than cane and T-shirts, that is to say we want to produce alternative products, we want an alternative economy, and alternative ownership of all the means of survival. In short, we want to move continually from the defensive to the counter-offensive.

2. Against Patriarchal Hierarchies

We oppose patriarchy. We oppose patriarchal *hierarchies*. These hierarchies are inextricably entwined with capitalist hierarchies. It is not the women's movement's aim for women to climb up the rungs of these hierarchies. This opposition to patriarchy affects the nature of our demands. e.g. 1) We want women to be recognised by society as the “centre of the hearth”, not the “head of household”. We want social housing and child allowances go to the person who tends the hearth. e.g. 2) We want women to be able to work in all work sectors, but we are not interested in who gets to be promoted within patriarchal hierarchies in work sectors. e.g. 3) We want equal wages for everyone one day, not the same proportion of inequality amongst women as amongst men. Our aim is equality, not “spreading inequality equally” between men and women.

3. Changing the balance of forces between Men and Women

We are working towards changing the objective balance of forces between men and women in society. If women have housing as a right, the means of survival as a right, if there is free public transport night and day, if basic foods are subsidised, if there is the right to contraception and abortion, all of this will tip the balance of forces in favour of women. This is why we struggle for these rights. At the same time, we want to change the balance of forces between workers and bosses so that workers become strong enough to challenge the system itself. We want to change the balance of forces between imperialists and oppressed countries. All this means that we have a broad manifesto.

4. No to State Repression! We want Freedom!

We are against State Repression. We are in favour of more freedom. We want women-abusers, those who use violence against women, and harassers of women to be publicly exposed and publicly criticised. They need to be made accountable for their actions. We are certainly not pushing for the State to hang them, imprison them for years and years, or castrate them. We want society to make use of the age-old methods that have worked, that is to say, to expose abuses and make perpetrators account for their actions. The best way to ensure this is to change the balance of forces in favour of women: claim social housing, basic food and clothing subsidized, a wage one can live on, schooling, health, free public transport, old-age pensions and pensions for the disabled. All the basic goods and services must be available and accessible to all who need them. This way, women are in a position to expose cases of abuse, and to stand up against abuse.

And when a women suffers violence, we are not asking for an armada of new policewomen, 24 hrs a day in all police station. Not at all. We are actually demanding *less* police officers. We demand that women, when raped, go straight to hospital, in a “one-stop-shop” system. There, she gets medical treatment, psychological treatment if need be, protection against STD's, and she can decide, if she want to, to file a case against her aggressor before a policewoman who is called into the hospital to take her statement. A police doctor examines her in the surroundings of a hospital. All this happens in a caring environment rather than the repressive environment of a police station.

In general, we want the right to demonstrate, we demand freedom of expression, freedom to unionize, the right to strike, that is to refuse to work in conditions we do not agree to.

5 New Framework for Matrimonial Laws

In our 33 years of struggle, we have been able to change the Code Napoleon, section by section. Where it said “husband” or “wife”, we have been able to make it read “spouse”. But the domination that existed within marriage has not changed as a result of these changes towards gender equity. So we have created over a two or three year period a “*Charter on Matrimonial and Allied Laws*”. It encompasses a whole array of changes that aim at viewing women as being the centre of the hearth, and liberating us outside the home, too. Marriage becomes a voluntary union between two adults who want to live together. Divorce will be possible without having to prove “fault”, and will be a rapid and inexpensive process. Care for children must be subsidised by society, when the family is in economic difficulty. We are against the law that makes the State go running after “the biological father” of the child. This compounds the problem. It causes violence against women and children. In addition, today, with this new law that does just this, there are husbands and ex-husbands who are being arrested when they can't pay or child support because they have lost their jobs. We do not agree with this. And we want women to be able to decide with precision when to fall pregnant and when to go ahead with a pregnancy, once pregnant. We want a form of the family that is flexible, where the

household unit that is formed around the woman is fully recognised by the State. When a man becomes the centre of the hearth, he too can be recognised as such by the Courts.

6 Against patriarchy, whether it dominates women or men

We have learnt in our 33 years of existence that it is not only women who are the victims of patriarchy. Men, too, are the victims of patriarchy. So, instead of making the mistake of recruiting those “alpha males” who rush to offer the women’s movement their patronizing “help”, we choose to ally ourselves with organizations who support our program, and with men who have become victims of the very same patriarchal system that dominates us, women. This is how we allied with Mr Naden Pakeeree of Surinam in the struggle against an unjust anti-abortion law that led to the death of his wife; with Mr Suresh Dawaking of Sodnac in the struggle against violent crimes on “contract” that caused the death of his wife; with Reginald Topize (Kaya) of Beau Songes and Rajesh Ramlogun of Lallmatie and their widows in the struggle against police violence the men suffered. We perceived, during this latter struggle, the similarity between the two forms of patriarchal violence - torture in police cells and domestic violence – both forms of violence take place between four walls, both use sexual language to mask the violence; both kinds of victims are supposed to carry the shame afterwards. This is how the MLF came to contribute towards the setting up of the association “*JUSTICE: Against violence by State Officers*”.

7 No to War! No to military occupation!

We are against war and military occupation. We are struggling to free Chagos, to close down the base, to decolonize Mauritius and win the right of return for all Chagossians as Mauritians. We continue to struggle to free Palestine.

8. Decriminalize abortion

We want to be free to reproduce (physically) in an atmosphere of respect. We want to decide when we will reproduce. For this we need free and easily accessible contraception and decriminalised abortion. Give us social housing, employment and social services, so that we are supported in the work of nurturing people in our care (children, the aged, the sick, etc). The family is too weak an institution to fend for itself without this respect for women.

9 Women's Liberation not just “Gender Equity”

We reject the conversion of the struggle for emancipation and liberation of women into the struggle for supposed “gender equity”, where patriarchy continues as before.

10 Encourage women to enter the world of political liberation

We reject the idea that men must stay home to do housework. On the contrary, they must continue to be able to go out, and participate in life outside the home. And women too, must be able to go out, and be active in the political struggle for liberation. Our aim is to free half of humanity (women) to become the ally of the working class in the struggle for the liberation of humanity as a whole.

WOMEN'S MOBILISATION A PRECONDITION

The MLF is helping to mobilize women, but it is we, women, who will collectively bring about our own emancipation and liberation, in the wider framework of emancipation and liberation of humanity.

January 2011

Ecology, the Environment, Climate Change

LALIT sees the natural universe, whether it be the air above us, the sea around us, or the earth we walk upon and all that lives upon it, and even outer space, as being our collective heritage as human beings. We are part of it, and also the guardians of it. This natural universe, our mother earth, is now endangered.

Our planet is already suffering irreversible damage, damage so serious as to threaten the very existence of the totality of human civilization in all its varied forms. We humans have the minds to know this.

The threat is posed by our own human-made forms of agricultural and industrial “development”. This is serious because it is our way of survival that has become this destructiveness.

The main damage has been done in the past 250 years. Increasingly serious damage is being done. And yet most of us are oblivious to it, and once we know, we are “helpless”. We sit and watch a potential melt-down of a nuclear plant in Japan, as the capitalists who run it admit their own helplessness.

The private ownership and control by a tiny minority of unaccountable bosses over all our natural resources and over nature itself, has permitted them to do as they please in their quest for private gain. This is the philosophy by which they have lived.

The rest of us human beings, creatures of nature, have been cut off from control over our own labour power and what it produces. This fracture, combined with the fracture between the city and the country, has led to the reckless ransacking of the earth. In particular, our forms of energy production, industrial agriculture and transport, are now a threat to our continued social existence on the earth. Climate change provoked by the greenhouse emissions from fossil-fuels is now proven. Yet, even timid attempts by nation states to limit the damage being done, like the Kyoto Agreement, are systematically sabotaged by powerful multinational corporations that control nation states and governments.

So this brings us to the crying need for collective and internationalist strategies. It is the working people, as a class, the youth taken as a whole, women who have always had to care for the environment, who will, together with the best elements of the environmentalist movement, be in the forefront of the struggle to get back control of what we do on this earth. We need this control so that we can assure the care and nurture of our planet. This means wresting control over production-for-private-greed from the minority that does as it pleases. This means challenging the State that provides this minority with the wherewithall to maintain its banditry. This means a socialist revolution.

It is, of course, totally useless to rely on the private company bosses to stop ransacking and polluting the earth. They will at best just pretend. It is also totally useless to rely on heavily financed “do-gooders” and other NGOs that the capitalists often control and who turn the environment into a single-issue campaign, fractured from the social forces that must be mobilized in order to be able to bring about the kind of change necessary to save the planet.

Since LALIT’s *Program on Ecology and the Environment* of October 2003 (available in Kreol language version), there has been the huge contribution made by John Bellamy Foster in his work, *Marx’s Ecology*. He has “given us back” a materialist and more political approach to the question of ecology. So, LALIT has now, since 2009, been doing the long-term work of re-integrating this “new” way of looking at the relationship between nature and human society into our overall analysis. We use the contradictory expressions “giving back” and “new” because the ideas that were so very much part of the basic philosophy of Marxism before the distortions of the rise of Stalinism in the Soviet Union and elsewhere, disappeared from the political front for some 70 years, leaving the surviving Marxist ecologists all alone in the field of science. The activists were not “green” and the “Greens” were often anti-Marxist, interpreting “marxism” as the Stalinists did, in the sense of seeing humankind as “mastering” nature. Anyone who questioned industrialization was seen as obstructing the Soviet Union’s catching up with US capitalism’s industrialization.

John Bellamy Foster has gone back to the materialist roots of Marxist philosophy, and to the way in which ecology is central to all Marx’s thinking.

In LALIT, we are often critical of many of the currents in ecology, sometimes because they miss key elements to the problems, and other times because they fall gaily into all the traps set by capitalists.

In Mauritius we have criticized those who take sides blindly in intra-capitalist fights, while thinking they are protecting the environment. There were ecologists who were openly and proudly financed by sugar estates and hotel bosses in order to oppose the Gamma-Coventa project for burning rubbish and generating energy, which impinged on their tourism project for *Integrated Resorts Schemes*. An advisor to the Government *Maurice Ile Durable* (Sustainable Mauritius Program), M. Jean Pierre Hardy replies to the question “*Who finances these environmentalists?*” by “*And, so what!*” (*L’Express*, 2 June 2009). This lack of integrity brings discredit to the environmentalists, and the discrediting weakens any point they may have made. They are, in the same vein, against *some* coal-burning plants, and fail even to see others!

And look at the trouble that the “*single issue*” environmentalists have got themselves into over the *Marine Protected Area* in Chagos. They have all fallen right into the British State’s colonial trap, and made fools of themselves relative to the polluting nuclear military base there. See our letter to Greenpeace, who fell into the trap, below.

We are also critical of those who pretend that environmental catastrophe, and even climate change, can rely only on “micro-actions”, that is to say each of us travelling less, becoming vegetarians, composting. Clearly all these are very fine things to do, but they will not suffice to get us out of the fix that the capitalist system has got us into.

We are also critical of the sections of the ecology movement that are happy to rely on “values” without any analysis of the social forces that underpin reality. Some people are benefitting from the ransacking, and they are the minority that take decisions. In LALIT, by contrast, we are mobilizing to build up power in the hands of the dispossessed masses of working people, so that, together, on the basis of a shared program, we can challenge the havoc that the capitalist class and the imperialists are wreaking. And it is urgent. Today global warming is threatening climate change, which could, in turn, cause social collapse. Fossil-fuels are the main cause. So it is urgent to find clean, renewable energy for industry, for households, for agriculture, and for transportation. Today, the dangers of nuclear energy have been exposed by the difficulty of controlling the Fukushima plant in Japan after the tsunami of 2011.

Given that humans do not only live in nature but that we are, ourselves, natural creatures, and that it is nature that allows us to survive on the planet, it is quite normal that we want human society to once again establish a long-term harmony with the rest of the natural world. It is normal for us to demand that the sea, the land, the air and outer space all once again become our common property, democratically controlled.

What John Bellamy Foster has brought back into politics are the two fractures that Marx saw having happened between nature and humans.

First, humans have, over the past 250 years, become fractured from part of our own nature. Whereas for most of our 100,000 years of existence on the planet, we have lived with elementary tools and in harmony with the natural world and the rest of life that has existed for 4 billion years or so. Until some 5,000 years ago when in many places on the earth, we broke into social classes, with the development of agriculture, whether animal-rearing or planting, this harmony existed. Still, we affected nature little more than, say, otters. However, in the last 250 years, increasingly a huge proportion of human beings have seen ourselves estranged from our own labour power. It is no longer ours. So, part of us (our work, our hands, our minds) has become a commodity for sale, and someone else decides what to do with it. And given that our labour power is part of our being, what has happened is that one third of our lives have been fractured from us. We sell them to another class of person, the employers, the owners of capital, who decide. This happened at the same time as the development of huge machines, thousands of them, that we work on, that pollute the world, and that we do not control. We listen to orders. Our labour power is alienated from us. Our nature is thus fractured. A tiny group of capitalists can then use this alienated labour for the pillage of the planet, the removal of the stock of carbon from under the ground and under the sea, and burning it into the atmosphere. The fracture in our natures has led to a dictatorship of a tiny class of people out to “maximize their private profit”. That is their only aim. They say it. Pollution is not a care in their world. Even when the whole system depends so thoroughly on fossil-fuels that we head blindly to our doom, as a society, their aim remains unchanged: make profit for themselves.

So, that is the first fracture: between human beings and our own labour power. This needs to be repaired, and the way to do it is to do away with class society.

The second fracture is between human beings and what we metabolize and how. Marx called it the “metabolic fracture”. Throughout most of our 100,000 years of history, humans metabolized things nearby. We ate and drank what was nearby and returned our stools and urine nearby. We lived in relatively small groups, in villages or smaller units. Where agriculture developed, peasants farmed on the spot, and everything was composted back into the earth. The cycle of nature was maintained. Domestic animals were in the same cycle. But two huge changes took place 250 years ago on a world-wide scale. First, cities and countryside got separated. Cities ate up things from the countryside, and caused “rubbish” and “sewerage” in the cities, while depleting the earth in the countryside. This is a long-term threat to the planet. It has to be addressed collectively. And secondly production is so huge-scale now under capitalism that the pillage is too vast to be sustained without harming the very mother earth we live off. In particular, the mining of all the fossil-fuels under the ground and under the sea-bed and burning them is a threat to the planet. This is also a metabolic fracture, in that humans – through our huge machines – are transforming natural substances irreparably, including, for the past fifty years, by nuclear fission. Causing pollution and contamination. Causing global warming, too. Top soil, water, biological diversity are all essential to our survival. Our climate needs to be nurtured. However, the metabolic fracture threatens them.

All this means the Government program of *Maurice Ile Durable* is too little too late. It is like all the NGOs that have no social motor. MID is a program that implies submission before the capitalist class, that class that has caused the fracture in nature, that does the polluting.

LALIT’s program, in contrast, has a natural motor: the working class, which is the largest class, the productive class, and the class with the interest and the capacity to overturn this capitalist rule that has brought the destruction in the first place. Then the fractures will have been repaired: both the alienation of our natural labour power and the metabolic fracture that does not return to the earth’s own system its natural balance.

Open Letter From Lalit To Leaders Of Greenpeace

Dear Leaders of Greenpeace,

We understand that your organization has taken a position in favour of the British Government’s outrageous plan to create a “Marine Park” on territory which is not its own, thus tricking ill-informed people into supporting the British State on rather vague grounds of “the environment”, while they are in fact banishing the people who lived there and flaunting the Charter of the UN.

We write in order to request you to re-think your position on what would in fact be the British Government’s perfidious imposition of a planned Marine Protected Area on part of Mauritius in order to mask the fact that it colonizes the land illegally. Britain colonizes the Chagos under the name of “British Indian Ocean Territory”. This colony is, as far as we know, recognized by no government in the world, except the USA, which has a huge military base on it. The Seychelles Government took the British to task, and took those of its islands in BIOT back, so blatant was the theft. The Mauritian Government has so far unfortunately been much more servile to its ex-colonizer.

The British government’s plan for a Marine Protected Area is a very weak, grotesquely transparent ruse designed to perpetuate the banning of the people of Mauritius and Chagos from part of their own country. And the UK has the cheek to do this, while at one and the same time, perpetuating a polluting nuclear base on Diego Garcia, part of this same stolen territory. The timing of their plan is also very humiliating for all those who have fallen into the trap: there is a European Human Rights Court which may soon hand down a judgment in favour of the right to return for Chagossians. Clearly the British Government is preparing a fall-back plan; if they lose the case, then there will be another “reason” for denying the banished people their right of return; another reason for keeping Mauritius from staking its claim under international law.

Surely the point is for environmentalists to get this nuclear base on Diego Garcia, at the very heart of the Chagos, closed down? Not to ignore its existence. Surely the point is for all concerned people to help complete the decolonization of Mauritius and the Chagos? Not to help in a British cover-up its crimes? After

decolonization, the people whose land and sea it is can decide on how to protect and nurture it best, how to affect a clean-up of the base once it was closed down, and how to re-generate it into the beautiful atoll it once was. And we would hope for ideas and support from Greenpeace, amongst other environmentalists, as to how best to do this.

The British State and the USA not only collaborated in the forcible removal of all the people of the entire Chagos, tricking them first, denying them passage back after medical visits to Mauritius main island, gassing their dogs as a warning, then finally starving them off the islands; the British State and the USA not only illegally plotted so as to dismember a country and hide this from the United Nations Decolonization Committee, as has been amply made public in the Judgments in the Court Case brought by the Chagossians, but have also set up a huge immensely polluting military base, one of the biggest in the world, a nuclearized base, right there in the same place that the UK now pretends to want to turn into a Marine Protected Area. The USA has even carried out illegal renditions for torture on and around Diego Garcia; after denying this for years, the Mr. Jack Straw finally admitted it in the British Parliament. So, Greenpeace should perhaps bear in mind that these illegal acts do, in time, get exposed and condemned by people.

Greenpeace should dissociate itself from this entire international plot. It is an old plot whose first shady days have gradually been exposed to the public by years and years of active struggle on the part of Mauritian political parties, associations, trade unions and the people displaced from Chagos, with their women at the helm of the demonstrations. Our women members were amongst those arrested by the Police in 1981 at peaceful demonstration in Port Louis. And though the illegal colonization and the nuclear base have both continued, the conspiracy to remove all the people, and for the UK to steal the islands, and for the US to become receiver of stolen goods, have been exposed in public in the British Courts and in international meetings against US military bases. So, being part of the tail-end of this long-term conspiracy will bring shame on organizations like Greenpeace. That individuals fall into this trap is understandable. But for organizations, we are afraid it will be very damaging to your reputation.

In the past, Greenpeace has known about Diego Garcia. We would very much like to remind you that in October, 1998, LALIT sent one of our members to have a formal meeting with your organization at your headquarters in Amsterdam. The *Rann nu Diego* Committee, a common front of some 10 organizations in Mauritius including one of the two main Chagossian groups, the Chagos Refugees Group, endorsed LALIT's request for a Greenpeace action on Diego Garcia to oppose the nuclear base there. One of our members, Ms. Lindsey Collen, thus had a formal meeting at your headquarters with Ms. Stephanie Mills, who she found to be a very capable, dedicated Australian campaign worker for your organization. Following this meeting, and following the dossier which we submitted formally at the same time, Greenpeace informed us by e-mail that you had organized for one of your vessels (in a window of opportunity) to take a group of people for an action on Diego Garcia in or around March, 1999, in protest against the military base, its nuclearization, the forcible removals, and the continued colonization of part of Mauritius. We were already discussing how many people, preparing for a campaign to get support from peace and environment organizations world-wide, and thinking up the kind of media plan necessary. LALIT immediately set in motion a very broad campaign for "background support", which we got from a series of organizations literally all over the world in order to back up the planned action as soon as it would be able to become public. Response from all over the world was very good. The issue was coming up at the right moment. The only thing that prevented the vessel from actually doing this visit, which would have been truly historic, and which would have been one of Greenpeace's greatest sources of pride as you looked back on your history, was thwarted, we were informed, when the vessel to be used got "iced in" during a trip to the Antarctica in early 1999, and would, by the time it got out of the ice, be too late, as it was already booked for another action afterwards.

Later, in January, 2004, in the outskirts of the WSF meeting in Mumbai, there was a second attempt, this time to ask Greenpeace if you could lead a planned Flotilla to Chagos and Diego Garcia, given that the Chagossians had won a Court Case for the right to return (since overturned - in part by Decree in the UK, and in part by a Privy Council appeal judgment last year). This time it was a joint request from the Chagos Refugees Group and LALIT. Greenpeace were unable to do this, but your leaders at the time were aware of the issues involved.

We mention your past links with the Diego Garcia issue because we believe that your position on the Marine Protected Area which the UK is planning is erroneous. The UK is clearly trying to use the "environment issue" as a desperate attempt to continue its continued colonization of part of Mauritius. Greenpeace should not allow itself to be used this way.

At present our organization is spearheading a campaign to call on the Mauritian Government to do two things:

- *Request the UN General Assembly to pass a motion for the ICJ at the Hague to give an opinion as to whose territory the Chagos is (the UK accepted compulsory arbitration except from cases put in by Commonwealth Countries, and when the Mauritian Government some 7 years ago threatened to leave the Commonwealth in order to put a binding case, Tony Blair just sent new instructions to his UN ambassador to change the exception to include ex-Commonwealth members. This shows the kind of lengths the UK State will go to.*
- *Request the UN International Atomic Energy Agency to do inspections of Diego Garcia for nuclear materials, given the coming into operation in 2009 of the Pelindaba Treaty for a Nuclear Weapons Free Africa.*

We would very much appreciate it if Greenpeace could consider supporting these two demands. Both would certainly help the environment of the Chagos, as they both involve exposing then closing the nuclear military base. Just as the UK Government is now being exposed for entering illegally into the Iraq War, and Bush and Blair risk charges as war criminals, so in the future, the UK and USA may be publicly exposed as illegal occupiers, as war mongers on Chagos, and as polluters of the Indian Ocean with truly filthy military base. Because that is what they are.

Yours sincerely,

Ram Seegobin, for LALIT, Mauritius, 8 February, 2010.

lalitmail@intnet.mu

www.lalitmauritius.org

153 Main Road,

GRNW, Port Louis, Republic of Mauritius. Tel/fax: 230 208 2132; Tel: 230 208 2555

Faxed (as well as this email) to Greenpeace Headquarters in Amsterdam on +31 207182002.

FOOD SECURITY

This Charter was developed in 2005 at the time of the first world-wide food security crisis. It was debated over a series of meetings that LALIT organized with 10 other organizations and a few individual academics who together formed a Common Front on Food Security. The full title of the Charter is: *“In times of globalization & food shortages, the Charter of the Common Front on Food Security.”*

CHARTER

Given that:

- o The world food crisis is characterized by both food shortages and price rises;
- o Food ought not ever to be hostage to capitalist profits;
- o Speculation and the grip that cartels have on production & distribution aggravate the food crisis;
- o There is a danger that some producers or distributors hoard food, and provoke a black market that then further aggravates the crisis;
- o An increasing share of food production is being steered into bio-fuels, for reasons of profit;
- o GMOs push food production further into the grip of private multinationals like Monsanto & Novartis;
- o Many countries that produce rice and wheat are controlling or even halting their food exports altogether, in a bid to reduce price rises and shortages on their own national markets;
- o Experts predict that the shortages will persist for a long time to come, and will get worse;
- o Geographically speaking, Mauritius is far from the sources of its staples, its milk and many other foodstuffs, in times when freight costs are rising, due to fuel price rises which, in turn, add to the price of food;
- o Food security is essential to the very survival of a people;

Given that,

- o For the very first time in the history of our country, there is an opportunity for the broad masses of the people to put into question land ownership and use in the Republic of Mauritius,

Given that,

- o Almost all good agricultural land in the Island of Mauritius is under *cane*;
- o All Government facilities, until today, benefit cane planters to the detriment of food planters (through whole institutions like the MSIRI, as well as others that ensure loans, seeds, insurance);
- o Just like all non-sugar agriculture in the Island of Mauritius, the whole of agriculture in the Island of Rodrigues is neglected by the State, relative to the support it has given and continues to give to cane planters; there is no support for planters who produce food, whether in Mauritius or Rodrigues;
- o There is a lack of irrigation in the Islands of Rodrigues and in certain parts of the Island of Mauritius;
- o The price of sugar is going to fall, and will be unstable and unpredictable, because the guaranteed market and price is now over;
- o The sugar estates are the owners of a huge proportion of good agricultural land, and they are converting much of it into buildings or into IRS with their golf courses;
- o The agricultural policies of successive Governments have brought about the wholesale destruction of jobs, in times when unemployment is already around 10% (if properly calculated);
- o “Accompanying Measures” assured by the European Union, were designed as compensation to be used for the development of the entire economy, but have been used, till now (under the Multi-Annual Adaptation Strategy) almost entirely in order to develop the cane sector; this means the European money designed to compensate for the lowering of sugar prices, is being blown in perpetuating the cane sector to the detriment of both job creation and food security;

Given that,

- o The lagoons in Mauritius & Rodrigues are no longer renewing themselves with enough fish for food needs, but have become poorer and poorer;
- o The Republic of Mauritius is a large country, with its 2,000,000 square kilometres of sea;

Given that,

- o The broad masses have no access to land for planting or animal husbandry;
- o There is already a rich knowledge of food production, fishing, and a high degree of commitment to the soil and the sea, in the masses of people in the whole country, and in particular in Rodrigues,
- o Given that we are still living under patriarchy, women who are responsible for feeding the family are often not given the means to be able to carry out this responsibility,

Our demands:

1. That the Government, with food security in mind, undertakes a general review of all land use and all land ownership and control;
2. That the Government, in particular, undertakes a study of the four “clusters” (Medine, FUEL, Bel Vue ek SUDS), with a view, inter alia, to encouraging diversification and food security;
3. To kick off, Government must introduce laws so that all land is at once re-organized so that, for 4 months of each year, food crops can be grown *interline*, in all of the 100,000 arpents that sugar estates and in all the 90,000 arpents that small planters, now have under cane; any land owner who does not plant food crops on his land, must lease it to a planter who will do so; this concerns crops like potatoes, tomatoes, beans, onions, sweet potatoes, arwi-violets, wheat, maize, etc; This way cane will be affected less in the early stages of converting to food security;
4. Government must force sugar estates to give labourers and artisans made redundant an arpent of land on lease so that, grouped together in co-operatives, they can grow food crops;
5. Government must ensure that everyone who want to plant food crops, in towns and in villages, or living in high-rise flats, or without any land, gets access to *allotments*; that Government help people plant in *greenhouses* and on a hydroponic basis;
6. Government must introduce measures, and if necessary subsidies, for planters producing food and for animal raisers:
 - a. Provide seeds.
 - b. Provide irrigation at a reasonable price, build dams, specially in Rodrigues.
 - c. Provide pre-crop loans
 - d. Organize insurance, as in a Welfare Fund
 - e. Guarantee a market and a good price through the Marketing Board and Meat Authority, which will stabilize all food products, milk, fish, eggs, meat; organize storage for planters, animal raisers and fishers;
 - f. Create agro-industries, which will preserve and transform the food produced (canning, making oil, etc.)
 - g. Re-launch the Palmar animal rearing farm, as well as the production of animal feed, and seedlings.
 - h. Ensure marketing for agricultural produce, whether in Mauritius or abroad.
7. Government must ensure the traditional knowledge gets transmitted to the new generation, and that scientific knowledge is brought in to join hands with the traditional knowledge in Moris, Rodrig, Agalega, and Chagos, so that agriculture, animal rearing and fishing develop well.
8. Government must prevent the middle-men (milk, fish and vegetables merchants) extorting too big a share of “plus-value”; this means producers need access to co-operative credit and marketing;
9. Government must provide the money necessary for building boats that can go to the outer islands and banks, so that fishermen can get there to fish.
10. Marine resources must be controlled, pirating prevented, and the fish stocks kept up.
11. Food prices need to be fixed for producers and for people who buy the food; where necessary, the Government must create a “stabilizing fund”.
12. Government must speak out at international forums against the WTO when it blocks food production in the Third World countries, notably when the EU & USA subsidize their agriculture;
13. Government must assure a “GMO-FREE” Republic; a good side-effect of this is that it attracts “bio”-friendly tourists to the country.
14. Government must use all the above means to ensure security for the following 5 food categories:
 - a. **Staples:** a variety of these: rice, maize, manioc, potato, wheat, arwi, arrow root, sweet potatoes, bread fruit (Today there is a heavy shortage of locally produced staples.)
 - b. **Milk.** (Today we fall very short.)
 - c. **Eggs, chicken, meat.** (Most meat is imported.)
 - d. **Fish.** (Mauritius can easily be self-sufficient – Government must organize investment.)
 - e. **Vegetables, fruit, tomatoes, spices.** (Some degree of self reliance; preservation needs to be developed.)

Founder Members of the Front that launched this CHARTER:

Mouvement pour l'Autosuffisance Alimentaire

Muvman Liberasyon Fam

General Trade Union Federation

Kishore Mundil (Associate Professor, University of Mauritius, Agric. Management)

Fron Travayer Sektor Prive

Mauritius Planters' Association

Amis de Rodrigues

Federation of PreSchool Playgroups

Ledikasyon pu Travayer

Institute for Consumers Protection

LALIT.

LALIT's Position Paper on Electoral Reform

Based on struggles LALIT has participated in since 1976, LALIT's *Commission on Electoral Reform* met on six Saturdays over a 12-week period in 2010. We came up with proposals on how to further democratise the electoral system and how, at the same time, to eliminate the communalism in the First Schedule of the Constitution which sets up the Best Loser System. Here is an outline of our position.

Subjects Treated

- Do away with anti-democratic restrictions on candidature
- Increase Legislature Size, decrease relative weight of Executive
- Keep Constituencies
- No more communal seats, nor communal calculations
- Add a dose of PR
- Ensure women candidates
- Constituency for Diego Garcia & Chagos
- Institute the right of recall
- Dissolution of Parliament
- Ban financing of Political Parties by private companies
- Indirect funding by the State
- Electoral expenses, tightening up of the law
- Powers of the ESC
- Code of Conduct
- Appendix with summary of Collendavelloo and Sachs proposals
- Appendix with LALIT's argumentation re political party funding

Anti- Democratic Restrictions on Candidature

So as to democratize candidature for the National Assembly

Amend the Constitution so as to:

1. Remove all language and literacy barriers to candidature for the National Assembly.
2. Ensure the right of all citizens to stand in all elections, whether they work in the civil service, parastatals or the private sector, subject only to accepting "leave without pay" for the duration of the campaign.

Increase Legislature Size, Keep Constituencies, No More Communal Seats, A Dose of PR, Women's Participation, Chagos included

So as to promote the following political principles:

- To democratise the National Assembly by giving more weight to the Legislature and less to the Executive,
 - While maintaining the principle of accountability of MPs to a Constituency,
 - To do away with communal classification of the electorate and candidates,
 - To introduce a dose of proportional representation for different political currents,
 - To decrease discrimination against women by Parties,
 - To represent Chagos, including Diego Garcia;
- Reduce the number of Ministers to 15 (thus saving tax payers money on the Executive Branch), while at the same time using this saving towards funding an increase in the number of MP's, i.e. in the size of the National Assembly to 104, as follows;
 - Electors elect, on their first of two ballots, 4 MPs in 20 constituencies, plus 3 in Rodrigues, plus 1 in a new constituency called "*Chagos including Diego Garcia*", where registered Chagossians will vote until Chagos is freed. This part of the election will use the same First-Past-the-Post system we already have for 62 seats but for 84 seats;
 - Electors also vote for a Party of their choice, on a separate ballot, at the same election; this would be the same as is already done in Rodrigues for the Regional Assembly. What it means is that political parties will have submitted to the ESC for prior publication a "Party List", in order of precedence, selected from amongst their candidates in Constituencies, a list which alternates men and women candidates (the list can

be any length judged necessary by the Party, so long as the gender alternation can be maintained), for the allocation of 20 MPs from the Party Lists.

- The number of MPs elected by Party is totted up after the first ballot and compared with the number of votes obtained on the second Party List ballot. Then 20 seats are allotted proportionately to those Parties that are least well represented *compared with the total number of Party List votes they got* (20 seats being allocated, skipping any of those on a Party's list who are *already* elected in the first ballot). This exercise should, however, in no case alter the winner in a case where a Party has gained an overall majority of seats on the first ballot.

The Right to Recall at all levels

So as to further democratise the electoral system

- To allow for more accountability and a further democratization of the Parliamentary system (which is potentially more democratic than the Presidential one),
- To introduce the fundamental democratic principle of the right to recall,
- Once 84 members are elected and once 20 Party List candidates are nominated by the ESC, the National Assembly meets immediately (as is the case in the Rodrigues Assembly) under the chair of the previous Speaker, who chairs the election of a new Speaker, who then chairs the election of the new Leader of the House. Should no-one yet command a majority, the outgoing Prime Minister remains Prime Minister, until a new Leader commands a majority;
- The new Leader of the House goes to the President to get sworn in as Prime Minister;
- As soon as is feasible, the Prime Minister proposes his Cabinet to the House, which ratifies it by voting "yes" or "no" without debate (as they are elected by the people), and then Ministers are sworn in by the President;
- The Leader of the House can at any time be revoked by a majority of MPs, on a vote of no confidence presented by the Leader of the Opposition – as is already the case;
- The Cabinet or any Minister can be revoked at any time, as the Cabinet or as Minister, on the basis of a motion presented by the Leader of the Opposition and which the Speaker accepts as having a serious political or moral argumentation for revocation, and which gets a majority in the House;
- At any time, the Prime Minister can re-shuffle his Cabinet and bring his new Cabinet before the House for ratification;
- Any MP can be revoked by a majority of signatories in an Electoral Petition in the relevant Constituency, whether they were elected in the first or second ballot, on condition that the Electoral Petition is judged by the ESC to be based on valid reasoning, for example, non-implementation of the political program on which the MP was elected (a program which will need to be submitted to the ESC at the time of the Election), crossing the floor, or other serious political reason for loss of confidence like electoral malpractice;

Dissolution of Parliament

- So as to maintain popular sovereignty

The Prime Minister may dissolve the National Assembly and call early elections at any time, thus giving the power back to the people.

However, once the National Assembly is dissolved, the dates (*echeances*) are then set and announced, within the legal limits, by the Electoral Supervisory Commission.

On the Financing of Political Parties

It should be illegal for any company or private enterprise to finance any political party. LALIT proposes the introduction of specific legislation to outlaw the funding of or donations to political parties by companies whether in money or in kind. The Sachs Report already proposes this. LALIT does not agree with the State granting financial support for political parties either.

Any company or business that provides material for an electoral campaign should inform the Electoral Supervisory Commission of this and of the amount involved, even if they are intended as donations, the value must be specified:

- Printing presses and other duplicating processes.
- T-Shirts and banderole providers
- Providers of sound systems for meetings
- Providers of stages, lorries and tents and "salle verte" for meetings

- Providers of cars for hire and taxis.
- Bus companies
- Providers of petrol and diesel for vehicles.
- TV, Radios and newspapers that cover advertisements.
- Bill Boards and other advertisements provided by service providers.
- Mass postal, call centre or mobile phone providers, or SMS providers
- Rental of premises (or its value if donated).

The provider of the goods and services should be required by law to declare income from electoral campaigns to the ESC, under the heading “electoral revenue”.

Indirect State Funding of basic electoral expenses

Instead of direct funding of political parties, LALIT proposes that the State should ensure that basic electoral facilities be made available *free* for all candidates and parties:

- o Free electoral registers on hard copy and on CD's be provided to each candidate. This principle is already accepted as electoral registers are sold at a symbolic price. CD's are now sold at Rs 1,000 for each Constituency. This gives an unfair advantage to heavily funded candidates.
- o Free postage fee (franking) of a specific amount for electoral mailing
- o Free access to public buildings and spaces for all Parties for meetings.
- o No judicial fee to be paid by candidates for submitting their electoral expenses returns
- o Special air-time be allocated to parties in the elections on a pro-rata basis to announce electoral events.
- o Expansion of party political broadcasts that the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation already does, to private radio (and TV, if and when there is private TV).
- o Government must ensure free public space for bill-posting (instead of all space being sold to the advertisers of products they are selling at a profit).

On electoral Expenses

The electoral expenses allowed to any candidate under law should include:

- o His own and his agent's expenses, as covered by the Representation of the Peoples Act.
- o Any expenses by well-wishers, as evaluated by him/her or by the Electoral Supervisory Commission, and which the present law excludes as expenses.
- o Any party expenses pro rata, if s/he is member of a Party. This means the cost of a national meeting would be divided by number of candidates, e.g. by, say, 80, whereas the cost of a constituency leaflet would be divided by 4. For these also, the ESC should have a team that checks on expenses. (LALIT already follows this practice.)

For this change, the present sums of Rs 250,000 for a candidate not in a Party and 150,000 for a candidate in a Party should be raised to one sum: Rs500,000 per candidate (including Party expenses and well-wishers' expenses). We propose this knowing that LALIT spends a quarter of this or less on the totality of its candidates.

We also propose that detailed returns also be made more accessible to public scrutiny by being posted for a month at public buildings such as Village Halls, Community Centres, Municipalities and Post Offices, and on the Internet. We believe that it is public scrutiny that will help to control electoral expenditure of candidates and parties. The electors in different constituencies are in a better position to compare what have been really spent during electoral campaigns and what is stated in electoral returns of candidates.

Powers of the ESC

These changes clearly involve increased powers and increased staff for the ESC. Additional powers should also be vested in the ESC to itself initiate Supreme Court Proceedings against any Candidate/s, on the basis of any serious complaint, that the said Candidate/s is/are over-stepping the legal limits. This means the Electoral Supervisory Commission be granted additional powers to investigate any complaints lodged. If after its investigation the ESC determines that a candidate has made an *omission* of expenses or has made a *false statement* and that this omission or false statement would have produce an over-expenditure according to law, then the ESC be empowered to apply to the Supreme Court for a writ to invalidate the election of the candidate and call for a by-election.

Code of Conduct

LALIT agrees that a Code of Conduct for Parties and candidates and agents and supporters in General Elections should be agreed upon by all major parties, and then be given a legal framework. We also draw attention to the fact that the “right of recall” that we propose will be a brake on electoral fraud and over-expenditure.

Qualification for the National Assembly

Amendment One: The language of the National Assembly

Section 49 of the Constitution reads “*The official language of the Assembly shall be English, but any member may address the Chair in French*”. Our first demand is simple:

Section 49 should read as follows: “*The official languages of the Assembly shall be English and Mauritian Kreol, but any member may address the Chair in French or Bhojpuri.*” As you are aware, Mauritian Kreol is spoken most of the time by 70% of the people, Bhojpuri by 12%, and both or one together with another language some 11%, which brings us to the figure of 93% for Kreol and Bhojpuri (see table).

Kreol	826,152	70.0%
Bhojpuri	142,387	12.0%
Bhojpuri & Kreol	64,106	5.4%
Kreol or Bhojpuri plus another language	66,658	5.7%
TOTAL Kreol & Bhojpuri mother tongues	1,099,302	93.2%
English, French, Other Oriental and other	76,453	6.5%
Not stated	3,093	.3%
TOTAL Population of Republic of Mauritius	1,178,848	100.0%

Central Statistics Office, Census of the Whole Population 2000

Amendment Two: Qualification for becoming an MP

There is another language clause that needs simple revocation. As you know, democracy means everyone can not only vote but also stand for election. In the Constitution, there are only two sorts of qualification for membership of the N.A. The first does not concern us here, and is technical (citizenship and residence), while the second concerns us directly. It demands proficiency in speaking and reading a foreign language, a proficiency which can be challenged by a litigant in the Supreme Court. “A person ... shall not be qualified unless, he – 33(d) *is able to speak and, unless incapacitated by blindness or other physical cause, to read the English language with a degree of proficiency sufficient to enable him to take an active part in the proceedings of the Assembly.*”

The humiliation of having one’s language ability questioned in public, of course, scares off half of the population from even contemplating running for office. As women are often less confident of their ability, women are more deeply affected. Many working class candidates are excluded from the democratic process by this clause.

So, Section 33 (d) should quite simply be revoked. If parties wish to field candidates, or people want to vote for people who cannot read and write English and French, or cannot read and write at all, they should be free to do so.

Charter on the Mother Tongue in Associations (2009)

LALIT adopted this Charter that was signed by over 20 organizations in Mauritius, including on Rodrigues. The co-ordination for the preparation of the Charter was done by *Ledikasyon pu Travayer*, a workers’ education association.

Given that

- The written word is an important means of storing our individual and collective memory;
- Minutes of proceedings of associations are an important part of that collective memory;
- Minutes of proceedings contain what an association wishes to keep as its memory;

- According to the last Government Census 2000, 93% of the population in Mauritius speak Creole and/or Bhojpuri;
- It is a human right to use our mother tongue in written form; and this right holds when we meet as associations, for all aspects of our work as associations;
- Minutes of proceedings constitute a faithful record of what happened in meetings, and when the secretary reads the Minutes at the next meeting, members can then verify whether they reflect accurately what happened in the meeting, propose any amendments, vote on them, before approving the minutes.
- Existing legislation hinders our right to keep our official minutes book in the language in which meetings take place that is in our mother tongue;
- When we are not allowed to use our mother tongue to keep our records, this hinders the day to day life of our associations;
- It is not a “true minutes” when it is translated afterwards for the benefit of the Registrar into some other book, and when it is then read at the next meeting in a foreign language, before being approved and signed, but without anybody understanding anything; such a practice, in turn, even if it respects the law technically, ends up entertaining, in Mauritius, a false idea on what minutes really are.
- Conversely, it is not a “true minutes” for our Association, when our Secretary has to listen to our meetings being conducted in Kreol or Bhojpuri and then has to do all sorts of intellectual acrobatics on the spot to translate into a foreign language and to write in this foreign language at the same time; then at the next meeting, the secretary has to do another impossible task of re-translating that same minutes from English into the mother tongue while reading them, and then getting them approved and signed on the basis of a version which could not be approved because it is in a foreign language.
- Repression against our mother tongue hinders our capacity to make our voice heard in society, thus it limits our participation and perverts democracy;
- As associations we only have the right to communicate with the authorities on the express condition that we already master a foreign language, namely English or French;
- Repression against the use mother tongue in associations is a symbol of a more widespread repression against the mother tongue,

And given that

- In large associations we cannot elect and choose our President, Secretary or Treasury, but only those members who master English or French; and given that this hinder the normal proceedings of our association;

We demand that:

1. GN 230 saying that: *“Every Association shall: 8(a) keep its books, documents or records in English or French or such other language as the Registrar may approve; (b) Where the book, documents or records have been kept in a language other than English and French, cause such book, documents or records as the case may be, to be translated into English or French for the purposes of enabling the Registrar to exercise his functions”* be amended to include Kreol and Bhojpuri, two Mauritian mother tongues as being acceptable to the registrar. So GN 230 will say: *Every Association shall: 8(a) keep its books, documents or records in English, Kreol, French or Bhojpuri (b) Where the book, documents or records have been kept in another language, a translation should be submitted to the Registrar in any of the Four languages mentioned above*
2. Revoke section 25 (b) *Registrar of Associations Act* which says: *In the case of a large association, no person shall be qualified to be a President, Treasurer or Secretary, unless he can read and write English or French.*

List of Associations that adhere to this Charter:

Alain Ah-Vee for **Ledikasyon pu Travayer**
 Ragini Kistnasamy for **Muvman Liberasyon Fam**
 Marie Réla André for **Women’s League for Alternative Feminist Action**
 Bertie Beeharry for **Confederation Travailleurs Secteur Prive**
 Rajesh Seewoosaha for **Government Hindi Teachers’ Union**
 Lyndsay Aza for **Groupe ELAN**
 Vimala Lutchmee for **Federation of Pre-School Playgroups**
 Vima Bundhoa for **Maudesco**
 Samad Dulloo for **Centre Idriss Goomamy**
 Veda Munian for **Les Abeilles Playgroup**
 Michael Lafleur for **Rassemblement pour le Progres de Quartier Pailles**
 Marousia Bouvery for **ABAIM**
 Selven Govinden for **Free Art**
 Alain Muneean for **Terre de Paix**

On Internationalism

2 papers on Internationalism in Creole version (2009)

LALIT

KONGRE UVER 2009

lor

INTERNASYONALISM DAN LEPOK KRIZ EKONOMIK MONDYAL

Internasyonalism ki LALIT pe vize zordi: 2-3 “Lapist”

par
Lindsey Collen

Internasyonalism ki LALIT pe vize zordi: Bann “Lapist”

Kan nu finn swiv lezot prezantasyon dan Kongre Uver 2009, nu pu’nn truve ki evidaman “internasyonlism” ki *Lalit* ti devet vize zordi li dekul direktteman depi 2 zafer:

- 1. Stad ek natir devlopman kapitalism internasyonal, setadir inperyalism, *zordi*.
- 2. Natir ek degre lorganizasyon klas travayer dan sak pei nasyon, *zordi*.

Alor, mo prezantasyon, lor nom LALIT, pu ena sa 2 pwen-la kuma premye 2 fokus, lerla

3. Mo pu get bann “lapist” pu internasyonalism dan lavenir.

1 INPERYALISM AN KRIZ – Luvertir ideolojik pu Marxist

Marx ti dekrir sistem kapitalist (kan sistem ti ne dan Lerop) avek otan presizyon ki zordi, dan kriz aktyel, tu dimunn, sirtu ekonomis burzwa, pe al lir tex Marx orizinal, mem seki pli difisil, kuma *Kapital*. Alor, Marx so analiz pe fer test letan, kuma tu tez syantifik bizin fer. E li pe ed nu. Li finn osi analiz sa piyaz ki sistem kapitalist pe fer lor lanatir, ki zordi pe amenn kriz klimatik. (*Marx’s Ecology*, 2007.)

E, 50 apre Marx, Lenin ti dekrir nuvo devlopman ki ti ena dan sistem kapitalis, e ki konsern nu zordi: “inperyalis”. Li ti dekrir li dan enn panfle apel “*Inperyalis: Staz Siprem Kapitalism*”. Sa ti pre 100 an desela, moman kot sa sistem kapitalist ti pe pran kontrol lemond an antye. Tu pei ti pe vinn su lanpriz, bann *monopol* kapitalist (sirtu proprieter lindistri ek lenerzi) ek su lanpriz *kapital finansye* (labank/lasirans/stok exchennj/bann seki fer larzan ar larzan/kapitalis zugader).

Zordi, avek globalizasyon, pa zis sa analiz Marx lor natir kapitalism, me osi sa tandans ki Lenin finn dekrir-la, finn revinn daktyalite – dan dernye 20 an sirtu. Zordi nu kapav dir ki lemond an antye finn vinn su lanpriz total *kapital finansye monopol* (enn lepresyon John Bellamy Foster, *New Left Review* 2008).

Sa panfle Lenin-la li ase kurt, si dimunn anvi lir li. (Dan stedi grup Lenin 2008-9 ki LPT ti organize, nu ti fer enn seri lezot panfle, pa sannala.) Enn zafer ki drol: lide Marx e mem sa panfle Lenin-la ti paret ase “vye” ek demode kan mo ti zenn dan bann lane ’60 ziska 90. (Ti ena buku exsepsyon a reg ki zot ti pe dekrir – sirtu 3: (a) Blok Sovyet ek Lasinn, (b) Sistem sekirite sosyal ek Welfer Steyt, (c) Guvernman Tyer Mond ki ti intervenir dan lekonomi buku.

Me zordi seki tu text klasik Marx, Lenin, Rosa Luxembourg dir, inn re-vinn daktyalite, e mo pu explike kifer, pu nu gete kot inperyalism ete zordi.

Seki Marx ti montre, ant-ot, se kimanyer kapitalism, par so natir prop a li, li rant dan bann kriz. Sa bann kriz-la vinn deplizanpli grav. E serten sa bann kriz la li ti apel “kriz sistemik”, dan lesans ki zot pa sa zar kriz abityel ki kapitalis gayne akoz so lanarsi ineran ki lerla stabilize pu enn tan par zotmem.

Parfwa konpetisyon feros ant kapital monopoler finansye ki rezid dan diferan pei nasyon dan Lerop finn anzandre kriz telman grav ki par exanp, avan ariv 1920, ki finn prodir enn Lager Mondyal ek provok enn Revolisyon anti-kapitalist reysi (1yer Ger Mondyal ek Rev Ris). Apre sa, gayn pli gran kriz ekonomik, “Gran Depresyon” bann lane 1930, ki asontur anzandre ankor enn lot Lager Mondyal ek enn Revolisyon anti-kapitalist avan ariv 1950 (2yem Ger Mondyal ek Rev Lasinn).

E sa 2 lager mondyal-la, finn osi donn lokazyon preske tu pep kolonize dan lemond (apar enn-de kuma lepep Reyone), kan zot kolonizater ti pe met tu so resurs dan lager kont so konpetiter, kumans sap depi zug kolonizasyon direk.

E anmemtan, dan lonbraz sa 2 gran revolisyon (Larisi ek Lasinn) klas travayer dan pei inperyalist finn reysi ras buku drwa ek enpe sirplis – klas kapitalist ti oblize sede pangar zot prop klas travayer dan zot pei, li osi, pran sime revolisyon. Sa bann drwa-la *grosso-modo*, ti pran form sekirite sosyal, seki nu apel welfer steyt, plis serten liberte kuma liberte dexpresyon, eleksyon enn fwa 5 an.

Me, avek inplozyon bann reyn Stalinyen depi 20 an, avek instorasyon kapitalism dan Lasinn, avek erozyon tu drwa su welfer steyt, avek retur anfors kapitalism dan tu ex-koloni, nu finn re-tom dan kontinyasyon sa reyn “inperyalist + kapital monopol + kapital finansye” ki Lenin ti dekrir. Selman zordi Leta Zini so puvwar pa pe monte, kuma lepek ki Lenin ti dekrir, me pe al tonbe.

Ideoloji fasist lepek kapital finansye

Reyn kapital finansye li danzere. Delapar lefet ki sa zar kapitalist ki opuvwar li napa truv ni travayer ni seki travayer prodir (li get zis larzan ki fer larzan, ondire li viv lor enn kanser lor sosyete), rann lamonte ideoloji fasist pli fasil. Ena enn klas opuvwar ki iresponsab net. E li nekrofil. Li konn zis zafer mor: larzan, aksyon, mobilye ek imobilye. Enn kapitalist agrikol, minyer, indistriyel, li oblize ena enn serten swen pu so mindev. Sinon, li osi mor. E li konn sa. Li partaz limanite ar “so” travayer. Me, kapitalist finansye, non. Li merd ar twa, li. E, se reyn kapitalist finansye ki ti donn nesans premye vag fasism dan 20yem Syek. Zordi, nu bizin bare kont enn dezyem vag kan li re-opuvwar anuvo.

Revolisyon elektronik, otomatizasyon, delokalizasyon, emigrasyon

Dan lepek aktyel, prodiksyon kapitalist finn fek, avan kriz resan, travers enn faz prodiksyon elektronik frenetik ek enn otomatizasyon ki finn permet enn ogmantasyon produktivite ki vedir patron finn kapav lisansye buku travayer atraver lemond e fer lezot vinn sezonye, kontraktyel, a tan parsyel. Li resanble premye revolisyon indistriyel 150 an desela. Buku dimunn ranplase par masinn. Lertan vinn long. Lapey bese, si nu pran lapey mwayen ubyen medyann total klas travayer mondyal. Lantrepriz finn deplase, finn galup deryer lapey ba, travayer finn oblize emigre pu al kas pri travay ayer.

Inegalite ki menas sistem-lamem

Kriz finansye resan vedir ki tro buku larises finn akimile lao dan sosyete parmi gran, gran kapitalist – e anplis, buku sa larises-la li sort depi naryen ditu, pena okenn travay ki finn azut valer. Larises finn kree plito atraver zwe zugader lor valer stok exchennj, vann “futures”, vann det travayer, fer spekilasyon lor valer diferan deviz, lor valer later. E nu finn fini avek enn sir-valyasyon later (sirtu dan Lamerik), enn sir-valyasyon similtane dolar Ameriken, ek enn sirvalyasyon aksyon. Ondire finn gayn enn disparite ant valer larzan (ubyen valer later, ubyen valer aksyon) ek valer travay (travay sel zafer ki vreman azut valer, pa zis azut dan pri), a enn tel pwen, kot travayer (sirtu dan Lamerik, ti pe pran det pu aste) krake, perdi so lakaz: personn pa aste. Alor, gro gro labank bankrut. Ondire enn imans problem *Sale by Levy*. Fannie Mae ki ti 9yem pli gran konpayni dan lemond an 2004 dapre Forges, grene. Freddie Mac ki ti 20yem, li osi grene, bel bel labank kuma Lehmann (*Fortune* met li nimer 47 pli gran dan lemond an 2007) al bankrut Septam 2008. Me, kan AIG – ki ti 3yem pli gran konpayni dan lemond an 2004 dapre Forbes – menas bankrut, e lezot gro konpayni ki anmemtan ena monopol e ki dan finans, kumans menas tonbe, e zot alatet sistem, lerla, ep! Guvernman kapitalist (asterla si dimunn pa ti sir, zot kapav sir li enn “Leta burzwa”) deside pu nasyonaliz

enn kantite labank ek lasirans. Byen vit kriz ekonomik swiv deryer kriz finansye, e Guvernman Lamerik mem nasyonaliz General Motors. Sa kriz-la, avek internasyonalizasyon kapitalism, finn vinn partu.

Alor, patern se kapitalist finansye sirtu Ameriken ti pe vinn exazereman ris, e sa profi lor zot liv-kont ti depann lor travayer Ameriken pey zot det dan lavenir – me kriz dan lekonomi-mem, dan lekonomi reyel (pa zis dan finans) finn anpes zot pey zot det. Travayer Ameriken finn plito perdi plas. Lantrepriz inn bankrut, lezot inn ferme, lezot inn delokalize. 15 Ziyet, Rezerv Federal predir somaz 10% Lamerik an 2009.

Alor, apre sa gran revolisyon elektronik ki finn transform natir travay pu buku travayer, apre sa angresaz par bann kapitalist monopoler/finansye, tu seki travayer finn benefisyé, se enn mizerab portab, avan met li deor swa rod bes so lapey.

Demokrasi: teren redwit

Avek skleroz kontinyel sa tigit demokrasi ki kapitalism ofer, nu truve ki demokrasi existe tuzur zis onivo “nasyonal”, tandi ki kapital finn internasyonalize. (Avek eksepsyon Lerop, kot ena enn serten degre demokrasi onivo rezyon Lerop.) Me, plas kot nu mobilize, an zeneral, li res “leta nasyon”. Alor nu internasyonalism, li pu bizin pran sa an konsiderasyon.

Antretan, mem dan “leta nasyon” ena drol fenomenn. Anmemtan, ena “kan konsantrasyon” partu dan lemond, kot burzwazi pe al viv deryer bann fenning barble, avek sekirikor lor geyt, pu anpes dimunn rant dan zot kan. Zot pe santi lalit-deklas pu aksantye. Zot pe sey azir kuma enn karst apar. Moris-mem pe kumans gayn sa fenomenn-la, bann IRS e lezot skiym. E dimunn ki vinn res isi, si zot ase ris, kapav aste rezidans permanan ubyen mem ... nasyonalite. E viv dan enn kan eksklizif ek plito militarize.

E sa zis militarism onivo rezidans.

Militarism

E dan sa lepok-la, li enn lepok kot kapitalism depann pu so reyn lor militarism zeneralize. Lor intervansyon militer direk. Li depann lor enn rezo 700 baz militer etranze. Serten plas li depann lor lokipasyon militer. Li servi dronn, avyon san pilot, ki kapav ena larzer-lezel 25 met (*Spokesman*, 2009) ki al bombard Afghanistan. Li interesan pu get intervansyon direk militer ki *Global Policy Reform* inn pibliye (sori li selman ziska 2004):

1989	Libya	Naval aircraft shoot down two Libyan jets over Gulf of Sidra.
1989	Philippines	CIA and Special Forces involved in counter-insurgency.
1989-1990	Panama	27,000 troops + naval & air power used to oust Pres Noriega.
1990	Liberia	Troops deployed.
1990-1991	<u>Iraq</u>	Major military operation, inc naval blockade, air strikes; attack
	Iraqi forces in Kuwait.	
1991-2003	<u>Iraq</u>	Control of Iraqi airspace in N & S, periodic attacks.
1991	<u>Haiti</u>	CIA-backed military coup ousts Pres Jean-Bertrand Aristide.
1992-1994	Somalia	Special operations forces intervene.
1992-1994	Yugoslavia	Major role in NATO blockade of Serbia and Montenegro.
1993-1995	Bosnia	Active military involvement with air and ground forces.
1994-1996	<u>Haiti</u>	Troops depose military rulers, restore Pres J-Bertrand Aristide.
1995	Croatia	Krajina Serb airfields attacked.
1996-1997	Zaire (Congo)	Marines in operations in eastern region of the country.
1997	Liberia	Troops deployed.
1998	Sudan	Air strikes destroy country's major pharmaceutical plant.
1998	<u>Afghanistan</u>	Attack on targets in the country.
1998	<u>Iraq</u>	Four days of intensive air and missile strikes.
1999	Yugoslavia	Major involvement in NATO air strikes.
2001	Macedonia	NATO troops shift and partially disarm Albanian rebels.
2001	<u>Afghanistan</u>	Air & ground operations oust Taliban, install a new regime.
2003	<u>Iraq</u>	Invasion with large ground, air & naval forces, ousts S Hussein
2003-present	<u>Iraq</u>	Occupation force 150,000 troops, counter-insurgency war
2004	<u>Haiti</u>	Marines land. CIA-backed forces oust Pres. JB Aristide.

Sa bann intervansyon, zot anplis de sa prezans kontinyel dan plis ki 700 baz etranze.

Sa lepok-la osi depenn lor enn degre represyon ek kontrol indirek lor klas travayer kuma zame nu finn truve avan. Bann frontyer inn vinn pli difisil pu traverse, ant pei. Nu serveye dan travay. Leta burzwa gard rikord lor travayer kuma zame avan. Ena rikord kriminel ki swiv dimunn pa les zot gayn travay aköz pena sertifika moralite. Ena kart idantite tu kalite. Ena kamera serveyans. Ena rikord sak korl telefonn u ubyen mwa fer. Lepok “Big Brother” George Orwell ti dekrir, vreman isi zordi. Nu su enn reyn birokratik, met anplas dan lintere kapitalis finansye monopol.

Kapital proteze par represyon intern imans, e inperyalism par militarism extern san pitye. Pu kraz sa sistem ti-koperativ ki ti ankre dan Yugoslavi, apre ki Miray Berlin ti fini grene, ti bizin servi gro mwayen. Furni lager sivil. L’OTAN fer lokipasyon militer. Kas pei-la but-but.

Sa ki nu ena pu zet anba. Pa fasil, apar lefet ki limem li pu sufer buku kriz.

Disparite Agrandisan ant Puvwar Militer ek Ekonomik: Lamonte Lasinn

Ena enn disparite agrandisan ant puvwar militer Leta Zini (plis ki tu lezot pei dan lemond azute ansam) e lefet ki dan enn-de-deseni li pu selman 2yem pli gran lekonomi dan lemond. Lasinn pe travers li, dapre previzyon FMI. Dan 5 an, lor serten fason mezire (korize pu diferans pri) Lasinn pu fini devans USA. Me, kote militer, mem ki pena buku lezot pei avek mem grander larme ki USA, ena ki ena bom nukleer (apar bann ansyen puvwar militer zordi ena Lasinn, Lend, Pakistan, Israel, ant ot).

Kriz klima

Azute dan tu kriz ki sistem-la prodir, samem sistem-la finn prodir enn kriz klimatik danzere pu sirvi sivilizasyon imen. Ena menas resofman planet, lamer pu monte, lasesres, linondasyon, siklonn, tsunami, tu kapav destabilize kote lanatir lor planet. Tusala pu dir li enn irzans absolü pu nu ranvers kapitalism ki finn kree sa dezord-la. Nu ti get fim *Home* ki pe popolariz bann pwen syantifik dan *Fim K-lib* an Ziyet. Tu manb kapav vinn Sant Dokimantasyon, kot nu ena akse tulesemenn a *New Scientist* ek *Nature*, 2 magazinn syantifik ki MLF pret nu.

2 Klas Travayer Mondyal Imans Zordi

Asterla, nu vinn lor degre ek nivo lorganizasyon klas travayer onivo mondyal. Kan Claude Gabriel ti vizit Moris apre lafen Blok Sovyetik, nu ti diskrit avek li sa dub lefe ki pu ena:

- 1) ezemoni kapitalist pu ogmante buku (petet nu pa ti predir “lafen listwar”!)
- 2) ezemoni Stalinist pu nepli zenn muvman klas travayer.

Ziska ler nu finn truv premye lefe plis, e aköz burzwazi finn telman ranforsi ideolojikman (ziska kriz 2 an desela), ki li finn rann bann gen aköz lafen Stalinism ase neglizab (omwen a kurterm).

Klas travayer imans

Premye pwen kle, se zame dan listwar pa finn ena enn klas travayer mondyal osi gran, ni osi gran pursantaz popilasyon mondyal. Zame. Prof. Richard Freeman (Cher Harvard ek Felo LSE) estime ki ti pu ena enn klas travayer (“work-force”) apepre 1.46 milyar an 2000 ki ti konekte direktman avek sistem kapitalist mondyal, e lerala anmemtan finn ena enn ogmantasyon dan grander sa klas travayer mondyal-la kan dan mem-mem lepok travayer depi Blok Sovyetik, Lasinn ek Lenn finn amenn enn nuvo 1.47 milyar dan klas travayer mondyal ki konekte ar sistem kapitalist mondyal. An 2000 sa vedir pre 3 milyar travayer lor enn popilasyon total de 6 milyar. Mo estime ki ena ankor plis ki 2 milyar peyzan ek dimunn dan sekter semi-peyzan- semi-“informel” dan Lasinn, Lenn, Lafrik, Lamerik Latinn, Indonezi, Malezi.

Par definisyon serten degre lorganizasyon vizavi sistem kapitalis

Sistem kapitalis li donn dimunn enn minimem organizasyon, deza. Alor, pa zis grander, me lefet ki sa imans popilasyon ena enn minimem form lyen “sosyal” avek kapitalis. Travayer travay ansam, e zot an-konfli kotidyen avek patrona.

Inegalite orib

Degre inegalite ant patrona inperyalist ek travayer, li inkrwayab. Dan USA, top 1% posedan posed 2 fwa plis ki 80% Ameriken dan pei, e si retir propriete lakaz-kot-u-reste lerla sa top 1% posed 4 fwa plis ki 80% Ameriken. Etan done ki saler enn travayer (median) dan US li 12 fwa plis ki enn Nizeryen (Harvard research, 2008), nu kapav mazinn ki dibyen ki 80% Nizeryen posede, li det par 100 fwa mwens ki seki top 1% dan USA posede. Inegalite finn vinn grotesk lor planet.

Nuvo zar Alyenasyon

Anplis alyenasyon ki Marx inn dekrir ki tipifye kapitalism ordiner, kot relasyon ant dimunn travers par marsandiz, e travayer alyene depi seki li prodir, zordi ena lezot form alyenasyon ki pli absird. Parfwa travayer bizin sanz zot non e asize enn zurne dir lor telefonn zot apel “Marie-Antoinette” ubyen “Jean-Francois”, koz manti ar dimunn lor letan deor, pretann zot an Frans, e antretan sey vann tu kalite zafer ridikil ar zot. Fizikman, zot kuma enn “one-man-band”: Zot lir depi enn lekran divan zot, zot konsilte enn lekran lao, zot ena irfonn lor zot zorey, zot ena mikro divan zot, e zot tipe tuzur lor enn klavye.

Migrasyon vast

Akoz inegalite ek lamizer, e aköz vyeyisman popilasyon dan pei “avanse”, larises dan pei Golf ki ena popilasyon ase restren, ena bann muvman imans klas travayer partu lor bul later. Sa vedir kapav enn enn partaz lexperyans pli vit, mem si klandestinite ek prekarite rann imigran frazil pu partisip dan lorganizasyon so klas.

Kantite lorganizasyon sindikal

Nuvo Konfederasyon apel *International Trade Union Confederation* (ki ti amalgamasyon an 2006 ant *World Confederation of Labour* and *ICFTU*) dir lor so sayt ki li regroup 166 milyon travayer. Dizaon ansyen konfederasyon pro-sovyetik ki tuzur existe apel *World Federation of Trade Unions* ena enpe. Pa buku, si estimasyon Prof. Freeman 2.93 milyar travayer. Li enn to sindikalizasyon internasyonal de mwens ki 1%. Me, sa li pa tro tris, parski si nu pleyn birokratizasyon muvman sindikal onivo nasyonal (kuma dan Moris, li malad net), me onivo internasyonal li buku pli pir.

Kantite organizasyon indepandan kote politik

Kote politik, sa imans klas travayer onivo mondyal purlemoman truv li sirtu kareman deryer bann parti pro-kapitalist, ubyen opizale deryer bann sosyal demokrat santrist, dan laplipar pei dan lemond. Sa vedir organizasyon politik sa bann trvayer-la li lwen det indepandan depi burzwazi. Okontrèr, klas travayer finn anzeneral absorbe dan politik dikte par burzwazi.

Si nu pu get bann lorganizasyon degos kuma LALIT, nu marzinal zordi dan preske tu pei dan lemond, afors ideoloji kapitalist finn vinn dominan apre ki Miray Berlin finn grene. Me, tu zafer ena so muvman dan lot direksyon. Dan Lamerik Latinn, apre Parti Travayer dan Brezil, ek enn seri muvman politik byen vivan dan Lamerik Latinn, finn ena enn muvman finn deklanse otur ek sirtu apre eleksyon Hugo Chavez dan Venezuela, enn pei ki ena petrol. Lax enn nuvo Venezuela an-aksyon ansam avek Kiba, ki pankor sumet divan blokis kapitalist pu 50 an zordi, pe permet bann guvernman degos rann Leta Zini enpe nerve. Ena Morales dan Bolivi. Ena Corea an Equador. E dan enn kont-atak, dan Honduras, le 28 Zin dernyer, ladrwat finn fer enn kudeta pu evins enn eli degos Manuel Zelaya.

Dan pei devlope, zis Lafrans ki finn truv gran gran manifestasyon sindikal ek politik, enn enn bann kont-atak kont Kriz, e emerzans Nouveau Parti Anti-Capitalistes, li petet enn prodwi sa bann muvman-la, osi byen ki enn faktor ki finn ankuraz bann muvman.

Dan Leta Zini, kan Obama ti pe rod nominasyon, nu finn truv kan-mem (tu proporsyon garde) enn relativ partisipasyon aktiv depi travayer, dimunn mizer, dan prosesis elektoral Ameriken, kot demokrasi burzwa paret finn pli skleroze.

Alor, kestyon se lavangard travayer kot pu sorti? Dan ki landrwa lemond? Eski Lamerik Latinn pu kontiyn amenn flanbo?

Ki kalite parti politik eski pu pran nesans dan sa nuvo lepok? Eski nu pu invariant bann nuvo form pratik politik, ki ni elektoral ni tom dan enn fason abjek dan “sosyete sivil”? Eski nu bizin fit tu nu ansyen zuti delit, asterla kan kriz fini fel sa ezemoni ideolojik-la?

Etan done ki sistem kapitalist li devlope dan enn fason “konbine ek inegal”, sa vedir revolisyon li vinn posib dan bann plis pli inatandi. Kot kapitalist pe atann li, zot met zot arsenal kont li laba. Kan zot pe konsantre isi, rebelyon large deryer zot ledò, laba.

Alor zordi, pu konklir nu vinn lor lefet ki inperyalist Ameriken li dan enn leta de “sirextansyon”. U kone, kan u avoy u lame pu sey pran enn zafer tro lwen, u perdi ekilib, u tonbe. Leta Zini pe fer sa. Li dan seki apel “over-reach” inperyal. Li ti krwar li fer enn “shock and awe” lor Bagdhad, fini dan 2 zur. Me, li ankor dan Lirak apre 5 an. Asterla, Afghanistan ek Pakistan riske vinn enn lamar pu li. Kot-sa nu bizin atake? Ki form nu internasyonalism bizin pran?

3 Ver bann Program Internasyonalist – an komen

Alor lapist prinsipal ki nu pe propoze se ki zordi bizin kumans travay otur eleman ver bann PROGRAM POLITIK INTERNASYONALIST. Nu bizin enn oryantasyon politik ki nu tu, tu bann militan sosyalist revolisyoner, tu dimunn klas travayer ki anvi ki klas travayer vinn opuvwar, ki nu ansam *konpran*. E li lor baz sa bann program-la ki nu rekrit lezot militan. Alor, avan nu koz ki “form lorganizasyon” internasyonalist, nu bizin petet adres sa problem programatik. Enn bon program sosyalist revolisyoner (li parey onivo nasyonal, kuma “*Program LALIT pu enn Lekonomi Alternativ*”), li pa zis viz enn “ideal” ubyen enn “rev”. (Nu rekonet ki ena deza serten program existan, eg “La 4”.) ki

Enn program ena 3 konpozant:

- enn analiz lasosyete sitye dan enn moman dan listwar, ek argimantasyon lor kot li pe ale, e kot nu bizin ankuraz li ale;
- bann demand, ek slogan otur lekel nu mobilize pu amenn sa sanzman ki nu pe vize-la, inklir sanzman ki implik enn revolisyon;
- mobilizasyon, kot nu amenn deplizanpli buku dimunn ar nu dan enn fason *konsyan*, setadir zot konpran ki sa mobilizasyon se pa zis “desann dan lari”, lerla “Guvernman pu krake”, non. Li enn mobilizasyon ki pe apiy serten demand ek serten slogan, ki, kan nu gayn zot, sa ranforsi nu pu al pli divan pu sanz sosyete net. Nu pu rekrit dimunn enn par enn dan ka militan, par tipti-grup dan ka lavangard klas travayer avek lexperyans lalit dan lepase, ek lerla par imans grup kan klas travayer buze, e nu kone li buze kan li anvi par li.

Alor, nu donn enn lexanp, kot LALIT deza finn kumans argimant enn pwen e milit otur de li ver enn posib PROGRAM INTERNASYONALIST. Nu finn ena enn listwar depi 1977 rant dan bann aksyon pu ferm baz militer US lor Diego Garcia. Nu truv so linportans dan lalit kont kolonyalis Britanik ek inperyalist Ameriken, e nu finn truve ki kot enn finn sed plas dominan a lot-la (dan sa moman-la) ena enn mayon feb dan lasenn mondyal kapitalist, dan inperyalism. UK ek US finn kas lalwa internasyonal. Zot finn briz enn pei. Zot finn koken bann Lil Chagos ilegalman otur Lindepandans. Zot finn fer enn krim kont limanite, deport Chagosyen depi zot Lil. Zot finn rwinn lanvironnman. Pu lit kont sa, finn ena fam dan lavangard. Alor, LALIT finn swazir lor letan pu donn buku letan, apiy kont inperyalist *lor sa pwen la*. Nu dan enn lager deklas. Nu bizin rod zot febles dan larmatir nu lennmi. Nu bizin ralye nu lafors. Kisna ek mwa finn expoze, arete Lasose, gayn keys, aköz manifestasyon otur sa size la, e nu zame pa finn regrete. Tutlong nu listwar LALIT finn akord rezurs lor la. Me, pa zis Morisyen, pa zis Morisyen ki Chagosyen, ki sufer aköz baz militer Ameriken, sipa LOTAN, sipa Franse, sipa Britanik. Ena dimunn dan plis ki 700 plas andeor Lamerik ki ena enn baz prekot zot. Petet 1000. Ek travayer Ameriken pli suver aköz ena pli ki 700 dan USA. An 2003 nu finn met dibut ansam ek lezot enn rezo mondyal NO US BASES, aster apel NO BASES, tukur.

Alor, so argimantasyon, so analiz. E nu osi get lefet ki li ena enn linportans *tranzisyonel* – setadir li pran nu depi nu sityasyon oprime net zordi, e li form enn pon kot nu kapav met nu dan enn pozisyon pli favorab pu nu kapav ariv konsyans neser pu enn sanzman *revolisyoner*. Sa argimantasyon-la li konstitye seksyon I dan enn pwen Programatik.

Inperyalism zordi li gard so puvwar, anfendkont, atraver so lebra militer kuma kolonyalist ti gard so puvwar par so lebra militer, li osi. Kan lager konpetisyon pu resurs mont lor kapitalist, zot lager involonterman ant zot mem (Premye Ger Mondyal pli tipik de sa).

Partu dan lemond, kan lager deklare, ubyen kan ena enn intervansyon inperyalist, ena enn ase gran lamas dimunn ki ankoler, ki pare pu desann lor lari. Me, desann lor lari, par li tuse, li pa marse, e li pa amenn gran

sanzman dan konsyans lamas dimunn, nonpli. Li riske kree dezilizyon dan nuvo-veni dan lalit. Me, si deza ena enn muvman an-permanans (mem ase tipti) *kont baz militer*, e li partu dan lemond inklir dan Leta Zini, la, kan ena enn agresyon militer, sa lalit kont baz-la kapav byen inportan pu mobilizasyon kont lager, e mem pu chalennj sistem kapitalist limem.

- 1) Inperyalis gard so reyn politik anplas anfendkont, atraver enn seri baz militer ki “**protez so lintere ekonomik**”; zot-mem zot dir li.
- 2) Etan done ena plis ki 700 baz partu dan lemond andeor USA, ek plis ki 700 dan USA, **partu dan lemond kot ena enn baz**, nu kapav lit pu fer ferm li; e sa, par limem, kapav enn parmi bann **pilye** dan enn stratezi internasyonalist kont inperyalism;
- 3) Anzeneral, kot ena enn baz militer deza **ena enn grup dimunn ki pe milit kont**; byen suvan zot dimunn mizer; byen suvan zot ena dirizan pasifist, byen suvan fam pasifist; byen suvan zot pa politize ditu; zot kont swa tapaz avyon, swa prostitisyon ek ladrog ki solda anzandre dan lavil pli pre, swa Leta ubyen Larme US finn efektifman koken zot later pu fer baz, swa zot anvironmantalist; tusala vinn potansyel alye dan sa muvman-la;
- 4) Pandan enn lalit kont baz, si militan politik anti-kapitalist ladan, **li kapav vinn kler pandan sa lalit-la, pa zis kifer ena baz, me osi kifer ena lager plitar**; baz-la li la pu enn rezon ki dimunn ariv kone pandan lalit: pu kontrol **lasurs petrol** ubyen lezot matyer brit, pu kontrol marse, pu “protez lintere” kapitalist pei inperyalist; sa lalit kont baz-la montre sa pli byen ki mil sermon.
- 5) Sa vedir, lalit kont baz ena potansyel montre nu prezizeman ki **lyen ena ant lebra militer inperyalist ek lintere ekonomik** kapitalist.
- 6) Sa a sontur montre nu ki ete “**militarism**”, e sa permet nu depas limitasyon truv “lager” kuma enn fenomenn suden ek inexplikab.
- 7) Lalit kont baz militer byen suvan ede dan **lalit kont lokipasyon militer**, ki suvan enn tranzisyon ant invazyon ek konstrikasyon 3-4 baz (Irak).
- 8) Dan ka baz militer etranze, enn baz militer inperyalist li enn infraksyon kont **suvrennte** enn pei domine; sa vedir **kontrol demokratik** pena lor baz etranze lor later enn pei mwen for ki lot-la.
- 9) **Travayer lepor**, ayropor, ek transpor kapav form parti dan **boykot** baz ek so aprovizyonman;
- 10) Etan done ki, kan ena lager, nu kapav gayn **100,000 a 1,000,000** dimunn dan lemond pu pran zot kuraz desann dan lari, manifeste pu sey anpes karnaz-la, li inportan ki nu pare pu ki zot partisipasyon li anrisasan, e ki zot partisipasyon vinn enn pon pu zot zwenn lalit kont *koz* deryer sa lager-la, setadir inperyalism, stad siprem sa kapitalism voras-la. **Lalit kont baz**, kan li integre dan lalit kont lager, li ena kapasite expoz “**militarism**” pu premye fwa a sa santenn milye dimunn ki desann dan lari pu lape. *Lyen* ant sa militarism ek inperyalism, li osi, vinn pli transparan pu dimunn ki kont lager, parski kan nu kriye slogan pu “**ferm tu baz!**” **anplis ki “aret lager!”**, sa aprofondi refleksyon tu partisipan. Movement “Bring the Troops Home” dan USA ti konvenki par diskur Ram Seegobin depi LALIT dan Asia Pacific International Solidarity Conference an 2006, e ti sanz zot slogan a “Bring the Troops Home from the Front and From the Bases!”
- 11) Inklizyon lalit kont baz, li transand analiz ase banal lor rezon pu lager. Li anrisi deba lor **stratezi** par klerman li pa sifi pu zis tir George W. Bush met Barack Obama. Militarism tuzur la. So fonksyon pu protez lintere kapitalist, li osi, li tuzur la. Nu analiz bizin al pli profon.
- 12) Dan lapratik, kan enn nuvo lager deklare, enn nuvo invazyon ena lye, muvman anti-lager **pa bizin mobilize depi zero** si deza ena enn eleman enn striktir anti-baz an-plas, ki pe lite **an-permanans**.
- 13) Delapar sa program-la, militan internasyonalist revolisyoner kapav travay pu fer “fermtir baz” vinn enn item lor azanda tu muvman anti-lager, tu lorganizasyon klas travayer, tu parti klas travayer;
- 14) Lalit pu ferm tu baz, li montre nuvo manifestan ki vini dan lapratik ki li pa sifi pu zis partisip dan enn muvman kont lager *ponktyel*, me bizin enn muvman pu ferm baz militer, pu aret prodiksyon zarm, pu aret miltarism; ase vit nuvo aderan pu **apran met ankestyon sa lintere inperyalist** ki alabaz sa militarism; byen vit, nu bizin **prepar enn program**: mazinn ki travay pu ranplas travay lor baz? Ki prodiksyn pu ranplas prodiksyon armaman? Ki travay pu ranplas travay solda, sa travay dan lekel zanfann mizer Lamerik tir zot lazurne?
- 15) Militarism li la an-permanans, pa zis dan lager, alor kan viz baz militer an-permanans, li anseyn nuvo ki vinn manifeste, ki lalit kont lager, li enn zafer permanan; li **anpes sa “dezilizyon”** ki nuvo veni dan lalit suvan gayne kan zot dir “Abe, tan mil dimunn ti desann dan lari, e Prezidan ankor pe amenn lager!”
- 16) Bann baz militer etranze, pu USA, zot kuma zot “**outpost**” kolon dan teritwar Amerindyen lontan; zot enn espas extra-teritoryel pu enn kolonizater opere andeor so later, depi lekel li fer so ekspansyonism.

17) Lefet ki li enn lalit permanan, li enn pon ki permet e parfwa obliz dimunn ki partisip dan enn gran muvman ponktyel kont lager ariv **reflesi lor KIFER ena sa rekur permanan a lafors.**

Alor, nu pu lite otur slogan: “Ferm tu baz militer! Non a inperyalism! Non a bombardman Afganistan ek Pakistan! Non a Lokipasyon Irak ek Palestinn!”

[Program-la, kapav servi mem zar argimantasyon pu liye lager ar lezot fenomenn permanan ki la: lizinn armanan, vize bato deger rutinn dan larad, exersis konzwen, “sea-swap regilye, antrennman (kuma lekol notwar Ameriken pu Lamerik Latinn), Africom dan Lafrik.]

Revolisyon aktyel

Kote sutyen pu revolisyon ki pe derule dan Venezuela zordi, nu bizin enn argimantasyon pu met li kuma enn pwen dan nu PROGRAM INTERNASYONALIST. Ena lezot parti ki ena plis lexperyans ladan ki nu.

Lalit aktyel ki kle, kuma Palestinn

Parey pu nu sutyen pu lalit lepep Palestinn. Nu bizin enn seri argimantasyon *kifer* li enn pwen dan enn Program Internasyonalist:

- 1) Israel enn Leta ki arme ek finanse par inperyalist Leta Zini.
- 2) Rol Israel pu inperyalist US se zandarm Mwayenn Oryan ek Golf. Li enn rol politik ek ekonomik, pa zis militer. Se dan Mwayenn Oryan ek Golf ki Leta Zini aprovizyon li an petrol, petrol ki deplizanpli alabaz “sivilizasyon” destrikter USA, sirtu dan dernye 100 an (loto prive ek elektrisite). Israel la pu fer travay sal Leta Zini. Li resevwar par milya dolar an ed militer depi USA.
- 3) Israel enn pei ki reprezant enn-de bann dernye koloni, e li ti kumans met dibut ver lafen ekspansyon kolonyal Eropeyen, e li pankor dekolonize.
- 4) Israel ti enn koloni partikilye, dan lesans ki li ti kolonize par enn seri lepep ki ti pe sibir anti-semitism, mem pogrom, e finalman zenosid, dan bann pei Lerop, alor li ti kumans anparti kuma enn av-de-pe pu dimunn an-sufrans akoz kominalism ki finn vinn debride dan Lerop kapitalist (setadir enn problem intern sosyete Lerop ki ti bizin rezud san rekur a fer enn lot pep perdi so later); lalit anfaver lepep Palestinyen, li osi enn lalit pu expoz anti-semitism e lit kont li;
- 5) Me, anmemtan, depi kumansman so lexisans, e mem avan li kumans, Leta Israel e so bann fondater, finn servi vyolans militer pu fer Palestinyen fwir, e pu dominn Palestinyen;
- 6) Guvernman siksesif dan Israel refiz kontanple enn Leta sekilye, me insiste ki Israel enn Leta Zwif; me etan done, dan totalite teritwar Palestinn-Israel, li pena mazorite alor Israel pa kapav kontanple enn *rezolisyon demokratik* (e anmemtan mentenir enn Leta relizye);
- 7) Israel finn deplizanpli ena rekur a politik byen similer a Apartheid Sid Afrik, pu kontiyn sa kolonizasyon-la, e mem Sid Afrik inn reysi ena enn rezolisyon demokratik apre Apartheid;
- 8) Lepep Palestinyen finn perdi so pei; ena par milyon refizye Palestinyen.
- 9) “Solisyon 2 pei” pa pe marse; Israel finn detrir Lotorite Palestinyen, اساسinn tu lider politik, e pe kontiyn etabli nuvo “setlemennt” ek koloni, e refiz retir li depi ansyen; li pe sey pran Zerisalem osi byen ki West Bank; Israel finn fer Gaza vinn kuma enn sel gran prizon e finn fer enn leta de syez, lerla bombard dimunn andan.
- 10) Mobilizasyon dan Moris ki LALIT finn fer finn dezanklav sutyen pu lepep Palestinn, depi enn kominote e fer li vinn politik, ek larz.
- 11) LALIT finn kontribiye pu fer Guvernman Moris sispann so relasyon diplomatik avek Israel pandan bombardman Gaza.
- 12) Seki pe ariv lepep Palestinyen zordi, kapav vinn enn avan-kurer seki pu ariv buku lepep dan lavenir, si nu pa aret sa masak Ameriken-Israel la;

“Program Nasyonal” Internasyonal

Nu kapav osi reflesi e kumans prepar ansam program de-lit nasyonal an-komen, setadir enn program delit nasyonal *internasyonalist*. Enpe kuma Manifesto ki Marx ek Engels ti drafte pu Premye Internasyonal. Li inportan pu rapel ki travay Premye Internasyonal ti petet ede pu klas travayer Pari pran puvwar pu 2 mwa dan Kominn de Pari (parey kuma plitar, sa travay inisyal 2yem Internasyonal finn kontribiye pu permet klas travayer Larisi pran puvwar an 1917).

Pwen inportan se konsyans de klas travayer li re-ose kan travayer inplike dan *refleksyon* ek *planifikasyon* internasyonalist. Parski nu tu kone ki enn revolisyon sosyalist, li pu oblize vinn internasyonal, sinon swa, si

li byen gran, li riske re-vinn birokratik ek swadizan “sosyalism dan enn sel pei”, ubyen si li pli tipti, tu sa artilri lur pu asiz lor li, re-ranvers li.

Me, argimantasyon ki inportan. Kimanyer nu liye nu argimantasyon pu pran depi sityasyon zordi ziska enn revolisyon sosyalist. Kimanyer sa li enn proses dinamik. Par exanp, enn parti politik par-la dan lemond kapav met divan argimantasyon ki li enn priorite pu parti revolisyoner azut dan nu program, *avek so argimantasyon*, transportasyon kolektiv pu tu – pu kumans mat problem karbonn ki loto individyel fer.

Nu bizin finyol seki enn *demand* ete, pa zis enn sinp revandikasyon me enn demand avek enn lefe tranzisyonel ver enn revolisyon, e finyol seki enn slogan inifikater ete. Sa li eklersi lefet ki serten revandikasyon nu kapav gayne depi Leta Burzwa ek reyn kapitalist aktyel (bann reform dan sistem), ek serten enn Leta Travayer pu bizin met an-plas (nu pu bizin revolisyon). Me, zordi kriz klima pe azut enn lirezans ki zame pa ti ena avan. Klas travayer ki bizin pran lavangard sa muvman ekolojist-la, ansam ek so lalit deklas.

Sa travay an-komen kote program, li pu met nu dan enn sityasyon kot nu kapav pare pu met dibut enn lorganizayson internasyonal, kan so moman vini, kan tu bann faktor obzektiv permet, kan ena enn lamas travayer pare pu kumans azir lor baz enn program revolisyoner dan plizir pei. Sa pu so moman.

Antretan:

- Konstrir mem zar program onivo **rezyonal**, ek enn Forum enpe kuma SEAF? Argimantasyon pu sa, ek preparasyon enn program delit, osi. Lanfaz lor nesosite met dibut parti politik revolisyoner sak pei. Lanfaz lor Afri-com.
- Sweyn relasyon bilateral avek parti sanblab: akeyir viziter, vizit zot pandan zot Kongre.
 - Kontak email anform let.
 - Kontak email anform dokiman internasyonalist.
 - Lir zot web, rebran pu zot.
- Swiv revolisyon lezot plas.
- Partisip dan revolisyon Venezuela – dan brigad.
- Propaz konesans lor revolisyon lepase.

pu LALIT, 18 July, 2009

Listorik LALIT so internasyonalism ek lyin internasyonal

Kriz ekonomik mondyal pe met lor azanda nesosite enn veritab ripost pa zis lokal me sirtu internasyonal kont sistem kapitalis. Zordi klas travayer antye lemond pe sibir mem lefe sa kriz-la: ki li par lisansiman, somaz, delokalizasyon, kanpayn pu ogmant produktivite (kuma Moris avek so 24/7), ki li par nuvo lalwa represif ki pe atak drwa aki travayer e pe etablir enn nuvo rapor de fors anfaver klas patron (kuma ERA isi). San konte ki dan Moris politik ekonomik e nuvo sektor lindistri ki guvernman Lalyans Sosyal pe promuvwar (avek so Korl Sennter, offshor) pe anfans lekonomi Moris ankor plis dan sa mem sistem global ki responsab kriz aktyel.

Zordi enn ripost internasyonal finn mem vinn enn lirezans avek kriz ekolojik ki finn provoke par samem sistem ekonomik baze lor akimilasyon profi e destriksyon resurs later. Enn kriz ki pe menas sirvi limanite mem. Me dan samem moman-la onivo nasyonal dan laplipar pei nu pe konstat difikilte ki muvman travayer e lagos pe fer fas pu riposte a kriz ekonomik mondyal.

Dan LALIT depi nu nesans nu finn truv li enn priyorite pu reflesi e azir anfaver internasyonalism. E seki finn karakteriz form ki nu travay internasyonalism e nu lyin internasyonal finn pran depi odepar mem se so lopoziyon a kuran Stalinyin, so natir non sektor e enn susi konstan pu lye nu travay politik isi ek nu travay onivo internasyonal.

Listorik

Revi e Grup Lalit deklas

Novam 76 – Revi ldk sorti anplin kanpayn eleksyon zeneral/elektoralism byin for dan MMM.

Tribinn lib degos. Lartik ekrir par pli gran nomb militan/rezo distribisyon militan

- Lyin ant teori e pratik revolisyoner/ inklir tradiksyon klasik literatir
revolisyoner- lor analiz lalit internasyonalis e anti imperyalis

Revi ldk No5: "Losean Indyin e Lil Moris- bizin fer bann 'korespondans ant politik lokal e Internasyonal"

Revi ldk No.8: lalit deklas enn lalit internasyonal

Plizir lartik danaliz lor lager liberasyon dan Lafrik Ostral, lor lalit kont Apartheid dan Sid Afrik, Muvman rezistans dan Les Timor, lokipasyon Palestinn, Baluchistan, kritik tu form inperyalis, kont baz Diego.

Kuran anti Stalinyin/Lopozisyon degos

* Odepar sitye numem an opozisyon a kuran Stalinyin dan blok Sovyetik e Lasinn. 2 manb ldk ki deza ena lyin ar La4, JCB, mamb La4 ek EB manb SWP-US. Plis RS ek LC (Sid Afrik). Byin vit devlop lyin ar diferan kuran Marxist Revolisyoner.

* Lesanz lide, dokiman, piblikasyon avek lorganizasyon internasyonalis (Rouge, Imprecor, Critique Communiste (La4, LCR), Intercontinental Press, Lutte Ouvriere, Lutte de Classe (LO-France), Informations Ouvrieres (PCI-Lambertis), Socialist Review (SWP-UK), New Left Review.

Me osi lezot kuran otur Monthly Review, La Forge (PCOF-Maoist, Pro-Albane), Granma (Kiba), News & Letters (Marxis imanis-US).

An 1988 deba lide ar SWP- pibliye so Action Plan ki viz pu inifye travayer lemond fas a kriz ekonomik. Lalit dakor dan lansanb ar so AP apar lor kimanyer pu konbat rasism (pa dakor ar SWP so lide anfafer 'positive discrimination' u 'affirmative action'/danze klasifikasyon lor baz ras u kominote odetriman politik deklas)

Lalit anti inperyalis

Aksyon kont inperyalis US- partaz trak ar marin bato deger US larad P.Louis/demand ferm baz Diego/ Kont inperyalis Franse- kont lokipasyon Tromlin, rol Lafrans dan Komor/ Anfafer lang Kreol (nu non ldk e lartik dan Revi, trak, lafis) e dan LPT (promuvwar lang maternel e lite pu so rekonesans ofisyel, prosesis dekolonizasyon linstitisyon dan Moris)

Fin 70 – Travay alinteryer Fron larz

Anti apartheid: Met dibut SOMAAP(kanpayn boykot zoranz Outspan), plitar aktif dan FRAAP

Grup ldk travay osi alinteryer MMM ki alepok koz anfafer lalit deklas e internasyonalism. 1981: nu kit MMM e form parti LALIT akoz ladireksyon MMM so trahizon lalit deklas (kolaborasyon deklas avek so Nuvo Konsansis Sosyal), e so trahizon lalit kont kominalism (kan fer lalyans ar H.Boodhoo so PSM). Me depi lane 80 ladireksyon MMM devye lor lalit anti inperyalis. So dirizan kumans koz lor bi politik etranzer MMM pu konserv aki avek Marse Komin e vizavi Leta Zini e pu gayn plis depi sa bann pei-la. Kumsa ki an 1982 Berenger, Minis Finans MMM-PSM aplik preskripsyon FMI. E Minis Zafer Etranzer, de L'Estrac deklar Lafrans pei rivrin Losean Indyin akoz li ena koloni LaRenyon . E li azute ki li lezitim ki Lafrans ena enn prezans militer dan sa rezyon-la. Sa politik etranzer MMM-PSM pu uver sime pu Lafrans syez dan COI e fasilit kapital Franse gayn akse marse rezyonal.

Anti inperyalis 1989: aktif dan Fron sutyin lepep Komor/rankont ant manb LALIT e dirizan FDC (Yousouf Moussa, Ali Saefou, Mohamed Sheik)

1990: Lalit met dibut Komite Kordinasyon Anti Inpeyyalis(KKAI) regroup 19 lorganizasyon/ organiz Manif anti Mitterand lor ronpwin Reduit

1991: Met dibut Komite Anti Lager(KAL)-kont lager Lirak, elarzi KKAI e regroup 26 lorganizasyon/ manif, lafis

1995- Militan Lalit inisye Komite Anti Nikleer- manif kont ese nikleer Franse dan Pasifik, partisipasyon buku zenn, grup ekoloji/ Petisyon 4000 siynater

1995-2000: Militan Lalit travay dan All Workers Conference (regrup lor mem platform tu federasyon sindikal ek LPT). Kanpayn kont FMI, BM, WTO. Partisipasyon dan Rezo rezyonal (lye ar kuran altermondyalis): SAPSN (Southern Africa People's Solidarity Network), Jubilee South, 50 years is Enough./ Konferans avek partisipasyon orater internasyonal kuma Michel Chossodovsky, Christian de Brie, Eric Toussaint, Vandana Shiva, Jose Bove, Trevor Ngwane.

2002- Organiz enn Forum Anti AGOA (lalwa vote dan Leta Zini pu akse prodwi textil depi 48 pei Sib Sahara lor marse Amerikin me kot ena kondisyon atase, kuma fode pa fer nanye ki met ankestyon sekirite e politik etranzer US / mem lane organiz enn konferans paralel (Peoples Forum) avek lansanb muvman sindikal, delege depi Larenyon, Sid Afrik. Manif dan P.Louis. Pandan sa rankont-la reysi fer enn kordinasyon politik rezyonal.

Petisyon kont AGOA sirtu dan pei lafrik (200 sinyatir).

2000: Ram dan Konferans L'Entente dan San Francisco, e divan enn Tribinal Travayer e Lepep Lafrik dan Los Angeles kot li finn expoz lyin baz US Diego e AGOA

Palestinn e muvman solidarite

An 2004 2 mamb Lalit al dan teritwar okipe Palestinn pu partisip dan 2 kalite aksyon solidarite. Enn lamars internasyonal kont miray Aparteid a linisyativ ISM. Al viv dan enn vilaz palestinyin pu temwanye lor lavi su lokipasyon e kolonizasyon par larme Israel. An 2006 enn mamb Lalit re-al Palestinn pu donn kudme dan kanpayn sutyin a rekolt zoliv.

Dan Moris Lalit organiz 2 riportbak lor temwanyaz lavi dan teritwar okipe Palestinn. Osi veye flanbo avek exPrezidan C.Uteem ek Minisipalite P.Louis otur agresyon militer Israel kont Liban. Pibliye enn dayri Palestinn lor 2 vizit Ragini Kistnasamy laba.

Suvan internasyonalism finn pran form muvman solidarite ver pei ki dan lavangard lalit : Kiba (lane 60), Vietnam (lafin 70), Sid Afrik (kont Aparteid-lane 80), Sid lamerik, sirtu Nicaragua (lafin 80) e zordi Venezuela e Palestinn. Mem si li nesese li pa ede pu kree enn form lorganizasyon atraver lekel internasyonalism kapav exprim li.

Evenman ki finn bulvers nu refleksyon lor internasyonalism:

1. Eklatman URSS, lafin blok bipoler lager frwad. Devyasyon birokrasi URSS e Lasinn. Kurbe avek anserkleman sistem kapitalis internasyonal, abandonn zot internasyonalism e rant dan zeo-politik.
2. Lexistans diferan regroupman otur Parti Trotskis dan Lerop e US ki finn kree e ankuraz devlopman bann striktir 'reyon bisiklet'. Sa kalite regroupman finn kree divizyon sektor onivo internasyonal. Ena tandans dan nu travay internasyonalis pu pans par rapor a lorganizasyon Internasyonal ki deza existe deor. Eski nu pa bizin antan ki revolisyoner internasonalist ena enn rol pli aktif dan batir internasyonalism numem. Long refleksyon lor natir nu lyin existan. Fode pa reproduir sema kolonyal avek bann Internasyonal ki Ero santre ubyin sant dan US, ki nuri relasyon kuma reyon bisiklet.
3. Emerzans blok rezyonal kuma COMESA, SADC, IOR, COI. Leta e klas kapitalis pe deza regroupe onivo rezyonal. Ki kalite kordinasyon politik rezyonal? Eski regroup lafors sosyalis e revolisyoner ubyin anti kapitalis? Anfet truve ki li enn fos dilem. Parski anfet kuran sosyalis pu gayn terin alinteryer lafors anti kapitalis.
4. Devyasyon lalit anti inperyalis ki reprezante par tandans 'integrist. Raliman kont inperyalis pa su banyer internasyonalism me relizyon, kuma dan Liran, Tinizi, Lezip, Lalzeri. Parfwa muvman kominalo-relizye kuma dan Sri-Lanka, Lind. Zot donn laparans anti inperyalis me san okenn lespwar pu liber limanite.

Rezo politik dan Losean Indyin

1991 - Lalit partisip dan Konferans fondasyon L'Entente Internasyonal (regrup lorganizasyon politik, sindikal Lafrik, Lazi, Lerop, US) ki ti fer Barcelone. Laba dan grup Losean Indyin-Lafrik militan Lalit zwenn manb WOSA, FDC, MIR, Madagascar. Rankont kot desid pu met dibut enn Rezo politik informel (Indian Ocean Network). Reysi pran form atraver Revi Lalit.

Indian Ocean Network/Reseau L'Ocean Indien: 12 numero Mars 1991 a Zin 1992, sirkile parmi manb ION e lezot grup e individi andeor/ kontiyn diskrit lor ION avek Salim Vally(WOSA) kan li vizit Moris, ar dirizan FDC, manb AZAPO (Paris, 1992). An 1993, LC ek RS vizit Sid Afrik pos Aparteid e retabliir kontak ar dirizan WOSA. Ena mem enn renyon avek manb WOSA kot koz lor ION. An 1994, AA ek AS zwenn manb WOSA e rediskrit lor ION. Mem lane Nevil Alexander (WOSA) vizit Moris/ fer kozri lor sityasyon dan Sid Afrik. Dan enn renyon formel ant LALIT ek Nevil A lide met dibut enn South East African Forum(SEAF) emerze. Deside ki regroup lorganizasyon ek individi anti kapitalis dan rezyon. Antretan WOSA ek LALIT pu fer travay refleksyon lor Labank Mondyal, FMI, GATT e tu isyu ekonomik ki pe dominn sityasyon politik. Diskisyon kumanse lor ki lorganizasyon pu inplike, eski sindika pu ladan? Prinsip: kont "reyon bisiklet", kimanyer diminye sektaris,

1995: Kreasyon SEAF. Lalit so travay internasyonalis kontiye lor baz pwin swivan:

1. gard lyin ar tu muvman ki konsider zot revolisyoner e sosyalis, ninport ki deba u konfli zot ena ar nu(La4, PCI, LO, IS..)

2. Viz internasyonalis ki pa sekter. Baz nu travay lor seki finn fer plan rezyonal depi lane 90. Olye enn 5yem u 6yem Internasyonal ki pu antrenn plis fragmantasyon dan klas travayer onivo internasyonal plito enn travay internasyonalism rezyonal. Met dibut rezo rezyonal partu.

3. Sa kalite travay rezyonal kapav prepar terin pu vre internasyonalis. Pa an konfli ar lidship Internasyonal existan parski zot pu kontan ki pe agrandi baz zot travay.

1997: Konferans Capetown kot vot rezolisyon pu enn lapel pu kreasyon International Network for the Socialist Alternative (INSA) alinisyativ WOSA, SR(Litali) ek Lalit. Me INSA pa tini lontan. Lalit retir li depi Komite organizater Konfereans Internasyonal Cape Town, Desam 1997. Lalit invite selman pu 1er parti konferans me pa 2yem parti kot met dibut Rezo internasyonal. 4 manb Lalit prezan. Pli tar konstat oryantasyon diferan depi seki planifye par Komite organizater e 2yem parti anile. Problem pu preparasyon 1er Biltin avek mamb SR, akoz yerarsi alinteryer Komite kordinasyon.

Fin 90: partisip dan 3 Konferans L'Entente (Madrid, Slovaki, Leta Zini)./ Kanpayn petisyon internasyonal anfafer konpansasyon pu krim lesklavaz depi pei kolonizater e konpayni ki finn ne e grandi gras a kapital kree par lesklavaz.

Larenyon: gard lyin e kontak ar militan kuran Trotskis, LO, Serge Sinamale (kuran independantis), Yoga e Maron. Lalit partisip dan konferans fondasyon Maron e lezot aktivite.

Lalit pu ferm baz Diego

Depi boner dan Lalit nu panse ki nu ena responsabilite pu pran enn rol lavangard kont inperyalis US akoz lokipasyon Chagos e baz Diego Garcia. Militan Lalit e Lalit gard laflam lalit Diego alime. E finn tultan gard 3 eleman politik santral ansam: lalit pu re-inifikasyon Moris, lalit pu ferm baz US lor Diego e drwa retur e drwa reparasyon.

1981: 2 militan fam Lalit arete dan manif grup Chagosyin.

Lane 90: Milite dan Komite Rann nu Diego, fron ki regroup plizir lorganizasyon sindikal/ Organiz forum, manif, petisyon. Anmemtan etabli kontak ar militan GreenPeace.

An 2004: Lalit deleg 4 manb Mumbai, kot ena WSF. Partisip dan konferans fondasyon No US Bases (grup anti baz militer dan lemond). Repezantan Lalit pran laparol dan Lasanble Zeneral Muvman mondyal anti lager e reysi met lor azanda kanpayn internasyonal fermtir baz Diego kuma priyorite ar lezot 3 baz e gayn sutyin pu aksyon "Peace Flotilla".

Devlop analiz kimanyer lalit anti baz kapav tir muvman anti lager depi lor defansiv (atann enn lager pu mobilize) e pas lor lofansiv (atak infrastruktir ki sutenir lager). Anmemtan ede pu devlop enn vizyon politik kont militarism.

Peace Flotilla: muvman internasyonal kot enn gro bato (avek manb GRC, lalit, lapres e TV internasyonal, + laflot bato al Diego. Kanpayn gayn risponns extraordinier partu dan lemond. Akoz sa mobilizasyon-la ki Guvernman Britanik sanz lalwa pu dekret tu lil otur Chagos zonn interdi pu bato akoste. Li bon note ki pandan ka lapel dan Lakur Lond an 2008 repezantan Leta Britanik ti dir ki Lalit koni kuma enn lorganizasyon ki kont baz militer e ki nu ti prepar enn flotil bato pu al Diego.

2005:Konferans solidarite Lazi Pasifik dan Lostrali: Ram explike ki dan lepok kot seki karakteriz inperyalism se so kote militaris e lera stratezi pu atak baz militer li viz leker inperyalis.

2007: Ekwador, Konferans pu aboli tu baz militer (400 repezantan lorganizasyon depi 40 pei) organize par NoBases. Lansman striktir rezo kordinasyon internasyonal kont baz (No Bases). Lalit donn kudme dan prosesis so formasyon. Lindsey prezan dan konferans e lamars internasyonal kont baz US dan Mannta. Dan prosesis preparasyon sa konferans-la Lalit travay ar plizir lorganizasyon ki finn siyn enn deklarasyon kont baz militer.

2009: Konferans fondasyon Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) dan Lostrali kot 2 manb Lalit prezan. Pran laparol, partisip dan werkshop.

Striktir Lalit

1. Lor azanda Komite Santral ena item aktyalite rezyonal ek Internasyonal.

2. Ena nu Komisyon Internasyonal. Refleksyon lor travay internasyonalis. 3. Prodiksyon e deba lide dan Revi lalit, lapres,../Tradiksyon literatir Marxis/ Priz de pozisyon publik

* Piblikasyon Pu Enn Sosyete San Klas, 13 kestyon lor krak ekonomik-1988 (Ernest Mandel), Program Lalit lor Internasyonalism e lalit anti inperyalis, Manifesto (Marx ek Engels), Akimilasyon kapital (Rosa Luxemburg)

* Organiz Kur Ledikasyon Politik (1997) lor kuran politik e dimunn koni dan listwar lalit pu sosyalism (sosyalis itopik, Louise Michel, Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, Che Guevara..)/ Lot seri kur ledikasyon politik an 2008-09 lor Lamerik Latinn (Simon Bolivar, Chavez e Venezuela, Sandinis e Nicaragua, Jose Marti, Peronis, Revolisyon Kiba, FARC, Zapata, Sili e Allende, Santye Limine/ Seminar Internasyonal 2006. Invite Oupa Le hulere (Sid Afrik)/ Liniversite Sanzman Sezon organize par Komisyon Zenn/ Kongre Internasyonal an 2008.

* Sant Dokimantasyon – akse a lagazet, Revi internasyonal, kupir lagazet.

* Websayt Lalit (www.lalitmauritius.org) – akse piblik internasyonal a dokiman Lalit.

* Denons infiltrasyon CIA dan sindika Moris, politik agresiv lafrankofoni dan Moris.

4. Diferan lorganizasyon revolisyoner avoy Mesaz pu Fet Travay Lalit organize suvan konzwinman avek lezot lorganizasyon travayer.

5. Brans Rose-Hill fer kanpayn lafis kont Minis Cuttaree kan li pe al ofer sekter ledikasyon avan a sekter prive dan kad GATS dan Konferans Cancun.

Kuma nu truve se pa refleksyon ni aktivite ki manke lor internasyonalism. Seki bizin se devlop enn oryantasyon pu nu travay internasyonalism. Sinon ena tandans pu nwaye dan aktivism efrene. Nu bizin enn program politik ki pu gid nu refleksyon ek aksyon, ki fer lyin ant teori ek pratik revolisyoner.

24.07.2009

Diego Garcia & Chagos

Declaration of Grande Rivière on Chagos

The Conference on Diego Garcia & Chagos held at Grande Riviere, Port Louis, Mauritius, bringing together 150 participants from 30 October to 2 November 2010, reached consensus that we share the combined aim of:

- the complete decolonization of the Republic of Mauritius, the dismantling of the British Indian Ocean Territories colony, and the re-unification of the country,
- the closing down of the US military base on Diego Garcia, and its ecological clean-up by the US,
- the right of return and full reparations for all Chagossians,

And that to advance these aims,

And given that there are some actions that can be set in motion only by the State of Mauritius,

we commit ourselves to putting pressure on the Mauritian State towards its acting in practice so as:

- To organize a formal State visit on the Trochetia ship to Chagos including Diego Garcia, which are all part of Mauritian territory as defined by the Constitution, and that the State delegation should include the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, and the Leader of the Opposition;
- To enter a case in the UN International Court of Justice at the Hague through at once inscribing a Resolution to this precise effect on to the agenda for the next UN General Assembly due in 2011, and continuing to ensure that the Resolution is not later withdrawn from the agenda;
- To make a formal demand for UN inspections under the Pelindaba Treaty, as soon as the mechanism for doing so comes into force later this year,
- To use all other UN bodies and procedures possible for bringing about actions that indicate a clear statement of Mauritian sovereignty over Chagos, and that indicate the danger the military base represents.

And, at the same time, in the context of the present debate on electoral reform and Constitution amendment, and in response to imperialist and private capitalist interests clearly targeting Mauritian Islands and land, to work towards giving concrete expression to the Chagossians' participation in the democratic set-up of the

country; and to amend the Constitution so as to outlaw the setting up of any military bases on Mauritian territory in future;

That we will work towards the setting up of a Scientific Centre that gathers testimony about Chagos, collects documentation on Chagos, so that the history and culture of Chagos are kept alive;

And that, in the context of these demands, we call on the President of the Republic, the last living witness to the pre-Independence negotiations held at Lancaster House to come forward to give public testimony;

And that in order to advance the three causes stated in the first paragraph above, as well as the specific demands then enumerated in this Declaration, we commit ourselves to building up broad support on a national and international level,

And we delegate six people, the undersigned, to present this Declaration of Grande Rivière to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and also to make the Declaration public.

Kishore Mundil

Ragini Kistnasamy

Alain Ah-Vee

Rela Andre

Vishnu Jugdhurry

Lindsey Collen

3 November, 2010.

Deklarasyon Gran Rivyer lor Chagos

Konferans 30 Oktob a 2 Novam 2010, ki finn reyni 150 dimunn Gran Rivyer, finn tom dakor ki nu pe viz anmemtan:

- pu dekoloniz Repiblik Moris konpletman, demantel BIOT, ek re-inifye pei,
- pu ferm baz militer USA Diego Garcia, e fer netwayaz ekolozik,
- pu asir drwa de retur ek ful reparasyon pu tu Chagosyen,

e ki, pu ariv a sa,

etan done ki se selman Leta Moris ki abilite pu met an mars sertenn linisyativ,

nu angaz nu pu met presyon lor Leta Moris pu li azir dan lapratik:

- Pu organiz enn vizit deta formel lor bato Trochetia par enn delegasyon ki inklir an personn Prezidan Repiblik, Premye Minis, ek Lider Lopozisyon, lor Chagos (inklir Diego Garcia) sa parti teritwar “Mauritius” ki definir kom tel dan Konstitisyon pei.
- Pu met enn ka Lakur Internasyonal Lazistis (ICJ) La-Haye atraver inskripsyon imedya de enn Rezolisyon dan sa sans la ek mintenir li lor azanda prosenn Lasanble Zeneral UN an 2011,
- Pu inskrir enn demand formel pu inspeksyon UN su Trete Pelindaba, osito ki so mekanism vinn an viger plitar sa lane la,
- Pu servi tu bann linstans UN ki posib pu sinnyal klerman suverennte Moris lor Chagos an antye, ek danze ki baz militer Diego Garcia reprezante.

E, anmemtan, nu angaz nu, dan kad deba aktyel lor reform elektoral ek sanzman konstitisyonel, e fas a vize inperyalis ek kapital prive lor bann diferan lil ek teritwar Moris, pu travay ver donn enn form konkre pu Chagosyen form parti dan “set-up” demokratik Republic of Mauritius, antan ki Leta Arsipel; e pu amand Konstitisyon pu anpes instalasyon tu baz militer lor teritwar Moris dan lavenir;

Ki nu pu evre ver met anplas enn Sant Syantifik pu rekey temwayaz, met ansam dokimantasyon, pu gard vivan listwar ek kiltir Chagos;

E ki, dan kad tu sa bann demand la, nu fer apel a Prezidan Repiblik, dernye temwen vivan, pu li vinn delavan, temwayn an piblik seki finn pase dan negosyasyon pre-Lindepandans ki ti fer dan Lancaster House;

E pu ki nu avans sa 3 koz mansyone dabor dan sa Deklarasyon la, osi byin ki tu demand spesifik ki nu finn elabore answit, nu pu batir enn larz sutyen nasyonal ek internasyonal.

E nu deleg sis dimunn, susiyne, pu zot remet sa Deklarasyon Gran Rivyer la a Minis Zafer Etranzer e pu zot rann li piblik.

Kishore Mundil

Ragini Kistnasamy

Alain Ah-Vee

Rela Andre

Vishnu Jugdhurry

Lindsey Collen

3 Novam, 2010.

On Slavery Reparations

**LALIT's 1995 petition addressed to the Head of State of Mauritius,
copies to Governments of Netherlands, France & Great Britain,
the three States which colonized Mauritius,**

Bearing in mind the immense scale of the human suffering caused by slavery and the vast scale of the social destructivity of this system, and given the universal denunciation of slavery, and

Bearing in mind the fact that there are some nation sates whose owning classes benefited directly in the form of capital accumulation from slavery, and still stand advantaged by the initial riches made through slavery,

Bearing in mind that there are some nation states whose working classes suffered directly from the confiscation of their means of subsistence and the annihilation of their social economy as a result of the ravages of slavery, and suffered directly from the humiliation and degradation of this system.

Bearing in mind that the only compensation that has hitherto been paid by States responsible for upholding and allowing slavery, is that compensation paid to slave owners in respect of their so-called "property rights" having been infringed, we, the undersigned

Knowing that the quasi-totality of Mauritian working class organizations have signed this petition, sent to President of Mauritius & three heads of state,

Knowing that the petition has been widely signed by peoples' organizations from countries all over the world and already sent to the President & three heads of state,

Call on States whose peoples suffered the direct effects of slavery, to put in claims to those States responsible for slavery, for material and moral damages, and we, the undersigned,

Call on those States responsible for slavery to pay the damages claimed, and to pay these damages not from the usual government revenue, which includes working peoples' direct

and indirect taxes, but from a special "anti-slavery levy" to be levied on the propertied classes and their companies and corporations, and we

Call on the States claiming damages to create a special "post-slavery fund" to be used for health and housing programmes in poor and working class neighbourhood and areas, and for the educational advancement, in its broadest sense, of all poor and working class neighbourhoods and areas, but without any recall to the perpetuation of race or ethnic classification of individuals, and we, the undersigned,

By our signature, I/we endorse this petition being circulated by LALIT demanding that the government of the Republic of Mauritius, in the spirit of the above arguments, prepare and submit a claim for compensation for the material and moral damage suffered by the working people of Mauritius through the slavery system from 1568 to 1835 and in the decades following the liberation of slaves and until today.

Signed by hundreds of organizations and community leaders in Mauritius and from all continents.

CHARTER on Aids & Rational Policies on Drug Addiction

This Charter, prepared in 2006 by LALIT in collaboration with others, was signed by 10 organizations, popularized amongst people with Aids and with addiction problems, and submitted to Government and all those working in the field. It contributed towards changing the mainstream ideas on the issues.

Given that we all live in society together, and that we all want a good, healthy life that we can lead in peace and liberty, all of us and our children, and noting,

That in the past the very measures aimed, often in good faith, at repressing drug addiction have become part of the system that perpetuates & aggravates the drug problem,

That the serious viral infection Aids is on a sharp increase in Mauritius, and is being passed on at present mainly by the sharing of intravenous syringes, an eminently preventable form of transmission; & that it is spreading fast in prisons,

That the sex trade exposes its workers to the virus through both unprotected relations and frequent intravenous drug use, & that this has a multiplier effect on the spread of Aids;

That unprotected sex, in general, exposes people to getting Aids,

That many substances, whether legal like alcohol, tobacco, prescription drugs, or ordinary commodities like glue, or illegal narcotics like heroine, are all causes of health problems and addiction; that addiction can also occur to practices like gambling,

That people do not take harmful drugs just because they are "there", but for other fundamental reasons, which need to be addressed by all of us in society, whether it be unemployment, lack of a vision of the future, unhappiness, insecure work, a quest for pleasure, boredom, gullibility, ignorance or a mixture of any of these,

That once someone is a hard drug addict, thus dependent on a substance, s/he is best considered by society as being "ill" because s/he has in fact become physically ill,

That once someone is a hard drug addict, it costs more per day than he or she can earn from any ordinary job, to acquire the black market drugs to keep pain at bay, and this can convert ordinary addicts into drug "pushers" who, in turn, draw others into drug use and/or into prostitution,

That repression has the direct effect of increasing the size and strength of a dangerous Mafia, and that a Mafia is, by definition, an interface between the criminal underworld and the Establishment,

That the prisons are overcrowded and in perpetual crisis,

That the continued criminalization of relatively mild drugs like gandya, which have been used for centuries in Mauritius, tends to put even occasional soft-drug users into contact with the Mafia which pushes syringe drugs,

That dealers prefer clients addicted to hard drugs to clients occasionally using marijuana as a social drug because of the regular and high profits in hard drugs, so they have a vested interest in pushing hard drugs,

That the continued illegality of marijuana makes social drug users fall prey to law-enforcement officers who are often violent, and this continued illegality then becomes a direct cause of police harassment of young people, which, in turn, is the cause of extreme resentment and anger, that in February 1999 brought a rebellion after Kaya's death in police cells,

That wherever alcohol problems are dealt with by banning alcohol altogether, hard drugs and syringe drugs tend to proliferate,

We, therefore, support the following Charter, which holds that:

The government should continue with its new policy of using methadone, and other substitution drugs, in the treatment of addiction to opiates amongst drug-addicts who voluntarily come to centres,

That syringes should, as PILS proposes, at once be decriminalized and no longer considered "drugs paraphernalia", and be made available routinely to addicts, including those in prison, on the grounds that addicts are ill,

That addicts in general be treated not as criminals but as people who are suffering,

That prisoners who have been tested HIV positive should no longer be ostracized,

That the best available treatment should be given to everyone who is HIV positive,

That prisons should become places for rehabilitation,

That gandya should be decriminalized i.e. no-one be harassed, arrested, charged nor imprisoned for possession or use of the drug,

That remand prisoners on minor drug charges be released on parole as proposed by the National Human Rights Commission, thus, inter alia, relieving over-crowding in jails,

That, similarly, all those in prison for drug-use be granted an amnesty as proposed by JUSTICE, on condition, if they are still opiate addicts, that they sign up for methadone treatment, with a view to later kicking the habit,

That remission for good conduct be re-introduced at once for all prisoners as proposed by the Minister of Justice, Prison Commissioner and NHRC,

That drug-use and abuse be controlled through the age-old methods of ordinary social control, and not through repression, which does not work and which gives the police far too much arbitrary power over citizens,

That people, including children, be informed in a rational way of the dangers of all substances, whether prescription drugs, ordinary but potentially very harmful commodities like glue, harmful substances like alcohol, gandya, cigarettes, and be informed of the addictive nature of other activities like gambling,

That under-age children no longer be drawn into activities that involve gambling,

That condoms be made easily and anonymously available (including in prisons) and that, as the women's movement proposes, their universal use be encouraged,

That repression no longer be resorted to as a "solution" to the drugs problem, but be exposed for what it actually is i.e. an additional problem, which at best does nothing to decrease drug abuse, and at worst strengthens the Mafia; that the Mafia be continually exposed as the interface between criminal elements and the State, and as benefiting from repression which expands its black market; that the public be educated to the fact that, because of the super-profits involved, the Mafia itself finds ways of opposing policy measures that narrow its market (measures like providing Methadone, on the one hand, or decriminalizing gandya, on the other),

That an ethos of freedom be nurtured, so that we, as a society, can use tried and tested traditional social control to curb drug abuse, including informal methods, debate, parental guidance, dissuasion, logical information campaigns, and rational argument.

That social problems at the root of drug abuse be addressed by us all working towards job creation, secure employment & organizing people to gain power over their lives.

Signed:

PILS

Muvman Liberasyon Fam

Justice et Paix (with four reservations below)

Justice

Mouvement pour le Progres de Roche Bois

ELAN (with reservation mentioned)

Amnesty (Mauritius Branch)
Collectif Arc en Ciel
Concordia II
Lalit

Reservation of the *Commission Justice & Paix*:

Paragraph 2. An efficient Needle Exchange Program should be introduced including relevant monitoring on its main objectives of: firstly collecting used and suspected contaminated needles and secondly, providing clean syringes to drug users. It is of utmost importance to introduce an effective detoxification and rehabilitation program (occupational therapy) in the prison instead of providing needles to drug-users detainees. This should be accompanied by incentives to motivated detainees in the programme.

Paragraph 7. The decriminalization should target only users with specified limited quantities. In such cases, these I should be referred to rehabilitation programs and/or community services.

Paragraph 8. Over and above remission, psychological assistance should be introduced in our prison system and target ALL detainees with special focus on those condemned for sexual abuses and violent crimes.

Paragraph 14. The distribution of condoms should be performed in accompaniment with proper education on the use of condoms instead of banal distribution.

Reservations of Elan

Re: decriminalization of marijuana

On Education

This is LALIT's education program. The LALIT Education Commission met on a dozen occasions in order to develop the analysis, demands and ideas for mobilization. We have since 2006 been mobilizing around the demands around it.

The subject of children's education is close to everyone's hearts. It's close to *Lalit's* heart, too. And while different political currents have very different ways of seeing education, any given education system is clearly both a reflection of society, and also something that, to some extent, in turn also moulds society. The education system also invariably involves some kind of fairly direct response to the demands the economy puts on it, in terms of the kind of skilled workers required. That is how an economy based on agriculture, as Mauritius was in the 1960's and 1970's, needed a majority of children to have actually *failed* the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE), so that they would docilely accept the bad work conditions of the cane fields as a punishment for their failure. The economy demanded them and the education system provided them. In the same way, it provided unskilled workers for textile factories in the Export Processing Zone in the 1970's. At that very time, the Government departments and professions also needed their fairly narrow, hierarchical ranks filled as the British withdrew their civil servants in the run-up to Independence and as the *Parti Mauricien Social Democrate* (PMSD) anti-Independence campaign made the existing intelligentsia flee the country because of supposed threat of "Hindu peril". So the same CPE examination that condemned masses of young people to unskilled work also prepared a small new elite by creaming off the "best" pupils for further schooling, and for further creaming-off a few years later in the School Certificate and then the Higher School Certificate examinations.

The very dynamic debates on education going on today are certainly a direct result of the fact that the collapse of sugar and textiles is forcing the capitalist classes to invest in other sectors, including many where Information Technology is involved and that require a generally high level of education from the masses of workers. The education system has thus fallen behind the economy, and this is what is causing the particular heat of the debates.

Hegemony

Today in Mauritius we are under the hegemony of the capitalist system. This means something very precise. It means that dominant ideas have a much greater effect on us than we could ever believe something as vague as "ideas" might have. Everything we think, even everything we do, is influenced by these ideas that taken as a whole are the "ideology" ² engendered and nurtured by the dominant class. This capitalist ideology is strong for the simple reason that capitalism is in power, and "its" ideas have the double strength of being both ideas and reality. This reality produces the ideology, and the ideology, in turn, re-secures the reality by maintaining class domination and exploitation. And this is how capitalism is still perpetuating itself, not like how other previous systems perpetuated themselves. This means that the mode of production is being maintained thanks to the ideology that "justifies" it. It is only in exceptional circumstances that the system needs to resort to overt repression and institutionalized violence to maintain its rule, although the arsenals are always ready and waiting. And ideology functions in such a way that even when there is

repression and violence of an every-day nature, we actually fail to see it for what it is. This “invisible repression” takes all kinds of shapes. Imagine a head of household is sacked by his boss, left without any revenue whatsoever. This is a fact of life. The factory is the boss’s, the job is his, and he has just taken it back from the man. We see no violence in this act of deliberately starving the worker’s children.

The education system is linked to the dominant ideology in many different ways. Let’s take one example.

Today’s bourgeois ideology leads everyone to believe that, in order to change the capitalist system, or even just some of its deleterious effects like inequality, poverty, domination, or anything else, all you need to do is to change people “through education”. Even if you go around asking people one-by-one what’s the *one* thing they would want to change so that society can be better, a vast majority (including most of the “nice” people we all know) would reply, “Change the education system!” And they would be misleading us badly, of course. There is little chance of any change in the education system being the direct cause of change in the economy. Education is a product of the economic system, and, at the end of the day, it bows to the economy’s needs. What is true is that political change that manages to bring a change in the economic system could change inequality, domination, exploitation, and in turn, bring fantastic changes to the education system.

The hidden functions of education

So, it’s the economy that, in the final analysis defines the education system. And then the education system, in turn, has a number of functions within the dominant economic and political structure. It re-enforces all sorts of ground-rules for the economic system. These functions of the education system are often well nigh invisible. Parents in the working classes, for example, get a handy place to park their kids for the day, while one or both go out to work in the fields, factories and offices for the owners of enterprises. Children are kept closed up so they don’t go around getting up to mischief, thus freeing their parents to work for an entrepreneur. And while the children are closed up like this, they are learning other things. They are learning first and foremost to stay put. They are acquiring the habit of sitting in one place for six hours a day, and what with the private lessons racket, eight or nine hours a day. They are being trained for the eight or nine hours they will need to do sitting at a machine or a desk at work later in their lives. They will by then think it’s normal. They are also learning how to listen. They are being taught obedience to the teacher, which can neatly be transferred to obedience to the boss later. Children are learning that above their teacher, there is someone else higher, a Deputy Head Teacher, and above this person, there is one higher still, a Head Teacher, and above this person, there is another one still higher, an Inspector, and above him or her, a Chief Inspector, and so on. The child is learning to accept as natural or god-given the hierarchies they will have to cower to and fit into in later life. Children learn regimentation, too. So that when they grow up, they can fit into the army of workers in factories, without too much complaint.

At the same time, and this is something people do notice, the education system transmits ideas that actually set out to justify the dominant economic system. Sometimes these ideas are embedded in stories, assumptions to stories, and sometimes they are opinions disguised as facts.

The sad reality behind the “equal opportunities” slogan

One of the most firmly believed in elements in present-day capitalist ideology is: “Everyone has a chance to climb the social ladder.” This is the *equal opportunities* ideology. People often imply that this can be done “through education”.

Let’s take a closer look at this innocent-looking phrase, “Everyone has a chance to climb the social ladder.” The first thing we notice is that it masks another layer of meaning. Just under this sentence, another sentence is hiding, embedded, and it reads: “It is natural that certain people are higher, and others lower”. Or, if not natural, it is justifiable, or if not, at least it is inevitable. Whichever way, the assumption is there. And we never get a chance to get to the really important question, morally and politically speaking, which is “Should there be some people at the bottom and others on the top?”

The most unjust and absurd inequality is, thus, *assumed*. Debate thus remains stunted and intentionally crippled. Debate is only at the level of whether everyone does or does not have an equal opportunity (to become unequal). The corollary gets us even more stuck. People’s demand then gets limited to the very narrow, and probably erroneous one of: “All children should be given equal opportunities” (assumed: to become unequal). This demand with all its appearance of something kind and reasonable is actually masking the diabolical logic of inequality. It not only masks individual inequality, which is bad enough, but also *class* inequality. This demand keeps class society in place, by promising either actual mobility, or at the very least, a mirage of mobility. To understand this, just take a moment to imagine how if every child did well at school, all would rise, and there would not be a class society forever and ever after.

Perhaps the enormity of the argumentation is best exposed by transferring it backwards 200 years in time. Someone says: “Here, all slaves get the same portions of rations!” The effect of this statement is to run the risk, if its assumptions are not questioned, of leading to the demand: “All slaves *must* get the same portion of rations!” While the statements hide the very fact of slavery, implying that it is a good thing, natural or at best, inevitable. This is clearly a morally untenable position.

In the same way, the capitalist ideology that “each child has equal opportunities” clearly represents a shift from the clear position that society should be more equal, to the abject position of acceptance of inequality. This shift is hidden by offering the real (or imagined, it often makes little difference) opportunity for each person to be given his or her appropriate rung on the ladder of inequality. Those who do well at school will get (or will imagine getting) a good job, a high pay, those who do less well a bad job and low pay. Then a lot of argument goes into whether the choosing of individuals for the jobs was “fair” or not. Of course, the logic also goes that if you do really badly it’s presumably the moral justification for being starved to death in unemployment without the right to any income at all.

A similar shift, or drift, has been clear in the women’s movement recently. The struggle for emancipation and liberation of all women, and the opposition to patriarchy and its hierarchies, has, in some quarters, been replaced by a quest for “gender equity”. The aim is for women to rise within the untouched, existing hierarchies, where instead of precipitating emancipation or liberation, they run the risk of further entrenching the very patriarchal pyramids that keep women under oppression.

The State

A whole arsenal of institutions spends day and night keeping inequality unchallenged. They do this unconsciously most of the time. There is the family (as an institution), the education system, Government, different religious hierarchies, the press, and advertisements. The totality of these institutions, in the precise meaning of the word, makes up what we call “the State”.

We mention this because it is important to realize that however much the education system is changed (even if we could make it well nigh perfect, which we cannot because of the hegemony of bourgeois ideology), it is not changes in the education system that are primarily what’s necessary in order to change society, or to change the State.

And yet, we in *Lalit*, even knowing this, are at the forefront of the struggle for a better education system.

Education has other important kinds of potential. For a start, it imparts to children the magic capacity to be able to read and write. (Or it should do so, and it certainly can do so). This way children are introduced to ideas. Children learn de-contextualized, abstract ideas, that can so easily be seen when they are “out there” in writing, and not inextricably linked to the speaker and listener, in the way naturally spoken language is. And this kind of abstract thinking is essential to our human capacity to develop a vision of a new kind of society. It is essential for us to be able to understand, and contribute to the building of a political program and political strategy, in a conscious way. Reading and writing helps enormously in this process.

It’s important to keep in mind, though, that it is only in the course of major revolutionary changes that the idea of equality (whether in the economy or in education) turns into a major winnable demand. In fact, the biggest literacy and mass education campaign in any one country in all history was the campaign in the immediate wake of the 1917 Russian Revolution³, when the masses were still in a state of mobilization. This is actually one of the little-known successes of that revolution. And the other big literacy campaigns have also been during mass uprisings, as in China⁴, Nicaragua, Guinea-Bissau⁵ Mozambique⁶ and even nearer us, in Seychelles.

In Mauritius we all know that it was the mass student rebellion of May 1975⁶ that put free education on the agenda at the same time as seeking a more egalitarian society in general.

Today in *Lalit*, we act on the assumption that it is important for people to be prepared for this kind of program that represents a big leap forward. We know that history rarely presents the opportunity for massive changes in the education system, but we know that these opportunities often come out of crises. We have to prepare to the highest degree possible before the events are upon us.

Capitalist economy demands a more literate workforce

Meanwhile, the education system is not producing enough workers who can read and write sufficiently well to cope with industry’s demand. The social ladder no longer holds out much hope that we might rise a few rungs. It is offering more rungs at the bottom, and the middle classes, as everyone can clearly see, have been panicking in case their kids slide down.

This is because the present crisis is a systemic one. It is affecting the whole of society, including the middle classes. While those at the bottom of the social ladder stagnate there, or get even poorer, falling into unemployment or the most unstable of jobs, dependent on social security hand-outs, turning to live from

theft and robbery, not to mention from peddling drugs, and in general being pushed to the very margins of society.

And meanwhile, there are loads of people, and often those with the best of intentions, who believe firmly that many of the social problems of today (crime, robbery, hold-ups, violence, rape and every other imaginable problem) are caused by people having the wrong sort of “mentality”. So they say everyone should run around “changing other peoples’ mentality”. And this, they believe, is often done “through education”. They are convinced that if only they could change peoples’ mentality, make them become “good” people, then all at once all the ills of society would evaporate into thin air. Everyone, they imply, would even become equal.

Once we can see exactly what they are saying, we can perhaps understand the campaign run mainly with money from business that is also bent on “educating” the poor and “inculcating” good values into them willy-nilly. They intend thus to “change the mentality” of the poor in a most paternalistic manner. This is fortunately is a doomed venture. Because in reality, the causes are elsewhere and not in peoples’ “mentality”. The proportion of people who are active in the criminal world in order to survive is, for example, directly linked to the percentage in unemployment, very dodgy work, and living without a proper home. In other words, social problems are linked very closely, even if not in a strictly linear fashion, to the economy. And so even if everyone in one fell swoop got very well educated, this would not have any direct bearing on the central economic problems that Mauritius is facing today.

But in *Lalit* we believe that, even before any profound revolutionary movement rises again, there are, however, some changes in the education system that could help children, when they grow up, participate better in the quest for a better society. For example, learning at school in the mother tongue is an obvious advantage, in its liberation of people from the yoke of colonization. As we have mentioned, the very fact of being literate gives children (and adults) the chance to free their minds from the chains of the here and now. And if the content of school subjects was broadened, this too could help children become more mature adults, stable enough to contemplate committing themselves to long-term plans for change. And of course, if children acquire nimble thinking, more logical approaches, and develop creativity, they will grow up into the kind of adults who can question the inequalities and injustices of the system that’s here today, and thus put into question the very class system that upholds the economy, the patriarchy that keeps women oppressed and the communalism and racism that pervades society.

What we are proposing as changes in the education system in this Program is not the key to changing society. It will not automatically bring equality in society. Far from it. Such fundamental changes come from changing the economy, which is done through political action. However, changing the education system has its relative importance: a better education system can create some of the dynamics in society that make young people put into question the entire edifice⁷.

The importance of the education system

Through good education, children can obviously develop their intelligence and their creativity. Whether children are from a rich or a poor family from an orderly household or a rather chaotic one, the education system can contribute to developing their capacity to understand the world around them, and their capacity to participate in creating a better world to live in.

But the education system in Mauritius is not doing any of this. So, we have to change it. This *Lalit* program, taken as a whole and together with the demands listed towards the end, aims at precisely that: proposals as to how to analyze the education system, how to imagine something better, and how we can put forward demands that are simple and effective for setting in action dynamics that move us from where we are today towards a better education for all children.

There are always lots of people, at any one time, who want to change the education system. Today there are plenty. They all share some of the following ideas: the education system could be different from what it is, it could be better, it could involve rather less competition amongst the children, it could be more egalitarian, it could develop the potential of all children rather better than it does. What this means is that many people who are *not* prepared to put into question the economic or political system, are nevertheless able to hold progressive ideas on the education of children. This is certainly true over the past 6 to 7 years. It is as though the economic crisis has brought some thinking, and this has led to the middle classes being terrified of finding themselves hurled into the working class. And there is also a feeling that “inequality” when applied to little children is hideous, even if when applied to adults it is acceptable. Similarly, cut throat “competition” between 11-year-olds at school is often considered appalling by the very same people who believe that competition is natural to the rest of capitalism.

The last Education Minister, Steeve Obeegadoo, of the MSM-MMM government did manage to introduce certain changes towards regionalization of intake designed to decrease competition. Today the MMM has

taken the initiative of a legal challenge against Labour Party Education Minister, Dharam Gokhool of the Social Alliance Government, as part of their opposition to creating an elite amongst 11-year-olds.

Most editorialists in a generally pro-capitalist press are against the Gokhool A+ examination on the grounds that it brings elitism.

The Catholic Church, especially since the 1999 riots after the death in police custody of Kaya, has realized that the youth of the country are rebellious, and have changed their approach in education from very elitist to “caring for mixed abilities” and a more egalitarian approach.

So, the challenge against Gokhool’s plan is quite unusually generalized, and what we have to avoid is the communalization or ethnicization of the opposition.

So, it is true to say that from all quarters there are social forces challenging the present education system.

Contestation

There’s always been contestation of the colonial education system that Mauritius inherited. In May 1975 students rose up and demonstrated for free education, equality in the level of education, for the use of the mother tongue, for respect of pupil’s home environment, for the teaching of Mauritian history in schools, for more liberty, and for a kind of learning that didn’t rely on repression and punishment, that did not foster communalism, racism, sexism either. Quite a few *Lalit* activists were in the movement, either as students or as teachers. Our program is until today influenced by the progress in thinking made during that big movement.

Today, 31 years after the May 1975 student uprising, there is still, or there is once again, unrest on the issue of education. In fact, it never really stopped. It just became less marked from time to time. After the victories of May 1975, when free secondary education for all was introduced as from 1977, there were also defeats. The system continued in its patent inequality. It was still a carbon copy of the colonial education system. A majority of children were still being branded for unskilled jobs. So, contestation continued, and this in spite of a number of reforms, timid though they were, introduced by Ministers like Pillay and Obeegadoo.

Changes in the Economy Now

The reason for the present contestation is undoubtedly, as we mentioned earlier, the changes in the economy. And these changes have, in turn, been detonated by the changes in the world economic system. The protectionism that Mauritian bosses benefited from since Independence has been torn apart. Sugar and textiles, the two big employers of workers, are both, as a result, on the verge of collapse. At the same time, the Government and para-statal sectors are decreasing staff and workers. So, the economy is in a grave crisis. The form it is taking for most of us is a crisis of unemployment. And it is following the satanic logic of unbridled capitalism, of the neo-liberalism that rules the day, where, the World Trade Organization rules are applied, where market forces reign in all their cruelty, especially when it comes to weaker countries.

The rule of supply and demand, as it breaks the sugar and textile industries, thus affects the education system, because the economy no longer requires it to “strain off” unskilled workers for these two huge sectors, nor to “catch” a tiny administrative elite for the civil service and professions. So the education system is out of step with the economy. It is out of date. It is no longer viable in its present form.

Almost every enterprise wants workers who can read and write well, who are computer literate and who are at ease on electronic machinery. So it is no longer just *Lalit* and a few progressive professionals who are criticizing the system, but the very owners of capital are concerned. At the same time, parents of working class children are realizing that their children need to become highly literate to get any job at all in the future, so they mobilize. The present system is not working, even in that sense. And the upper petit-bourgeois parents are stricken lest their children not be able to compete on the new international market for jobs in the upper echelons of private and public sectors.

All these factors are leading to the setting up of new kinds of private educational institutions that grow up like mushrooms all around us. They also lead to pressure for schools and universities to produce broad-based educational success for, if not all, at least very many.

“World Class Quality Education”?

So, the economy is demanding a higher level of education today or, as Minister Gokhool is always putting it “a world class quality education”.

But will Minister Gokhool’s Plan to provide high-level education actually work?

The simple answer is never on your life.

The category of A+ that Gokhool has introduced as a panacea, will, instead, be like a virus in an already shaky education system.

At primary level, there is the existing popular classification into “good” schools, ordinary schools and ZEP schools (for the poor areas). The “good” ones are still good for nothing except rote learning. The ordinary ones are the same, only with lesser results in terms of success at rote learning, and the ZEP schools have caused a social fracture between poor areas and other areas. In addition, there are private paying primary schools now, also shooting up like mushrooms all over. And then private companies are busy sponsoring government ZEP schools. There’s also the unofficial business of private lessons, and a moneymaking trade in schoolbooks, too. A+ will have a worsening effect on all this. The “rush” to the “good” schools will get worse. Parents, teachers and pupils will get even more drawn into an even tougher rat race than the one Obeegadoo was trying to get them out of. And there is no plan as to what to do to improve the ordinary and ZEP schools.

Meanwhile, the A+ has effectively banished the national debate on the use of the mother tongue as medium, as well as putting the debate on the curriculum into the background. Everyone will be drawn back into the savage competition. And at best, into debates about it.

At the pre-primary level, there are already the hideous effects of the A+. Pre-primary teachers in some schools have offered to do the Std I and II syllabus during pre-primary school.

At the secondary level, the elitist “National Colleges” that will cater for some 1,260 pupils who get A+ at the CPE will, in no way, produce “world class quality education”. Those whose rote learning is best will arrive there. And they will be in emotional distress from all the competition, as well as unbalanced by believing at that young age in their intellectual superiority. Nothing in this will help them think independently, rationally or creatively.

For the Regional Colleges, Gokhool has no plan whatsoever, while for the Prevocational classes, he seems to be, if anything, confirming them as a “caste”, increasingly separate from mainstream secondary education. Whereas in the past, it was possible for a pupil to do well and go back into the academic stream, it will no longer be possible.

In addition, there are the private paying Ecole du Centre and Le Bocage, for example, which are colleges purpose-built for the economic elite of the country.

So, secondary education is divided and divisive.

The tertiary education sector is being offered up for “investment” by Government under the GATS (General Agreement on Trade in Services) under the WTO. What happens is all sorts of business Universities (both teaching “business” and little else, and also making money) come and set up shop. Then they complain to the WTO that the University of Mauritius has unfair subsidies. Then the Government pretends it only just realized that it is illegal under the WTO to subsidize just the University of Mauritius, announces it cannot possibly subsidize all these new “Universities”, so therefore it no longer subsidizes the University of Mauritius.

And the CMT textile company is now financing a course at the University of Mauritius, a course cut to measure for its needs on the shop floor.

Bankruptcy of the education system

There have been all sorts of Reports ¹⁰, after all sorts of Commissions that have, one after the other, pointed to the necessity for reform of the education system. In *Lalit*, we would go further than most of these reports do, and say that the education system is actually doing harm to children. It is doing harm, not just to those who fail the CPE examination but also to the rest who pass, and even to those whose results are supposed to be brilliant. Let us look at the harm being done to children.

Recently a group of psychologists expressed concern about the dangers to the cognitive and emotional development of all children of introducing the A+ examination. They wrote a joint letter to the Minister of Education ¹¹. There are also University lecturers who have pointed to the shortcomings in the “cognitive development” of university level students, causing them to suffer difficulties in coming to grips with their work. In a *Le Mauricien* ¹² article, an ex-student from the elite Royal College gave witness to how any success he felt he had had in life was in spite of and not due to the education system. In a Public Forum organized by *Ledikasyon pu Travayer*, *Lalit* member, Dr. Ram Seegobin in 2002, described from his own experience how difficult it was to juggle ideas the same way his co-students at Balliol College at Oxford University, and that it took him some six years to feel he had caught up.

The Mauritius Examinations Syndicate (MES) recently published a Report on the 2005 CPE examinations that shows the bankruptcy of the education system. Levels have fallen, it says. Most children have not developed critical thinking, and could not reply logically to questions. None of the children got the maximum score for essay writing in English, while 33.5% got zero. They also noted poor performance in Mathematics and Science, which they put down in part to “poor language skills”. Many children, the report says, learn by rote and approach their work in a mechanical way.

Results of a recent British Council study in 2006, in various secondary schools including the so-called “star colleges”, show that the level of English is low. Many international companies at the Cybercity have complained of the same problem. They note that there are very poor levels of English and especially French amongst Mauritians they have been recruiting¹⁴. Most young Mauritians, they note, even those with a University degree, can’t speak French at all well, and their written English is weak. The levels of French and English that they got in school is not enough to be useful even at the relatively low level of what is required to work at a call centre.

What this means is that the education system is not only against the interests of the pupils, but is not even up to the minimum requirements of what the capitalist system needs on the shop floor. Prof. Tove Skutnabb-Kangas¹⁵ put it rather well when at the Port Louis Theatre, speaking at an LPT public lecture in 2002, she said: “Creativity comes before all inventions. This is true even as regards the invention of objects and commodities. Investment follows creativity, and high-level multi-lingualism increases creativity. Teaching language in an additive way (when new languages are added to the progress already made by the child in its mother-tongue) brings multi-lingualism to a high level. It is thus true that any form of education that does not develop high-level multi-lingualism is limiting creativity. This means education that is not done through the mother tongue, is ruining the country’s future. This should be of concern to everyone.”

Studies in favour of using the mother tongue

Worldwide, endless studies have shown that the mother tongue is the finest tool for use in schools. This means the medium must be the child’s natural language. In a recent speech, Dr. Arnaud Carpooran¹⁶, University of Mauritius linguist, gave an excellent outline of the importance of developing one’s general language proficiency in one’s own tongue first and foremost.

Recently the *Association for the Development of Education in Africa* (ADEA) was commissioned by the African Union to do a huge study on the language issue in education in Africa¹⁷. The results, though not public yet have been circulated to some of our members, and they show clearly that the mother tongue must be used as medium for at the very least the first six years of school. The longer the mother tongue remains the medium, the better the results. It is also clear that the ability to master English and French is better, the longer the mother tongue is used. We will come back to this.

The longitudinal studies in the USA by David Ramirez, between 1983 and 1991 in California, Texas, Florida, New York and New Jersey, had already shown that the longer children learn through their mother tongue (mainly Spanish in the 51 schools they followed for 7 years), the better they do at science, maths and also at 2nd and 3rd languages. Similar studies in Mali, Mozambique¹⁹, Haiti²⁰, Zambia, Malawi, Guatemala, Nigeria²¹ and Papua New Guinea have all given similar results. The studies by Jim Cummins²² provide the theoretical framework for understanding all these studies. He found that children have two rather distinct language capacities, one he names Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) which you can acquire in a language that is not your own, and the other, Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) which is badly stunted if you are taught through a language that is not your own. His study, together with those of Tove Skutnabb-Kangas²³ indicates that it takes some 7 years post-secondary education in order to attempt to catch up what has been lost.

The ADEA document has now come up with similar results after studying 25 African countries. The authors maintain that it is essential that at least 6 years be in the mother tongue if academic success in foreign languages is to be obtained. Even in optimal conditions (which we don’t really have in Mauritius), they estimate that it takes 6 to 8 years of the study of, say, English or French, for a child to be equipped to learn any other subject *through the medium of* these languages. They are in favour of the use of the mother tongue in primary, secondary and tertiary education. Optimal results are obtained, they say, from the exclusive use of the mother tongue as medium for the first years and for as long as possible. As late as possible a foreign language can be introduced as medium, but even then, preferably only for a few subjects. Mother tongue medium, they believe, is beneficial throughout an educational system.

Genocide

All pedagogues now agree that in Mauritius the schools are not only harming children emotionally by suppressing the mother-tongue, but are also doing serious “mental harm” to the children, that is to say, interfering with the children’s capacity to reason and understand. Article 2 of the United Nations *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*²⁴ states that if a State inflicts “serious mental harm” on a people (defined linguistically) that this, just as physical extermination of a people on the basis of language, amounts to genocide. In Mauritius it is Kreolophone and Bhojpuriphone peoples that are being made to suffer “serious mental harm” as a result of their mother tongue.

There is a second way in which the UN Convention defines linguistic genocide. If a State, through its education system for example, attempts to “empty” a whole linguistic category by forcing them to abandon their mother tongue in practice, and ends up placing them into a different linguistic group. Here the Government is emptying the peoples defined as being Kreolophone or Bhojpuriphone, and converting them, by means of the education system, into Francophone and Anglophone people. LPT had already written a letter to the previous Education Minister, Steeve Obeegadoo²⁵ on this issue, accusing the government of genocide, and now with the PT-PMXD government continuing in the same vein, LPT has written to the new Minister.

In addition, the Mauritian State is a signatory to the *International Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Article 29 (a) of the Convention states that education must aim to “develop the child’s personality, talents and mental and physical capacities to his or her full potential”²⁶. The Mauritian educational system certainly falls gravely short of this.

However, in the Concluding Observations (commonly called COBS) of the UN Human Rights Committee under the *Civil and Political Rights Convention*, the Mauritian State was congratulated (rather too generously, it could be said) for taking measures to ensure a certain measure of written Kreol in schools²⁷. But so little has been done, and even less is being done.

Reform

It is true that some Education Ministers (especially Pillay and Obeegadoo) tried to introduce certain reforms. The Governments that they were in certainly lacked any political will, and their attempts to change education in a fundamental way, failed. Steeve Obeegadoo tried to decrease competition by assuring all children a place in a secondary school until the age of 16, but the plan was so timid, on the one hand, and did not repose on a mobilization around a program, on the other, that it probably permitted the reaction that we see in the “Gokhool Plan”.

Today the education system is now coming under increasing criticism. Its weaknesses are being increasingly exposed for all to see. Its examination system, still run in the colonial way through Cambridge, has been criticized²⁸. There are criticisms from all sides. Even the Catholic Church, that had had a whole history of elitist and “specific” education is today criticizing the excessive competition in education, taking up the education of those who have failed the CPE, and more recently beginning to defy the Government’s language policy. They have in fact introduced Kreol in classes of many of their Prevok schools. Recently Bishop Maurice Piat said: “When a child hears his mother tongue in school, he gets the wonderful feeling of welcome and of recognition of who he is.”²⁹ According to a Bureau d’Education Catholique (BEC) study, there are indications that children studying in the mother tongue are making better progress than those who do not.³⁰

Some Unions in the teaching sector have also taken a position in favour of better education. It is true that teachers have an important role to play in the process of changing the education system. It is of concern, however, that at present nearly all the teachers’ unions have limited their thinking and actions to very narrowly defined issues of work conditions and respect for acquired rights, which, important as they are, should not mean any neglect for their role in proposing changes in the education system as a whole. At the same time as struggling for better work conditions, it is necessary for them to discuss the content of education being offered, the medium used, the punitive methods still resorted to. When unions come forward with ideas for improving education, then we can expect to see parents supporting them in their struggle for better work conditions. The alliance becomes a natural one. In France, the education unions have a long history of fine contribution towards the thinking on the education system³¹.

There are also editorialists³², academics and pedagogues³³ who agree on the necessity of developing a new vision of education for the Republic of Mauritius, one that responds to the needs of the modern age as well as being in the interests of the pupils.

And this is what *Lalit* has always stood for, too.

And we regret hearing some parents in these times saying “I want a good school for *my* child!” when it would be so much healthier to hear the same parent say (as all parents in some epochs do say): “I want to help raise the standard of the school in our neighbourhood.” In some times of history, especially those where there are more mass movements, parents express hope for better schools for everyone in the country, and in really big movements, for everyone in the whole world.

The Progress of the Mother Tongue

For many years the *Lalit* position on education and the use of the mother tongue remained marginal. It was deliberately marginalized and often repressed. For example during the *National Seminar on Language* organized by the MMM Government in 1982³⁴ at the University of Mauritius, the organizers prohibited the

Lalit representative and others who had prepared speeches in the mother tongue, from speaking in Kreol. They even resorted to turning microphones off when Rex Stephen, *Lalit* representative was addressing the assembly.

Not that repression discouraged us. On the contrary, we became more determined, and continued publishing leaflets, posters, newspapers, books, magazines, program in Kreol. We have even set up a website with a lot of text in Kreol. No one would deny that Kreol has made immense progress³⁵. It has made progress not only for itself, but also for freedom. Today Kreol is used in all kinds of diverse places: in ads, in stand-up comedy, in literature, in films and television serials, on posters, in theatre, in the Courts of Justice, in dictionaries and on banners³⁶. Even boat skippers now have an examination in Kreol. Policemen in the UK can pass a written exam in Kreol, in order to get overtime jobs as translator in the Courts when Mauritians whose English isn't too good are called as witnesses. Many Ministries use written Kreol. Bosses have used it for their Codes of Ethics, and any number of other campaigns. LPT even has a Unit especially for translating all kinds of texts into Kreol, or perfecting someone's orthography. And today thousands of people accept the importance of the mother tongue as medium.

The publication in 2005 of a standardized orthography, "Grafi Larmoni", is part of this ongoing progress. This makes introduction of Kreol in schools much easier for people to imagine. All this progress is certainly in part due to the relentless political pressure that *Lalit* has built up, together with numerous associations and movements in favour of Kreol and Bhojpuri³⁸. This struggle will continue until the mother tongues get full recognition, in school, and in society as a whole.

Institutional divisions amongst children

Historically, the Catholic Church has had an important role within the national education system, and this has had two contradictory effects: a positive contribution in terms of developing the system, and also a potentially, and often real, source of division amongst pupils, on the basis of race, religion and class. These divisions have been accentuated by the ambient communalism in society as a whole.

Prior to the Church's opposition to the Government Notice (GN) 114³⁹, it had been implicitly, and even explicitly, accepted that the Church's schools were a part of the *national* education system. During the course of the battle over GN 114, the Church relied on an argument to the effect that it had a "specific" type of education that it dispensed in its schools, and this position, then contributed to a long-lasting and destructive battle between Church, State and others, against the general back-ground of a country fraught with communal, language and class tensions. When Education Minister, Armoogum Parsooramen in the MMM-MSM Government set up two Select Committees⁴⁰ (with Madun Dulloo as President of one and Jean Claude de L'Estrac as President of the other), this further communalized debate from 1993 onwards. The two Select Committees were equivalent to the State offering a kind of trade-off between two very unlike objects: "Oriental languages being counted for CPE examination results" v/s "The Catholic Church being able to keep 50% of its places for its own choice of pupils" especially relevant for its "star schools" (i.e. not off the national list). This Government decision put the communalists of two "communities" on head-on collision course, and a number of collisions took place, both in mass mobilization on a communal basis, and also in Supreme Court litigation. In the first round the Church side gained important victories, so the barter seemed unfair. Then when Suttihudeo Tengur of the Government Hindi Teachers' Union took cases on appeal to the Privy Council in London, his side won both halves of the barter.

When S. Tengur finally won his victory and the Oriental languages could be counted for the purposes of CPE ranking (an eminently reasonable decision), then the MMM-MSM Plan that Obeegadoo came up with was one that aimed to "escape crisis by fleeing forwards" (also a good thing). He abolished ranking for CPE altogether. However, it was also rather normal that the supporters of S. Tengur should be angry, because their victory after years of struggle was suddenly a Pyrric one. So that the Gokhool Plan was finally seen by people on the S. Tengur side as being a way of salvaging some of their victory. In addition, they knew that many who had been in favour of competition before and who are in favour of competition in all other aspects of life, were suddenly very against the competition around the A+. So, around S. Tengur were people who found themselves opposing progressive measures, not so much because they were against them, but due to the weight of history around the issues. And they are not without reason in questioning the credibility of some of those who are so thoroughly against the A+.

So, the Gokhool Plan got a bit of much-needed support for a while from the reaction against a whole history of elitism that had ruined all rational debate, even more so after the 1993 Select Committees were set up.

The challenge before us today is to transcend all these weighty, past sources of division.

Failure of schools to teach literacy

Literacy is obviously key to all education. Reading and writing are skills that children have to learn, and be taught, quite consciously. This may seem self-evident, but many people confuse the acquisition of language and of literacy. Languages are acquired naturally when they are in the home and the environment, while literacy must be taught. So, the education system has a specific duty to impart literacy to children. In addition, it is also important that adults learn to read and write, when in Mauritius some half of people over 12 years old can't read nor write according to the UNESCO quite restrictive definition.

We would like here to include a very brief outline of the thinking behind *Lalit's* giving so much importance to literacy. We realize that as a person learns to read and write, he or she is also learning to put thoughts and words that were part of them, out there into the world⁴¹. This process then, in turn, contributes to one's ability to learn to think in an organized way, to be able to analyze one's own and others' thoughts. Language, once in written form, is not just for communication, but intrinsically linked with learning to understand the world. We develop a new capacity, which we cannot develop very far very easily without literacy. We learn a new language proficiency altogether, not just ordinary interpersonal communication⁴² skills. Knowledge, science, analysis, intellectual creativity, all of this develops through this new capacity to handle language at a high level, a level that surpasses that of daily communication.

In schools in Mauritius, unfortunately this capacity to handle language at a high level is not developed at all. We go through primary, secondary and tertiary education, without developing this high level language proficiency. We just learn enough reading and writing for daily communication. Taken together with suppression of the natural language of the child in the education system, this actually stunts the development of high-level language proficiency. In fact, our LPT colleagues tell us that adult literacy students who have never been to school almost inevitably have better developed language skills than those who have been to school for six or seven years.

The concept that we have two different language skills (one for ordinary communication, and another for cognitive academic development that is linked to literacy), in turn, has further significance for us in *Lalit*. It is through intellectual work on the part of large masses of people in any given society that permits them to be able to challenge the dominant ideology⁴³, which keeps such a huge majority of people living under the yoke of others. If the broad masses are not increasingly conscious, that is to say that all of us are not in a process of increasingly understanding quite abstract concepts, then it is not easy for people to understand and contribute to the kind of common understanding of the way in which we can change society that is a necessary precondition to changing it.

If now we take this idea together with Paolo Freire's idea that literacy (adult literacy, and also that of children), if the process works well, is a process of reading the *world*, not just the word, and of writing a new *world*, not just taking other peoples' words at face value. Literacy is not just reading words, but understanding the world by means of working with ideas about the world⁴⁴. While an adult is learning, there is a process whereby he or she also, at the same time, teaches the teacher new ways of seeing the world, thus multiplying the learning experience.

Literacy as it is taught in schools, even more so when it is in a language the child does not understand, is an extremely minimal skill. It does not involve the liberation that true literacy brings.

Another kind of school is possible

Almost everyone today would express the hope that their own children be free to express themselves at school and to grow emotionally and intellectually to their own highest potential. Almost everyone wants their own children to get a high level education, and when you put the question to them, you realize that, in fact, they want that for all children, and not just their own. *Lalit* shares this hope. This is what we are always working towards. This is what was also the basis for the wonderful educationally rich projects⁴⁵ like A.S. Neil's⁴⁶ *Summerhill* in England, Celestin Freinet's⁴⁷ techniques developed in France, Paolo Freire's⁴⁸ literacy in Brazil and Chili, and even before them Maria Montessori's⁴⁹ methods developed in Italy and which have become standard in all the best pre-primaries in the world.

In Mauritius, alternative kinds of education have been developed by the *Lekol Koperativ*⁵⁰, (secondary level), *Ledikasyon pu Travayer*⁵¹ (adult literacy level), Playgroup⁵² (pre-primary level), Bambous Health Project⁵³ (at the level of health education, preventive medicine, and conceptualization of the body), *Muvman Liberasyon Fam*⁵⁴ (women's biology and concepts around patriarchy). And in turn, these organizations have relied on the experience of other pedagogies, and then developed new forms. All of these are an inspiration for future pedagogy. They represent the beginnings of an alternative pedagogy for Mauritius.

Vision

For us in *Lalit*, education ought to mean none other than the full development of all children. Every child has potential. The school has a duty to enable its fulfillment, in intellectual and physical terms, as well as in terms of emotional development.

Education should also mean the freedom to learn. The first freedom is that of learning through your mother tongue, the language you use naturally, and not through the imposition of a language you are not comfortable in⁵⁵.

Education, at its most basic, means children learning to read, write and use figures. But it means more than this. It means the development of the love of reading. Children need to have the love of books fostered in them from an early age. The love of writing, of writing one's own thoughts, is a separate and important aspect of literacy. It too must be nurtured in all children.

Education also means the full development of the potential humans have for the logical and the rational. It means acquiring scientific method. We'd like education to involve children in thinking and understanding, in being able to be proficient in mathematics, in comprehending cause and effect, and knowing of unintended effects, and dialectics. A love of science, of the history of the universe, of our planet earth, of all that lives upon it, and of the history of humanity, as well as the history of our own country, Mauritius, and how our own bodies, minds and emotions work. This way children will understand health and illness. Learning science and maths is interesting to some children only when learnt through games like, say, chess, through lab experiments, or even calculations based on football, if that's what motivates some kids.

The celebration of Albert Einstein's birthday could be used to introduce his findings and thinking to young children, and to hold science festivals and conferences for the young. There is no reason why children shouldn't be introduced to all the great scientists and philosophers of the world.

Today "Grafi Larmoni", by providing a regular orthography for Kreol, will help in the translation of any number of texts. The Ministry should raise money and award prizes to the teacher of a subject whose translation is considered best.

High-level education means that we can use more than one language, our mother tongue and one or more others. When English, French, Oriental languages and others are taught, the best methods must be used: the mother tongue until a high level, and then proper language labs and modern methods of *English as a Foreign Language* (EFL) and *English as a Second Language* (ESL), which have seen important leaps ahead over the past 35 years.

Children must be able to use computers efficiently, and also have an understanding of the technology involved. This means they must not only know how to use a computer, but also understand its significance, its potential and its limitations as a tool, for study and for understanding.

Children, as they learn, must feel free, so that they are able to learn in an easy, pleasurable way. They must be able to express themselves freely, as they learn. This means, in terms of discipline, that it must be something that springs from the love of knowledge that children naturally have. Discipline must come from the natural curiosity of human beings.

Education, because it means creativity as well, should involve children maintaining their sense of wonder, wonder at the universe out there combined with the desire to create new ideas, invent things, love art, dance, cartoons, music, and want to push science to the boundaries of the universe.

Lalit is proposing a form of education that not only wants the development of what BEC calls "mixed abilities" but also of the "multiple abilities" that children have.

Lalit sees education as encouraging children to work together, in pairs and in groups, without any harmful competition. It means also practicing sports, exercises, games that help children learn co-operation and the love of working together, as well as each child's individual potential for concentration. Everything from Chess championships to public speaking, debates by team from different schools and colleges on tough topics. Each school could have its own band and orchestra so that children can join in and learn different kinds of music as if they are one. And to develop a broad outlook, school-leavers should have the option of a year's voluntary work, which counts as work experience, before heading out, looking for work.

Education must avoid dividing children into boxes -- of different communities, races, religions, or ancestral languages. This means education should be secular, and children should learn about the history of all religions, about all different cultures and philosophies.

The art of life, itself, should be part of education, including everything from the practical things (cooking, planting, animal rearing, how to make knots, fishing, first aid, how to tell stories) to meditation and art appreciation. Some of these subjects can be acquired through residential seminars at the seaside, as the primary schools already do for six-standard children, where people in communities who fish or plant or raise animals, can come in and get involved in education. This way children will become self-confident, gain in self-esteem and learn a relative independence from their own nuclear family.

Education should also mean democracy. Pupils should be involved in decisions about their colleges. Elected Students' Councils should have representatives of each class that meet up. And a few representatives could be elected to sit on a Parent Teachers' Students' Association.

Each school should have special programs to help the integration to the highest degree of any children who have a physical or mental handicap. Children with hearing problems, reading problems, and visual impairment should all be included, and not educated separately.

Pupils should all have access to psychological and health care.

Given that preschool education is a bridge between the home and the school system, in *Lalit* we believe that it should reflect this state of affairs. It's a place where informal knowledge that children already have can be shared in class. The full richness of the education already received at home from the family and from the environment, should be integrated into the education received at the playgroup. School should take into consideration the concept of moving from the known to the unknown. We believe that the system developed and used by the Federation of Preschool Playgroups could be implemented all over Mauritius. The key points of the system are that education be holistic, all the subjects integrated together, that children be considered as individual beings that need esteem, that all learning can be linked to the notion of play, that children have an instinct for play, that stories be introduced in oral form in the mother tongue, and the writing, too, be introduced in the mother tongue, and this in a holistic way. Children should be introduced to the idea of "a book", to develop a love of books at the same time. There need to be corners where children can get involved in fairly autonomous activity: the home corner, shop or nature corner, the library corner and so on. Teachers need to be taught to observe children intelligently, and record their observations. Parents and others in the environment must be integrated into the overall education to the highest degree possible.

In many ways, the developments at the preschool level are a kind of forerunner of how education can be one day, in primary and even secondary schools.

But this kind of education that we have a vision of is just not compatible with rote learning, the examination system that there is today, nor the ferocious competition to get into the supposedly best schools or best college. We are horrified that children could be drawn into producing false utilities papers in order to get into "good schools", or to see their parents buying examination papers. Our vision cannot be contained by a system in which only a proportion of the children even learn to read and write.

The kind of education is Lalit proposing for the Republic of Mauritius

How do we overcome this onerous legacy, and work towards our vision of the future? What kind of proposals will bring the kind of change we all want to see?

Our proposals aim at creating "dynamics", that is to say, a lively forward-moving process towards a better system for all children.

How do we create dynamics that bring about in-depth changes in education?

Many people agree with *Lalit's* proposals. Many people, like us, reject the inherent inequality in the present education system, and do not agree with divisions between children.

What we need to do now is to look at what kind of general demand we can push for, what kind of mechanism we can propose that will decrease inequality and competition in the education system, and raise the standard of education in all schools.

Demand

We propose eight demands that can provide a bridge between today's reality and our vision of tomorrow.

1. University Scholarship for each Secondary School!

This is one of *Lalit's* fundamental demands as it embodies a mechanism to equalize the level of all schools to that of the highest and thus, to raise the standard of education in general. It is a system of *quota of university scholarships for each secondary school*, and works hand in hand with a *quota for each primary school for seats in whichever secondary school parents choose*. (Look at the section "The Quota system" on the next page. It explains how this mechanism will work, and the amazing dynamics it will unleash.)

2. Learning through the Mother Tongue!

To enhance intelligence, and to acquire other languages to a higher level.

3. Abolish national ranking in CPE!

To foster knowledge not rote-learning, nor atrocious competition.

4. Literacy for all children

To read the *world*, not just the word

To write a better world, not just words

5. Remedial Program in the Mother Tongue

To give a second chance to past victims of selection to get back into the mainstream

6. Creativity not Repression

To develop high-level thinking, to nurture the arts & sciences

7. Stop religious categorization of children

For social cohesion and profound humanism.

8. To put the Accent on educational Content

So as to strike a balance between the sciences, logic, the arts, mathematics, philosophy, other languages, education, and all these linked up with the knowledge that parents have accumulated over the years.

The Quota System

Our principal demand (see number one above) requires some effort to understand. We invite you to read our proposal, see if you think it is feasible, and bring forward your own proposals too. Let us debate these questions.

Many people have proposed a quota system to break out of the present deadlock we are in.⁵⁶

Let us now explain our demand:

Each secondary school gets a quota of university scholarships each year. (An easy calculation for a computer to make. There could also be a minimum result required for scholarships). This will tend to equalize demand for secondary schools that teach up to Higher School Certificate (HSC) level. Such a change would need a five-year notice, creating a five-year transition period where parents are able to shift their children to nearer schools should they wish to.

A quota system for university scholarships is after all, nothing new. At present, there is a quota for girls and boys, a quota by subject (science, economics, art); and a quota on a geographical basis for Rodrigues Island. What we are proposing is simply a quota of university scholarships per HSC school. What will immediately start happening is that most parents everywhere in Mauritius will want their children to go to the nearest HSC school, and this will in fact *increase* the probabilities that their child will get the university scholarship that is so much prized (and desperately so because of the rising cost of tertiary education). So this mechanism will have very creative indirect effects. It will raise the standard of education in *all* schools, which is exactly what we are aiming at. There could, at the same time, be University of Mauritius scholarship quotas introduced for each HSC school.

If, at the same time, a quota of “first choice” secondary school were introduced for each primary school, this would establish a parity of esteem for each and every primary school. This would also require a five-year notice and transition period.

All this will mean that national ranking for CPE will disappear, and will only exist at primary school level, in each primary school. Even though 6th standard examinations are organized nationally, the results with this new system would not be computed at the national level. This would result in first of all, decreasing the unmanageable competition and limiting it to the boundaries of the school, where it is within social control. Secondly, given that there are intelligent children spread out in all schools, all these children will be given the same possibilities, even though their results might not be similar due to social inequality. Thirdly, there are not only mechanical or linear changes that will be set in motion, but also some other very interesting dynamics. Let us explore some of them:

When there is a new system of quotas of seats in “first choice” HSC secondary schools; a quota allocated to each primary school, parents (especially the more adept ones) everywhere in the country will want their children to go to the nearest school instead of trying to put them into schools that are at present considered “good” schools, and that are far from home. If each primary school has its own quota, why on earth would parents have to wrestle for seats in the small number of existing “good” schools? Such a quota system will certainly discourage parents from seeking out fake electricity or water bills to get their children into schools that they consider “good”. This will bring more individual integrity. Capable parents contributing towards improving their local primary school will also bring about another dynamic that will raise the standard of education everywhere; a dynamic that might appear surprising, but is predictable even so. In villages and town fringes, middle class families (civil servants, shop keepers, professionals) will no longer find deceptive means to get their children into high status primary schools. They will prefer keeping their children in the local school to give the child a better chance of getting a scholarship, and parents will work towards making the school a better one.

The same reasoning will apply to teachers too. They will prefer to stay in the primary school nearest to their home, and stop squabbling to teach in the scholarship-reaping primary schools in towns. All parents

and teachers will be able to contribute to make Parent-Teachers-Associations (PTA) really work, and at the same time, to make their primary school flourish. The PTA will have the responsibility to ensure that the government is providing all the artistic, cultural, sanitary infrastructure needed for the school. It will also be responsible for ensuring that all children in the school have the means to come to school with appropriate school-wear and that they get nutritious food at school. The government must provide PTA's with the resources to be able to do this. In this way, the standard of schools will rapidly rise. In the meantime, if necessary, school "regions" can be re-defined so that each region has the same number of primary schools.

Perhaps, for a time, "good" schools will still be in great demand. This will only be a historical left-over, and the situation will change quickly, especially if a quota of university scholarships are introduced for each secondary school at the same time.

If ever secondary schools that are in demand remain so, we could always resort to the mechanism of Minister Obeegadoo where "high demand" secondary schools are transformed into Form 6 schools. We, in *Lalit*, do not believe this will be necessary.

We propose that the same quota system be applied to the island of Rodrigues as well, and becomes fully integrated into the national system

Our aim is to improve *all* schools. The government already invests more or less the same amount of resources on each school: on physical infrastructure, on teachers, on facilities for all primary schools. What we need to do now is to introduce a mechanism that will minimize the effects of class inequality that brings elitism into the classroom. There is disparity between secondary schools in terms of government expenditure, which should be done away with gradually, as the new quota system equalizes and raises the standard of all secondary schools.

Conclusion

We started off with the point that real equality in education, is inextricably linked to the broader struggle to abolish class inequality in society at large.⁵⁷ So when people tail-end the MMM or other "anti-A+" currents, they get to hear all the good ideas *against* competition in the education system, but are not told that such competition is bad in the rest of society as well. The reason is simple: they *agree* with competition in society in general. They only oppose it when it comes to the education system. Such hypocrisy puts their credibility in question. And this credibility gap, in turn, makes Minister Gokhool appear to be relatively more credible. After all, Minister Gokhool is in favour of competition at all levels, including the education system. So it is important to link up demands for changes in the education system with demands for general equality.

We should keep in mind that a good education system can open up the minds of young people, but at the same time, it will not, by itself, change society as a whole. The education system, in the final analysis, is there to hold up the class system. However, because it deals with the development of human thought, of ideas, it is potentially something that can liberate the mind.

Students can discover through education that "equal education", when looked at up close, only means an opportunity to get into different layers of an unequal and even immoral hierarchy. Students might find out that the "equal opportunities" philosophy is a blunt attempt to justify social inequality through the pretense that there is equal access to places in the stratum of inequality. So we must learn to be wary of such concepts, and learn to decipher their real meaning.

Even if education, by itself, cannot change the world, we realize, in *Lalit* that even if the great majority of people accept inequality in general, they do not agree with it when it comes to innocent children. This is a contradiction in the capitalist system. There is yet another contradiction: because knowledge is, in itself, a form of liberation, when children are at school, as a group, that too is potentially liberating: school children can become agents of change.

Paolo Freire said that education should be "a means whereby people can perceive, interpret, critique and finally transform the world." This is what "*world class quality education*" should aim at. This is the kind of education students of the May '75 movement sought. This is what the *Lalit Program on Education* is calling for. No more, no less. We want good school for all children the Republic of Mauritius over. How can we want less than that?

And one day, during the transformation from our present post-slavery society to a free society without social classes, the nature of education will start changing. It will become the means whereby children will truly discover the wealth of knowledge in the world around them. It will be restored to its original Latin "e-ducere" meaning from which the word "education" is derived: to draw out a person's innate potential so that it is developed to the full.

End Notes

- ¹ From *Decolonising the Mind -The Politics of Language in African Literature*, James Currey/Heinemann/EACP, 1997
- ² *Pu Enn Sosyete San Klas*, Ernest Mandel, Lalit, 1980, pp 24-25.
- ³ Two fantastic book on the 1917 Russian Revolution, *The Russian Revolution* by E.M. Carr (3 volumes), and *The History of the Russian Revolution* by Leon Trotsky (3 volumes).
- ⁴ Perhaps the best introduction to the Chinese Revolution is *Fanshen* by William Hinton, Penguin.
- ⁵ *Apprendre pour Vivre Mieux, Guinée Bissau 1979*, Document IDAC 18.
- ⁶ *Out of Underdevelopment to Socialism, Report IVth Congress*, Frelimo Party, 1983.
- ⁷ *Program ANEM*, Asosyasyon Nasyonal Etidyan Morisyen, 1975.
- ⁸ *Action Plan for a New Education System in Mauritius*, March 1998
- ⁹ *Ending the Rat Race in Primary Education and Breaking the Admission Bottleneck at Secondary Level*, May 2001.
- ¹⁰ Glover Report (1978), Richard Report (1979), Glover Report (1983), Ramdoyal Report (1990), Masterplan (1991), Nine Year Schooling (1992), Pillay's Action Plan (1998), Obeegadoo's Ending the Rat Race (2001).
- ¹¹ *L'Express* 21 March, 2006 letter from the Société des professionnels en psychologie.
- ¹² 25 March 2006.
- ¹³ Mauritius Examinations Syndicate, CPE Examination 2005-Report on Core subjects, 27 April 2006.
- ¹⁴ Gilbert Ahnee editorial of *Le Mauricien*, 21 March, 2005
- ¹⁵ His extraordinary book *Linguistic Genocide in Education, or Worldwide Diversity and Human Rights*, 2000 is also a good read.
- ¹⁶ In the September 2006 BEC Seminar, Arnaud Carpooran made a key speech on the importance of maternal languages in cognitive development and on conceptualisation.
- ¹⁷ *Optimising Learning and Education in Africa: The Language Factor: A Stock-Taking Research on Mother Tongue and Bilingual Education in Sub-saharan Africa*, ADEA, March 2006.
- ¹⁸ Longitudinal study of structured English immersion strategy, early-exit & late-exit bilingual education programs, by J. David Ramirez, Centre for Language Minority Education and Research California State University Long Beach, USA, 1250 Bellflower Boulevard, Long Beach, California 90840.
- ¹⁹ From a 1997 study by Carol Benson *Mother Tongue Schooling for Pluralism and participation*, 2003, Centre for research on Bilingualism, Stockholm University.
- ²⁰ From a study by Nadine Dutcher in collaboration with G.Richard Tucker, *The use of First and Second Languages in Education - A Review of International Experience*, published in Pacific Islands Discussion Paper Series No.1.
- ²¹ From a study of Ayo Bamgbose *Ife and River Readers Project-Six Year Primary Project*, quoted in *Language and Exclusion-The consequence of language policies in Africa*, Hamburg:Lit, 2000.
- ²² *An Introductory Reader to the Writings of Jim Cummins*, edited by C. Baker and N. H .Hornberger, 2001
- ²³ *Eski Guvernman pe Tuy Bhojpuri ek Kreol? Zenosid Lingwistik dan Lekol ubyen Diversite Langaz?* by Tove Skuttnab-Kangas, LPT, 2003
- ²⁴ International Convention on Prevention and Punishment of Genocide Crimes UN 1948
- ²⁵ LPT open letter to Minister Obeegadoo, October 2003
- ²⁶ *International Covenant on Rights of the Child* adopted by UN on 20 November 1989
- ²⁷ UNCCPR, Paragraph 4 Concluding Observations: 31 March 2005: “ The Committee also notes with satisfaction the measures taken by the State Party to promote the use of written Creole in the schools.”
- ²⁸ A series of press articles criticized Cambridge, after several errors were detected in the 2005 examinations, and Cabinet approved a document entitled *Towards a Quality Curriculum* in which there is a proposal to have recourse to the International Baccalaureate, if there is no joint MES-Cambridge examination.
- ²⁹ In a BEC seminar for Mother Tongue Day, 21st February 2006
- ³⁰ BEC document: *An action research strategy for the use of mother tongue in schools*.
- ³¹ In France, teachers' trade unions take stands on all aspects of education: see article in *Rouge* No.2144, 2 February 2006, p.4.
- ³² Jean Claude de L'Estrac in *L'Express* 10th February 2004. Also several editorials of G.Ahnee in *Le Mauricien* and Georges Chung in *La Vie Catholique*.
- ³³ See Ramesh Ramdoyal's book: *The Development of Education in Mauritius 1710-1976*, Reduit,MIE, 1977; Dev Virahsawmy's *Le système éducatif mauricien: problèmes et possibilités, Etudes Creoles*, 1984"; Sheila Bunwaree's *Mauritian Education in a Global economy*, Ile Maurice, EOI, 1994.
- ³⁴ Report of the National Seminar on Language '*The Language Issue in Mauritius*', October 1982.
- ³⁵ *Langaz Kreol Zordi*, LPT 2002 has brought together several papers on the progress of the mother tongue.
- ³⁶ See LPT paper in Festival Kreol Sesel 1999, in *Textes-Etudes et Documents* 9, Ibis Rouge Ed, 2001
- ³⁷ *A Harmonized Writing system for the Mauritian Creole Language Grafi Larmoni*, 2004 by the Committee set up by the Government, presided by Prof. Vinesh Hookoomsing.
- ³⁸ A list of organisations in *Evolision Dinamik Lortograf Kreol Morisyen* by Alain Ah Vee in *Langaz Kreol Zordi*, LPT 2002.
- ³⁹ GN114, when Minister Parsooramen made discrimination on the basis of race or religion illegal as regards school staff, this causes an uproar in the Catholic Church, which at the time, had a conservative, even reactionary hierarchy. This historical error of the Church caused many problems such as on the question of reserved seats, etc.
- ⁴⁰ the L'Estrac Select Committee was called “The Select Committee on Confessional Schools”, and that of Dulloo “The Select Committee on the Certificate of Primary Education/Oriental Languages”, December 1993
- ⁴¹ Paolo Freire in his book *10 letters to Teachers* develops this line of argument really well.
- ⁴² Jim Cummins calls this Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), whereas spoken language is developed just for Basic Inter-personal Communication Skills (BICS).
- ⁴³ Antonio Gramsci has made an important contribution on this question. He talks of “organic intellectuals” within dominated classes that need to develop a counter-hegemony to prepare for the overthrow of the capitalist system. See his *Prison Notebooks*.
- ⁴⁴ Alain Romaine explained this concept in a speech in the BEC Seminar, 11 September, 2006
- ⁴⁵ *Ledikasyon pu Travayer* held a Seminar on the 9th of September, 2006 on these 4 pedagogues.
- ⁴⁶ Summerhill, by A.S.Neill, 1968, Pelican Books.

- ⁴⁷ Celestin Freinet, *Les Techniques Freinet de l'Ecole Moderne*, Collection Bourrelier/Librairie Armand Colin, 1980 and *Pour l'Ecole du Peuple*, 1969.
- ⁴⁸ Paolo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Sheed & Ward, Penguin, 1972.
- ⁴⁹ Maria Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind* (Paperback) 320 pages, Owl Books (NY); Reprint (September 1995).
- ⁵⁰ Lekol Koperativ also known as ATSCASE, (Association of Teachers and Students Co-operating for Adult and Secondary Association) was an association of students and teachers (with parent and family participation) based in Port Louis. The courses were run in Mezon de Zenn, Sant Sosyal Marie Reine de la Paix, College Alpha, College Trinity, St. Francois Xavier) and also in Curepipe, Surinam, Bambous, Petite Riviere, Mount Ory. Was very active in 1976 - 1983. It was an association that organised "group work", in response to commercially-run private lessons and used modern and creative pedagogy. Was run by student and teacher members.
- ⁵¹ *Ledikasyon pu Travayer*, that was awarded the UNESCO WORLD LITERACY PRIZE in 2004, was founded in 1976 for adult literacy, promote mother tongues, promote art and literature, and promote the emancipation of the working class. The LPT uses advanced pedagogy based on Paolo Freire's work.
- ⁵² Federation of Pre-School Playgroups, also known as "Playgroup", was founded in 1975 to set up self-run neighbourhood level parent-teacher associations for education, especially good pre-school education. They have promoted the pedagogy of learning through play, integrated and holistic pedagogy, and mother tongues.
- ⁵³ *Bambous Health Project*, and especially Dr Ram Seegobin who was active in the association over 25 years, developed an advanced pedagogy in health courses held under a tree or on people's verandas, and equally through a one-year health course where anatomy, how the human body functions, pathology, philosophy behind medical treatment was taught. See booklet *Le Bambous Health Project*, LPT, 1998.
- ⁵⁴ *Muvman Liberasyon Fam*, founded in 1976, developed its pedagogy through its courses called "Bioloji Fam". See *The Women's Liberation Movement* in Mauritius, LPT, 1998; *Who Owns What and Why: Women Pose the Question of Ownership and Control*, MLF, 1999. Also two series of magazines *Nuvel Fam*, and *Fam Lite*.
- ⁵⁵ Derek Bickerton's two key books: *The Roots of Language, Language and Species*.
- ⁵⁶ Kumara Venkatasamy, *Taking the sting out of the CPE selection exercise*, L'Express, 27th September, 2006. MES officers have also made similar proposals.
- ⁵⁷ There are two key articles on this question by Lindsey Collen *How All Children can get a Wonderful Education*, Le Mauricien 18th and 19th January, 2006 and *The MES Findings and What Lalit in Fact Says* Le Mauricien, 31st July, 2006.

Against the new Pro-Capitalist Labour Laws

The union movement and socialist parties like LALIT struggled for many years against the old labour laws like the *Industrial Relations Act (IRA)*, e *Labour Act*, because these two laws aimed at paralyzing the unions and they exposed workers to job insecurity. In the past there was vast mobilization of workers against the IRA, especially in 1979 and 1980, but in the absence of a strong enough political voice for working people, the necessary changes could not be made.

In the 1980s and 1990s, with the ideological turn to ultra-liberalism and repressive politics under the Jugnauth regime, the bourgeoisie with the help of institutions like the FMI and World Bank, began to put pressure on Government for amendments that would increase profitability for capitalists by weakening the working class's capacity to demand better work conditions. One by one different Governments submitted to these pressures. Professor Lim's Report, the TULRA-NPPC Bill, Soodhun's "White Paper" were all such concessions. However, the trade union movement mobilized and was strong enough to resist and to halt these attempts to suppress workers further.

When the Social Alliance Government of 2008 came up with its proposals, however, two factors played into the hands of the capitalist pressures: the trade union movement fell into the trap that Government had set up to weaken it, and the MMM and MSM Opposition in Parliament was paralyzed by having adopted the same ultra-liberal ideology as the PT-PMSD Government. So, with the voting in of the two new laws, the Employment Relations Act and Employment Rights Act, to replace the IRA and Labour Act, the Social Alliance succeeded in changing the industrial relations and workers' rights so that they corresponded better to ultra-liberal economic politics. This meant a change in the balance of forces between bosses and workers, in the bosses' favour. This is evident when you read the "Guiding Principles" of the Employment Relations Act. They aim to:

- keep a positive commercial balance
- increase economic growth
- maintain and increase competitiveness
- respect the company's capacity to pay
- link pay and productivity

Employment Relations Act

This law which replaced the IRA, aims to eventually eliminate all the institutions that regulate pay and work conditions. This is done by pushing in the direction of making pay and work conditions depend on direct negotiations between unions and bosses, by collective bargaining and conventions, which will ultimately replace the Awards, or laws governing pay. When we know that 80% of Mauritian workers are not unionized, that more than 40% work for small enterprises with less than 10 employees, we know just how dangerous the new law is. And, at the same time, direct negotiations between unions and bosses are meaningless without the right to strike. Only the threat of strike action makes bosses negotiate in good faith. Under the old IRA, it was the Labour Minister in person who was responsible for making all strikes illegal. Under the new EReA, it is a series of bureaucratic obstacles and procedures that make the right to strike impossible to exercise. Between declaring a dispute and going on strike, the EReA imposes a five month delay, a secret ballot amongst all the workers implicated in the dispute, even those not in the union. But what exposes the new attitude of the Government to strikes, is the absence of any procedure once workers and their union have, in fact, gone on strike.

Employment Rights Act

The new EriA to replace the Labour Act has the ultimate aim of changing the balance of forces at the work site in favour of the bosses. It allows bosses to lower production costs by lowering what workers earn. How does it manage this? A series of new measures allow the bosses to re-organize work, to the disadvantage of workers:

- The work week no longer begins on Monday. Sunday is just any old ordinary day. Workers have only 2 Sundays off in a month.
- Overtime is paid only after a workers has worked more than 90 hours in a fortnight, and is no longer paid on a daily basis after 8 hours' work.
- The right to sick leave has been decreased from 21 to 15 days. Local leave has increased from 14 to 20, but this leave depends on the boss's agreement as to if and when.
- Bosses can now change work contracts with workers who are confirmed employees, converting them to part-time workers, and the bosses can impose cuts in hours per week and in pay. The law encourages seasonal work.
- Perhaps most grave is the fact that the new labour law facilitates sackings by the bosses. Only one month's notice instead of three now. When a boss sacks workers, he no longer pays Severance Allowance based on how long the workers have been in employment. The TCSB, a Board before which bosses had to justify future staff compression, no longer exists.

Struggle continues

These two new laws represent a major defeat for the working class and the trade union movement. We have to work for their revocation. They need to be replaced by laws that allow workers to fight for better rights, conditions and pay. But, it is also clear that without putting into question the very logic of capitalism, it is difficult to combat laws that follow its logic.

Our struggle against these kinds of laws depends on developing a will amongst workers to challenge capitalism itself and its logic, and on the will to create a new socialist society where real democracy can exist at the work site. In this struggle it is also necessary to put into question the bureaucracies that run the union movement and that actually contribute to maintaining the existing social relations of production: we fight therefore to eliminate the social and class inequality and injustice that capitalism breeds.

The Program that the working class must base its demands on must create confidence on the work site and capacity to move towards a kind "dual power" on the work site: whereby workers are in a position to influence the way work is organized on the site, and eventually decide what to produce and under what conditions. Some immediate demands, demands with which all workers will agree right now, include:

- **A minimum wage, indexed to the cost of living, for all.**
- **Equal wages for women and men workers.**
- **Security of employment, not insecurity, short-term contracts and seasonal work.**
- **The right to time-off for workers to learn new skills.**

- **The age of retirement must go back to being 60.**
- **Reject all privatization plans.**
- **Improve Welfare State benefits, and keep social services free and universal.**
- **The right to strike must be guaranteed as a fundamental right in the Constitution.**

Freedom

LALIT's Program on Freedom was developed over our struggles against repression, since the *Muvman Solidarite Anti-Represyon* in 1978, the anti-repression movement, and over a number of Program Meetings held in Grand River North West.

All human beings love freedom. And freedom is the aspiration of each and every person on earth. Our love of liberty is part of our human nature. It's an instinct we have. And this instinct has helped us survive. We needed it in times of gathering fruit and honey, so that we could get food every day. We needed it in times of fishing and hunting for the same reason. This instinct for freedom is not something that only human beings have: many animals in the animal kingdom yearn for freedom. We all share a refusal of imprisonment.

But human beings have a special love of freedom. Particularly to be free to seek our daily bread, to say what's on our minds, to express ourselves in the especially human capacity of speech, to show love and affection, and to express our sexuality in a way linked to our emotions. It is freedom that help us create our social lives on earth and that protects us from dictatorial rule. It is what gives us the opportunity to co-operate with our neighbours on this earth.

Human beings resist being closed in or being under any yolk. We don't like external controls on our thinking, speaking or writing. We don't like it if people prevent us from socializing with other people. We like moving around our neighbourhood, our country and everywhere on the earth. Everywhere people rebel against attempts at locking them up, or sending them into exile. We hate being colonized or militarily occupied. And though we adore all kinds of creative work (from fishing and gardening, to cooking and creating things), we all hate forced labour.

We hate it when a *band of armed men* comes and replaces our age-old ways of keeping peace and harmony in our areas. These age-old methods relied a lot on womenfolk, and they were sufficient for the vast part of our history. What we are saying is that, in a certain sense, freedom means *freedom from State control*. And the State, in a certain sense, means the band of armed men that protects the class that rules. This means that, in the last analysis, freedom means *freedom from the ruling class's domination*, for it is the ruling classes that have an interest in dominating us. It is them who reap the benefit of our forced labour.

In the long run, people don't stand for repression. For a time, people do cower. People give the impression that they have given up or that they are used to domination. Sometimes, in times of despair, the broad masses of the people even develop a will for fascism. But in the long run, people refuse to accept repression. We tend to rise up against forced labour and exploitation. To rebel against domination of any kind. To mutiny in prisons. To hold revolutions against tyranny. And we are right in this.

We are born free. We were always born free. But everywhere our freedom is under threat. This means that humans have a constant quest for freedom. Although we are born with it. And if we have won freedom of association through past struggles, for example, and can form political parties of our choice, this freedom is constantly limited by laws and work contracts.

In the same way, we have won the freedom to form unions, but what does this mean when workers are still not yet free to decide collectively to withhold their labour under the conditions they are being obliged to work? Strikes are still illegal in Mauritius. You can lose your job and fetch up in jail.

We have won free expression as a right in the Constitution, and yet the space we have to express ourselves freely in is constantly diminishing. Walls are no longer free for a football team to put up a poster. Multinationals billboards pollute all open space. Newspapers are controlled to a heavy extent by those who pay the enormous rates for ads. Radio and TV are the same, if they are not also controlled by the State.

It's as though humans don't accept that some time back in history we were expropriated. We don't accept that it's normal that we have been separated from the land that feeds us. We find it difficult to believe that we have been banished from our mother earth. Or that a small minority of powerful men control the quasi-totality of the earth itself and all its resources, and well as the product of our labour. And we are correct in our refusal to accept this. Because it is this deprivation, this banishment, this exiling, this expropriation, that is the greatest attack on our freedom.

Our freedom is thus controlled in two interlinked ways:

Firstly, there is the small group of people who for the past 5,000 to 10,000 years have developed monopoly control over the earth's resources that we work. For these people to keep us in submission, there needs to be repression at our point of work, at the very point where we are making our physical living. Repression is the antithesis of freedom. And what repression could be more cruel than threatening to starve a worker's children?

Secondly, *The State* (in the broad sense of the word) has an arsenal of coercive and repressive forces to keep the unequal social relations in place. Some of these are ideological, like education systems, the patriarchal form of the family, religion, the use of constant debt in the consumer society, the advertising industry, the press, and then on to a more violent repression, through anti-democratic laws, the police, the army, the secret services, the judiciary, prison guards.

Bourgeois propaganda is so ubiquitous – in society and in our own minds – that our idea of freedom can be harmed by it. When, for example, there is generalized hysteria in the mass media about the drugs problem, many people can think it appropriate that a suspect be locked up, deprived of his freedom without even thinking about giving him bail. At a different level, people can begin to think that basic human rights like the right to food, to pensions, to health care, education and housing can instead be things that you have to “earn” or “merit”, so powerful is the ideology of “meritocracy”.

So, there is a constant battle against the bosses and the State.

And central to this ongoing struggle is the constant quest for freedom.

And, what we have learnt, especially over the past hundred years or so, is that the best way to watch over our freedom is through an increase in democracy. In particular gains we make through past struggles need to be codified, while we continue the quest for more rights and for wider and deeper democracy, and while we build parties independent from those who dominate us, fight for the right of recall at all levels, and try to win more democratic control over the whole of social life, the environment, political questions, and most important of all, over the economy itself. It is during the quest for genuinely democratic control of the economy itself that we best defend all our freedoms won through past struggles.

In LALIT, we have also noted that repression not only worsens the problem it is supposed to be “solving”, but it creates new, often much worse problems than the original one. Once again let us look at the example of drugs. The repression against drug-users and dealers often increases the strength of the mafia, itself. The worse the repression, the more vicious the mafia. This re-enforcement of the mafia then makes the drugs problem worse, because peddling becomes more cut-throat. And there is now the additional problem of police harassment and brutality against young men, with all the violence and torture, and this is then an even more serious problem than the drugs problem. We lose our very freedom.

The State must stop its incursions into matters that belong in the private sphere. When a woman has recourse to abortion, for example, the State should not arrest her and threaten her with a prison sentence. Her decision is a question of her own ethical judgment. Abortion should be regulated by the same law that regulates all medical practice.

The question of sodomy between consenting adults being illegal, is a private moral question, not an issue for the State to repress.

And the law making it supposedly “excusable” (meaning that it has a lower sentence) for a man to murder his wife and her lover if he finds them in the act, comes from an outdated feudal and patriarchal ideology left in the law. This law must be revoked.

In fact, the Mauritian State has been left with a heritage of the colonial State. The State is powerful enough to be able, to some extent, to regulate the class struggle, and certainly to be able to tax every single transaction. It is also very paternalist, as the Colonial State was. Labour law in Mauritius is a direct descendent of the labour law of indenture, and that of indenture, is a relic of slavery. The Registrar of Associations in Mauritius, a State bureaucracy has the legal right to study the annual returns prepared by an Executive of an Association, while it is not mentioned that members have this right. And in Mauritius, even the sale of a car or bicycle is subject to tax.

We demand freedom for each and every one:

Freedom

- So that freedom of expression is not just a phrase in the Constitution, there needs to be a new kind of system whereby newspapers, radio and television are under democratic control of some sort, free from the control of sponsors and from day-to-day control of the State (Like the BBC at its best, only more independent from the State.) The thinker, Raymond Williams made good suggestions for how this could be organized.
- Public space must be made available for peoples' posters: the invasion of public space by multinational commercial advertisements must be halted as a form of pollution.
- There must be a *Freedom of Information Act*, giving people the right to knowledge, amongst of other kinds, to knowledge as to what the State knows about them.
- Freedom means the right to hold public meetings without repressive rules like those of the *Public Gathering Act*, which must be revoked.
- Privacy relative to the State must be protected. This means refusing the introduction of all kinds of electronic cards with information that the State gathers about individuals
- The right for the public to speak freely on the new independent radios must be protected. Ministers must stop their threats against radio stations.
- Everyone must be free to use their maternal language in education and in all spheres of life.

Freedom at work

- The *Industrial Relations Act* must be revoked so as to prevent the continued bureaucratization of the trade union movement.
- The right to strike must be protected by the Constitution.
- In the future, work must be organized in a system of producers freely associating. This way, wage slavery and the "forced labour" it implies will be done away with.
- Each citizen must have the right to participate actively in all levels of politics, whether they are in the private or public sectors.

Anti-Repression

- The *Public Security Act*, if it is not already a dead letter, must be revoked, because it is a law that brings insecurity not security for the people.
- The *Prevention of Terrorism Act* must be revoked because it brings the danger of State terror.
- The *National Security Service* must be closed down.
- All bugging and mail-checking and e-mail surveillance by the State must be stopped.
- All remand prisoners not involved in crimes of violence, must qualify for bail until their cases come up, and lack of money should not be a reason for keeping pre-trial people in prison. This has already been proposed by the National Human Rights Commission, and the Prime Minister has announced that it will be implemented in certain cases.
- Police and other officers of the State who act violently, speak brutally and mistreat people in their custody, must be made to face formal charges in Court. Deaths in detention must be investigated by a real "Judicial Enquiry", because the existing form of judicial enquiry has degenerated into a mere police enquiry, in practice. So we have the police investigating the police. This explains, in part, why charges are never laid.

- A Department independent from the Police must be set up for the purposes of conducting autopsies. Post mortem reports must be given to the family of the deceased within a fixed time limit.
- The death penalty, at present suspended, must be abolished formally by a Constitutional amendment.

Social and economic freedoms

- Economic and social rights and freedoms must be put into the Constitution. These must include democratic control over the land, sea, waters, and air of the country. The private sector's invasion of land must be halted.
- Abortion must be removed from the criminal code as an offence. It is part of morals and ethics not a matter for police to intervene in.
- There should never be prison, or other punishments meted out against a man who is not respecting his financial engagements in relation to his family. This new law in Mauritius tends to bring violence back into a woman's home, after it may have ended. Society must have a fund, based on generalized income tax and company tax, to help all children, and their mothers, when they are in financial straits.
- Everyone should be free to choose who they choose to live with. Young girls must be free from forced marriage; the way to ensure this freedom is to make the legal age for marriage coincide with the age of becoming adult.
- The State must change its strategy on the drugs issue. The State's present strategy is both useless and repressive. It is important to focus on the issue as to why people have recourse to drugs, instead of punishing those who do.
- There should never, under any circumstances, be prison for debt.

Public space must be freed

- Huge public spaces must be made free for people to experience free movement in, safe from cars, lorries and heavy vehicles. Pedestrians and cyclists must be cared for, not just the minority of people in private cars.
- Children need vast public spaces to play in, again free from the danger of vehicles, and stress-free for the people, usually women, in charge of children.
- Freedom of movement also involves a good, cheap public transport.

Freedom from War and Occupation, and from Imperialism

- The Chagossians and Mauritians must be free from the military occupation of Diego Garcia and Chagos. Britain and the US must close their base, the country must be re-unified, and those displaced fully compensated for the suffering they have been through, and freedom to return, and freedom of movement put in action again.
- Everyone must be free to move from place to place on the globe, to visit and to seek work, without visa restrictions.
- Everyone must be able to live in freedom from conditions imposed from above by organizations like the International Monetary Fund, The World Bank and the World Trade Organization, and other imperialist organisms.

Freedom relies on increasing democracy constantly

- Instead of Government decreasing democracy through their new *Local Government Act*, which abolishes Village-level democracy, we need Village Councils with more resources and more power and more autonomy. In towns, elected Ward-level councils should be set up, to allow proper decentralization.
- Instead of decreasing democracy by following the recommendations of the Albie Sachs Report, political parties should remain free from State control, and guaranteed no money deposits for candidates. Candidates need to be free from language and literacy restraints.

- Political leaders that take corruption money from the bosses, like those who took from Air Mauritius bosses or any others, should be charged, so as to liberate parties from the stranglehold that capital has on them.
- The basic democratic principle of recall must be established at all levels: whoever elects someone can revoke the person too. The means of revocation need to be agreed upon.
- The communal Best Loser system must be abolished. This way we will be free from compulsory classification or auto-classification by the State.
- All judicial procedures must be made more equal, more accessible, and more transparent.
- *National Human Rights Commission* must be democratized.

LALIT Program on Freedom was first published 22 September 2004

Police Violence & Torture: Our Demands

**after the 1999 uprising against police brutality, a rebellion that followed the death of Kaya, LALIT, other organizations and human rights campaigners, dedicated lawyers, mobilized victims and survivors of police violence. Set up an organization called JUSTICE, which contributed in its thinking to LALIT's Program below.

Below is a summary of the demands LALIT has mobilized around, as well as the protocols we are militating for various professions to adopt.

1. That the Prime Minister immediately:

- (i) Put an end to the impunity of violent police officers; police officers must no longer be exempt from criminal charges for threatening or swearing at detainees; for hitting, kicking, beating detainees; for using torture on suspects or witnesses;
- (ii) Invite a Special Rapporteur under the *UN Convention Against Torture* to visit Mauritius for the purpose of interviewing victims of torture and of investigating police units, and of reporting publicly on patterns of illegal behavior by police officers and of exposing *modus operandi* of units that routinely torture people;
- (iii) Set up an independent enquiry into the tools of torture (where stored, how acquired, by whom) existing in Government departments, and then find and destroy all these items (e.g. cagoules, sticks, and electric shock tools);
- (iv) Ensure the automatic suspension of officers entrusted with custody at the time of a death in detention, and the prompt arrest of the officers concerned, as is the case with drivers in fatal motor accidents;
- (v) Overhaul the Forensic Department, so that scientific evidence be available for criminal prosecutions, thus nullifying the excuse that brute behavior is supposedly "necessary" so as to extract confessions;
- (vi) Initiate new laws so that:
 - (a) A confession alone no longer be sufficient evidence for a conviction (Revoke section 75 of the Criminal Procedure Act), and that a confession only be admissible as evidence if made before the Judiciary.
 - (b) Police officers are obliged to inform a person whether he or she is being held as a suspect or being called on as a witness, and inform the family of his/her whereabouts at all times.
 - (c) The DPP institute criminal charges against officers-in-charge in cases where injuries have been sustained by a detainee, failing which he must publicly explain the grounds on which he decided not to prosecute, a decision which must be subject to judicial review.
 - (d) Police officers can join unions.
 - (e) The NHRC Act be overhauled so as to democratize the institution and so as to respect the UN principles for national human rights commissions, in particular to establish the NHRC's independence from the Executive (including from the Police) as regards appointment of the Commission, its funding, its enquiring officers, and so as to ensure that it no longer refuses to investigate certain cases of torture, and so that it clearly exposes apparent "*patterns* of illegal behavior" by police units (i.e. the *modus operandi* of the units known to torture people), and thus acts to prevent torture of detainees and witnesses.

2. **Opposition leaders** immediately stop their cries for "law and order" which they bandy about indiscriminately as a political weapon against the Minister of the Interior; these cries become a semblance of a moral "justification" for

police violence. **Parliamentarians** must find ways of putting pressure on Government to end torture, and must publicly step in to protect their “mandants” from torture by State Officers.

3. **Professionals** must at once take their responsibility and put a stop to any of their peers perpetrating or colluding in or covering up torture. **The Bar Council** must prepare and issue an “*ethical protocol for lawyers*” on how members should proceed in their professional work, so as to protect their clients from torture. The Council must identify and expose the patterns of torture brought to its notice by members, and be pro-active against torture. It must also protect its members from any interference in their professional work by police officers who they expose as using torture. **The Medical Council**, after the dent to the credibility of medical practitioners in the Rajesh Ramlogun case, must develop an “*ethical protocol for medical practitioners*” on how doctors should work so as to identify and expose any signs of torture of patients who are in the weak position of being in custody, and how to practice their profession so as to avoid colluding with torturers who bring in injured detainees. **Magistrates** (through their monthly meeting) must prepare an “*ethical protocol for magistrates*” on how Magistrates ought to proceed when they become aware, in the course of their work as magistrates, of signs of torture. Until there is a police officers’ union, the **Police Welfare Association** must develop a code of conduct for police officers, including protection of members who expose torture by colleagues in the police. **Journalists** must urgently set up a professional body for journalists that can, amongst other things to protect the public, issue an “ethical protocol” to avoid individual professional journalists from either covering up torture or in any other way colluding with torturers..

This Program was adopted by LALIT and also by JUSTICE: Association Against Violence by Officers of the State, in 2007.

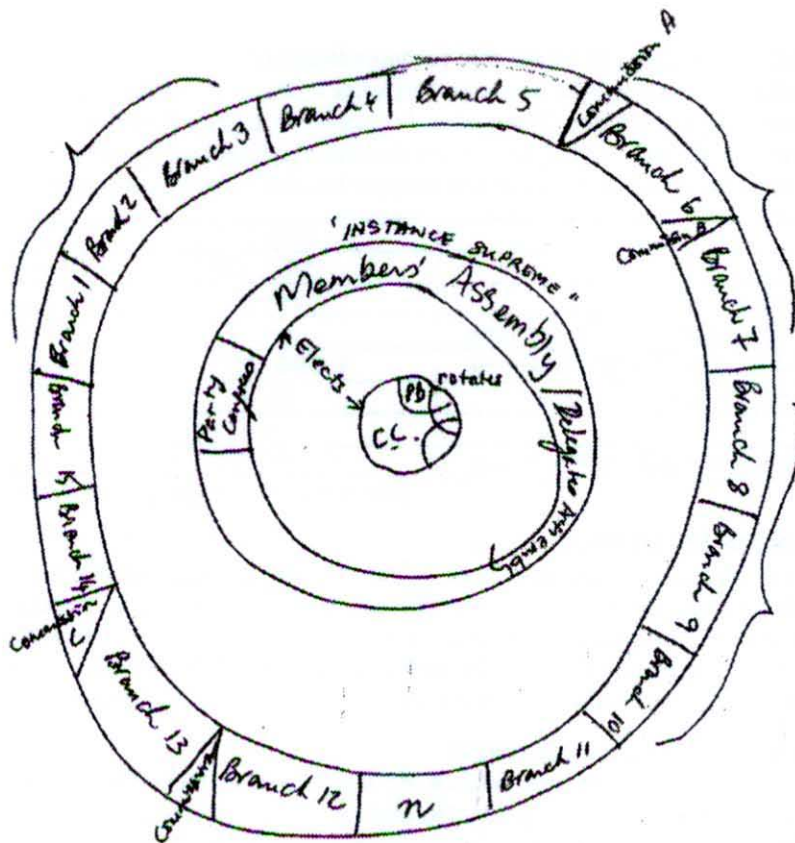
LALIT’s 5-Year Report & Program

Prepared as General Elections Approach in 2010

Two visuals may be worth keeping in mind while reading this Program Document:

Who has done the Work in these five years?

WHAT LALIT IS



Branches

Create Ideas, send them to Central Committee & Members Assembly

- Regular meetings (weekly or fortnightly)
- Members compare branches to "lungs" of the party
- Recruit members (work of individual members)
- Distribute LALIT newspaper/magazine
- Distribute party leaflets
- Put up posters with party slogans
- Organise neighbourhood meetings, forums, public meetings
- Collect contributions from party members who are not yet full auto-tax-paying members
- Keep a list of party supporters in the area (who pay annual dues)
- Take position on things, prepare and publish communique

Central Committee

Centralizes the party's program

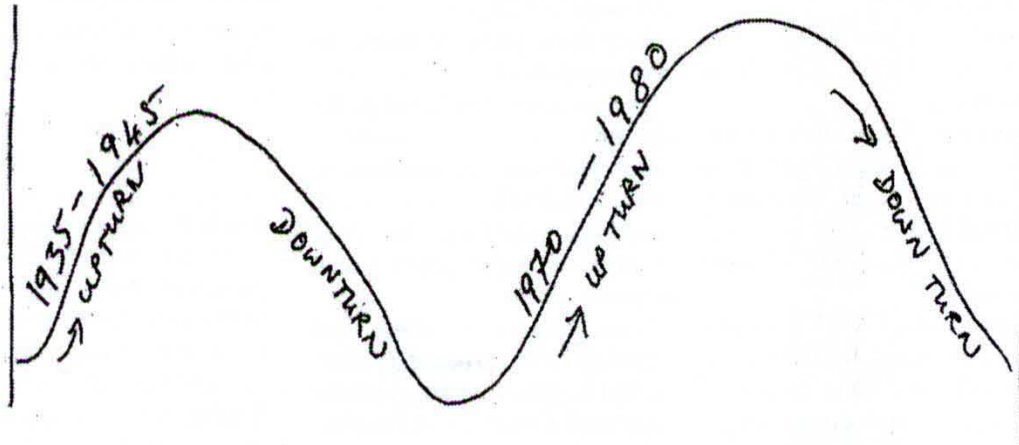
Organizes (& decides timing & content)

- Members Assemblies
- Party Congresses
- Party newspaper/magazine
- Congresses on themes
- Meetings
- Residential Seminars
- Nation-wide leaflets
- Demonstrations
- Lalit web site
- Campaigns, Forums
- Books/publications
- Recruit members – send to branches
- Relations with other organizations, Relations with parties abroad
- Common Fronts
- Collection of auto-tax
- Write press articles, do radio programs,
- Hold press conferences

Note: "Up-turns" & "down-turns"

From when the working class in Mauritius first organised 1930s

2010



Up-turns

Increasingly coherent mass action

Mobilization and thinking

Dynamic leadership emerges, and is under the control of the vanguard of workers.

The workers' vanguard + workers' party + the broad mass tend to converge

Working class ideology becomes stronger

It is easy for a revolutionary party to recruit, on the basis of a good transitional program that takes working people from where their consciousness is at right now through the demands of now on to the will to build socialism

Down-turns

There is relative passivity in the working class, a tendency to leave things in the hands of a few leaders.

The working class is relatively weak, and since we represent this class and its aspirations, we can expect relative weakness.

Demobilization and feeling "down" in the working class.

Not easy to attack communalism (racism and religious bigotry)

Relative depoliticization, thus it is difficult to recruit without making concessions to ruling class ideology, and risking liquidation as a revolutionary party.

LALIT's Report & Program

The Labour Party, having been in Government in Mauritius, will soon be using its "accomplishments" over the past five years as its platform in the General Elections. The two opposition parties in the National Assembly will not have any real "accomplishments" to announce. Instead they will base their electoral

campaign, assuming they are not in an alliance by then with the Labour Party, on criticizing the Labour Government for corruption, communalism, not moving fast enough on x, y, z infrastructure project and so on, things the Labour Party criticizes them for when they were in Government for the previous five years. Their program will be a list of various “valeurs”, values of a vague nature like “social justice”, “national unity”, and “equal opportunities”. Both sides will, of course as usual, employ all the socialist rhetoric they can drum up.

LALIT, by way of contrast, is preparing a report of its *political work* over the past five years. Here is a preview of a draft, based on a talk by LALIT member, Lindsey Collen, at a members’ assembly in January, 2010. (She called on members to note the proportion of our *political work* that is *not electoral*.)

This “report” will be part of our program during the coming electoral campaign for General Elections, which could be called any time from March 2010 to January 2011, depending on what the Prime Minister Navin Ramgoolam decides to be a propitious moment to dissolve the present Parliament, or whether he prefers to let Parliament dissolve automatically in July. At present he has 42 of the 70 seats, so presumably he wants, as he is always saying he wants to do, to increase his majority so that he has a three-quarter majority. This means he wants a bigger alliance than the one he is in at present. It is not clear what he plans to do with such a majority, should he get it. But with the working class in a serious down-turn, what he intends to do with the 3/4 majority is most likely something retrograde.

Our 5-year report is a report on the fruit of the work of the LALIT branches. These are the very lungs of our Party, *forming new ideas*, sending them to the Central Committee. The report is also the fruit of the work of our Central Committee, elected by the Members Assembly every year so as to continually bring together our *political program*. In short our program is based on three things: first, an analysis of the political and economic situation we find ourselves in, where it comes from and where it tends to be going to; second, a series of demands that are transitional in the sense that, once mobilized behind and won, the gains made are not a signal to go home, but become part of a conscious progress made in terms of the balance of class forces, in favour of the working class, a class which has every interest in overthrowing the present capitalist economic system and the State upholding it; and third, a shared plan – one always developing – as to how we intend to popularize these demands and generalize the popular will to mobilize against capitalism and also for socialism.

Before the last general elections in 2005, everyone was certain that the outgoing MMM-MSM (*Mouvement Militant Mauricien - Mouvement Socialiste Mauricien*) Government would, since they were “two parties against just Labour”, win hands-down against Labour. (For readers who are not Mauritian, we have a note to add here: Note that these three main political parties are all bourgeois parties, neither militant, nor socialist, nor labour, despite their names. Two once were. However, working class consciousness is high enough, and the working class is such a large class in Mauritius, there being no peasantry, that it is impossible for any party to go into elections without using full left-wing rhetoric. They all refer to the public as “comrades” in public meetings, they all claim to represent the interests of “the working class” and they are all “anti-capitalist” in all their speeches. They would never defend Israel in a public meeting. They would never say they intend to privatize a brass bean. They would never say capitalism is a good thing. They no longer attack the mother tongues. And they would never, ever say they intend to introduce new laws in order to make work more “flexible”. Yet, they all do most of these things once elected, if not as parties, then as the State.)

Anyway. Labour, despite it being two-against-one, did win 2/3 of the seats at the last elections. This was for two main reasons (other than that the outgoing parties had made themselves fairly unpopular while in Government). First, though this does not concern us directly at the moment, Labour pulled 5 smaller parties into an alliance, parties each scoring less in opinion polls than LALIT. They made a political difference. And second, Labour glued together a program of sorts before the elections, a program forced upon them by the Labour party’s grassroots “chief agents”, a program based on isolated bits of the LALIT program for which we had built up support through our actions over the previous 5 years. In particular, Labour announced it would re-introduce village-level elections for Village Councils that had been dismantled by the MMM-MSM, and for the re-establishment of which LALIT and only LALIT had fought against tooth and nail at grassroots village level over the course of the whole dismantling process. Labour announced that it would restore old-age pensions on a universal basis, and do away with the means-testing that LALIT had challenged since the MMM-MSM introduced it. Labour announced that it would bring in free transport for all students and everyone over 60 years of age, following on from LALIT’s campaign for free transport for

everyone, using the “travelling money” that businesses and the State pay employees, for a fund with which to develop public transport. Labour promised to break diplomatic links with Israel, which is in LALIT’s program. (For readers from abroad, the Labour Party did bring back Village Elections, it did re-introduce pensions as a right, it did introduce free transport for students and old-age pensioners and disabled people, it did formally and publicly suspend diplomatic relations with Israel at the time of the Gaza bombardment of 2008-9.)

These measures, taken piecemeal do not, of course, in any way add up to our program for socialism, but when implemented like this they are both a witness to the political strength of LALIT, specially when we mobilize the working class behind the demands, and they also change the balance of class forces in favour of the working class. This means LALIT has a political power way beyond our capacity to get votes for ourselves in a General Election. (This merits another much longer paper in order to try to understand *why*.)

Today, as the “traktasyon” begin, with the MMM and Labour trying to patch together a pre-electoral alliance, they are putting together bits of the LALIT program that may help them get and keep grassroots “agents” for the electoral campaign. This time it is, in particular, concessions towards introducing the mother tongues (Kreol and Bhojpuri) in schools, and taking up the Diego Garcia issue (though not being so bold as to threaten to get the US military base closed, of course.) So once again, they have to concede the new reality that is before them, after LALIT’s program and action have developed a new reality over the past five years. Once again, taking items one by one is certainly not LALIT’s program, and this brings no dynamic towards overthrowing capitalism or building socialism, taken alone. But they are both vindication of our pertinence, and also a sign of a change in the balance of class forces, which helps towards overthrowing capitalism. Liberating ones mother tongue also liberates a certain force in the oppressed classes. And having been proven by history to have been correct to have maintained pressure on the Diego Garcia base strengthens LALIT’s program in the eyes of the working class.

In summary, once again the past five years shows that LALIT, though electorally weak (1%-2% in the first-past-the-post system), is a political force to reckon with. This relative political strength surprises us coming at a time when the class we represent, the working class, is as weak as it is today. No-one denies this weakness. We guess that the total discrediting of the capitalist system over the past 5 years, and the exposure of the fraudulent imperialist wars detonated by Bush and Blair, have meant that capitalism is ideologically even weaker than it was before, in Mauritius. This, in turn, makes the working class relatively “stronger” than it would otherwise be.

This means that “upturn” or “downturn”, LALIT has a certain potency. It represents a class that is potentially very strong, even though at present weak. Our adversary, our class enemy, is in ideological free fall. So, our role is not only to be observant for the moments when we can, during defensive actions, also get to pose the questions of ownership and control, but also to prepare to leave defensive mode altogether and move into counter-attack. There is a constant role for us in developing our program, in all its three aspects mentioned earlier. Acting on present issues, we link them to a socialist future, in ways that are conscious and open and honest.

Today, in this “*downturn*”, we are simultaneously, as we mentioned, going through a series of grave crises of capital. They are each different, and yet they each reflect the general crisis of capitalism. First there was the Mauritian systemic crisis, on which we ran our last electoral campaign (the end of the EU Sugar Protocol and the end of the textiles protective regime) and which has been LALIT’s main political work for some 6 or 7 years. Then the oil prices crisis. Then the food crisis. Then the financial crisis, then the economic crisis, and now the deepening of an unpredictable ecological crisis. Crises have over the past five years hit us, world wide, with vertiginous force.

LALIT has been in the vanguard in Mauritius in analyzing and confronting these crises as they have unfurled. The international financial institutions running capitalism have collapsed and are still in “intensive care”, an expression used by George Soros, who should know. The capitalist economies in many countries are slow, and where they speed up (as in China), they threaten a repeat of the same crises of the past five years, only more violent this time round. Unemployment is still high world-wide. Sources of oil will soon be reaching the beginning of their end. For civilization that relies so utterly on these sources of energy, this is a serious crisis. At the same time, at any moment we can expect the acceleration of exponential factors of disorder in the climate, and this partly because of the over-reliance on polluting forms of energy. The social

effects of these combined crises are sometimes beyond even the most fertile imagination. They may well be on the scale of the “natural” disaster in Haiti, which though natural in its cause, is not at all “natural” in its devastating social effect on a country so poor after generations of punitive measures imposed by capitalism.

In these last few decades, many left parties and “left” parties have folded – in Mauritius, as elsewhere – finding the going hard in the long “downturn”. In Mauritius the last upturn was, say 1970-1980, with a bit of overdrive until 1982. Since then we have seen Serge Rayapoulle and Dev Ramano’s *Lalit Travayer* disappear. The Jack Bizlall “*aile gauche*” of the MMM folded. Dev Virahsawmy’s MMMSP died. Dev Ramanos’s OMT-FNAS and Jack Bizlall’s FMP dissolved to form the PMT, which didn’t last too long before evaporating without anyone getting any explanation, and without anyone noticing. Jocelyne Minerve’s *Nuvo Lizur* ditto. And this is only mentioning the organizations that actually existed for a while, not the phantoms that are born and disappear without leaving a trace, like GMR, GRA, FPLLM, and a host whose initials are not even in anyone’s memory anymore.

Why has LALIT survived, when so many groups didn’t?

1. Because LALIT (at the time called *Lalit de Klas*) was the leadership of the biggest strike in Mauritian history. And it was not just a strike but a strike movement, starting before the August 1979 general strike movement and going on until the end of the September, 1980 mass uprising around the two-week hunger strike of the leaders of the movement. The working class was in the strike movement in an autonomous mode, but under the leadership of *Lalit de Klas*. That is a major factor in our survival. We were born of the mass student strike in 1975, the free zone women’s wild-cat strikes of 1976, and the build up of the workers’ struggles that led to the general strike movement.

2. Because LALIT has a clear Political Program. We do not just have a list of “values”. We don’t just have a string of prayer-beads like Labour and the MMM’s “social justice”, “equity”, “anti-corruption”, “law and order”, “patriotism”, etc. Nor do we have a shopping list of disconnected demands leading nowhere, like the trade union movement often has. We have worked on transitional demands, forming a kind of bridge from where the consciousness of working people is today over towards the socialism we intend to build tomorrow. And it is a socialism that will be international, or it won’t last. And we develop a strategy that links the demands of today with the program for tomorrow, in ways that working people grasp for themselves. This program work makes us survive, keeps us relatively strong politically, even in the long downturn.

3. Because, and this perhaps what concerns us in this paper, we have a minimum necessary number of party cadres. It is the cadres in our party who have made this report possible. Individual human beings. Through the party structures obviously, especially the branches. And developing ourselves and new members as cadres is something that is in our power, just as the development of a program is. We can, to some extent at least, determine it. So that this Report is also a kind of homage to our party cadres, as individual activists – people who are caring, brilliant, visionary, active, creative beings, generous, courageous, and who, even in a downturn like this, nurture these characteristics in themselves and in us all – characteristics that become widespread during a pre-revolutionary and revolutionary period (we saw it in August 79 and September 80): love of humanity, bravery to the point of daring, intellectual independence, honesty that looks at everything as it is that yearns for the truth, and revolutionary patience to go with it all. And with all this, there is a kind of down-to-earthness necessary in a cadre. A toughness. As we say in Kreol: “Being good is good, but being good to the point of being stupid is not good”. The saying praises being street-wise – if we aren’t we would not survive the campaigns against us, the traps set for us by adversaries, the endless court cases against our members, and the petty arrogance meted out to us, as socialists, by many of the defenders of the status quo. We care for the great things in life, we cherish the elation of seeking a better world, and we, at the same time, find no small detail in human life too insignificant to observe, and, if necessary, to deal with.

What is a party cadre?

It’s someone who perhaps:

-Grasps the party program at a deep level (the broad significance of its class analysis, something of the spirit of transitional demands that articulate towards socialism) and who has the will and capacity to popularize the programme – each one in his or her different way.

-Can recruit new members to the party, on the specific basis of this program

-Knows the history of our political current (the LALIT current in Mauritius, and the current/s we are part of internationally) and what differentiates us from Stalinists, populists, opportunists of all ilk, Bonapartists, reformists, various kinds of ultra-leftists and adventurers. This knowledge is, of course, not equal in us all,

but we all aspire to deeper understanding of our political current, and all the other different political currents and their manifestations. (In LALIT, we refer to this in short-hand as knowing the difference between our reasons for being against police brutality and the Red Cross's.)

- Is loyal to the party, meaning stands by the party when up against adversaries, and when in trouble defending his or her ideas, knows how to seek help from friends and comrades for future arguments.
- Knows how to work with the masses of ordinary people at the grassroots level (is not arrogant or a bluffer). This implies knowing first-hand what the level of consciousness of workers is right now, so that *that* is where we start from.
- Pays his or her monthly auto-tax (a scaled self-tax based on income), so that the party has funds.

Most of these are things which involve a certain flair, as well as being acquired on the job, so to speak, and from those with experience.

To be able to be a party cadre also involves some “luck of the draw” from life: a fairly stable family or home life, fairly good health, a place to live peacefully, and to be able to draw new internal resources from, and maybe being blessed with a sense of humour and *joie de vivre* thrown in, too.

We put this all to paper, so that we know how to interpret the 5-year report, as general elections loom. That it is the work of real live human beings, and that it continues, as part of a long tradition of human struggle.

What should we do in the coming General Elections?

LALIT provoked the veritable flowering of debate about elections that there is at the moment. We had uploaded a report on our December end-of-the-year Members' Assembly on our web site (www.lalitmauriti.us.org) and it was then taken up in the local Press. In it we had begun, for what it was worth, to predict the most likely alliance possibilities amongst the existing bourgeois parties:

- A 3-way confrontation: Social Alliance (led by Labour) v/s. MMM-UN-Guimbeau v/s. MSM.
- Social Alliance (led by Labour) + MSM v/s. MMM-UN-Guimbeau.
- Labour + MMM v. MSM + and those left out of Labour's previous “Social Alliance”.

And an outside chance that the whole lot get together in a “national unity” binge.

Whatever the configuration of parties and alliances, LALIT will definitely participate in the electoral campaign. But the question is will we put up candidates? Or will we not? As each election approaches, we take stock, in a case-by-case way (bearing in mind that we believe elections are nearly always a tactical issue, not strategic). It will depend ultimately upon the exact configuration of other parties and the *en jeu* of the election. The past elections were as follows, since our founding in 1976:

1976: We were still a “tendency” within the MMM (as well as being a group around an independent publication, a “tribune libre de gauche”) so we worked for the MMM election but with warnings to the leadership.

1982: Did not put up our own candidates, but said to vote for the MMM-PSM alliance, despite their calling for a “new social consensus” with the bosses, and despite having opposed the MMM's alliance with the PSM, (i.e. having left the MMM because of its abandoning of class struggle and its simultaneous abandoning of the anti-communal struggle). We put up a list of 10 points in the MMM-PSM program on which we called for electors to vote for them, but without any socialist illusion.

1983: We stood against the two blocks, the Red-White-Blue Alliance, as it was called, and against the MMM, by now representing bourgeois interests whole-heartedly, as we had predicted it would.

1987: Stood against the same Red-White-Blue alliance and against the MMM.

1991: Did not put up candidates. Called for a vote on a single point for the MMM-MSM on the basis that their program was to complete an aspect of decolonization, that is to say, to establish Mauritius as a Republic. Labour and the PMSD (Red and Blue) were against.

1995: We called for a deliberate spoiling of ballots, in the context of hideously communalized campaign and election: the Government having pushed people into two opposing communal-religious camps: one for Catholic education and the other for Oriental Languages.

2000: Stood against the MMM-MSM (after their surprise Medpoint pre-electoral agreement) and against the Labour-PMSD.

2005: Stood against the Labour Social Alliance and against the MMM-MSM alliance.

2010: ??

The recent by-election in Constituency number 8 (Moka and Quartier Militaire) nearly a year ago now, exposed the degeneration and rot that has set into the Mauritian electoral system. Neither of the two biggest parties (Labour and MMM) put up their own candidates, each feeling they had more to lose than to win. And we had the rather disgusting spectacle of the MMM supporting the candidate who had been struck out by the Courts for electoral fraud in 2005 elections, and Labour supporting the candidate's nephew who was leader of the party involved in the fraud at the time of the fraud. So we had a family feud for an election. The Press and the private radios managed to make these two rather minor characters into the only two candidates: uncle v/s nephew. This remains fresh in our memories as a kind of symbol of the bankruptcy of bourgeois democracy.

-Capitalist lobbies have totally corrupted the electorate as electorate.

-The so-called Best Loser system of institutionalized communal-religious classification, has corrupted the entire electoral system, from top to bottom, giving unspeakable lobbies enormous power.

-We have repeatedly seen musical chair type alliances of different parties, ever-changing, making the first-past-the-post system hegemonic, but for multiple-parties in a pasted together electoral pact. In 2005, in the Social Alliance, Labour allied with the Xavier Duval PMXD, Madun Dulloo's MMSM, Anil Baichoo's party, FTS-Les Verts and the Mouvement Republicain: 6 parties in all won against three others, two big and a small: MMM, the MSM and PMSD.

-The Press, and now the commercial radio stations are even worse at it, acting as they do like the conductors of the election, especially during a down-turn when workers are not mobilized enough to insist thoroughly on their own agenda.

-Since the Gaetan Duval of the extreme right-wing PMSD in 1983 used the phantom POP-FMI party as 60 fraudulent candidates in order (by sheer numbers) to increase their compulsory legally-defined air-time on TV and radio, and since the MMM in 1987 used the "left" group the OMT-FNAS and the duped leadership of two trade union federations in the same way, getting the airtime of 30 candidates who then came and said "Don't vote for me, vote for the MMM!", there have been an endless stream of the same corrupt bands of candidates that are not candidates, in the pay often of god-knows-who, ridiculing the air-time rules and more importantly ridiculing electoral TV programmes altogether.

So, this gives an idea of where the electoral system is at the moment. It is important background when we weigh up all the pros and cons of putting up candidates.

Now to the nitty-gritty: What political work has LALIT done in the past 5 years?

1. LALIT's Political Campaign for an Alternative Economy

In the past five years, the central theme has been LALIT's campaign for an alternative economy. We began this by putting forward what to plant and what to produce, as the systemic crisis began in Mauritius, some 8 years ago: The sugar industry, which was the *raison-d'etre* of the country, would be moving from employing 50,000 workers to employing 5,000. Textiles would move from employing 100,000 workers to employing 13,000 or so. This was the theme of our campaign in the last general elections, and since then we have put it on the agenda, throughout the five years, articulating this campaign with new campaigns on the new crises as they hit the world. The campaign has obviously had some effect: the Government and the sugar estates have begun at least to talk a lot about agricultural diversification and to actually get some going, and the Ministry has had its name changed to the Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-Industry. Sugar estates have even begun, under the threat from LALIT during our campaign on food security to diversify (and not just into grass for golf-courses and flowers for export), but into food crops. The time was right for the campaign.

LALIT has during the past 5-6 years organized its political work around analyses and actions against each of the "Crises" that have started to become endemic in this stage of capitalism. We are proposing both alternative crops and products, and also job creation within these, and one step further, posing the question of who exactly it is that decides on food security and job creation. So, when the Labour Government talks about its "democratization of the economy", we in LALIT say what we mean, and compare what we mean with what Labour Party means: Labour Party means opening up possibilities for quite big capitalists to join the ranks of the very big ones. This is quite unashamedly its meaning. Behind the rhetoric. Although they do also do a bit of political work to increase the share of cane by-products for small planters relative to mill owners, and offer workers the odd possibility of shares, or a "Voluntary Retirement Scheme" involving a

lump-sum and a bit of land to build a house on, in exchange for closing down a job, and not counting you in the figures as unemployed. We mean something else: we mean workers getting to decide what to plant, what to produce, and how much of what to plant and what to produce. And we mean to get there by political means, by political action.

Here is an outline of our 5 years political work on the crises, as they unfurled:

i *The Structural or System Crisis in Mauritius*, the closing down of jobs in both the sugar industry and the free zone: Our actions included: neighbourhood meetings, public meetings, producing a 30-minute DVD film (it outlines the position of the bosses, government, academics, trade unionists and worker) then organizing film showings and discussions; we brought out an 80-page book on the subject of what we mean by an alternative economy, we distributed leaflets in bus stations and at work sites, we participated in the 2005 electoral campaign and put up a candidate, Rada Kistnasamy in the by-election in 2009, we ran two nation-wide poster campaigns on the subject, we held an action at the Ministry of Finance before his 2008 budget when we presented him with our *Program for an Alternative Economy*, three or four members were on the radio for some 12 or 13 radio programs on the subject (not government radio, obviously), we wrote articles for the mainstream press and for our website, and held a number of neighbourhood forums. The areas we held such meetings or films or forums included: La Brasserie, Surinam, Rosehill, St. Pierre, Richelieu, Riviere Noire, Port Louis, Cite Atlee, Grande Riviere Nord Ouest, Grande Riviere Sud Est, Malherbes, Camp Cavale, Forest-Side, Cassis, Rose-Belle, Suyak, Mon Dezer Mon Trezor, Bambous. They were in clubs, village halls, peoples' houses, under trees. We held public meetings with posters and loudspeakers from Bambous to Cite Attlee, from Stanley in Rose-Hill to St. Hubert, from Port Louis to Dagotiere.

ii *Oil Crisis*: As oil stocks are used up, and with the over-heating of some economies like India and China, oil prices rocketed, and will again tend to suffer sharp rises. LALIT's program for an alternative economy already had a large section integrated into it on alternative production of renewable energy. This meant that during this crisis, our point of entry could change, thus introducing people to the idea of a political struggle for an alternative economy through the energy issue that was a hot one then.

iii *Food Crisis*: We could similarly change the starting point for our campaign when the food crisis hit. We convinced a women's organization to take the issue up, too, and it had meetings, in turn, with women's organizations at neighbourhood level. The aim was to think big about the food crisis, and to imagine a different land use, to prevent food insecurity. LALIT took the initiative of calling the *Food Security Common Front* ("Fron Komen Sekirite Alimanter") which brought together 10 or so organizations (unions, consumer organization, women's organization, planters' organization) and a couple of expert agronomists/food economists. Together we produced a fantastic *Charter on Food Security*, a veritable transitional program on food security, starting where people's consciousness was at the time, taking the agenda right into land reform. This Charter is now a tool for future struggles.

iv *Financial Crisis*: When the world-wide financial crisis hit the headlines, people were interested in the world financial system, the world capitalist system, in an immediate way. We could use this in order to put emphasis on the internationalist aspect of our program. We linked the world crisis to our ongoing program, using examples of the local *Integrated Resorts Scheme* slowdown, tourism cancellations, off-shore being exposed and attacked. (Mauritius is curiously the "biggest investor in India." This is because US investment transits in Mauritius in order to get out of tax because India and Mauritius have a Non-Double Taxation agreement, and Mauritius does not tax offshore companies. Indian capital also leaves India, transits through the Mauritius offshore and invests back into India, having got out of tax.) We also had 3 or 4 of our political education sessions on some of the more technical issues involved in international finance under capitalism.

v *World Economic Crisis* – During the slowdown in the world market due to the recession, this then became the entry point to our campaign. So LALIT was flexible, and up-to-date as the different crises unfolded, but remained concentrated on the politics of an alternative economy.

vi *Ecological crisis*: Our campaign for an economic alternative was also flexible so that during the build-up to Copenhagen, or before that, in turn, as films like Al Gore's and *Home* became talking points, we were able to home in through this window.

Over the five years, this articulation of an existing campaign with the separate (but interlinked) crises has been the highlight of our political work.

As well as the work in women's organizations, we had a session on Rodrigues Island's economy and agriculture, in the context of the food crisis. Rodrigues produces a lot of food, and has no sugar cane, so the economy is very different. On three or four occasions, trade union federations invited one of our members, most often Ram Seegobin to speak to their members on the economic crisis. Unfortunately, the degree of bureaucratization of the unions has meant they have not really joined into the campaign as they might have.

We produced a number of documents, some of which were titled as follows: "12 Measures for the People", "Prejudice and Sugar" (2006), "Rupee Depreciation: Who is responsible? What should be done?" (2006). Our annual comments on the budget, always linked the budget with the crises of the moment, and with our campaign for an alternative economy.

We confronted the bosses organizations in polemics in the Press and live on radio over the question of the economy.

Rajni Lallah and Cindy Clelie participated in a Conference on "Alternative Economies" in South Africa, and presented our campaign there. The other associations there and the SACP members present only considered co-operatives, and did not imagine that an "alternative economy" could be a conscious political struggle to change the whole of production. This is not possible in all times. But when there is a systemic crisis as there is in Mauritius, it is not difficult at all. Workers understand, though the downturn means they are not yet ready to act.

LALIT during these past five years has also been able to expose the link between the economic crises and the very serious social dislocation in Mauritius. Instead of joining the moral brigade, or lamenting, we were able to show how direct the effect on the whole of social life is when there is a systemic crisis. The separations between the "compartments" in our lives, all collapse before our eyes. Sackings change everything in your life. Bankrupt small enterprises do the same. The fact that there is not yet a political vision for a future socialist alternative converging in the broad masses means that the economic dislocation leads to a sharp increase in suicides, in gambling, in family debt, in intra-familial conflict, including the most hideous murders, the most amazingly complicated emotional and sex scandals exposed by the murders, panic emigration, infanticide, all these symptoms further interact to produce a profound social crisis. It shows how the decay of capitalist economy brings a decay in the morality propounded by the ruling class, while the morals that will come from a strong, rising working class, are not yet born. People seek individual solutions in ever-increasingly desperate forms, as until now they remain blind to collective possibilities. The bourgeois ideologues and State, unable to think of anything else to do, call for and impose more and more repression.

So, to conclude this first point in our 5-year report, LALIT has, to some extent, succeeded in producing the intellectual framework to link all these crises, as working people come up against them, to the bankruptcy of capitalism and to the socialist possibility.

-We have also developed some interesting transitional demands, and a better understanding in practice of what transitional demands are. These demands took hours of analyzing "where people were at", and of creative thinking, in branches and in LALIT Program meetings. Our two different poster campaigns are a good way of showing this.

On the first of the two posters, we distilled four demands as follows (in translation some of the punch is lost): "The EU Compensation Money must be used to create jobs, not destroy jobs!" All workers, even those who are least informed, agree with this, and know what it means. Yet, it poses the question of who decides what to do with capital. It also puts workers into the picture. Next there was "Training plus Unemployment Benefit!", another demand easily supported, and yet posing the question of the right to work, and the right to a living wage. Third: "foreign exchange must return to the Central Bank, so as to decrease rupee devaluation!" This demand includes the concept of "price control", because when we call just for price control, the bourgeois ideologues say "but the rupee is weakening", it's outside our control. The slogan thus points to the *provoked* depreciation of the rupee. Fourth: "For every cane labourer given Voluntary Retirement, agricultural land on lease! Regroup in co-operatives!" Thus posing the question of land reform. (There have been direct results from the mobilization behind these demands: Training has been set up, the

Governor of the Bank of Mauritius responsible for the depreciation was sacked and replaced by one in favour of opposing provoked depreciation. The Government has commandeered 2,000 arpents of land from the sugar bosses, around the EU compensation deal.)

-The *Charter on Food Security* is an important tool for future demands, and for future common fronts.

-Our campaign has visibly affected government and bosses' policies.

-And as for the slogan of our second poster campaign, during the food crisis:

*"Plant food crops
on sugar estate land!"*

thus bringing on to the agenda very firmly who decides what to plant.

(Unfortunately this campaign was so successful that the Ministry of Tourism started to employ thugs to pull down all posters, and posters have been banned across the country.)

2. LALIT's progress on Internationalism

After a party decision taken at a Seminar a few years ago, we decided to work at integrating our internationalism into our everyday political work, so that it was not an "add on", but part of our program in general. (Of course it always was in theory, but we wanted to work at this in practice, given that it has been a time of international crises.) We wanted *political* contacts, not NGO-type work. We developed closer links with the Australian *Democratic Socialist Party* (recently closed down into the Socialist Alliance), and then also with the *Revolutionary Socialist Party* after the split. We have developed closer links with the Fourth International, Leon Cremieux being one of our speakers at our 2009 International Congress, although we have had publication exchanges since the 1970s. We have delegated two members to attend the 16th Conference of the FI. We have simultaneously integrated our work to get the US military base on Diego Garcia closed down, with more general political work to set up the NO BASES movement, and to get base closure on to the agenda of the world-wide anti-war movement. The NO BASES started as an electronic network we were in until in 2004 when there was a face-to-face meeting of the No Bases around the WSF in Mumbai, where we had four members present for this meeting, and to get a Peace Flotilla to go to Diego Garcia, the American base on Mauritian territory. LALIT was one of the five or six organizations that worked hard at setting up the network, along with Focus on the Global South of Walden Bello, the American Friends Peace Service, the TNI at the Hague, and the common front against bases in Ecuador. Then we would later withdraw from the IOC once it was launched. Meanwhile we had delegated a member to attend the first congress of NO BASES in Quito, Ecuador, and the march in Manta, where the base has subsequently been closed down. Before going, LALIT united a common front of organizations supporting the LALIT stand against bases and against war. Another LALIT member who attended the *Asia Pacific Solidarity Conference*, while there, during a public meeting, convinced the *Bring the Troops Home* leader of the necessity of including bringing troops home not just from the front, but from the foreign bases. They subsequently included this in their main statement. Another LALIT member went to Okinawa and Tokyo to participate in anti-base demonstrations, and to speak at the demonstrations. Two of our members have also been to Palestine a total of three times, in order to express solidarity and to link up these struggles. More recently, another member went on the Gaza Freedom March. Another participated in the *War Resisters International* meeting in Ahmedabad in India, taking the No Bases focus as part of our strategic, permanent opposition to war. We have worked at convincing existing anti-war groups of also putting emphasis on opposing the permanent features of militarism, bases for example.

At the same time we have welcomed visiting socialists to our party, as speakers:

-Neville Alexander, from WOSA in South Africa (who spoke on socialism in times of crisis)

-Nadja Rakowitz from Germany (who told us about the Frankfurt school of Marxism)

-Oupa Lehulere from South Africa (spoke on the role of the party)

-Sam Wainwright from the Australian DSP spoke on the history of the Australian labour movement.

-Mike Cole, a Marxist pedagogue from the UK, spoke on work teachers can do in education, while militating for revolution.

-Ellora Devononcourt, a student from Harvard came to work with and also study women and Diego Garcia, with LALIT.

-Grace Goldfarb and Asher Woodward, both US students, helped us make the film on the economic alternative after the collapse of sugar as the main employer, and the leading section of the bourgeoisie.

Other internationalist links, woven into our political work, include:

-Ally Hosonbokus at the MARON Congress in Reunion, 2006.

-Rajni Lallah participated in the Radical Left Network in South Africa's seminar on Rosa Luxembourg in Cape Town.

-Lindsey Collen spoke at an international Seminar against the War in Johannesburg, in particular on the Diego Garcia base closure, and how the base is in contradiction with the new Pelindaba Treaty for a Nuclear Arms Free Africa.

- Two members, Cindy Clelie and Lindsey Collen attended the RSP first Congress, and though the fares were expensive, we wanted to give the support and also learn from their very rich experience. Then there was, as for all our political work abroad, a report back to Party Members.

-Rajni Lallah in 2008, participated in a Conference on the economic crisis in London organized by Dialectical Materialism.

-Rajni Lallah had a formal meeting with Alex Callinicos, SWP, UK 2008.

-Ragini Kistnasamy, was involved in Check-Point actions in Palestine 2007, her second visit, and then in the Gaza Freedom March, 2009-2010, where she was in some 6 demonstrations in Cairo.

- Jewai Yves met colleagues in the NPAR, in Reunion, the French colony, in 2009

-Alain Ah-Vee, in January 2010 participated in the War Resisters International, Ahmedabad, 2010, where an organization started in 1921 joined with people from No Bases and from the Gandhian peace movement in India and the Institute for Total Revolution in Ahmedabad.

Other actions with an international aspect include LALIT, when appropriate, has jointly with the former President of the Republic, called for actions against Israeli aggression in Palestine.

LALIT has launched a boycott on Israeli goods, aiming particularly at Jaffa, thus reminding people of the successful boycott against apartheid.

LALIT organized a Palestine Evening, 2005: Around the film: Caged Bird Sings, Port Louis

LALIT organized another Palestine Evening, Rose-Hill, 2006: "The Second Uprising",

LALIT organized another Palestine Evening, 2009: Film + talk on the Norman Finkelstein book on Israel and Palestine.

LALIT and Cassam Uteem jointly organized a vigil at the Municipality of Port Louis against the Israeli bombardment of the Lebanon in 2006.

LALIT participated in a demonstration against the Gaza bombing, Jan 2009. Our sustained work against Israeli aggression on Palestine contributed to causing the Mauritian Government to suspend its diplomatic links with Israel.

LALIT launched a successful international petition to get the Diego Garcia base closed, and the country reunited.

LALIT has recently launched a new international move calling on the Mauritian Foreign Affairs Minister to get the UN Atomic Energy Agency to come and do inspections on Diego Garcia, now that the Pelindaba Treaty has finally come into force in late 2009.

Some of the Articles by LALIT members in international publications:

- LINKS, in Australia, Ram Seegobin's article on our work for an economic alternative, during an election campaign.
- *Red Pepper*, UK 2008, article on Diego Garcia by Lindsey Collen.
- Bertrand Russell Foundation's monthly booklet, *The Spokesman*, article by Lindsey Collen and Ragini Kistnasamy, on Diego Garcia, 2007
- Electronic Magazine, *Pambazuka* in South Africa on Economic Alternative 2006, by Alain Ah-Vee, Ram and Lindsey on "LALIT's campaign for an economic alternative".
- Article by Lindsey Collen on August 79 Strike Movement, for *Direct Action*, Australian Newspaper of RSP, 2009
- Many of our website visitors, are from abroad. This is a new form of link.
- During the past year, we have started a process of re-preparing our international bilateral links with other parties similar to ours.

3. LALIT work on the issue of Diego Garcia, base closure, re-unification of the country, the right of return, and reparations

In its collective wisdom, LALIT made the Diego Garcia struggle central to its concerns from as long ago as **34 years ago** – on the triple struggle for base closure, retrocession and reparations for those forcibly removed. And today, right now, it is a central struggle, 34 years later. We were able to deal politically with the fact that the British State, faced with LALIT's threat of a "Peace Flotilla", arranged to take the

Chagossians to Diego Garcia and the other Islands, themselves. We have had the British Executive giving testimony against LALIT in the Chagossian Court Case, saying we intended to get the base closed (true) and were planning a flotilla that was a threat to the US base there. LALIT was, we should mention it, again and again referred to in the House of Lords judgment in the UK, simply because the Executive in the UK used our closeness to the Chagossians in order to attack them.

And we have continued the struggle even as the British are carrying out “assimilation” tactics, allowing Chagossians into the UK, so that increasingly the Chagossians are living in the UK.

LALIT has constantly updated its struggle, together with the people of Chagos and other progressive forces in Mauritius. In the last years we have taken a number of initiatives, including the demand for the Mauritian Government to ask the UN General Assembly for a Resolution to send a case to the ICJ at The Hague for an advisory opinion. We are at present re-iterating this demand. More recently we have called, and organized a successful international petition, for the Mauritian Government to call for UN inspections of Diego Garcia under the newly ratified Pelindaba Treaty.

We had a meeting with the author of *The Islands of Shame*, David Vine, who has written a book on Diego Garcia.

2005, Petition for the closing down of the base launched by LALIT

LALIT members gave a hand to John Pilger in his now famous TV documentary, *Stealing a Nation*.

LALIT members assisted Paedar King for his excellent documentary for Irish TV, *The Chagos Islands are Closed*.

And now we are calling for the UN nuclear inspectors to go to Diego Garcia, under the terms of the new Pelindaba Treaty.

We are also denouncing the UK Governments plan to cover up its evil by getting popular support for a “Marine Park” around Chagos. If ridicule could kill ... There is a nuclearized military base on Chagos. Get that closed first, LALIT says. And then, the rightful government is in charge of what kind of environmental care is necessary, not an illegal occupier like Britain with its farcicle colony, British Indian Ocean Territories.

4. Lalit political struggle for Decriminalization of Abortion, and for the women’s struggle in general

LALIT is known in Mauritius as the party in favour of women’s liberation. We are known for our high proportion of women members and women activists. Our aim, it is also known, is to free as many forces for change towards socialism as possible, one being women, oppressed as we are by patriarchy.

2005: 3-day women members Residential Seminar.

2006: LALIT supports the Muvman Liberasyon Fam demand for *Rape Crisis Units* in all hospitals, as the first and only port of call for victims of sexual aggression. You no longer need go to the Police Station! The demand has been won. It is known that this demand, popularized by the MLF, was in fact invented by a LALIT member. The women members immediately recognized its importance, and took it into the women’s movement, where mobilization won the day. It is part of our work of developing demands that are transitional. Many other organizations, faced with the same problem, tend to demand more women police officers, women officers in all police stations at all times. But we know that we want *less* police officers, not more. And we know that women who are victims of sexual aggression need first and foremost to be cared for in a hospital environment. The police doctors, and any police investigators can be called in now, and see the woman victim in the caring atmosphere of a hospital, rather than the woman having to go to the Police Station and then to the forensic medicine department of the Police.

2007, LALIT was the only political party to give evidence before the Select Committee of Parliament on the *Sexual Offences Act* – we took position against repression as the only thing the State can do in response to sexual aggression. We also called for the decriminalization of homosexuality and abortion.

2009 was the year of a high point in the ongoing struggle for the decriminalization of abortion. More and more forces came in, and relied on the LALIT political work and political guidance, after the death of the photographer-journalist, Marie Noelle Derby in 2009, and the criminal charges against the young woman, Shabeela Calla, subsequently dropped after women’s mobilization in a Common Front on Abortion.

2009, Ram Seegobin, for LALIT, was speaker in favour of legal abortion alongside Attorney General, Rama Valaydon, former Attorney General, Jean Claude Bibi, MMM Central Committee member, Kishore Pertaub, at the Forum organized by the Common Front.

Today, when more and more people take a stand alongside women for decriminalization, it is a political victory for LALIT.

5. The Kreol Language and Equal High-standard Education for All

LALIT has been closely associated for 30 years with the struggle for the use of the mother tongue/s in school, the National Assembly, Parliament and all official business. In the past year this struggle has come centre stage, and change is getting very near. LALIT has given political punch to the long-term work in literacy and language promotion, in which the workers' education organization *Ledikasyon pu Travayer* has been involved for 3 decades. And it was LALIT's program on language which, when it came out 6 years ago made the great leap forward in putting emphasis on the harm done to all children by the suppression of the mother tongue, whereas before it had been assumed that children with some difficulty at school would be helped, that the failure rate would be less, that the rate of illiteracy would be decreased. Though all this is true, there is something more general, and even more important: that the suppression in schools of the mother tongue harms not only emotional development but also cognitive-academic development. LPT took this idea up, and last year in October held an International hearing into the Harm done to Children by the Suppression in Schools of the Mother Tongue. LALIT gave evidence, and has been doing the political work afterwards, to turn the gains of the findings into a political gain. The transitional importance of the use to a high level of the mother-tongue is obvious: the working class needs its own language to be able to develop to the highest level, in order that its thinking can develop alongside.

One LALIT article in the commercial press was: "*What LALIT in fact says about Language*", 2006, criticizing our adversaries for, being short on arguments, criticizing what is *not* our position and has never been.

Today, as everyone concedes on the mother-tongue in education (although political victory is not yet achieved), this is a victory for LALIT.

LALIT also brought out its *Program on Education*, LALIT, 2006, after a series of open meetings with supporters, developing our program for a dynamic that goes towards equalizing the level of education in all schools to the highest level. Taking the problem of inequality between government primary schools (despite equal-ish expense by the State on them in terms of infrastructure and teachers' pay) and inequality in secondary schools left over from the Government in 1976, following the student mass strike of subsidising existing paying poor students' school fees, as our starting point, LALIT is mobilizing behind a program of quotas for admission into secondary school by primary school, and quotas for overseas and Mauritian university scholarships by secondary school, as a way of causing a dynamic progression towards equalizing standards upwards. The idea being that parents who can, for class reasons, make the PTA and the school function well, will then stop tending to cluster in a few "elite" schools, but will make nearly all schools elite, in their bid to continue getting the best of education for their children. No doubt their children will still do "best", but in the meantime, all children will get a better education.

LALIT article in commercial press 2006, "*Equal Education without Unbridled Competition.*"

And so unsectarian is LALIT that, when appropriate, and it was appropriate this year, we accepted to attend a formal bilateral meeting with the Bishop. We could discuss, as the Catholic Church was re-orienting its emphasis away from education for an elite, both the mother-tongue issue and also education for the broad masses of students.

LALIT took a stand against the Minister Gokhool's division of schools into "star" and other colleges, and also against the first draft of the new Minister Bunwaree's Plan, 2009.

6. In the Working Class

LALIT's Trade Union Commission and Inter-Shop floor-Unionism

LALIT's political strategy in the working class rests upon uniting the whole of the working class, at the grassroots of all unions in all federations, and on avoiding being tied to any one union or federation over time. We work with all the unions on an organization-to-organization basis. In the past five years, we have continued to link shop-floor union struggles through the "Inter Labaz Sindikal" strategy. That needs a separate paper.

Opposing the Changes in Labour Laws

LALIT has also throughout this 5-year period succeeding in giving an ideological framework to the trade union movement. The document submitted by the totality of the union movement against the *Employment Relations Bill* and the *Employment Rights Bill* (that later became Acts) was based largely on a document prepared by LALIT member, Ram Seegobin, against the Industrial Relations Act. LALIT produced key

documents, held meetings with workers and trade unions and federations in the struggle against these two laws. LALIT also participated in the series of demonstrations organized by the *Confederation of Private Sector Workers* (CTSP). It was a sign of the times that the slogan for this demonstration that we supported was rather weak: “*No to Labour Laws that Do Not Protect Workers!*” This slogan implies two things that are not exactly true: First, the bourgeois state does not ever pass laws to protect workers, but only to exploit workers. It passes laws that protest workers not in order to protect workers but *because* this facilitates wage labour exploitation. If it is necessary, because of workers’ mobilization being strong enough to disrupt production otherwise, the bourgeois State will and does pass laws that protect workers, if reluctantly. And that is not its role: its role is to pass laws to permit the continued exploitation of workers. First there was the Code Noir, the slavery framework for labour exploitation, then the Indenture Labour Laws of the 19th Century for a new framework for labour laws post-slavery, and today there is the modern wage slavery framework. Second, the two new laws are themselves positively harmful to workers as human beings, and allow new forms of exploitation of workers, as well as being harmful to unions – directly causing their further bureaucratization and criminalizing them during strikes.

LALIT has also exposed (by means of talks, meetings, gatherings, leaflets and articles), the leadership of some unions when they were busy allying with the two bourgeois parties, the MMM and MSM when they were in Opposition, on issues on which these two parties were in fact enemies of the workers. The two issues were “means testing for examination fees subsidies” which the MSM-MMM government had itself announced a couple of years before, and now pretended to join the mobilization against. How can you then ally with them to oppose this? Only by losing your own credibility. And as for allying with them over the size of lay-off packages and the nature of redeployment for 100 *Development Works Corporation* staff when the MMM and MSM were responsible for actually sacking 800 manual workers illegally after a strike. It was grotesque, and at mass meetings of workers, we said it, and were applauded, and the union leaders veered away from these temporary “allies” – but without making it clear that they had been mistaken. The Courts had even found the MMM and MSM had acted illegally in sacking the 800 workers, and the Government had had to pay compensation. Union bureaucracies, in order to ally with the likes of these, must surely think that workers have very short memories, which the best of the class do not have.

Work-Site Bulletins

For the first time, LALIT has in 2009 begun to work on work-site bulletins that come out regularly, with general political articles on one side, and articles pertaining to the particular site on the other. The way we believe the Lutte Ouvriere run their worksite bulletins. These are prepared and distributed by the branches. The sites covered by regular leaflets include Princes Tuna, Rosehill Transport, Vacoas Transport, Cernol, Gaz Industriel, United Basalt, Lekol Lotelye, Platinax.

With the Unions

Ram Seegobin has spoken at large meetings of the Federation of Civil Service and Other Unions some four or five times over the five year period up to the end of 2009, and at the Federation des Travailleurs Unis twice, Rada Kistnasamy at the National Trade Union Council assembly at Octave Wiehe in 2006, Ram Seegobin at the NTUC Assembly in 2007 and at the Organization de L’Unite des Artisans, at a seminar organized jointly by the Federation of Para-Statal Bodies and Other Unions, the State Employees Federation and the Local Government Unions, 2008, and the GTUF and mineral water factory workers, 2010. LALIT also participated in the Confederation des Travailleurs du Secteur Prive demonstrations in front of Parliament, as well as the big demonstration in Rose-Hill in 2009 and the smaller one in Port Louis the same year, as well as the 2008 Telecom Workers demonstration in Edith Cavell Street. LALIT members were also in the “Bread Demonstration” in 2007.

Web Series

Working people in times of Crisis: The Curepipe Branch has started a series for the LALIT web-site under this name. The first two are on construction workers and agricultural workers, respectively.

7. Themes for Political Education for Party members and other interested individuals

Following a decision taken in a Members Assembly to open our political education to individuals who are not party members, we have held the following sessions (amongst others):

Marxist Economics – Lindsey Collen

The Crisis in the Sugar Industry – Ram Seegobin

LALIT’s Program on Agriculture – Alain Ah-Vee

LALIT's Change-of-Seasons University for young people, 2007
 LALIT's Spring University for young people, 2008
 Work and Capital – a talk and discussion given in five different places by Lindsey Collen
 Ecology and the economy – Ally Hosenbokus
 The mother tongue in School – Cindy Clelie
 The Role of Ideology ideology since Independence in Mauritian Politics – an article for a mainstream magazine by Ram Seegobin
 The State – Alain Ah-Vee
 Classes – Rajni Lallah
 Marx's Ecology – Lindsey Collen
 Latin America – a series (we felt we were not knowledgeable enough at a time when there is a great deal of dynamism already in countries like Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia)
 - On Simon Bolivar: Ram Seegobin
 - Cuba's revolution: Ally Hosenbokus
 - Peru: Shining Path, what is it?: Ram Seegobin
 - Pancho Villa & Zapata and the Mexican Revolution - Alain Ah-Vee
 - Jose Marti: Rajni Lallah
 - Chili and the Allende regime: Yann Jean
 - Chavez's Venezuela: Rada Kistnasamy
 - Peronism in Argentina: Lindsey Collen
 - The nature of FARC in Colombia
 - The Sandinistas in Nicaragua: Cindy Clelie
 Media and Advertising (based on Raymond Williams' seminal essay): Rada Kistnasamy
 Ideology: Cindy Clelie
 Spanish Civil War: Rajni Lallah
 Rosa Luxembourg's development of Marx's Economics: Lindsey Collen
 The Paris Commune: Ally Hosenbokus (2008)
 The Paris Commune (2009), a session prior to a Sunday session viewing the 6-hour Peter Watkins film La Commune (1871)
 The Russian Revolution: Ragini Kistnasamy
 What is a Political Party? (Comparing with associations, trade unions): Alain Ah-Vee
 What is a trade union? (Importance, limitations, and tendency towards bureaucratization): Ram Seegobin
 New Employment Relations Act: Ram Seegobin, 2008, 2009 (many sessions)
 LALIT challenges the subject of "bourgeois economics" and the economics of the capitalist system itself: Lindsey Collen
 Session on Mauritian outer island of Agalega after return of a member from there, 2008
 Session on Norman Finkelstein's book on Israel & Palestine, 2008
 Session on the film on Palestine: "Tragedy in the Holy Land: The Second Uprising," 2008
 Session on film on Palestine: "Caged Bird Sings", 2009
 Two sessions on the August 79 strike movement in preparation for LALIT Congress: Rajni Lallah and Ally Hosenbokus
 September, 1980 Mass uprising: Alain Ah-Vee and Rada Kistnasamy
 The Working Class in Crisis Times: Ram Seegobin
 Internationalism in Crisis Times: Lindsey Collen
 The Rise of Fascism in 3 countries in Europe (comparing the different forms taken): Italy, Germany, Spain: Ram Seegobin
 The Rise of Fascist Ideology: Alain Ah-Vee
 China: Its Rise within Capitalist Economic Production: Ragini Kistnasamy
 China: The Class Situation: Rada Kistnasamy
 Lessons of the August 79 Strike Movement: Ram Seegobin
 Telling about the August 79 strike movement: Ragini Kistnasamy
 Telling about the August 79 strike movement

8. Elections and Electoral Campaigns in the Bourgeois State Apparatus

In the electoral campaign for General Elections of 2005, we aligned 32 LALIT candidates and had candidates in all constituencies; we prepared and popularized our program whose main thrust was "Confronting the systemic crisis that is accompanying the fall of the sugar and textiles as main employers" and the need for an alternative economy, in terms of what is produced and who decides.

Ally Hosenbokus, LALIT candidate for the by-election just before general elections, prepared our program, then election cancelled as National Assembly was dissolved, 2005.

LALIT prepared a party program for Village Elections, 2005.

LALIT prepared a party program for Municipal Elections, 2005

Rada Kistnasamy, LALIT candidate in by-election in Constituency No 8 Moka – Quartier Militaire.

Prepared program, popularized it during campaign.

9. Electoral Reform

-LALIT continued its campaign to replace the communalist Best Loser by some form of proportional representation – a struggle in which we have been in the vanguard for years. LALIT made it clear that we are not just struggling for a “5th community of conscientious objectors to auto-classification”, but want the entire system dismantled. Our position is in our 230 page book on the subject, published in 2005.

-ISPD Rajni Lallah and Ram Seegobin were speakers on their panel on Electoral Reform organized at the University of Mauritius, 2006.

-Numerous newspaper and web articles clarifying our position.

10 Drugs, drug addiction and AIDS

Following our meeting with the association PILS, LALIT drafted and then launched a *Charter on Aids and Rational Policy on Drug Addiction*. Many organizations signed up. This is the culmination of years of struggle since our very first program for a rational drugs policy. To give an idea of the shift that our actions have brought about, we were alone at the time of the 1984 Select Committee on Drugs. One of the Ministers on the Committee, when we went to give evidence, said that “all” the social workers in the country, and everyone else who had given evidence, supported more repression as the only solution. That our ideas were supported by no-one. So, it is something of a LALIT victory that now the idea of syringe-exchanges is already in practice, the use of drugs like methadone for weaning addicts off opiates is being sponsored by the State, while the decriminalization of some drugs, and treatment for addicts who want it, are fairly well supported ideas today.

This part of LALIT’s program is linked to the idea of a socialist society one day, because it attacks the kind of repression that present day society uses as the response to all social problems. It also potentially frees people from police control; people who use substances that are illicit while they are illicit, are sitting ducks to become police informers, while drug dealers almost invariably are. This weakens any struggle. Any small or big mafia depends for its power over neighbourhoods on the continued illegality of substances used by people, and the mafia is always an enemy of socialist revolution.

11 Police Violence

This has been an important theme in LALIT’s program and actions since 1979 when Serge Victorine was killed by police officers after being re-arrested after the prison mutiny and the mass break-out. We see police violence as the most crude expression in the country of the violence of the bourgeois State. It is important to be able to confront officers who use violence, and to halt it.

LALIT was amongst the organizations, and perhaps it was the leading one, in the process of setting up the organization “JUSTICE: ASSOCIATION AGAINST VIOLENCE BY OFFICERS OF THE STATE”, which has, in turn, exposed police violence, and theoretized, as LALIT has too, the meaning of this institutionalized State violence. We wrote articles like “10 Steps against Police Brutality”, 2006, in the daily Press, and commentaries on the first-ever judgment under the new anti-torture laws. LALIT and JUSTICE’s positions made the political space necessary for the Director of Public Prosecutions to be able to have to appeal against the not-guilty verdict, 2009

LALIT criticized the National Human Rights Commission formally, and called on its members to resign. Judge Seetulsing replied to LALIT through the Press, 2007.

12 Slavery and Reparations

LALIT’s campaign for reparations for slavery, a campaign launched with a big petition-signing movement, from 1994-1996, situates slavery in the history of the working class in Mauritius, and in the history of the capitalist system world-wide. This is important for class consciousness, which is in turn important for a socialist revolution. This issue is now centre-stage in Mauritius, and 1st February has become a Public Holiday. We have constantly at the same time opposed the racial interpretations of slavery, and campaign

against racism and race classification (in ordinary life as well as in politics) as being one of the worst sequels of slavery.

Throughout these 5 years, we have had articles on the issue. And we prepared and submitted a 50-page written statement to the Truth and Justice Commission on Slavery and Indenture, 2009, a Commission which is still sitting. We exposed the problem within the Commission which was not functioning at all, by means of a walk-out that received press coverage. We also showed its two elements: a genuine investigation into historical crimes of a class nature, on the one hand, and on the other, a pre-electoral stunt based on race and community.

13. Books Written/Published by LALIT in these 5 Years

These and our other publications can be ordered from us:

LALIT Program for an Alternative Economy – Bilingual booklet, 2005 (84 pages) (sold out)

Against Communalism: The Best Loser System, 2005 (230 pages) (sold out)

The Manifesto by Marx & Engels in Kreol: 2005 (with audio cassette in Kreol)

Program on Education, 2006

What Needs to be Done? Speeches by Ram Seegobin, Jean Claude Bibi, Oupa Le hulere, with Intro by Lindsey Collen, 2007 (212 pages)

The State ("Leta") edited by Rajni Lallah, 2008 (200 pages)

Palestine Diaries by Ragini Kistnasamy, "Dayeri Palestinn", 2008

Kreol version of Rosa Luxembour's "The Accumulation of Capital", 2008

Class ("Klas"), edited by Alain Ah-Vee, 2009 (266 pages)

Palestine Newsletter on Gaza Freedom March, 2010.

What other party has produced this volume of written political analysis in the past 5 years? The MMM has nothing but a very wishy-washy weekly, Labour has nothing to show for itself, and nor does the MSM. For a party with socialism as our aim, we need continually to educate ourselves, to relate the past to the present and the future, and to broaden the influence of our ideas. New members need to be able to "catch up" at a rhythm and rate of their own. For all this, printed material is important.

14 Actions not so easy to classify

Court cases on trumped up charges from when Paul Berenger was in Government, against Ram Seegobin and Lindsey Collen. Both members were finally found not guilty of "molesting police officer" when the police were trying to spy on a common front meeting that was preparing a demonstration against George Bush due to visit Mauritius (visit cancelled because he invaded Iraq at the time). The charges were so trumped up that in Lindsey Collen's case the police had misread their own hand-writing. An officer had thought he had noted down that Lindsey had said a police officer was a "mutuk", which means a "grub", when he had in fact written "mustas", meaning "moustache". (She was asking whether someone was referring to a "moustached" police officer.

Another Court case: Criminal charges against Roland Fauzoo and an ex-member ended in a not-guilty charge for being "Rogue and Vagabond" when they were visiting a victim of police brutality at his house. (The police turned the victim into an accuser.) Our member put in civil charges, won damages, and made a donation to LALIT.

The Court Case Against our Member, Alain Ah-Vee and unionist Atma Shunto, for defamation, brought by the bosses of Happy World, following a poster campaign in which the bosses were accused of taking too much profit, was finally withdrawn unconditionally by the bosses.

Lindsey Collen, speaker at Media Watch event, "Women in Politics" 2005

Ally Hosenbokus, speaker at Amnesty Forum on Youth, 2008

Two LALIT members spoke at an Amnesty night vigil on Gaza, Ragini Kistnasamy and Alain Ah-Vee, who have both been to Palestine, 2009

Meetings in Flacq and Rose-Hill on the Financial Crisis, Lindsey Collen, 2007

15. LALIT Congresses

January 2005: LALIT Congress on an Alternative Economy.

Congress on the Role of a Revolutionary Party in times of Crisis (2006), Oupa Le hulere amongst those who spoke.

Congress on Socialism Today, where Neville Alexander was amongst those who spoke. (2007)

Congress on Internationalism Today in Times of Crisis (2009), Leon Cremieux of the Nouveau Parti Anti-Capitaliste in France, and of the Fourth International spoke.

Congress on Remember August 79 Strike Movement, (2009) – with workers who were in the strike speaking, too.

16 Positions taken Publicly by LALIT, and polemics

On the mosquito-transmitted disease Chikungunya, 2006, “In Praise of Truth”, an article in the daily press.

“Hunger Strike as Means of Struggle,” 2007, an article in the daily press

Aquatic Business Act, 2007, an article in the daily press.

New Labour Laws, constant taking of position, 2006-9

Remission must be re-installed in Prisons, 2005, an article in the daily press.

Call for the DPP to be made more accountable, 2005, an article in the daily press

What is politics, when it is not electoral? 2008

Reply from Espitalier Noel, sugar boss leader of MSPA to LALIT’s campaign, 2008

Reply by Gilbert Ahnee to LALIT’s criticism of the Press, 2007

LALIT decided to publish the abusive attack by Jack Bizlall on LALIT, specially against two women members, 2008

Reply by Judge Seetulsing, NHRC to LALIT’s criticism of the National Human Rights Commission, 2007

Reply from and meeting with Bishop Piat, 2007

Correspondence between La Croix Rouge and LALIT over the possibility of inspections for “rendering” on Diego Garcia, 2008

LALIT features in House of Lords judgment on Diego Garcia, 2008

Many members speak in public in favour of decriminalization of abortion, during 2009, when the subject was being discussed everywhere.

A number of members spoke in public against police violence, and many articles in LALIT’s name were published.

(Many of these positions can be found in our “news archives” on our website.

17 Ideology and debates

- The occasional column on the LALIT website “Mauritius media at a glance” that Ram Seegobin writes, is a constant counter-weight to the bourgeois ideology of the commercial press. The series exposes the press for what it actually is. And it does this with humour.

-During these 5 years, we have cleared up two or three important matters in recent history:

- The role of major personalities in the local media in the plot the MMM hatched against LALIT, by means of corrupting our then ally, the OMT-FNAS and the leaders of 2 trade union federations, getting them to take the role of phantom candidates who say vote MMM, as Gaetan Duval had previously done with lining up POP-FMI candidates to say vote for their alliance.

- The role of the press in the 2005 elections and then later in the by-election in 2009.

We have also shared very precisely our ideas with our supporters and with the public (more precisely than before) on:

- What is a revolutionary party?

- What is a party militant, or party cadre in a revolutionary party?

- What, if any, is the content of the programs of other left groups in Mauritius? Is it “left”?

- What is “the State”?

- Why would it be a defeat if the Government introduces a 5th “community” so as to stabilize the best loser, that is to say a community of those who object to classifying themselves, when they stand for election, while the whole corrupt system of classification continues as usual?

- What is “Class”?

- What is the content of trade union bureaucratization? The phenomenon that trade union leaders strengthen themselves on the backs of the weakness of the very class they represent?

- We have come up with analyses that are totally new to us, though the content of them was always there:

- Marx’s philosophy is clearly based on “ecology”, and he is a joint founder of the concept. The John Bellamy Foster book proves this beautifully. He also shows how Stalinism banned this current in Marxism, needing to industrialize at any price, while other important Marxist thinkers were not knowledgeable about the physical and biological sciences, while others still refused the use of dialectical materialism for anything else except “ideology”, partly fearing the right-wing “social Darwinist” currents, based more on Malthus

than on Darwin. All this to say that from 1923-24 onwards the ecological current in Marxism was suppressed, and it survived only as Marxism amongst scientists, not so much in the political sphere.

18 Art

Many LALIT posters were chosen for the national exhibition of political graphics held in Castel in 2005, and published in the British Council book *Upfront and Personal*, 2005.

Politics and Comics for Change, is a series of youth workshops in LALIT run by Alain Ah-Vee, 2007.

LALIT member Rajni Lallah has continued to play in the best of concerts, like the LPT organized “A4” program together with the play-reading of *Le Morne*, for Slavery Abolition Day, 2009.

LALIT member Lindsey Collen has continued over the past five years to receive praise and awards for her literary novels.

We have analyzed the way in which the Ministry of Tourism has put thugs in charge of tearing down posters, painting big black crosses on them, and generally closing down a form of artistic expression, reserving it for commercial advertisements. Since then laws have been passed outlawing posters. With this important means of struggle banned, we have decided to find new ways of transforming visual space available into a place for struggle.

19 Electronic Developments in LALIT

Our web-site, despite 4 hackings in 2009, has continued to get more and more visits. 260,000 hits in 2009. Our replacement web-site after the hackings is still not completely up and running, but will hopefully be soon. Through our web site we have had some recruitment. And our site is like a window through which people can see into our party, and get an idea of it. We found this year that it has been essential to continue to make copies of every web article, for distribution in LALIT branches, otherwise a division is created in the Party between those with (easy) internet connection and those with not-so-easy (or no) internet connection.

Our archives of press cuttings and documents is being put into electronic form, a vast enterprise. We are fortunate to have members who are world experts in this domain.

Some party work is also now helped by the advent of SMS.

20 Themes that LALIT has long agitated around that have become central recently:

-The economy: what with the end of the EU preferences, the economy is page one and first item on all media; we have been putting the economy (and the fact that this is the main content of politics, or should be) since 1983, if not since 1976.

- Free zone fragility: a campaign begun in 1976

- Need for exchange control – everyone talks about it now.

- To prevent provoked depreciation of the rupee.

- Against the destruction of jobs – in favour of converting units threatened with closure into other forms of production.

- The need for price controls – now in the news, since the oil and then the food crisis.

- The debate on free transport, now taken up by university students.

- LALIT launched a petition, signed by many organizations, to make Mauritius a GMO free area. This is now spoken about a great deal.

- We were against the war on Iraq, and we said it was illegal. Today the Chilcot Commission is hearing all the legal advice that called the war illegal. There were no “weapons of mass destruction”.

-Diego Garcia: This is one of LALIT’s longest standing campaigns, and for the past year, it has been main headlines almost every week. The three issues: reparations, re-unification of the country, and base closure are all on the agenda.

- We exposed the nature of the WTO before it existed. What we said about it is gradually becoming common knowledge. The same about GATS, under the WTO.

- The Palestinian struggle has been important in LALIT for 30 years; now it has become everyone’s concern.

- The need to decriminalize abortion is now centre stage; all the parties are now in favour, although they still do not have the courage to bring in the law that is needed.

- Violence against women is discussed openly now by almost everyone; it has been on LALIT’s agenda for years, while other parties shied away from the subject.

- Or struggle against the Industrial Relations Act over 30 years helped to delay the new worse industrial laws, the EReA and EriA.

- Against police brutality: a subject that only LALIT used to take up, and we bore the stupid criticisms that we were “protecting criminals”, etc.
- Village elections have been re-introduced after LALIT’s campaign.
- The Best loser is still being contested, a LALIT campaign.
- Those against the Kreol language are finally giving up – LALIT is the only party that has kept up the pressure for over 30 years; while the MMMSP was alive, it did.
- Housing is still a major problem; but instead political parties and editorialists blaming the poor, since LALIT set up and organized the homeless people in “Muvman Lakaz” to raise their voices, to do sit-ins and demonstrations, the debate has changed.
- Drugs: LALIT has held with this subject until it is now centre stage.
- Health as a right: this concept too is a LALIT one, from our Program Document “People’s Health” which the MMM turned down, through members’ massive contribution to the Bambous Health Project co-operative, LALIT has shown the way to preventive health. Today AIDS is forcing the issue of prevention on to the agenda.
- Universal Human Rights: the LALIT campaign on rights as the very minimum, and the need to take power, is making headway now.

Conclusion

So, if ever LALIT decides not to put up candidates for the next General Elections, we need not be worried that our only political work in 5 years won’t take place! There are probably many things left out of this Report.

After preparing this Draft Report my conclusion is I’m not sure there is any other political party in Mauritius with such rich political production and mobilization in five years. So, this brings me to ask myself, “And what exactly is ‘a big party’, then?” If not us.

Prepared from a Paper delivered in Kreol
on 31 January at a LALIT Members’ Assembly,
by LCC.

(This paper was part of a series of discussion papers presented at a LALIT 3-day Assembly on 30 and 31 January, and 1 February, 2010)

- o Rada Kistnasamy on a Report on 5-years of political work by the Labour Party’s Socialist Alliance, the MMM and the MSM;
- o Internationalism in LALIT, including an outline of the content of our internationalism, plus report-backs from the Gaza Freedom March and the War Resisters International conference in India;
- o Rajni Lallah on the economic, political and social forces pushing towards a Labour-MMM coalition, and what makes it nevertheless difficult;
- o Ram Seegobin on the proposal for a left common platform, in a “facts only” account of 32 years of convergence and divergence with others on the left and often on the “left”, elucidating their trajectory.)