

You will have noticed that several happenings are scheduled when Pravind is out of the country. This seems to be a smoke-screen designed to make the orchestrated exits look more authentic. Here are brave militants who have left their shores to join a party without having been guaranteed anything by the premier. It has not worked though. The population has called their bluff.

There have been a number of low blows exchanged between the departed and the MMM. The latter would do well to ignore them and not indulge in cheap allusions of financial help given to a former member. It is unbecoming of a movement that used to stand for noble values.

● I don't think the information about the help came from the MMM leadership but rather from the homework of journalists. What's cheap about exposing disloyal candidates to the electorate?

If I remember correctly, it was mentioned by a future candidate of the party on a radio show. There is a minimum of decorum to be kept. We should not forget that many of the members who have left have given years of their lives to the MMM as well. Yes, in most cases, these years have been served saying yes to the leadership and enduring press conferences. But they are years nonetheless. The only thing that this type of bickering does is widen the disgust of citizens with politics. Whether the information came from the journalists matters not. Anyone who deems that this is something that should be thrown in the agora is ill-advised.

● There are those who left to look after other things and those who left to join the *Mouvement Socialiste Militant* (MSM). Do you have the same opinion of both groups?

No. I can understand why

someone would wish to leave the MMM: there is no clear economic policy being advocated, with the leader vouching for pragmatism. What does that mean? The heavily tilted scales in favour of the haves are likely to be untouched. There will be mere management and kowtowing to the interests of capitalists. There is hardly any new ideas being proposed these days and nepotism has entered an already soiled structure. There is a cut-throat jostling for position, which is contrary to all MMM values.

Leaving the MMM for the MSM is altogether another matter. Whether the individual chooses to do it directly or through a Special Purpose Vehicle does not matter. The MSM's list of scandals is truly baffling: The mishandling of the British American Investment (BAI) case, the Rs19 billion Safe City project and the creation of a surveillance state, the generous incentives in terms of tax rebates to promoters of Smart Cities, the leeway given to one betting com-

"Those close to power have clearly expressed their shopping list in regressive ethnic terms."



pany in particular and the acute drug problem. The greatest scandal if you ask me is Pravind Jugnauth's taking over as prime minister. Anyone respectful of our democracy would face the electorate for a new mandate within a short time frame. I can only hope that those highly excited to partake in the progress of the country have paid due attention to the list of botch-ups associated with this regime.

● The spin right now is that the scandals are not the doing of the prime minister but of his ministers and that getting rid of the rotten apples will result in the creation of an almost new party. Are you sympathetic to that view?

That is a load of malarkey being served to the population. It is an endorsement of Tancredi's line in Visconti's *Le Guépard*, "*Il faut que tout change pour que rien ne change*"; that is, "For things to remain the same, everything must change". We know how the system works and the considerable power that is vested in the head of government. We have an aching trust issue with our police force, the report of the Commission of inquiry on Drugs has not been followed by strong action so far and the onerous projects that have been initiated seem to be an attempt to masquerade the absence of progress. If we judge Pravind Jugnauth solely on the debt levels and creation of new industries, he has failed.

● What do you think of Bérenger's reaction to the crisis - "We won't underestimate the crisis but we will survive"?

The crisis might even have helped the MMM which is drawing sympathy from those partisans who had gone away. Political parties do not die easily. The lure of power is intoxicating and patience is one ingredient never missing in our political figures. The wheel turns as it did for Anerood Jugnauth in 2014. The

"Those who have left on a question of principle are now joining a party that is a fervent adherent of dynasty politics and is neck deep in scandals"

MMM might be dying but it is certainly not dead. And this might explain why we are in a situation of crisis with many of our parties in a similar comatose stage. Gramsci said it best, "*Le vieux monde se meurt, le nouveau monde tarde à apparaître et dans ce clair-obscur surgissent les monstres.*" I would expect the bargaining power of the MMM prior to the election to be significantly lowered. That would explain why the party is betting on an alliance after the election.

● Yes, let's talk about an after-election alliance. Doesn't it look more and more likely?

A post electoral alliance could indeed be on the cards. The belief that there will be no landslide victory for either of the two main blocks is prevalent among many observers. It is difficult to know at this stage what the future holds in store. A politician is a dealer in hope that merely has to present a carrot before his followers that shows them the possibility of being in power tomorrow. This scenario would fit the MMM's best chances of salvaging anything from the next election, a bit à la *Parti Mauricien Social Démocrate* (PMSD) in