

LBJ LIBRARY DOCUMENT WITHDRAWAL SHEET

Page 1

Doc #	DocType	Doc Info	Classification	Pages	Date	Restriction
1	memo	Research Memo RAF-21 <i>sanitized 5/21/15 per RAC</i>	S	32	5/10/66	A

Collection Title National Security File, Files of Harold H. Saunders

Folder Title "Indian Ocean, 4/1/66-1/20/69"

Box Number 14

Restriction Codes

- (A) Closed by Executive Order 13292 governing access to national security information.
- (B) Closed by statute or by the agency which originated the document.
- (C) Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in the donor's deed of gift.

5/11/2010


Initials

~~SECRET/NO FOREIGN DISSEM~~
CONTROLLED DISSEM

Saunders

- BOWDLER
- BOWMAN
- BUDGET
- HAYNES
- JESSUP
- JOHNSON
- KEENE
- KOMER
- MOYER
- ROPA
- ROWEN
- SAUNDERS
- TAYLOR
- THOMSON

Research Memorandum

Indian Ocean

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

SAF-21, May 10, 1966

RECEIVED
MAY 16 3 13 PM '66
N.S.C.

USAF REVIEWED 06-Aug-2009: SANITIZED FOR RELEASE IN PART

To : The Secretary
 Through: S/S
 From : INR - Thomas L. Hughes *Thomas L. Hughes*
 Subject : Mauritius Approaches Independence

The Crown Colony has been promised its independence by the end of 1966. We here examine some of the complex factors in the Mauritian picture and their implications for US and UK strategic interests in the Indian Ocean.

ABSTRACT

Mauritian Problems a Cause for Western Concern. For a country on the verge of independence, Mauritius faces problems that are particularly difficult even in this era of weak, newly-emerging states. It is geographically isolated, grossly overpopulated, and growing with a very high birth rate. Its 750,000 inhabitants are divided into hostile ethnic-religious communities, several of which are apprehensive over the prospective withdrawal of British protection. The communal groups themselves are often split by differences in economic and social status. The island's one-crop economy (sugar) suffers from mounting unemployment, particularly among partially educated youth. Mauritius has agreed with the UK to part with one of several dependencies, the Chagos Archipelago, where US-UK defense facilities are planned on Diego Garcia Island. This agreement has become a political football.

DOS reviewed Jan.9, 2009. Refer to USAF

DOS REVIEWED 09 JAN 2009 NO OBJECTION TO DECLASSIFICATION

SANITIZED
 NLJ.034R.014.005/1
 NARA, Date 4-7-15
jc

~~SECRET/NO FOREIGN DISSEM~~
CONTROLLED DISSEM

GROUP 1
Excluded from automatic
downgrading and
declassification

~~SECRET~~
 NO FOREIGN DISSEM
 CONTROLLED DISSEM

- 11 -

Inter-communal Strife a Constant Threat. An underprivileged, rural Hindu majority expects to profit from independence at the expense of important Moslem, French, Chinese, and Creole minorities. Inter-communal violence, particularly between the Hindus and the Creoles, has intensified since 1961, reaching peaks in late 1963 and the spring of 1965. British troops were called in to restore order in May 1965, and tensions have subdued somewhat since then. They may intensify once again, however, in the course of an electoral campaign in July and August to determine the political balances and alignments in independent Mauritius. Thereafter, an emigration of skills and capital may occur as a result of increased apprehension among the minorities.

Independence Still an Issue. Prime Minister Seewoosagur Ramgoolam of the Mauritius Labor Party has concentrated so intently on the successful drive toward independence that a Hindu-Moslem governing alliance he forged in 1961 has suffered an increasing rate of defection over domestic issues. A number of Moslems, alarmed at the perils of independence under Hindu majority rule, have deserted the alliance. Members of the Hindu community, feeling that Ramgoolam was overlooking their own special interests in his efforts to conciliate other groups, have splintered off to the more radical components of a new communal alliance, the Independence Party, pledged to promote Hindu welfare.

The Anti-Independence Movement. A direct challenge to the independence program itself comes mainly from the Parti Mauricien Social Démocrate (PMSD), an aggregate of anti-Hindu minorities built around an urbanized, middle class, French-Creole core. The PMSD has fought majority-rule independence from both within and outside the Mauritian Government. It has issued direct

~~SECRET~~
 NO FOREIGN DISSEM

~~SECRET~~
 NO FOREIGN DISSEM
 CONTROLLED DISSEM

- iii -

requests to London for some form of associated status with the UK, and for a plebiscite in Mauritius. It has also formulated appeals in Washington, Paris, and other capitals, canvassed international socialist conferences, and followed its flamboyant deputy leader, Gaetan Duval, into the streets for demonstrations and riots -- but to no avail. PMSD leaders boycotted the conclusion of the London constitutional conference in September 1965 which formally set independence for 1966. The PMSD later withdrew from Ramgoolam's governing coalition, vowing to fight the next elections on an anti-independence platform.

Strategic Facilities Become Local Political Issue. Since the London constitutional talks, the PMSD counter-independence movement has been able to exploit to its own advantage the price of making the Chagos Archipelago available. Notwithstanding protests from the island's political left (and from communists outside as well), the Ramgoolam government gradually reduced its demands for a quid pro quo in exchange for British retention of the Chagos group. In November 1965 Mauritius agreed to part with them in exchange for a £3 million grant from the UK and recognition of Mauritius title to all oil and mineral rights as well as to sovereignty over the Chagos once they were no longer required by the UK. Although aware of the UK's firm intention to give Mauritius its independence regardless of the outcome of the Chagos negotiations, the PMSD, despite its bourgeois and pro-Western leanings, succeeded in stirring up for campaign purposes local resentment against what it portrays as a treacherous "deal" between the UK and Indo-Mauritians to trade political control (independence) for "nuclear base" rights.

~~SECRET~~
 NO FOREIGN DISSEM
 CONTROLLED DISSEM

~~SECRET~~
NO FOREIGN DISSEM
CONTROLLED DISSEM

- iv -

The Radical and Perhaps Neutralist Hindu Independence Party. While for the time being Mauritian opposition to Western defense planning comes largely from the middle-class PMSD and the island's embryonic pro-communist factions, the new, radical Hindu Independence Party may also seek to capitalize on this issue in the forthcoming election campaign. It would hope to embarrass the Ramgoolam government on the one hand and to prevent the PMSD from successfully using the issue to block independence on the other. If voted into power -- a possibility which cannot be lightly dismissed -- the Hindu radicals will be tempted to follow a neutralist foreign policy. They might trade -- or threaten to trade -- established Western positions in Mauritius and other islands in the area under Mauritian control to other powers interested in taking advantage of a post-independence power vacuum.

Present Communist Designs: Infiltration Without Over-Exposure.

Communist countries have been cautiously preparing for their eventual presence in independent Mauritius. Peking has gained footholds in the local Chinese community (which also has pro-Taiwan members) and supports a communist youth group composed largely of Hindus. The Soviets and eastern European communist nations have developed contacts with certain labor and youth leaders and provided scholarships to at least 50 Mauritian students. The communists profit from poverty, social inequities, growing unemployment, inadequate facilities, and the economic vulnerability of the island. Nevertheless, Peking and Moscow have refrained from massive or open campaigns in Mauritius; their local fronts are relatively weak in membership and entirely dependent on outside support.

~~SECRET~~
NO FOREIGN DISSEM
CONTROLLED DISSEM

NO FOREIGN DISSEM
CONTROLLED DISSEM

- v -

Implications for Non-communist Countries. India, Pakistan, France, South Africa, Portugal, and perhaps other countries as well, will tend to define and, if necessary, seek to protect their interests in Mauritius in the context of their patronage of one or another of the island's communities or of the region's overall security.

For the UK, Mauritius will continue to be important in its roles as an air base, a communications facility, the site of a nuclear-explosion detecting unit, and as a potential base in the event of further British reductions between Suez and Singapore. The UK is unlikely, however, to reverse the trends on Mauritius that risk bringing the Independence Party radicals to power. And it may be powerless to block the development of neutralist opportunism and irredentism even if these were determined to repudiate the Whitehall-Ramgoolam agreement on the Chagos.

The US interest in Mauritius arises not only from concern for the security of the Indian Ocean but also from Mauritian support for important scientific programs. In case of renewed violence after independence, the US, along with nations in the area, could become the object of appeals to help restore order. Mauritian leaders have speculated to a considerable extent about

possible US interests in the Indian Ocean and have formulated their own notions of US willingness to aid the island. They think in terms of concessions on sugar and immigration quotas as well as economic assistance in return for their contribution to meeting our strategic needs. Thus, whether in friendly or threatening fashion, Mauritius will ^{persist} for some time to come in suing for American attention and help.

-SECRET
NO FOREIGN DISSEM
CONTROLLED DISSEM

~~SECRET~~
NO FOREIGN DISSEM
CONTROLLED DISSEM

- vi -

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Abstract	i-v
I. Economic and Social Problems	1
A One Crop-Economy	1
An Ethnic Patchwork	2
Inter-communal Violence	3
II. Politics and Independence	3
Self-Determination on the Indo-Mauritian Course	3
MLP Loses Some Indian Support	4
Moslem Uneasiness at Alliance with MLP	5
PMSD and the Counter-Independence Movement	6
PMSD Failures in Cabinet and London	7
III. Politics and the Issue of Western Bases	9
Negotiations on the Chagos	9
PMSD Seizes on the Chagos Transfer	9
Position of the Pro-communist Factions	10
Other Parties May Use Chagos Issue	11
Political Value of Bases for an Independent Mauritius ...	12
IV. International Implications	12
Communist Designs: Infiltration Without Over-Exposure ...	12
UK Position	13
Interests of Other States	14
US Interests	14

~~SECRET~~
NO FOREIGN DISSEM
CONTROLLED DISSEM

NO FOREIGN DISSEM
CONTROLLED DISSEM

- vii -

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

	<u>Page</u>
<u>CHARTS</u>	
1. Ethnic-Religious Communities in Mauritius	16
2. Political Parties in Mauritius	17

APPENDIX

Strategic History of Mauritius: A Pawn in Great Power Gamesmanship 19

MAPS

1. Mauritius
2. Indian Ocean Islands

~~SECRET~~
NO FOREIGN DISSEM
CONTROLLED DISSEM

~~SECRET~~
NO FOREIGN DISSEM
CONTROLLED DISSEM

Despite economic fragility and ethnic-political dissensions, the Indian Ocean Crown Colony of Mauritius has sought, and has been promised, independence from Great Britain by the end of 1966. A new island Dominion will thus soon be born within the Commonwealth, separated by a thousand miles of ocean from any major land mass, and beset with weighty social, economic, and political problems. How these problems evolve, and how an independent Mauritius government deals with them, will bear upon British and American planning for the strategic Western Indian Ocean zone. Serious instability in Mauritius could in some circumstances threaten to turn a hitherto secure area, subject to Western control, into a new arena for Great Power conflict.¹

I. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS

With almost three-quarters of a million people already crowded at a density of 1,000 per square mile, Mauritius has a multi-racial population that is growing at a rate of three per cent per year. Its inhabitants have increased by one-third over the past decade. Its standard of living, relatively high for the Afro-Asian world (\$200 per capita in 1963), is declining. Chronic unemployment is being compounded by the entry of 8,000 unemployable school-leavers into the saturated white-collar labor market each year. The island is likewise experiencing a deterioration of its high literacy rate (once 85 per cent) as schools -- never adequate beyond the elementary levels -- fail to keep pace with population growth.

A One Crop-Economy

Diversification of the economy has been slow, for Mauritius is too densely populated and too remote geographically for most agricultural, industrial, and tourist programs. Moreover, there is a reluctance to take measures that could adversely affect sugar exports as long as the intensively cultivated crop remains highly profitable. Mauritius ranks twelfth in the world's production of cane sugar, and the sugar industry is considered well managed and efficient. Cane already occupies 95 per cent of land under cultivation; a disastrous harvest or a collapse of sugar prices could wreck the country's fragile economic equilibrium. The kind of exodus of surplus population that might help the economy is virtually ruled out by the unwillingness of underpopulated countries to accept large numbers of unskilled Indians, who comprise the island's teeming majority.

1. See maps of Mauritius (1) and of Indian Ocean Islands (2).

~~SECRET~~
NO FOREIGN DISSEM
CONTROLLED DISSEM

At present the UK guarantees markets for most of Mauritius' sugar,¹ and at prices usually well above world rates. It has come to the island's rescue, occasionally at great expense, when hurricanes attack the sugar crop. Whitehall has revealed no inclination to "forsake" its ward once British sovereignty is yielded, but many islanders ask with concern whether their interests can be sufficiently protected under an independent government responsive mainly to Hindu desires.

An Ethnic Patchwork

Throughout its history, which made Mauritius from time to time a pawn in "Great Power" politics,² the population became a curious mixture of diverse racial, religious, and cultural groups. Hindus, Moslems, Creoles, Chinese, and Europeans divide and subdivide into factions, often on the basis of language or economic and social status.³ Thus persons of Indian extraction, the "Indo-Mauritians" of official nomenclature, are divided into religious and linguistic sub-groups which are often mutually hostile: Moslems from the Calcutta regions, Tamil- and Telegu-speaking Hindus, and Hindi-speaking farmers and farm laborers. Combined, the three major Hindu linguistic groups form a bare majority of the island population, with the Hindi speakers by far the largest single homogenous community (42 per cent of the Mauritius population). Virtually all the Hindus are descended from indentured workers brought to Mauritius in the mid-19th Century, following the emancipation of the island's African, Malagasy, and mulatto slaves. The slaves and their descendants seldom inter-married with the Indian newcomers; rather, they become urbanized, relatively "Frenchified" and Roman Catholic. Their descendants, virtually all of mixed blood, represent one-fourth of the population and are known as "Creoles." Like many Moslems, Tamils, and Telegus, they tend to oppose independence under majority (i.e., Hindu) rule.

About 10,000 scions of 18th-Century French planter families control the island's sugar economy and set its social style; these "pure" Europeans likewise remain adamant against independence. Finally, there is an important overseas Chinese community of 24,000, many of them from families dating back almost a century on the island.

-
1. Approximately 536,000 long tons of a total production of 665,000 in 1965 were guaranteed.
 2. See Appendix, Strategic History of Mauritius: A Pawn in Great Power Gamesmanship.
 3. See Chart No. 1: Ethnic-Religious Communities in Mauritius.

~~SECRET~~
NO FOREIGN DISSEM
CONTROLLED DISSEM

~~SECRET~~
 NO FOREIGN DISSEM
 CONTROLLED DISSEM

- 3 -

Inter-communal Violence

Under the tensions of a steadily approaching independence, communal rivalries and political alignment are coinciding more closely. Rioting and violence, particularly between Creoles and Hindus, have increased markedly since 1961 and were especially intense in late 1963, when thousands of Creoles demonstrated at the opening of Parliament against their party's exclusion from the government. Since then, new Hindu organizations have given the majority an activist organization through which to challenge the Creole forces. As both sides perfected their techniques of mass action, old-style political demonstrations and petty electoral harassment gave way to terrorism, labor violence, and pitched brawls. Teams of Creoles have broken up politically-oriented Hindu prayer-meetings; Hindu boycotts, vandalism, and arson have victimized Moslem and Chinese shopkeepers; these incidents increased during the Indian-Pakistani and Sino-Indian conflicts.

Four weeks of such conflict, breaking out after the visit of British Colonial Secretary Anthony Greenwood to Mauritius on April 8, 1965, cost at least three lives and threatened general security. On May 14, after police proved unable to enforce a ban on public meetings, the Governor, Sir John Shaw Rennie, was obliged to proclaim a state of emergency and to appeal for a scheduled deployment of Coldstream Guards from Aden to Mauritius to take place immediately. Racial tensions appear to have subsided somewhat since then, although troops remain on the island and the anniversary of last year's riots as well as an electoral campaign in July and August 1966 will increase the possibility of further violence.

II. POLITICS AND INDEPENDENCE

Self-Determination on the Indo-Mauritian Course

A series of constitutional conferences in London and gradual transfers of authority at home have guided Mauritius since 1961 to the verge of independence. The forthcoming general elections follow the recommendations of an electoral commission sent to the island to implement Colonial Office consultations in September 1965 with the major political parties. If, as anticipated in the September accords, the pro-independence forces win these elections, Mauritius will obtain full sovereignty by the end of 1966. It will have a Governor-General appointed by the Crown, a defense treaty with Britain, and a place in the Commonwealth.

~~SECRET~~
 NO FOREIGN DISSEM
 CONTROLLED DISSEM

CONTROLLED DISSEM

- 4 -

Independence on an appropriately prompt timetable has been the announced goal of both Tory and Labor governments in Great Britain since 1961. This objective was dictated largely by a distaste for quelling nationalist movements with force, the desire for a good international image -- especially among other members of the Commonwealth -- and the need to minimize financial drains. Furthermore, the island has never been a center of genuine British "colonization" and numbers only a handful of Englishmen among its residents. Culturally in the French orbit for two and one-half centuries,¹ the bulk of its population now looks toward India. Thus the UK has been inclined to divest itself of this small fleck of land with its manifold economic and social problems. Whitehall's determination to minimize its political vulnerability in the "third world" is particularly clear in the Indian Ocean region and is closely associated with a British desire to disengage from "East of Suez." London regards its plans as consistent with the joint US-UK planning for the security of the vast area between Southeast Asia, the East African littoral, and the Red Sea.²

Independence was first formally advocated in 1961 by the Mauritius Labor Party (MLP), dominant force in island politics, and its then new ally, the Moslem Committee of Action (MCA).³ Together the two parties have been able to command large-scale support in the colony's Indian population, and their electoral alliance furnished a legislative majority in the election of 1963. Prior to 1961, the MLP, which was founded in 1947 by Creoles, depended also on full backing from the Hindus, who became enfranchised in 1948 with the removal of high income voting requirements that previously had left political control to the economically dominant Europeans. Creole support and, more recently, both Hindu solidarity and the Hindu-Moslem entente have suffered considerable erosion. Nevertheless, the MLP's bellwether, Prime Minister Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, an upper-caste Hindu physician and one time trade union leader, has been Mauritius's principal statesman since the end of World War II. Enjoying excellent rapport with the British Colonial Office, Dr. Ramgoolam was knighted in 1964, the only politician in Mauritius to be so dignified.

MLP Loses Some Indian Support

Under Ramgoolam the MLP has sought to organize the broadest feasible consensus for independence, often at the cost of political compromises, electoral deals, and the dilution of a nominally socialist

1. See Appendix.

2. See RM-RAF-39, Political Climate in Islands of the Western Indian Ocean: Implications for Western Strategy, August 16, 1965, SECRET/NO FOREIGN DISSEM/CONTROLLED DISSEM.

3. For the purpose of this paper no attempt is made to give a full account of the intricacies of Mauritian political parties. For a compressed presentation see appended Chart No. 2: Political Parties in Mauritius.

SECRET

NO FOREIGN DISSEM
CONTROLLED DISSEM

~~SECRET~~
NO FOREIGN DISSEM
CONTROLLED DISSEM

- 5 -

platform. It has tended to rely heavily on the labor unions for its contacts with the people and has thereby become somewhat remote. Its avoidance of clear-cut socio-economic programs, combined with its being identified persistently as "the Hindu's party," has led to a gradual breaking up of the large-scale support it had in 1961 from the Indian community and has jeopardized its hold over the electorate. Ethnic, religious, and ideological factions have sprung up within the Indian groups, differing with the MLP (and among themselves) over the pace and conditions for self-determination and, in particular, over issues of social change and economic reform. This process was already underway at the time of the last general elections in 1963, when the MLP lost its absolute majority of the 40 elective seats in the Legislature, dropping from 23 to 19.

Certain representatives of the Hindu laboring groups, more concerned with social issues than with the technicalities of constitutional advance, have posed increasingly strong challenges to upper-caste Hindu leadership of the MLP. Represented primarily by the radical low-caste Independent Forward Bloc (IFB) and more recently by the activist All-Mauritian Hindu Congress (AMHC), these xenophobic elements joined forces in October 1965 under the title of the Independence Party. The new formation immediately issued an appeal to the MLP and MCA to form a monolithic Indo-Mauritian bloc. The older parties have thus far refused, however; MCA Moslems fear Hindu chauvinism as much as any other variety, and moderate MLP Hindus wish at all events to avoid identification with the radicals.

Advances scored by the Independent Forward Bloc in the 1963 elections furnished it with eight seats in the present 52-member Legislative Assembly, compared to the MLP's 25 seats and the MCA's five.¹ In addition, the IFB obtained three cabinet portfolios, (now held in the name of the Independence Party), compared to eight for the MLP and two for the MCA. While supporting the Ramgoolam MLP independence platform, the new, more radical combination will seek to transcend it in the forthcoming election. It will hope to exploit communal feeling, and to end MLP-MCA control, by pledges of social and economic reforms for the masses of have-not Hindu field hands.

Moslem Uneasiness at Alliance with MLP

As Hindu support for Ramgoolam's MLP is being cut from the left, the more prosperous Moslem community has had strong second thoughts over the implications of its alliance with the largely Hindu MLP. While assuring Moslems parliamentary representation and a number of cabinet portfolios in successive Rangoolam governments, the alliance between the MLP and the Moslem Committee of Action has not fully satisfied Moslem demands for minority community safeguards in an independent Mauritius.

1. Of the eight seats won by the IFB-AMHC Independence Party, seven were elective, one nominative; by the MLP, 19 elective, six nominative; and by

CONTROLLED DISSEM

- 6 -

The September 1965 agreement with Great Britain envisages that after independence there will be reserved seats for the minority communities, a civil rights referee ("ombudsman"), a non-Mauritian Governor-General, and a treaty undertaking by the UK to help maintain law and order. The agreement does not, however, provide certain safeguards sought by Moslem leaders. Among these are communal voting, a form of proportional representation (since the Moslems are a minority in each constituency), and a permanent British military presence on Mauritius. Since returning from London, MCA chiefs Abdul Razack Mohamed and A. H. Osman (Minister of Housing and Attorney General, respectively) have been hard put to defend a rising tide of Moslem dissent against their acceptance of the constitutional compromise and their continued collaboration with the MLP. Splinter groups, in evidence for years, have been strengthened at the expense of the MCA, and reports of Pakistani encouragement of dissenters have multiplied, particularly after the 1965 Kashmir and Rann of Kutch conflicts.

PMSD and the Counter-Independence Movement

While dissenting elements have tended to weaken the MLP's hold over local political institutions, neither the more radical Hindus nor the Moslems with vested interests have deflected Mauritius from its course toward independence. Genuine, categorical opposition to independence has emerged, however, from the aggregate of ethnic, social, and economic factions identified with the Parti Mauricien Social Démocrate (PMSD). Organized in 1955 by defectors from the MLP who were apprehensive over the trend toward party domination by Hindus, the Parti Mauricien (as it was then called) has an essentially European-Creole core. Nevertheless, it has managed to attract disaffected members of the Moslem community, a majority of the Chinese commercial population, and many Tamil- and Telegu-speaking Hindus. Largely but not entirely of middle-class, or artisan, urban background, the PMSD membership is unified, despite ethnic-religious or ideological differences, by widespread minority apprehensions over Hindu aspirations. The party scored significant gains in the 1963 elections, holds 11 seats in the Assembly (eight elective and five nominative) and had three portfolios in a coalition Ramgoolam cabinet from March 1964 to November 1965.

The PMSD has endeavored for a decade to combat independence by every means at its disposal. It has warned Whitehall of the ominous implications of majority rule in a strategically located, microscopic state beset by overpopulation, unemployment, and a one-crop economy. PMSD's spokesmen and journalists have appealed also to Paris, Washington, and other capitals for economic aid and moral support against what they regard as British intentions to throw Mauritius to the Hindus. Since

~~SECRET~~NO FOREIGN DISSEM
CONTROLLED DISSEM

~~SECRET~~
NO FOREIGN DISSEM
CONTROLLED DISSEM

- 7 -

adding the "social democratic" appendage to the original Parti Mauricien title, the PMSD has beaten the MLP to international socialist conclaves where its land-owning whites and professional-class Creoles plead the case against independence.

The PMSD retains the financial, educational, and organizational advantages afforded by the Europeans (under Jules Koenig, party parliamentary leader), while exerting a dynamic, though somewhat capricious, mass appeal through the pyrotechnics of its 37 year-old deputy leader Gaetan Duval, darling of Creole politics. Dubbed "King Creole" by a maladroit MLP opponent in 1963, Duval has retained the sobriquet proudly ever since. Affecting open-necked silk shirts and paratroop boots, Duval's style runs to demagogic histrionics, battle-cries from sport-cars, irreverent beard-pulling, and simple street-brawling. Thus, in addition to its patrician, parliamentary, and self-professed socialistic protagonists, the party has an activist wing of great vitality to supply different forms of suasion when its objectives so require.

PMSD's Failures in Cabinet and London

Minority opposition to independence seemed to have been halted in March 1964. At that time Ramgoolam succeeded (with Governor Rennie's active help) in exacting PMSD acceptance, in principle, of the idea of independence, in exchange for three cabinet portfolios. After the formation of this multi-party government, Ramgoolam could ostensibly lay claim to a consensus in favor of full sovereignty for the island; all was set for the final constitutional conference. PMSD's reconciliation proved only a tactical move, however, as demonstrated by its subsequent shifting position on independence, by the Hindu-Creole riots in 1965 over independence, and by the intransigence of PMSD delegates at the London conference in September.

Despite the terms under which the PMSD had joined the government, Koenig, Duval, and their associates exploited from the outset their parliamentary and ministerial vantage points to advocate some form of continuing British authority in Mauritius as an alternative to independence. These proposed "solutions" ranged from perpetuation of the colonial status quo (permitting internal self-government minus the security apparatus), to loose association with or integration into the UK -- on the alternative models of Northern Ireland with the UK, of Puerto Rico with the US, or of nearby Reunion island, an overseas Département with France.

PMSD proposals for constitutional accommodations toward these objectives fell on deaf ears at the London meeting, however, and its demands for a plebiscite or referendum on the independence question were likewise rejected. MLP, MCA, and IFB alike supported independence

~~SECRET~~
NO FOREIGN DISSEM

~~NO FOREIGN DISSEM~~
CONTROLLED DISSEM

- 8 -

within the Commonwealth, with special guarantees to minorities and continuing strong ties with Britain. PMSD delegates boycotted the conference's final session and refused to sign the communique. Koenig, Duval, and the third PMSD minister (Raymond Devienne) resigned from the government on November 12, vowing to campaign against independence at election time.

By the time the PMSD leaders had decided to fight the London agreements from outside the government, however, a new issue had arisen which made it easier for them to oppose the London accords indirectly -- that is, without seeming to advocate stifling Mauritian self-determination. This opportunity came with the announcement on November 11 of British and American intentions to reserve certain small islands north of Mauritius for future defense purposes.

~~SECRET~~

NO FOREIGN DISSEM
CONTROLLED DISSEM

~~SECRET~~
NO FOREIGN DISSEM
CONTROLLED DISSEM

- 9 -

III. POLITICS AND THE ISSUE OF WESTERN BASES

Negotiations on the Chagos

With the consent of the Ramgoolam government, the UK had decided to retain control over the Chagos Archipelago, hitherto a virtually uninhabited administrative dependency of Mauritius. The British planned to combine these islands, located midway between Mauritius and India, with a group the UK was separating from the British colony of the Seychelles in order to form a new political entity, the British Indian Ocean Territory. One of the Chagos's constituent atolls, Diego Garcia, was thereupon to be developed as a refueling and technical support facility for the US-UK Indian Ocean task force. News of these intentions, often distorted but sometimes presented in meticulous detail, had been seeping into the local and international press since 1964, stimulating strong reactions from Mauritian nationalists.

Most Indo-Mauritian leaders seemed to have adapted their thinking to accept the Chagos transfer, and the island government had indeed substantially lowered the price for its consent. Throughout 1964 and early 1965, the MLP's left wing fulminated against the UK's Cold War intentions, while super-patriots denounced designs to amputate portions of the island patrimony, however remote and useless. In the autumn of 1965, however, Ramgoolam and his ministers (including the IFB representatives) attempted to complete the bargaining by demanding: (1) the retention of a long-term lease rather than entire loss of the Archipelago, (2) a massive US sugar quota which would assure disposal of the half of Mauritius's annual crop not covered in the highest-price category of guaranteed British purchases, and (3) Anglo-American pledges of long-term economic assistance. These conditions were unacceptable to the UK, but proved negotiable.

Early in November, six weeks after the accords of independence had been announced, Mauritian agreement to the Chagos transfer was sealed on payment of a £3 million lump-sum compensation and on condition (1) that sovereignty revert to Mauritius once the facilities were no longer required by Britain, and (2) that Mauritius retain title to all oil and mineral rights on the Archipelago.

PMSA Seizes on the Chagos Transfer

Disappointed over its failure to convince the UK that Western strategy required a prolonged sovereign presence in Mauritius itself, the PMSD became an opponent of that very presence in the Chagos. The resignation of the three PMSD ministers from the government was dated two days after the

~~SECRET~~
NO FOREIGN DISSEM
CONTROLLED DISSEM

~~SECRET~~
 NO FOREIGN DISSEM
 CONTROLLED DISSEM

- 10 -

announcement of the negotiated transfer. While hewing essentially to the argument that "Mauritius was robbed," the PMSD (or, at least, the irrepressible Duval) was tempted to exploit the issue beyond this line; Duval, a Creole, ironically congratulated India on its position against the Indo-Mauritian "deal" with Britain. On November 26 he stated publicly that the PMSD had changed its mind over the Chagos matter when it became clear that Diego Garcia was to become a "nuclear base," hence a threat to peace, rather than a safeguard against communist expansionism.

Duval's campaign has gathered considerable momentum. On December 5 he addressed a rally attended by approximately 60,000 Mauritians, denouncing the "sell-out" and appealing to all communities for a repudiation of the island's unscrupulous leaders and their deceitful independence program. Although PMSD claims of new-found support from Hindus were probably exaggerated (only the Tamil and Telegu sub-groups ever supported the party in any significant numbers), its vigorous exploitation of an issue involving patriotism and "Cold War perils" apparently aroused considerable concern among several other parties.

The PMSD's strategy is designed to capture anti-Western sentiment among all communities by any means available and to win the next elections against what the party hopes will be a divided Indo-Mauritian electorate: MLP moderates versus IFB-AMHC; social radicals versus the fence-sitting MCA Moslems. This accomplished, Duval and Koenig would sue in London for retraction of the independence pledge and would probably wish to re-negotiate the Chagos issue -- although on terms not necessarily unfavorable to Western strategic interests. These tactics, then, are tantamount to a last-ditch attempt against unfettered Indian majority rule, and only secondarily a gesture aimed at British defense policy. Nevertheless, whatever its principal motives, the essentially bourgeois and avowedly pro-Western PMSD has become an opponent of Mauritian acquiescence in Western strategic planning, and is endeavoring to marshal public opinion against it.

Position of the Pro-communist Factions

The Chagos issue was also a welcome target in Mauritius for communist and pro-communist elements, who are largely in the Indian community. They petitioned the UN against the "nuclearization" of their waters and accused the US of designs to fill the Indian Ocean with Polaris submarines. Most of their organizations in the past have been either fly-by-night affairs that sprang into life at election time, labor unions affiliated with the

1. Official British estimate, 60,000; PMSD estimates were about 200,000.

~~SECRET~~
 NO FOREIGN DISSEM
 CONTROLLED DISSEM

~~SECRET~~
 NO FOREIGN DISSEM
 CONTROLLED DISSEM

- 11 -

WFTU, or youth groups. Although the Communist Party of Mauritius has shown only spasmodic signs of activity since it was first formed in 1959, its secretary general, in a recent petition to the UN against the Chagos agreement, claimed that the party and its affiliated organizations had about 50,000 members.¹ Well-informed sources consider this figure highly exaggerated. Communist influence on labor is traceable mainly to two WFTU affiliates that represent only 15 per cent of organized labor.² An energetic youth organization that claims 8,000 members, disturbed at the few British grants available for higher education abroad, is primarily interested in obtaining scholarships to communist countries.

Other Parties May Use Chagos Issue

The PMSD and the pro-communist factions which belabor the Chagos issue are not the sole sources of potential challenge to Western defense planning. Mistrust of British and American intentions remains strong among the allied nationalists, neutralists, and radicals of the new IFB-AMHC independence party. These elements are becoming embarrassed and alarmed over the PMSD's exploitation of so obviously popular an issue as "Western bases." Although still collaborating in Ramgoolam's government, the new party will probably contest the MLP for the Hindu vote. Its campaign will emphasize Labor's alleged softness toward the island's sugar barons and non-Hindu bourgeoisie, but the radicals within the alliance will be strongly inclined to take their crack at the "base issue" as well. Moreover, if they should inherit power from the more moderate MLP, the IFB-AMHC leaders will be strongly tempted to develop an opportunistically neutralist foreign policy that could have serious implications for Western interests.

1. The petition included in this figure members of the Communist Party of Mauritius, the Mauritius Young Communist League, the Mauritius Women's Committee, the Mauritius Student's Association, "Government Urban Boards," the Agricultural and other Workers Union, and "other regional organizations."
2. Out of total labor union membership of about 46,000, some 6,700 belong to the two WFTU affiliates: The Mauritius Federation of Labor (6,000) and the Mauritius Federation of Trade Unions (700). The former comprises only the Agricultural and other Workers Union; the latter, only the Government and other Manual Workers Union.

~~SECRET~~
 NO FOREIGN DISSEM
 CONTROLLED DISSEM

NO FOREIGN DISSEM
CONTROLLED DISSEM

- 12 -

Political Value of Bases for an Independent Mauritius

25x1

IV. INTERNATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Communist Designs: Infiltration Without Over-Exposure

In anticipation of independence, the USSR, Communist China, and other outside powers have been gradually converging on Mauritius with a view to establishing a footing for future exploitation. Peking has worked discreetly through the prosperous but opportunistic Chinese community (which also has ties with Taiwan); it encourages visitors to Communist China, supports two of the four local Chinese-language newspapers as well as one Chinese school and a bookshop, and finances a youth organization. The UK's Special Police Branch has begun only recently to take seriously the prospect of Chinese subversion, although local and foreign observers had been referring to it for some time. Should the Chinese on the island run into difficulty after independence, Communist China could regard this as an invitation to expand its interest in Mauritius.

The Soviet Union has cultivated WFTU-affiliated union leaders, some of them with good access to MLP politicians, and it has offered financial and other support to a variety of political parties, youth groups, and other factions. Upwards of 50 students from Mauritius are now studying in the USSR, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany, and in a few years a high proportion of the island's academically trained personnel (particularly among the Hindus) will have studied in communist countries.

-
1. See appended map of Indian Ocean Islands.

~~SECRET~~
NO FOREIGN DISSEM

~~SECRET~~
NO FOREIGN DISSEM
CONTROLLED DISSEM

- 13 -

Soviet representatives on the UN Committee of Twenty-Four (on decolonization) have denounced the UK record in Mauritius. As early as April 1964 Soviet delegates called Afro-Asian attention to the fictitious US-UK "rocket bases" on the island, as well as to alleged US "monopoly" penetration of the sugar plantation and new tobacco factories. In May 1965 a Soviet-supported, communist-front spokesman (Teekaram Sibsurrun of the miniscule Peoples Progressive Party) told the Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organization meeting in Ghana that the UK was developing Mauritius into an extremely important "imperialist air base" and was holding back on independence in order to further its militaristic designs. After the November agreement on the Chagos was announced, Tass denounced the British for succumbing to the "US base disease" and "escalation sickness" and for violating Asian neutrality.

Poverty, unemployment (particularly among a host of half-educated school-leavers), social inequities, economic vulnerability, and the intense desire of Mauritians to discover the outside world, are all potential contributors to the growth of communist influence. Nevertheless, communists and their sympathizers in Mauritius have so far acted with some restraint, not wishing to give the British further grounds for retaining control. Electoral candidates running on communist tickets have obtained little or no support from the British Communist Party or world communist centers, and all have fared poorly at the polls. No communist power maintains a consulate on the island as yet, although Peking is said to claim ownership of property in the capital and its news agency has referred to discussions of "future relations" between a CPR representative and Dr. Ramgoolam at the Accra OAU summit meeting in October 1965. In general, Moscow and Peking appear to be playing for time, preparing for the future by infiltrating labor and youth movements and currying favor with the majority Hindu community.

UK Position. Whitehall has tended thus far to treat Hindu radicalism in Mauritius largely in terms of domestic security -- that is, as a particularly difficult factor in the turbulent racial confrontation -- rather than as a potential holder of power in an independent government and hence a future threat to overall Western interests. Given traditional British disinclination to interfere decisively in the local politics of autonomous but not yet independent colonies, the UK probably would have to be provoked severely before intervening directly to curb growing radical influence.

Assuming the defeat of the PMSD's anti-independence drive at the next election, and provided communal violence does not get out of hand, the UK will probably have little difficulty meeting the present independence timetable and thus satisfying the aspirations of the Hindu majority.

~~SECRET~~
NO FOREIGN DISSEM
CONTROLLED DISSEM

CONTROLLED DISSEM

- 14 -

Moslems will tend to try to assure themselves of the strongest possible parliamentary and judicial safeguards, regardless of their past electoral alignments. Much of the white population will probably try to emigrate (to places like South Africa, France, Australia, and Canada), taking their professional skills and as much of their capital as possible. A few Creoles and Chinese will also try to seek their fortunes elsewhere, although their prospects for emigration are smaller.

Satisfying the majority and mollifying minorities in the final constitutional arrangements will probably not resolve all issues, however. Under the terms of the envisaged defense treaty with the Mauritian government, the latter may call on British forces after independence to ensure internal security. Whitehall may have to reckon on the consequences of this provision's being invoked in order to help put down further outbreaks of inter-communal violence. The UK will hope that local disorders can be insulated from the more vital context of regional stability and Western security. The UK will also expect independent Mauritius governments to respect the November 1965 agreement and to regard the £3 million grant as sufficient compensation for use of the atolls. In the light of Mauritius' topsy-turvy political history, however, the British cannot depend indefinitely on the good faith of Mauritius' future rulers, particularly if they should stand ideologically to the left of Ramgoolam.

Interests of Other States. Several other countries are primarily concerned with the implications of the situation in Mauritius for their own regional interests. India and Pakistan have stakes in the island, if only by virtue of their patronage over rival factions of the Indo-Mauritian community. France may have similar interests with regard to the Franco-Mauritians and the French-speaking Creoles of the island; Paris would also have its eye on the risks of contagious violence for French holdings, some of them strategically important, in nearby Reunion, Madagascar, and the Comoro Islands, as well as, perhaps, French Somaliland. The Malagasy Republic and certain African nations are already concerned over opportunities for Chinese or other communist exploitation of Mauritian difficulties, while the Republic of South Africa and Portugal probably have similar apprehensions. Pretoria would also want to protect its substantial export markets in Mauritius and to retain South African Airway's privilege of using the island for landing and refueling on its jealously preserved Australian route.

25x1

SECRET
NO FOREIGN DISSEM
CONTROLLED DISSEM

con't to next page

~~SECRET~~
NO FOREIGN DISSEM
CONTROLLED DISSEM

- 15 -

25x1

The politicians and journalists in Mauritius have shown a high degree of sensitivity to indications of American interest in their island -- or of signs of apathy on our part. A small PL-480 milk-distribution program under UNICEF auspices is the only sustained evidence of US presence, aside from occasional gifts of USIS literature, consular visits from Tananarive, and one or two private university scholarships held by (white) Mauritians. Proposals for a resident consulate and USIS office, and for an expanded PL-480 program, are under consideration, but Mauritian expectations of American generosity already transcend the realm of the practicable -- in terms of sugar exports above the present statutory 15,000-ton quota, technical and financial aid, and immigration possibilities (Mauritian leaders persist in ignoring explanations of the new US legislation under which their compatriots will be competing globally, and at a disadvantage, for immigration numbers after independence).

Local educational and training facilities are woefully inadequate for both high-level and low-level manpower needs, and an independent government will seek capital for the financing of its agricultural and industrial diversification programs. Anticipating US readiness to pay well for any concessions offered our strategic interests, Mauritians will be inclined to exaggerate, as they already do, the extent of US involvement in the development of regional defense facilities, preferring not to believe that we are to remain a beneficiary of what are primarily British undertakings, at least on the Chagos group and in Mauritius itself.

~~SECRET~~
NO FOREIGN DISSEM
CONTROLLED DISSEM

UNCLASSIFIED

- 16 -

Chart 1. Ethnic-Religious Communities in Mauritius

Group	Number (Est. 1964)	Percent	Literacy ¹	Primary Economic Role	Political Affiliation ²	Position on Independence
Indus - Total	373,000	51.0	Low	Agricultural laborers, some small farmers, civil servants	Most Hindi-speaking belong to MLP or if more radical, lower caste, to IFB/AMH. Tamils belong to TUP.	Pro; except for some Tamils in TUP
By language						
Hindi	308,000	42.2				
Tamil	48,000	6.5				
Telegu	17,000	2.3				
Creoles ³	206,000	28.1	High	Skilled trades, white- collar, professional	PMSD. Very few remain in MLP	Anti; prefer association with U
Malay	120,000	16.2	High	Tradesmen, urban employees	MCA. Some PMSD and splinter factions	Divided; majority pro but with communal guarantee
Chinese	24,000	3.3	Total	Shop-keepers, clerks	PMSD. Some communist	Largely anti (even many communists)
Europeans	10,000	1.4	Total	Land-owners, industrialists, professionals	PMSD	Anti; prefer <u>statu quo</u>
Total Population	733,000					

Conversation among virtually all Mauritians is conducted in Creole, a kind of pidgin French, with accretions of Malagasy, Swahili, and Indian-dialects. All literate Mauritians also speak French, and educated persons, English, but few are at home in that (official) language. Most grammar schools teach two and even three languages simultaneously. As few Mauritians go on to secondary school, the majority can read and write no language well.

2. For political party names, see Chart No. 2.

3. Mixed origins, seldom fully negroid, descendants of African and Malagasy slaves, European, and other ethnic groups. Creoles today tend to be urban dwellers, many of them French in custom and culture.

UNCLASSIFIED

No Objection To Declassification in Part 2010/08/30 : NLJ-034R-14-5-1-4

No Objection To Declassification in Part 2010/08/30 : NLJ-034R-14-5-1-4

Chart 2. Political Parties in Mauritius

Name	Popular Vote 1963 ¹		Elective Seats	Nomi- native Seats	Cabinet Posts	Principal Source of Support	Position of Inde- pendence	Domestic Platform	International Orientation
	Number	Percent							
Mauritius Labor Party (MLP)	80,110	42.3	19	6	8 ²	Moderate part of Hindu community	Pro-	Moderate (trade union) socialist	Commonwealth, neutralist (Indian exam
Moslem Committee of Action (MCA) ³	13,834	7.1	4	1	2	Majority of Moslems (but relies on MLP Hindu votes)	Pro; with minority assurances	Protective for Moslem interests	Neutralist
<u>Parti Mauricien</u> <u>Social Démocrate</u> (PMSD)	37,066	19.5	8	3	0 ⁴	European, Creole, Chinese, some Moslem and Tamil minorities	Anti; favors association with UK	Conserva- tive	Pro-West, I opposes de facilities
Independence Party (IFB/AMHC) ⁵	30,980	16.0	7	1	3	Low-caste Hindus	Pro-	Radical reformist	Neutralist
Communist Party and affiliates ⁶	neg.	neg.	0	0	0	Hindus and Chinese	Pro-(some Chinese anti-)	Marxist	Both Pekin and Mosco
Mauritius Peoples Progressive Party (MPPP)	Did not run as party				0	Small number of Indian radicals	Pro-	Marxist	Anti-West (affiliated with AAPSO
Non-Partisan Candidates	3,980	2.4	2	1	1				
Minor Parties ⁷	27,054	13.5	0	0	0				

UNCLASSIFIED

- 18 -

Footnotes to Chart 2.

1. Parliamentary elections held October 21, 1963, by universal suffrage. Total valid vote: 193,053, filling 40 elective seats in Legislative Council (name subsequently changed to Legislative Assembly) by single-member constituencies. The Assembly also has 12 nominated members.
2. Includes Prime Minister.
3. MLP and MCA ran in electoral alliance, supporting one another's candidates. Pro-MLP Hindu votes assured election of Moslem candidates in single-member constituencies, where Moslems are in minority.
4. PMSD held three ministerial portfolios from March 1964 to November 1965: Housing (Duval), Attorney General (Koenig), and Economic Development (Devienne); all three resigned from cabinet on November 12, 1965.
5. Independence Party, formed October 25, 1965, by alliance of Independent Forward Bloc (IFB) and All Mauritius Hindu Congress (AMHC). Only IFB had been formed in time to run in 1963 elections; hence seats and cabinet posts listed are originally IFB, now occupied in name of Independence Party.
6. Aside from Mauritius Communist Party, this category includes youth/^{and} women's/^{groups} and two trade union affiliates as well as pro-communist faction in Chinese community.
7. Minor parties in October 1963 election included: Parti Syndicaliste-Travailleiste (PST), Parti Démocrate Travailleiste des Travailleurs (PDTT), Moslem United Party, Moslem Democratic League, Parti Liberal (TUP), Parti Syndicaliste. Tamil United Party/^(TUP) pledged support in 1963 elections to PMSD. PDTT held two seats, PST one, in Legislative Council from 1961 to 1963.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

- 19 -

APPENDIXSTRATEGIC HISTORY OF MAURITIUS: A PAWN IN GREAT POWER GAMESMANSHIP

From the 1500's until 1639, Mauritius was used in common and owned by no one. Its legal status was somewhat like that of the moon or outer space today. Sailing ships -- Portuguese, Dutch, British, French and Arab -- sometimes put in at the largely populated island, breaking their voyages approximately midway between South Africa and India for reprovision and repairs. But it was barren of spice-bearing plants and situated too far east of the principal 16th century trade routes to be of interest as a colony in the early years of international Indian Ocean competition.

A. Game One: Preventive Colonization, 1638-1658

Eventually the system of free use and no sovereignty broke down. France, the UK, and the Netherlands suspected each other of preparing to occupy Mauritius and colonize it; each prepared a pre-emptive expedition to take the island. The Dutch won the race and named the island after Prince Maurice of Orange. They had established a token settlement by 1638, when the British forces, and then the French, arrived offshore. The British commander proposed that the French join him in throwing out the Dutch. The French commander demurred, however, and sailed off alone to annex in the name of France a substitute island, barren Rodrigues, several hundred miles to the east.

Score: The Netherlands won first prize; France took a symbolic consolation prize; and Britain gained nothing.

After twenty years of unsuccessful, half-hearted efforts to colonize Mauritius with Dutch convicts and invalids from Java and with slaves from Madagascar, the Netherlands gave up. The hordes of rats and monkeys infesting the island are said to have caused the doom of the Dutch colony. In actual fact, Mauritius was being by-passed by historical and technological development -- a fate that was due to be repeated in the 19th century. Having developed principal interests in the "East Indies" centering around their stronghold of Batavia (Jakarta), the Dutch discovered that their improved sailing vessels made the journey between those territories and the Cape of Good Hope more auspiciously by holding to the lower latitudes (below the typhoon belt in which Mauritius is situated) and cutting due north to the Straits of Malacca on reaching the longitude of Sumatra. The tiny Cocos-Keeling island group situated on that longitude replaced Mauritius for a time as a contingency refueling and provisioning station.

UNCLASSIFIED

Consequently the Dutch pulled out in 1658, destroying their sugar plantations, buildings, and forts in order to deny them to the British or French. France and Britain, noting the Dutch experience, also lost interest, and Mauritius once more became a common international facility.

B. Tacit Agreement Not to play Games, 1658-1721

During the next 72 years, from 1658 until 1710, private Dutch farmers from South Africa attempted to establish settlements on Mauritius, but they finally gave up in utter discouragement, which was compounded towards the end of their experiment by constant harassment from pirates and looters based in the Republic of Libertalia,¹ on the northeastern coast of Madagascar. Libertalia's aggressiveness helped to deter any of the remote great powers from a new attempt at colonization, keeping Mauritius neutralized in terms of power politics until 1721.

C. Game Two: Franco-British Rivalry, 1721-1800

With the development of sharp and sustained rivalry between France and Britain for expanded spheres of influence in the Indian and North American sub-continent, Mauritius for the first time took on a potential positive value.

A school of thought developed in France held that because Britain had positioned itself better on the Indian land mass, France should redress the balance by securing a monopoly of island bases in the Indian Ocean. These bases could dominate the sea lanes and also provide logistic support to French salients in India. Mauritius, with two harbors and a convenient location near the shipping lanes, met French criteria. France landed an occupational force in 1721 with no resistance and re-baptized the island Isle de France.² The Compagnie des Indes administered the colony for commercial purposes, later ceding it to the crown in the interests of defense.

1. The "International Republic of Libertalia" emerged towards the end of the seventeenth century. Its capital was Diego Suarez in Madagascar, where France now operates a major naval base. Libertalia was a genuine, even visionary, republic organized by European expatriate soldiers of fortune, who abolished slavery fifty years before European countries did. The nation's economy was based largely on a single activity, capturing foreign ships and cargoes intruding in areas of the Indian Ocean over which Libertalia asserted control. Libertalia collapsed in the 1720's after naval defeats by superior British warships. At the invitation of France, some of the frustrated Libertalian elite emigrated to the island of Reunion, near Mauritius, which France had occupied in 1654. There they settled down and became relatively peaceful farmers.
2. The resident population, enumerated after a thorough census, was determined to be one person, a German living in Robinson-Crusoe style. None of the other whites and few, if any, of the slaves who had been left behind by the South African Dutch farmers in 1710 had survived.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

- 21 -

Beginning in 1735 under the energetic Governor Mahé de Labourdonnais, France provided an impressive infrastructure -- roads, hospitals, aqueducts, administration buildings, arsenals, fortifications, harbor facilities, and a shipbuilding industry, as well as a "little Versailles," with palace and formal gardens. It imported a labor force of African and Malagasy slaves and Bengali and Madras artisans to work the sugar cane fields, coconut groves, and spice plantations of the flourishing island.

When war broke out between Britain and France in 1744, the Mauritian base was ready. It sent a strike force to India which succeeded in relieving two separate British sieges of Pondicherry and also, in 1746, in capturing Madras, a key British strong point.¹ As it later lost ground in successive land battles on the Indian sub-continent, France shifted its use of Mauritius from a base for strike forces against British strongholds in India to a base for corsair raids on British shipping off East Africa, the Persian Gulf, India, and the East Indies.

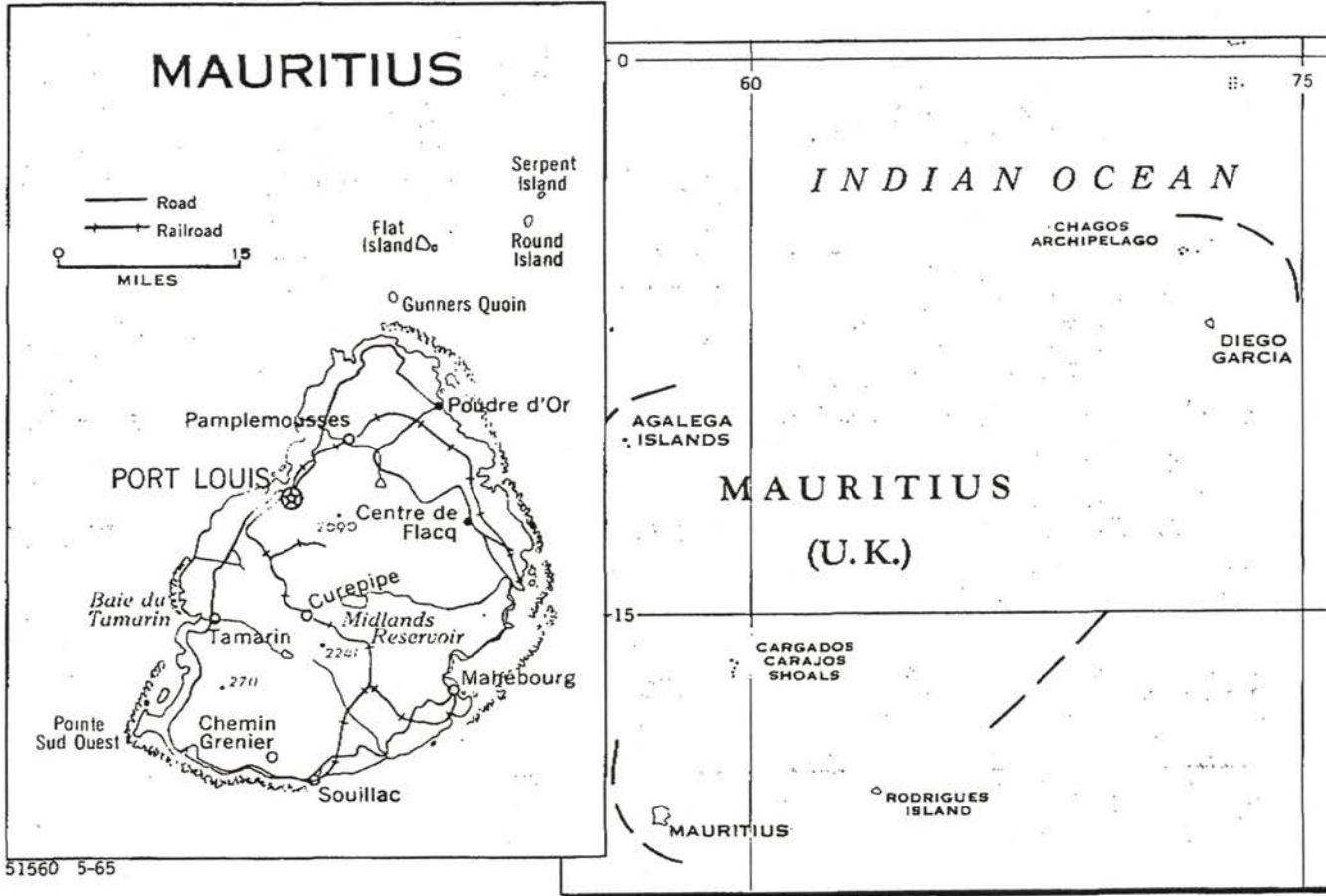
Eventually corsair and privateer activity intensified during the Napoleonic wars, provoking Britain to decisive action. In 1810 the Royal Navy invaded and captured the island after a fierce naval battle and siege. British sovereignty over Mauritius, the nearby Seychelles, and all their present dependencies was confirmed in the Treaty of Paris of 1814.² The British tolerated existing French-settler hegemony over the island's economic and cultural life, but they abolished slavery in 1838 and introduced substantial numbers of Hindus and Moslems from the Indian mainland to replace the emancipated Africans and mulattoes in Mauritius' sugar-cane fields and refineries.

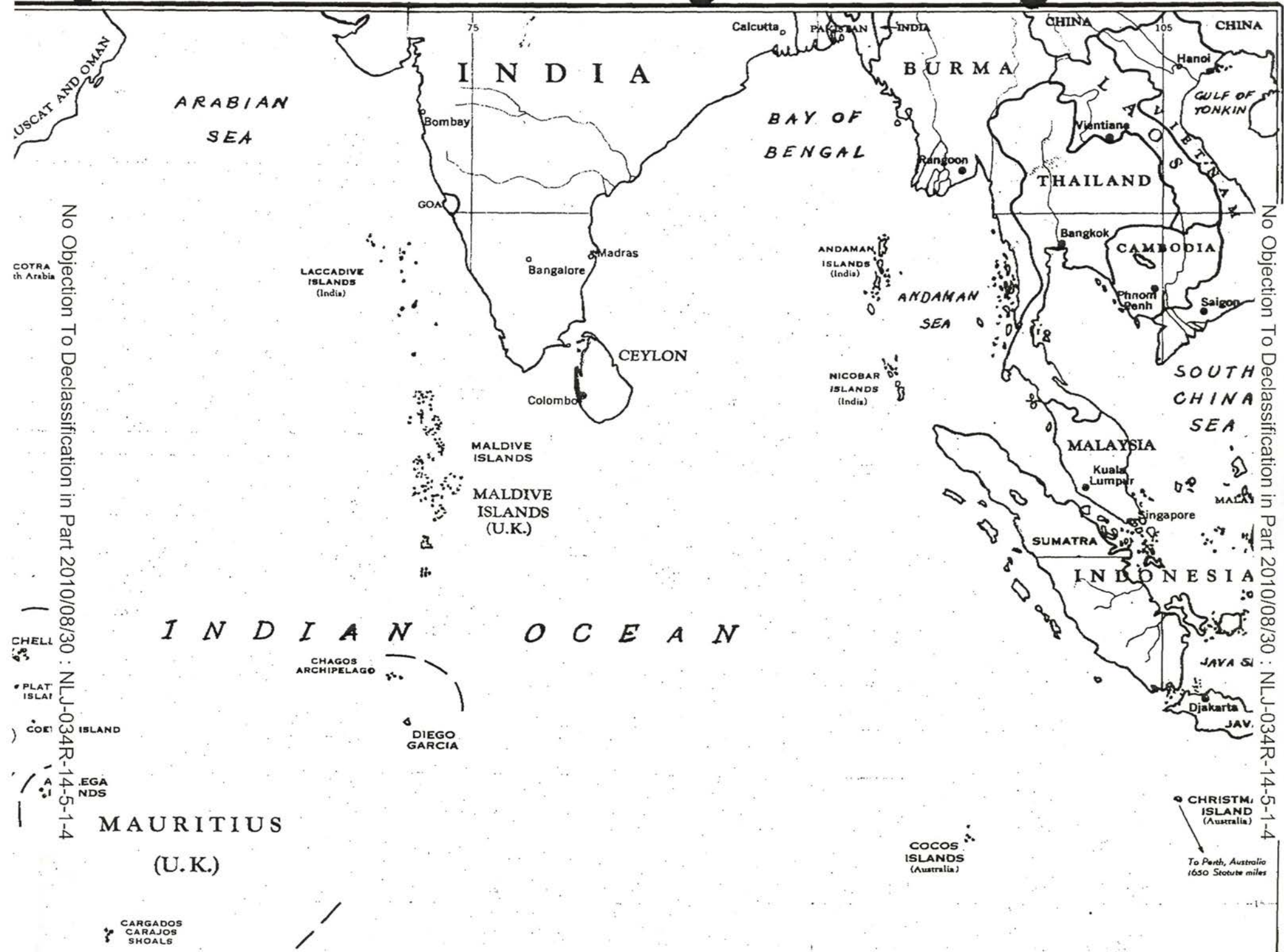
D. Strategic Unimportance, 1814-1950's

The Indian Ocean, under dominant British naval influence, became a zone of tranquility in the 19th century, and Mauritius lost special strategic importance. The US, however, stationed a consul in Mauritius in the mid-1800's to service the flourishing US merchant marine traffic to India and the Far East. In World War II Mauritius served as a base for the sustained British blockade of the nearby French island of Reunion, whose administration was loyal to the Vichy regime. The primary purpose of the blockade was to deny access to German and Japanese submarines.

After the war, dominant French cultural interests in the island led to the accreditation of a resident French Consul. The independence of India brought the establishment of an Indian High Commissioner to look after the interest of the large Indian population. West Germany also has a consul in Port-Louis.

1. Current Mauritian school texts proudly use the phrase, "the Mauritian conquest of Madras"; they also note, somewhat sadly, that the fruits of victory were lost in the peace settlement, when France handed back Madras to Britain in exchange for the town of Louisbourg, Nova Scotia, which Britain had captured from France.
2. In 1903 Britain made the Seychelles a separate Crown Colony, separating it administratively from Mauritius.





No Objection To Declassification in Part 2010/08/30 : NLJ-034R-14-5-1-4

No Objection To Declassification in Part 2010/08/30 : NLJ-034R-14-5-1-4