

Tough Times Never Last, But Tough People Do

Robert H. Schuller

The tough beginning of 2022

The very start of 2022 has proved to be a tough time, all right, at every level of life. At international level, the West and the East are confronting each other in a stand-off that could disturb world peace. On the economic front, commodity prices are rising as never before in every country of the world causing local unrest, which politicians have to face. The pandemic is still raging decimating countries of their population. Natural disasters have been causing havoc in many parts of the world leaving behind deaths and desolation. In parts of the world men are still mired in traditions and bigotry that encourage them to believe that women should only be kept for pleasure and to reproduce other creatures like themselves.

It's sad for an island like Madagascar to be so severely hit twice within a month by successive cyclones, a country whose population has already been experiencing serious food shortage. During that first month of 2022 the world grieved for the little Moroccan boy who fell in a narrow 33-metre deep well and who survived for five days. When finally rescued on the fifth day he was found dead. We can picture the atrocious situation of that boy down there in

that deep narrow dried pit all alone, day and night, fearful without any food and water. This was as tough as it could get.

We, too, at MOG (Mauritian Overseas Gazette) have had our fair share of difficulties during that first month of 2022. We faced lots of technical problems which made it difficult for us to produce an issue in January. We are now forced to adapt to the 'normal' to get back on track. We apologise to our contributors for failing to publish articles received.

Our first article in this issue is a contribution from Eliézer François on the abolition of slavery, which was commemorated in Mauritius on February 1. A similar article was previously submitted to Le Mauricien and as the author says all the facts are still relevant as they were a few years before. Mr François still believes that the Church should appeal for Easter celebration to be a public holiday in Mauritius.

P.C.

Commémoration: Cet article fut publié dans Le Mauricien quelques années de cela. L'auteur, Eliézer François, nous l'a envoyé disant que le contenu est toujours pertinent, surtout la suggestion que la fête de Pâques soit proclamée jour férié.

L'Abolition De L'Esclavage



Eliézer François

Dans le cadre de la célébration du 187e anniversaire de l'Abolition de l'Esclavage à Maurice, j'aimerais rappeler à tous les Créoles Mauriciens, Rodriguais et Agaléens, tous des descendants d'esclaves, le combat que le Mouvement Authentique Mauricien (MAM), principalement José Jacquet (Major), Jacques Tsang Mang Kin et moi-même, Eliézer François avons mené pendant plus de 20 ans, en leur faveur. Les principaux thèmes de ce combat sont, entre autres : - La Santé, le Travail, le Logement, l'Éducation, la proclamation du 1er février jour férié pour célébrer l'abolition de l'esclavage à Maurice, un jour



L'ironie: Qui tient la hache?
Qui tient le fusil?

férié pour la fête de Pâques et une compensation à tous les descendants d'esclaves. Bref, une Égalité des Chances pour tous les Créoles de Maurice, Rodrigues et Agaléga.

Aussi, c'est avec un intérêt particulier que j'ai lu certaines déclarations qui ont été publiées dans la presse locale lors de la célébration du 187e anniversaire de l'abolition de l'esclavage à Maurice. Je me permettrais de les citer à l'intention de tous les descendants

d'esclaves, afin qu'ils puissent les comparer avec quelques extraits des revendications du Mouvement Authentique Mauricien (MAM).

Citations : -

(1) « SAJ décrète le 1er février jour férié. C'est en 2001 que le 1er février est décrété comme un jour férié pour commémorer l'Abolition de l'Esclavage survenue en 1835. »

(2) « Compensation aux descendants d'esclaves. Mon gouvernement compte souscrire à toute décision internationale en vue d'offrir une compensation aux descendants d'esclaves, disait SAJ. »

(3) « Lors de la messe 1er février 2001, Mgr Maurice Piat a présenté des excuses de l'Église, qui n'a pas combattu, en son temps, l'esclavage à l'île Maurice. Il a estimé qu'elle avait commis un péché d'omission pour n'être pas monté au créneau et se



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mettre à la pointe du combat.

Toujours au cours de cette célébration, le prélat a déclaré, à mots couverts, que l'Église Catholique avait été absente dans la lutte qui a abouti à l'interdiction du travail forcé. L'Église a-t-il souligné, veut demander pardon 'à Dieu et à nos frères et sœurs qui en ont souffert.' »

Extraits des Revendications du MAM : -

(a) Le dimanche Quasimodo de l'an 2000, les Verts Fraternelles et le MAM avaient organisé un grand rassemblement d'environ 50,000 Créoles à Mont Choisy pour réclamer: un jour de congé public, le 1er février, pour fêter l'abolition de l'esclavage; un jour de congé public, lundi Pâques, pour fêter la résurrection du Christ qui représente la plus grande fête du calendrier chrétien, ainsi qu'une compensation pour les descendants d'esclaves.

Lors de ce grand rassemblement, le MAM avait proposé, entre autres, dans un premier temps, une action de revendication et de réparation, à travers l'ONU, pour que les pays qui avaient profité de la Traite des nègres tels: La Grande Bretagne. La France. la Hol-



lande, le Portugal, l'Espagne et certains Pays Arabes y souscrivent financièrement. J'avais aussi déclaré que cette action auprès de l'ONU devrait être soutenue par le gouvernement mauricien, le secteur privé, les propriétés sucrières et les banques à Maurice.

Il n'avait jamais été question, que c'était le gouvernement mauricien ou le secteur privé, qui devrait payer la compensation. Il n'avait jamais été question que les descendants d'esclaves eussent à déboursier Rs.500/ par personne pour retracer leur généalogie « Ban Racines Nou Ancêtres ». Il n'avait jamais été question, non plus, d'organiser des manifestations devant certaines banques ou certains bureaux à Port Louis, ni même de proférer des menaces contre une section de la population mauricienne, qu'elle soit blanche, rousse, noire, jaune ou verte « Zot fin kokin boukou larzan, e Zot pou bizin rande. » Notre action devait être menée, non sur une base de dénonciation et de conflit mais plutôt sur la concertation et la réconciliation.

La Grande Trahison

L'Abolition De L'Esclavage (Cont)

Le Morne:
Witness of
great human
tragedy, A
symbol of
despair



Le Morne mountain is a symbol of the dark days of slavery in Mauritius. If this mountain could speak it would tell of the great human tragedies which it witnessed during the slavery era in Mauritius from 1639 to 1835. Runaway slaves from the sugarcane plantation sought refuge on Le Morne. They were hounded and brought back or killed. Some preferred to throw themselves from the top into the void than to surrender. The irony was that it was other slaves with the guns who did the chasing. The white masters did not themselves dare to venture into the forest to chase the escaped slaves.

Le Morne mountain is a UNESCO Cultural Heritage Site and is described as "a symbol of the slaves' fight for freedom, their suffering, and their sacrifice, all of which have relevance to the countries from which the slaves came - the African mainland, Madagascar, India, and South-east Asia."

Malgré le soutien populaire de la communauté créole aux Verts Fraternelles et au MAM en ce dimanche Quasimodo 2000, Sylvio Michel joua un rôle qui nous fit penser à Judas Iscariot. Il alla négocier une alliance avec Jugnauth et Bérenger, derrière le dos du MAM. Ainsi, il obtint deux investitures, pour lui et Armance, pour les élections générales de 2000 et il devint Ministre après ces mêmes élections. Au lieu de profiter de son statut de Ministre et membre du Cabinet Ministériel pour faire avancer le dossier des descendants d'esclaves, il les mena tous à l'abattoir. Je m'explique. Le député Verts Fraternelles, Armance, présenta une motion réclamant une compensation pour les descendants d'esclaves. Très bien ! Au lieu de soutenir Armance et d'insister pour que la motion soit votée, Sylvio Michel naïvement accepta un amendement à l'effet que les mots « travailleurs engagés » soient ajoutés à la motion d'Armance. Quel dommage ! Sylvio ne comprit pas qu'il existe un monde de différence entre 'Esclaves' et 'Travailleurs Engagés,' quoique ces derniers aient eux aussi connu des périodes très difficiles. Pour lui l'Esclavage et l'Engagisme avaient la même signification. Et, ce fut un coup mortel que Sylvio Michel porta aux revendications légitimes des descendants d'esclaves pour une compensation. Il fit montre d'un manque de perspicacité à comprendre le piège que Paul Bérenger lui avait tendu et dans lequel il précipita toute la communauté créole.

La Différence

Selon l'historien Frédéric Régent, « l'esclave est une personne dont la liberté appartient à un autre... L'esclavage est la réduction d'une personne à un état de privation de toute liberté, celle-ci allant de libertés sociales aux libertés les plus fondamentales... »

« ... Contrairement à l'esclave qui est un meuble, l'engagé jouit d'une personnalité juridique... Il possède des biens, peut contracter (mariages, contrats de vente) plus ou moins librement... »

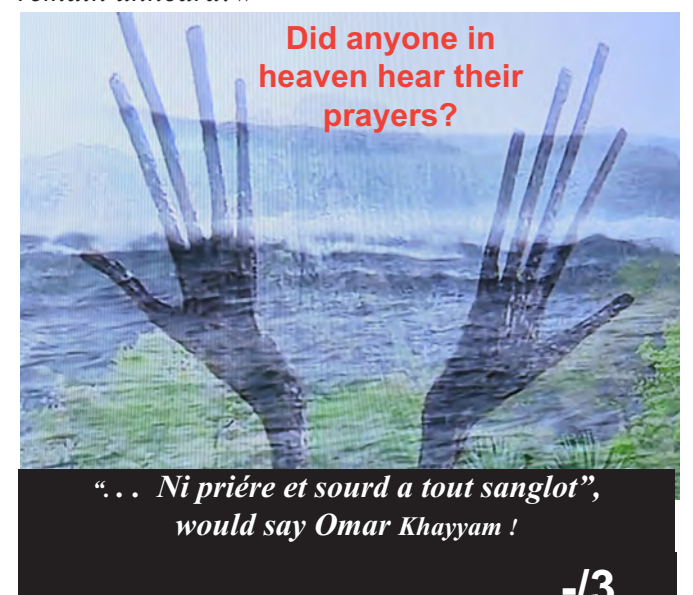
fondre engagisme et esclavage. »

... « L'engagé a une situation préférable à celle de l'esclave. »

Comment donc, peut-on demander aux pays qui avaient profité du commerce des esclaves tels:- la Grande Bretagne, la France, la Hollande, l'Espagne, le Portugal, certains Pays Arabes etc. de souscrire à une compensation pour les descendants des travailleurs engagés à Maurice.

(b) Examinons ensemble quelques unes des principales observations de la Commission Justice et Vérité en relation avec la lutte que mène le Mouvement Authentique Mauricien (MAM) depuis mon entretien avec le Père Roger Cerveaux, après son interview dans un hebdomadaire, à propos du 'Malaise Créole' et du 'Backing', environ 15 années de cela.

« Les descendants d'esclaves ne sont que des citoyens de deuxième grade... ils ne sont nullement représentatifs dans le secteur agricole, dans le commerce ou encore dans les petites et moyennes entreprises ; ils doivent se rechauffer à faire des travaux manuels, contrairement aux autres groupes sociaux, ils ne disposent pas de groupes de pressions pour faire entendre leurs voix dans les milieux politiques avec pour conséquences que *most of their grievances remain unheard.* »



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La Commission met aussi en exergue le fait que « Creoles are the last to be employed and the first to be retrenched. » Elle formule des “recommendations directed towards Social Justice,” and “equal opportunity for all ;” exactement ce que le MAM a toujours réclamé pour les créoles, descendants d’esclaves habitant les régions défavorisées telles : Roche Bois, Batterie Cassée, Ste Croix, La Cure, Tranquebar, Cassis, Vallijee, GRNO, Pailles, Pte aux Sables, Richelieu, Barkly, Camp Levieux, tout le long des côtes de la Rivière Noire, Le Morne, La Ville Noire, Goodlands, Grand Gaube etc.

(c) Pardon

Je suis personnellement content de voir que le chef de l’Église catholique, Mgr. Maurice Piat a accepté de demander pardon aux descendants d’esclaves pour l’injustice, la souffrance et l’oppression subies par nos ancêtres, les Esclaves, avec la complicité, le silence et la bénédiction de l’église. **Quand je suis rentré de l’Australie après 12 ans d’absence, lors de mon premier meeting public à Cité Barkly le 27 décembre 1994, j’avais demandé à l’Église**

catholique de faire son ‘Mea Culpa, Mea Culpa, Mea Maxima Culpa’ (C’est ma faute, C’est ma faute, C’est ma très grande faute) pour n’avoir pas ouvert les portes des collèges catholiques aux enfants des Cités ouvrières de Barkly, Chebel, Stanley, Camp Levieux etc. aux enfants des descendants d’esclaves. Car, si seulement l’église catholique avait réservé 10 places annuellement, dans chacun de ses collèges : La Confiance, Le BPS, St. Marys et les Lorettes de Rose-Hill pour ces enfants défavorisés, cela aurait fait LA DIFFÉRENCE.

J’avais publiquement réclamé cet Acte de contrition de la part de l’Église catholique non pas parce que j’étais contre l’église, bien au contraire, car je fus le seul ministre créole à défendre, en Conseil des Ministres, Mgr. Jean Margéot lorsque lui-même et Père Tamin furent injustement attaqués par feu Sir Gaëtan Duval. Je félicite donc Mgr. Maurice Piat pour cette décision sage de demander pardon aux descendants d’esclaves; ce sont eux qui le méritent de la part de l’Église catholique, personne d’autre.

D’autre part, je voudrais profiter de cette période des

fêtes de fin d’année et l’atmosphère de pardon qui y règne pour demander à Mgr. Maurice Piat d’abandonner son intransigeance et son orgueil personnel et de déclarer Lundi Pâques 2012 Congé Public pour tous les descendants d’esclaves. Il n’est pas juste que ceux du secteur privé puissent fêter dignement la Pâques, la plus grande fête du calendrier chrétien, ainsi que le lundi Pâques, alors que les créoles des Cités, tous des descendants d’esclaves sont obligés, dépendant des caprices de leurs maîtres ou patrons, de prendre un ‘sick leave’ pour pouvoir fêter lundi Pâques. A noter que ni l’Évêché, ni La Vie Catholique travaille le lundi Pâques; ce qui est très bien. Si Mgr. M. Piat continue à ignorer le droit fondamental de tous les chrétiens, la majorité des créoles, tous des descendants d’esclaves, l’Église catholique aura dans 5 à 10 ans, peut-être même bien avant, à demander Pardon encore une fois pour cette flagrante injustice.

**Eliézer François JP
Leader MAM**

*Pictures and captions are from
the editorial team*

Editorial Observations In the article above, in reference to the *Malaise Creole* mention is made of the principal finding of the **Commission Justice et Vérité** namely that the descendants of slaves are but second grade citizens ... they are not all present in the agricultural sector; they should reluctantly confine themselves to manual work”. Here it may infer that the **Commission Justice et Vérité** may have lost the plot and did not get hold of the whole truth. This is what can be deduced from the observations set forth in the following paragraphs.

Mr François’s article brings to mind three BIG IFs:

The First BIG IF is what would have happened if the French colonizers of Mauritius did work the land themselves as they have always done in France? The answer to this First BIG IF is that IF the colonizers did farm the land themselves, there would have been no need to bring the forced labour from Africa and from elsewhere. The Creole community and the ‘Gens de couleur’ would probably not exist in Mauritius today. The Africans were enslaved by the French settlers under the most inhuman conditions to work on the sugarcane plantation until they were freed under the British regime in 1835, after two hundred years of servitude on the island.

The Second Big IF is what would have happened IF the emancipated slaves had continued to work on the sugarcane plantation under British rule? The answer is that there would have been no need to bring the Indian indentured labourers (travailleurs engagés) to replace the former slaves on the sugarcane plantation. There would today be no people of Indian origin in Mauritius today.

But, history tells us that the emancipated slaves did not want to continue to work on the sugarcane plantation which they associated with slavery. Their greatest fear was the French plantation owners’ domination would continue and they would still be used for free labour (with no

pay). They themselves wanted to be trained as artisans to acquire new skills. They were thus trained as stonemasons, blacksmith, carpenters and other trades in which some forced African labour was already employed, especially in construction. (This is the truth which escaped the attention of the **Commission Justice et Vérité**.) Had the former slaves accepted to be farmers, their descendants would today own and govern Mauritius like descendants of the emancipated slaves of Jamaica who constitute 92% of the population of their island “in the sun, willed to them by their fathers’ hands”, as sang Harry Belafonte. Today, they run the country themselves and there is no Creole malaise. There may be an Asian (Indian and Chinese) malaise, the Asians constitute 8% of the Jamaica’s population!.

With the refusal of the emancipated slaves to be agricultural workers, the British who had taken possession of Mauritius in 1810 had a dilemma on their hands. Mauritius was a purely agricultural country with no mineral resources. The island would not be able to support itself except through the established sugar industry. Hence they turned to their overseas possession in the Indian Ocean, India, to supply the labour to toil and sweat on the plantation. And so began the coolitude era and the population of Mauritius by Indians. The lot of the imported coolies (labourers), accommodated in camps, was not any better than the former slaves.

The Third BIG IF is what would have happened to Mauritius IF the Indian coolies were not brought to Mauritius to replace the emancipated forced labour on the sugarcane plantation to make the island an important sugar supplier to the world and a prosperous country? Mauritius could have been a poor country like, for example, Madagascar in the Indian Ocean, which is three times the size of France and with plenty of unexploited mineral resources. Madagascar is having difficulty, in this day and age, to feed its population.

So, all in all, Mauritius is not doing badly, It is today thriving in spite of all the clamours on the political scenes, in spite of the claims of corruption and maladministration, and in spite of all the facebook damaging assaults. It is a country where the public sector and the private sector work hand-in-hand to create a prosperous economy.

P.C.

The Ukraine Crisis: A Third World War ahead?

In our introduction to this issue on Page One, we mention that “the West and the East are confronting each other in a standoff that could disturb world peace.”

Who is right and who is wrong in this conflict? The Russians say there can be no peace without the security of Russia. The Russians fear for their security with a presence of the West, especially the Americans, on their threshold through the possibility of Ukraine joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). By dangling the Ukrainian invasion threat, Vladimir Putin wants an assurance from the West that America will not encourage Ukraine to seek admission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. But US President Joe Biden says that such a guarantee cannot be given. It is therefore clear that it is the intention of America to create a presence of the West on the doorstep of Russia.

Such a confrontation between Russia (formerly part of the USSR) and the US is not new. Re-

member the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962? America, fearing for its security, strongly objected to the USSR installing a military base on Cuba with nuclear missiles, i.e. on the doorstep of the United States. It was feared then that the confrontation between the US and the USSR could lead to Armageddon. In the end, US President John Kennedy agreed to remove US military installation on Turkey and Soviet President Nikita Khrushchev relented. No base was built on Cuba by the USSR, There was a compromise.

The present Ukrainian crisis begs the question: If it was all right for the Americans to fear for their security with the presence of a Russian military base in Cuba, practically on America’s doorstep, why the Russians should not fear for their security with the NATO presence on the threshold of their country? What’s good for the gander is good for the goose! Unfortunately President Biden does not see this way. Like Trump, he wants to make America a super power with world domination. A compromise must be found to diffuse the present crisis,

The Ukrainians want to live in peace in their own country without any fear of Russian invasion.

Have they any ambition for their country to join NATO to avoid any threat of an invasion by their gigantic neighbour? It has been said that Vladimir Putin’s vision is to reconstruct the USSR empire which was dismantled in 1991 under President Mikhail Gorbachev.

So, there exists a situation of two leaders with world domination vision. These two leaders have created fear among the other nations of the world. How can the threat of war be diffused?

French President Emmanuel Macron, as the incumbent EU Council President, has been conducting shuttle negotiations with President Putin to find a diplomatic solution to the crisis. **Can the threat be diffused by making Ukraine a Zone of Peace?** In this case, America will not encourage the country to join NATO, the Russians will have no reason to fear for their security, But will autocratic Russia be happy with a democratic country as a neighbour? Could a situation arise similar to that of autocratic China vis-à-vis democratic Hong Kong and Taiwan? The difference is that those two islands used to be an integral part of China.

P.C.

The Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics

February 4 - February 20

Bobsledding, curling, ice hockey, luge, skating, skiing, and biathlon.



Mylene
Japan

Emblems



As you watch the athletes spin, twirl, somersault, flip, and flop in the comfort and warmth of your home, remember that they do this in sub-zero temperatures. Approximately 3,000 of them, from some 86 countries are represented in 109 events in seven sports (15 disciplines).

The XXIV Winter Games is being held at 14 venues, spread across three zones: Beijing, Yanqing, and Zhangjiakou.

China's zero-tolerance policy toward COVID-19 is evidenced in the creation of the Olympic 'bubble.' In reality, the 'bubble' is a series of mini bubbles. The entire Games-area is off-limits to the public. Approximately 200 kilometres of 'closed loops' have been formed around hotels, arenas, and stores that are exclusive to Games personnel.

To enter, all Games-related staff, from cooks to drivers, translators to volunteers, must be fully vaccinated. Once inside, this will be their home for the duration of the Games.



Arriving athletes and their entourages (who must be fully vaccinated) enter the bubble and go directly to their respective village in one of the three zones. Insiders are tested daily and must wear a face mask at all times.

The Motto

'Together for a Shared Future.'

This is the official motto of the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Beijing 2022. The words reflect the need for the entire world to collaborate in order to create a better tomorrow.

The Mascot

Bing Dwen Dwen, an animated panda dressed in a full body ice-costume with colourful circles around its face to resemble an astronaut suit, is the official mascot. It represents technology and the concept of

a future with infinite possibilities. Bing, means ice, and Dwen Dwen means robust, lively, and also represents children.

If you look closely, you'll notice a heart on its palm. This is to welcome the athletes. BDD can be found all over the place, and has created a panda-monium at the Games.

The Emblem

Winter Dream. Inspired by the Chinese character for winter (冬). The ribbon-like motif resembles a skater at the top and a skier at the bottom. It combines traditional and modern elements of Chinese culture.

The Venues

Only Beijing, China's capital, has hosted both the Summer and Winter Olympics. This has its advantages. Many of the venues built in 2008 are being reused as part of a sustainability plan. Many are multi-functional. One moment dry, the next, iced. All are powered entirely by renewable energy. Because of their unique designs, most have been given a nickname.

Once the Olympic village closes, these venues will be put to use as housing, training facilities, and tourist attractions. Now, that's sustainability.

Beijing Zone

The National Stadium, also known as 'The Bird's Nest,' is the site for the opening and closing ceremonies.

National Aquatics Centre, called 'The Water Cube,' housed a swimming pool during the Summer Games. Now, it has transformed into an 'ice cube,' to stage the curling event.

National Indoor Stadium

Dubbed 'The Fan,' it was previously used for gymnastics competitions and now hosts the ice hockey match.

Wukesong Sports Centre

Together with the National Indoor Stadium, they will host the ice hockey event.

National Speed Skating Oval

The only arena built specifically for this Olympiad. It has already earned itself the moniker, 'The Ice Ribbon.'

Capital Indoor Stadium

Built in 1968, it hosted the 2008 volleyball tournament. It is now fully equipped for figure and short track speed skating competitions.

Big Air Shougang

The world's first permanent big air venue. The term, 'big air' was coined in 1998 to describe a high-risk injury sport. In a nutshell, it's the ability to perform extremely high jumps, airborne spins and flips, before landing back on the ground. Big air sports include skateboarding, snowboarding, BMX, lugeing,

and mountain biking.

Yanqing Zone

Located 75km northwest of Beijing.

National Sliding Centre

A wooden roof covers the entire length of this 1.9 km national sliding centre that will host bobsleigh, skeleton and luge.

National Alpine Ski Centre

Located in the Xiaohaituo Mountain Area, it has seven courses.



Zhangjiakou Zone

A popular ski destination 180 km northwest of Beijing, with a newly constructed intercity railway that can transfer guests between all three venues in just one hour. The majority of ski and snowboard events will be staged here.

National Biathlon Centre

After the Games, this centre will be used for training and as a tourist resort.

National Ski Jumping Centre

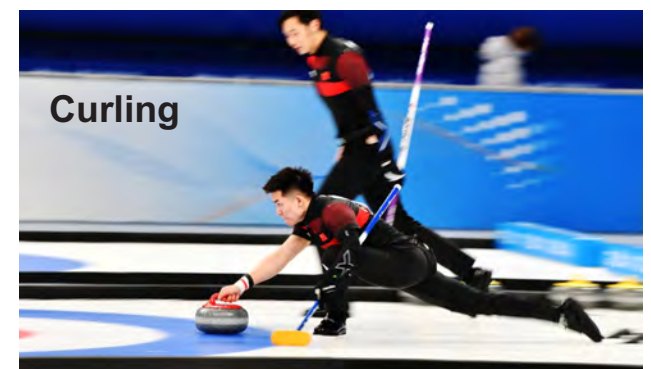
The design of the ski jump resembles a traditional ruyi sceptre (a Chinese talisman). So, it's not surprising that it's called, 'Snow Ruyi.'

National Cross-Country Centre

Genting Snow Park. Park A, for freestyle skiing, and Park B, for snowboarding.

In recent years, concern and controversy have followed the Games.

Let us remember that sport has no borders. In fact, it's a universal language that can unite people from all walks of life. It has the ability to inspire, educate, and bring hope. While we may not be able to attend the Olympics in person, let us keep in mind that the objective of this international sporting festival, conducted every four years, is to contribute to world



peace via mutual understanding and the spirit of friendship and sportsmanship.

Photos courtesy of the Media and Communications Team of Beijing 2022 Games.

Is the origin of the name of Mauritius Island Roman rather than Dutch?

The piece below has been sent to us by Paul Draper, Rodrigues, who has in turn received it from a friend in England. Several years ago, on a trip to Italy, while travelling down to Venice we stopped at a Catholic Church where I was surprised to see a statue of St Maurice. I can now place in context the significance of that statue. **P.C.**

The Island of Mauritius is named after a Roman Legionary from Egypt! In about 60AD St Mark, who had been a close witness of Jesus' work, moved to Alexandria. His preaching was so powerful that he is known today as Africa's first Bishop. As a result, the Thebans became devoted Christians, and in 280AD, a legion of the Roman Empire was made up of Theban Christians.

At one point in the 280s the Emperor Diocletian decided that he should be honoured as if he were a god. The soldiers of the Theban Legion could not do this, and gradually they were all martyred. Their martyrdom, ordered by their Emperor, must have shaken the whole Roman world, and by 312AD the new Emperor, Constantine, made Christianity legal.

St Maurice, one of their Commanders, became the best known of all the Theban Legionaries, and very soon in the Roman Empire, churches and cathedrals were dedicated to him. There are at least eight recognised today in the UK alone, all near Roman settlements.

St Maurice eventually became the Patron Saint of the German Holy Roman Emperors, and his sword, or replica of his sword, was used at the coronations of the Austro-Hungarian Emperors until 1906.

In the 16th Century there was a resurgence of interest in St Maurice, and the Statholder of the Dutch Republic, Prince Maurice van Nassau, was named after him. El Greco, 1541-1614, had chosen St Maurice as a subject for his famous painting, c.1580, The Martyrdom of St Maurice and his Legions, twelve centuries after the actual martyrdom. In 1598 Admiral Wybrand van Warwyck, a Dutch Commander, named the island in honour of Prince Maurice of Nassau.

Churches Remembering St Maurice in the UK

St Andrew's, Wellingham, Norfolk, has an image of St Maurice.

St Michael's, Michaelston-y-fedw, Glamorgan, has an image of St Maurice. <http://www.jlb2011.co.uk/walespic/churches/michaelstonfedw1.htm>
St Maurice, Briningham http://www.brininghambenefice.org.uk/c_briningham.php
St Maurice, Eglingham, and St Maurice, Ellingham, are dedicated to him as are about six others in the UK, including St Maurice, Plympton, Cornwall.

There are about 650 religious foundations dedicated to St Maurice in Europe. Dates for the construction of some foundations named after St Maurice. Tours - the first cathedral begun in AD337 was dedicated to St Maurice. Burnt in AD561, restored by Gregory of Tours who discovered St Martin's relics of St Maurice. Contains a stained glass window of St Maurice. Vienne - begun in 4th Century and dedicated to St Maurice. Magdeburg - begun as an abbey in AD937 and dedicated to St. Maurice is the oldest Gothic cathedral in Germany. Angers - rebuilt in AD1032 has stained glass windows of the life of St Martin (and one of St Thomas a Becket). Dedicated to St Maurice.

Charlemagne kept his treasures at the Monastery of St Maurice in the Rhone Valley, on the site of the massacre.

Friends of Merton Augustinian Priory. February 2022

Film Reviews by *Prega Venkatasawmy* (UK)

PARALLEL MOTHERS DIRECTED BY PEDRO ALMADOVAR

I just returned from the local cinema, viewing *Parallel Mothers*, by the Spanish director, Pedro Almodóvar - the first time I ever watched his film. Apart from the fact that the great Luis Bunuel is the first and only Spanish director with whom I am familiar, I must say that I am impressed and I will explain why.

This film revolves around an unfortunate incident of two babies, by a serious mistake, being swapped at birth on a maternity ward. The director has built a story of two mothers facing some very traumatic and emotional decisions as a result. In order to thread his narrative Almodóvar springs surprises after surprises, getting under the skins of the women to inhabit a world only known to women, rearing children from birth!



To disentangle this mess, Penelope Cruz, brilliant and moving, tried her best to inform the other mother, whom she has befriended on the maternity ward, of this incident at birth. Through some personal detective work, she is able to explain everything but, unfortunately, learnt that the other woman's baby, a week old had passed away! The story gets complicated when she has to hand over the baby to the real mother. In fact, the dead woman's baby was Penelope's own baby! We can feel the pain and anguish that she went through, but, through a set of circumstances, she became pregnant again and is able to overcome the serious misfortune she underwent!

For one thing, Almodóvar, very adeptly, constructed the story from an archaeologist helping Penelope to find the mass grave in which her grand father was thrown into during Franco's regime. The two fell in love and everything is tied up with the birth of the baby. The director shows a lot of understanding and warmth in portraying the two women, through different circumstances, became pregnant and, later, the bonding of the babies with their respective mothers! It is a woman's world and there is only one man involved and the whole film gravitated around the two babies. Credit goes to Penelope Cruz for playing the part of the mother who had to part with her baby and she really made me quite tearful at times. The whole film hinges on her performance and acting ability under the helm of Almodóvar!

So my first film by Pedro Almodóvar is a positive reaction and hope to see more of him! I am just about to fall into Morpheus arms before stringing this quick film review! Good night, folks!

Nightmare Alley, directed by Guillermo Del Toro

Boy, what a film noir! beautifully executed and crafted, nearly a masterpiece. Though clocking 150 minutes long, slightly running out of steam, but a visual feast, a retro feel and gorgeous photography all along. It is the remake of a 1947 film by Tyrone Power.

It is the story of a drifter, played by Bradley Cooper, starting life, from the bottom of the ladder by doing menial jobs in a circus freak shows, joining a mentalist and working his way up through lies and deceptions, piling up money in the process. Unable to curb his unbridled love to trick people in order to amass more money through his girlfriend. Together with the connivance of a psychotherapist, acted by Cate Blanchett, playing on people's fears and anxieties. In the end, his life descended into hell losing everything!

The film pitches its story in a circus that shows weird and horror displays to people in search of a thrill and kinky urges. The camera acts as voyeuristic tool allowing the viewers to see human depravity and a couple of people with bodily disfigurement, drawing crowds to the circus. It is shot mainly in brown, almost during the nights, dark lit, in tight confines, lots of props, mirrors, trap doors in cages and small rooms to heighten the sense of claustrophobia! It adds more layers to the drama of the story!

The film scores brownie points in build-



ing sets designs and replicas of very stylish period during the great depression era, lavishly shot with the cameras gliding slowly. Huge effort has been made to be consistent with the retro feel of the time, especially the antiques furnitures and buildings. Furthermore, lots of clues are planted in the decors and themes in order to consolidate the story and the audience to extricate meanings and thematic images!

Finally, Bradley Cooper invests lots of emotions and sentiments in the part of a drifter and gives a very performance almost on a par with the part played by Cate Blanchett. Full credit goes to the director, a specialist in horror genres, who is in full control of his medium. Rarely have I sat on the edge on my seat to fully enjoy a film. *Nightmare Alley* just did that for me. Most certainly this film will garner some Oscars nominations!

For sale two plots of land at Péreybère close to Chemin Le Flamant and Mont Oreb Lane.
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Read for you by Prega Vencatasawmy (UK)

Jean Claude de L'Estrac

TERRES POSSESSION ET DÉPOSSESSION

Préface Ananda Devi

Land ownership is a very prickly subject which is fraught with problems, some unsurmountable, deeply rooted in family squabbles, politics and cultural heritage. Mauritius is no exception! The country, since its colonisation, occupies virtually all lands, fertile and abundantly arable, in its topography.

This book by Jean Claude de l'estrac is the first, to my knowledge, of its kind to address and investigate various problems that beset the country in terms of land ownership, its distribution, accessibility and other mismanagements. And the recent Commission of Truth and Justice has opened a can of worms revealing, what we already know, many cases of fraudulent transactions, and situations of heirs being deprived of their lands inherited from distant relatives, legally and through documents and notarial deeds.

This book prides itself to have a very rigid and sturdy hard cover (the best that I have ever seen from Mauritius) published by Éditions le Printemps, bristling with 254 pages, well spaced out into 20 sparsely written chapters and a *table de matières* at the end .

First and foremost, let me point out an important detail in that there are several excellent photos and shots of huge portion of lands at different angles and some impressive bird's eyes views, well positioned, to highlight the vast land masses dotted around the country. They are a marvel to look at! There are also many archives photos, references, sketches and drawings to accompany this book.

The 20 chapters covered all the grounds, from the first lands concessions, the newly imported sugar factories, slaves from Mozambique to till the lands, the introduction and developing of sugar, *le premier morcellement*, awareness of politics in land distribution and development, 69 pounds of compensation to the sugar owners after the abolition of slavery, the arrival of Indians locked into indentureship contracts, James Meade report, brandishing the spectre of nationalisation, strikes at the heart of the sugar industry, crown lands, the famous Illovo deal, the fights and protests around seaside lands, and owner of campements and finally, the Commission Justice et Vérité, instituted in 2009, to investigate the vestiges of slavery and its many victims whose lands, legally inherited, have been deprived and dispossessed of their acquisitions.

Here are some very important and vital statistics culled from many pages in the book:

First land concession was granted in June 1726.

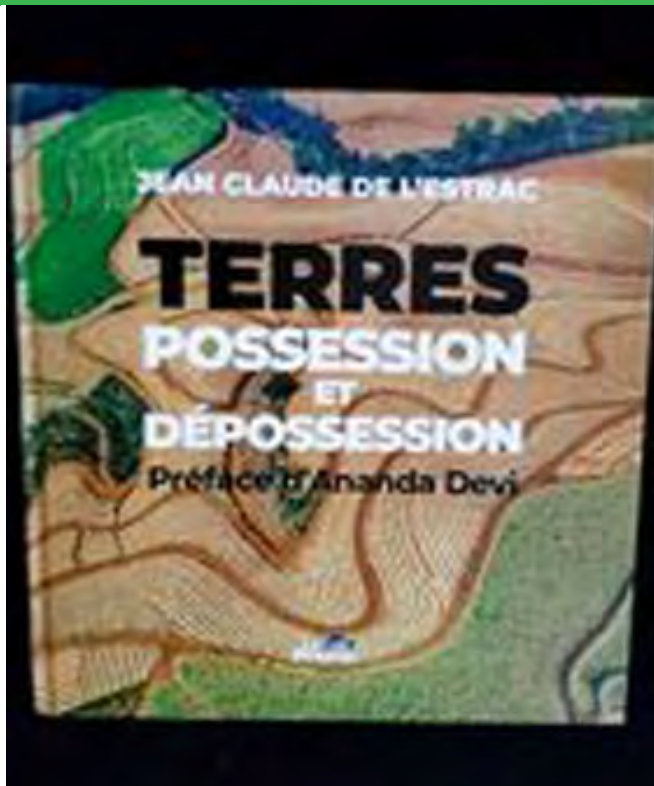
In 1766, the island had 20,000 inhabitants of whom 1,998 were whites, 18,000 slaves and 500 free people.

1810: 9000 arpents

1825: 27,800 arpents

1830 whites were in charge of 92.5 per cent of sugar factories 82.4 per cent devoted to sugar plantation.

Crown lands occupancy 95,875 arpents



7.9% pas géométrique
73% de terres forestières
0,8 de chemin de fer
15.8% de terrains dont la prospérité sucrière
2.5% d'ilots.

There is also a very important page on the famous Fact-finding Committee on Crown lands in order to map out all the lands that belong to the state, its placements, its potential agricultural benefits, the various conditions of hire. The Crown lands lump together all government lands and the projects attached since independence. I am giving only a small summary here. The famous Report of the Fact-finding Committee on Crown Lands have four chunky volumes about an inventory of state lands known as Crown Lands, included "Pas géométrique " and other aspects that belong to lands in Mauritius.

The book posits some solutions in terms of redistribute the lands in a fair equitable manner, reminding us of the debacle in Zimbabwe! A very strong and robust case presented on behalf of people whose lands have been shifted into possession of others. The Commission de Justice et Vérité has only scratched the surface and, up to this day, no genuine answer has been found despite hunger-strike and resorting to the law.

Finally, I find the book very interesting and informative on many levels due to the fact that I know very little on the subject and it has shown me almost everything about lands in Mauritius with its huge benefits, problems and, not to mention, the minority who is battling to regain their lands back .

The book grapples with the complexity of land ownership as best as it can!

Mauritius is gearing up for the Fourth Industrial Revolution, states PM



Mauritius is committed to a policy of promoting innovation which is an essential lever of competitiveness for the creation of activities and jobs. The new technologies sector is one on which the government bases its industrial renewal

policy and our country is working with determination to meet the challenges of the fourth industrial revolution and make the most of the opportunities that arise from it.

This statement was made this month (February) by the Prime Minister, Mr Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, at the inauguration of the XEFI Centre, in Ebène. The Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development, Dr Renganaden Padayachy; the Ambassador of France to Mauritius, Mme Florence Caussé-Tissier; the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of XEFI Group, Mr Sacha Rosenthal, as well as other eminent personalities were present.

Prime Minister Jugnauth rejoiced that the French leader in IT services, office automation, software and Cloud has decided to deploy its activities in Mauritius. According to him, the arrival of XEFI in Mauritius will enrich the country's business ecosystem. He further encouraged other companies like XEFI to set up in Mauritius. Together with local and foreign players,

we will prepare our country for the challenges of the digital transition and shape the economic future of the country, he said. He highlighted that Mauritius boasts of a favourable environment for investment and innovation adding that the creation of technological infrastructures such as the Côte D'Or Data Technology Park and the Jin Fei Smart City will open up horizons for ICT companies. He further recalled that many multinational companies, which have adopted an international expansion strategy, such as Orange Business Services, Concentrix, Allianz Services, Euro CRM, Accenture, Ceridian, SD Worx, Elca Swiss, GPO, and Intelcia have already relocated part of their activities to Mauritius.

The Prime Minister recalled that Government is mobilising significant resources to support private sector partners and create the conditions for sustainable growth in Mauritius. Considerable efforts, he stated, are being made in terms of infrastructure and the regulatory framework so that private companies can realise their full potential as key players in development. He added that last year, the tax system has been reformed in a bid to attract more digital and innovation companies and highlighted that Mauritius is consistently ranked among the top countries in the world in terms of ease of doing.

Speaking about the COVID-19 pandemic, which has plunged the global economy into its worst recession in decades, Prime Minister Jugnauth expressed satisfaction that the ICT sector in Mauritius has adapted quickly to new business models and has thus proven resilient in times of crisis. The ICT/BPO industry in Mauritius, which generates 30,000 jobs, grew by 3.9% in 2020 while the national economy shrank by 15.5%. ICT/BPO growth is now at 6.5%, he indicated.

He acknowledged that ICT is a growth sector which needs to be further consolidated. He recalled that in the Government Programme 2020-2024, foundations have been laid for a smart and connected country which is creative and innovative. With the new approaches to service delivery in public services, the digital revolution is now affecting virtually all public administrations in Mauritius and is better responding to user requirements, he said.

He dwelt on several measures put in place as regards digitalisation and connectivity acceleration. They include: setting up of an Emerging Technologies Council to propel Mauritian society towards accelerated digitalisation; adoption of a legal framework on cyber security and cybercrime to address new threats; acceleration of connectivity deployment across Mauritius via three international submarine cables and soon through a fourth one, the T3; coverage of 5G network in several regions namely Ebène, Bagatelle, Réduit, and Trianon; implementation of a project for electronic data exchange in public hospitals and health centers.

Other innovative projects are: implementation of a digital identification system, MauPass, which makes the use of online public services more secure and easier; setting up of an online queuing system, MoRendezVous, and a Certification Authority, MauSign, which is responsible for creating, issuing and managing electronic certificates.

For his part, the CEO of XEFI Group, Mr Sacha Rosenthal, underlined that the organisation has since its creation in 1997, established a leading reputation among small and medium-sized businesses in France for its IT and office equipment sales and related services such as maintenance, cloud, managed services, security, back-up, printing and software solutions. Its values are centered around engagement, hospitality, client-service, and commitment, he said.

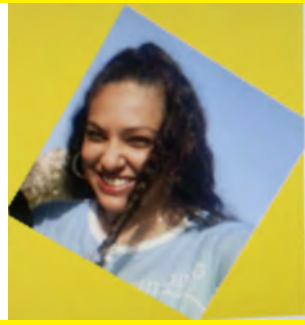
Speaking about the Group's projects for Mauritius, Mr Rosenthal indicated that the focus will be on the development of a digital software for SMEs as well as the setting up of a XEFI Academy to train young people.

XEFI Group

The Group, which has some 1,600 employees, aims to provide turnkey products and services to all businesses, regardless of their size: small and medium-sized businesses, larger companies with up to 5,000 employees, and government bodies. This local branch concept has been successfully modelled and rolled out through franchises since 2015. There are more than 130 branches throughout France and the Group is expanding rapidly elsewhere in Europe. **GIS**

Whatever Next? From a Monocrop Economy to Industrialisation, to Tourism, to Financial Centre and now to Digitalisation on a grand scale! Yes, whatever next !!!

Rising Superstar Actress Mauritian Shalom Brune-Frankin



By
Yvonne Goder-Persand

Shalom Brune-Franklin, aged 27, is known as an English-Australian promising actress rising to potential Hollywood superstardom. She was born in St. Albans in Hertfordshire, UK and moved with her parents including her younger brother Siam to Western Australia as a teenager. She holds both British and Australian citizenship.



Shalom Brune-Franklin

Shalom embarked in drama whilst studying at Ocean Reef Senior High School based in Perth. She then went on to win the school's high achievement award in drama. She studied at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA), a course that is part of Edith Cowan University (ECU), located in Perth, Western Australia. WAAPA has many prominent alumni actors and actresses.

The rising star's epic acting skills have allowed her to successfully feature in BBC's dramas 'Our Girl', 'The State', 'Line of Duty (series 6)' and 'The Tourist'.

The Tourist currently showcasing on BBC 1, is a television series featuring the gorgeous Jamie Dornan, an Irish actor well-known for his role as Christian Grey in Fifty Shades of Grey. Shalom is one of the leading cast in The Tourist and plays Luci Miller the love interest of Dornan's character Elliot Stanley.



Sylish Grandfather



Youthful Grandmère

Shalom is of half-Mauritian origin from her mother. In December, 2020, Shalom mentions her very stylish Mauritian grandfather's 75th Birthday. Image from @shalombrunefrankin Instagram. In August 2020 she also mentions her youthful Mauritian, 68 year old 'grandmère'.

It seems Shalom is aware of her Mauritian roots, and it is inspiring to see her in leading roles on prime time TV. We wish her continued success.

*All images from Instagram @shalombrunefrankin

2022 Winter Paralympic March 4 - 13



Mylene, Japan

The long-awaited but very controversial Beijing Winter Olympic Games were held in the Chinese capital from Feb 4 – 20. Boycott or not, the games went on and medals were won. In a world full of trouble, such divertissement brings relief from the nastiness of political ambitions for supreme domination. Sportlovers can now relax and enjoy the Paralympic events taking place in Beijing from March 4 to 13.

P.C.



Mascots for the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Beijing 2022

The Olympic village has been made barrier-free, and the Olympic logos have been replaced by Paralympic logo Agitos. Everything has been put in place to welcome the delegations from around the world who are competing in six para-sports: Sled hockey, alpine skiing, cross-country skiing, biathlon, snowboarding, and wheelchair curling.



Ski Jumping Continental Cup

where only four Chinese athletes competed, this figure demonstrates how far the nation's Paralympic winter sports have grown and developed.

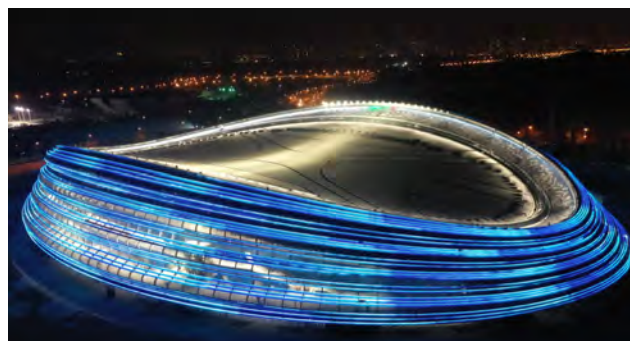
The icing on the cake came in 2018, when China's wheelchair curlers won the country's first Winter Paralympic gold medal, proving that all of the hard work had paid off.

The XIII Paralympic Winter Games, also known as the Beijing 2022 Paralympic Games, feature 736 paralympians from 51 countries.

Despite the fact that this is China's sixth appearance at the Paralympic Winter Games, the country is sending 96 athletes, the largest delegation ever. When compared to Salt Lake (2002),



National Speed Skating Stadium (indoor)



National Speed Skating Stadium (outdoor)

Without a doubt, the Paras have advanced significantly over the years, particularly in terms of technology that improves the lives of paralympians: From robotic arms to prosthetics. But, more importantly, because of the widespread global media coverage, it has challenged our deep-rooted beliefs regarding disability and has prompted governments to improve the lives of people living with an impairment. Elevators, wheelchair ramps, lifts, access to buildings and public transport all contribute to making daily life easier. The success of these Games leave a lasting legacy for future generations. Meanwhile, it is expected that China will put on another spectacular show, complete with all of the thrills and action of a multi-sport international event.

**You are never too old
To set another goal
Or to dream
A new dream**

Food for thought Les Brown