

# Party Life - Work In The Community

— JANET JAGAN

The Party Constitution, in the section dealing with the Party Group, states that one of the Group's functions is to "enhance the role of the Party in the community, in the place of work, in the place of study, in mass organisations and in all organisations in which struggles can be carried out on behalf of the working class and other oppressed sections of the community."

Thus, an important sector of Party life deals with the role of Party members and Groups in the community in which they live and work. A great deal of this pertains to agitational, representational and educational activities, which now, as never before, are reaching greater proportions. There is, therefore, greater need to lead struggles for pure water supplies, fight against blackouts in electricity, demands for cleaning of trenches, better sanitation, repairs to roads and all the various problems that face people living in both urban and rural areas.

Many Party groups have led picket lines demanding better water supplies, repairs to bridges, improved medical services, more medicines, etc. They have also led delegations to local authorities on a wide spectrum of problems facing residents of their area. This is an on-going process which involves representational activities by groups, by Party members in local authorities, Regional Democratic Councils and municipal Councils and frequently up to the National Assembly by the Party's parliamentary group.

Our Party groups have devised many ways in making representation, from the local and regional level up to delegations to ministers responsible, and including petitions and protests at other levels. For example, in the West Demerara region, dozens of petitions have been signed by residents calling for improvements in different villages. They outline point by point the demands of the community. Delegations have been organised in the city of Georgetown, for example, to demand street lights, improved drainage, highlighting areas that require special attention, as in slums.

A recent incident in a section of Georgetown bordering the Demerara River is an example of the interest the PPP has exhibited in community problems. In this case,

the high tides had completely flooded the housing area. This was ignored by the authorities despite frequent warnings that the situation would worsen. When it did, the PPP Georgetown District Committee intensified the popular pressure until, at last, emergency works were carried out to stem the overflowing river water.

In its representational work, the Party has not forgotten old age pensioners who frequently put in applications which are ignored. Party members have had to personally intervene and discuss such applications with officials, to assist senior citizens in obtaining their rights.

A new aspect of community activities has risen out of the escalating crime wave throughout the country. The incidents of violent crime have increased so rapidly, as a result of the decline in the social fabric of the nation, that persons have become overwhelmed by fear. Out of this situation, many Party groups have been involved in organising "vigilante groups" which patrol the village area at nights to keep out criminals.

PPP Groups are involved in many community organisations such as Parent/Teachers' Associations, Tenant and Ratepayers' Associations and in farmers' organisations such as the Guyana Rice Producers' Association, the Guyana Cane Farmers' Association and the Guyana Agricultural Producers' Association. In these and other community and national organisations, PPP groups have taken active part, working to improve the area's schools, looking into sports grounds and sports activities for the youths, seeing that ratepayers get a Square deal from the local authorities as regards village public works for better sanitation, clearance of trenches, buildings and maintaining health centres, and Community Centres, etc.

At the level of adult education, groups or regional bodies of the Party frequently sponsor seminars or lectures to which the whole community is invited. Film shows as a component of adult educational activities are very popular, especially when we consider the limitations of leisure activities in the rural and interior areas in particular. Also, the Party groups in many areas of Guyana have set up libraries which are open to members of the community. There is the ongoing political education of the masses carried out village to village, street to street in the towns, at public meetings and at bottom house or yard meetings. Hundreds of these are held every year.

Community work of Party groups also includes the work of the women's section, (the Women's Progressive Organisation) which is, of course, closely co-ordinated with Party activities. This includes in some areas, handicraft classes, lectures on health, games for young girls and involvement in agitational activities on behalf of the community, like the need for better water supplies, which affect women as housewives.

In this aspect of Party life concerning community work and work among the masses, our youths come in for close attention. Many areas have sponsored youth Camps in which Party groups have borne the full involvement and responsibility. Work with the Progressive Youth Organisation and the co-ordination of all activities relating to children and young people, is an integral part of the work of the PPP's groups.

Work in mass organisations, mainly farmers' associations and trade unions is essential to the Party's responsibilities. Thus, members are encouraged to join the trade union in the field of a member's job, or with farmers, in the farmers' body which relates to the kind of farming carried out. Great stress is placed on work in mass organisations, urging full participation. Whole communities are involved whenever there are labour problems or strikes, giving support both moral and practical.

As members of a particular community, village, estate or town, Party groups are involved in the social life and this frequently includes attendance at funerals and weddings, which form an integral part of the life of any community.

Thus, community involvement is part and parcel of Party life and enhances the role of the Party in the community, strengthening its links with the people through mass organisations and uniting all Guyanese in struggle. In fact, such activities are in complete harmony with the theme of the Party at its 21st Congress:— **"Strengthen the Party! Defend the Masses! Liberate Guyana!"**

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