

Building Groups

by JANET JAGAN

Of paramount importance in any party, and particularly in the People's Progressive Party, is the task of building Groups. In the PPP, from its first constitution passed at the First Party Congress in 1951, the Group has always been the basic unit of the Party. **Without Groups, there is no functioning Party.**

According to our new Party Constitution, adopted by the 20th Congress in 1979, which was one of the stages of the Party's Transformation into a Marxist-Leninist type party, it is stated that the Group shall be constituted by the District Committees in consultation with the Regional Committees and the Central Committee from among the members of the Party in a place of residence, work or study in the District.

The formation of each Group is subject to the approval of, or ratification by, the Central Committee. The functions of Party Groups are stated in a few simple clauses. These include the duty of winning over new members and enlarging the Group. The education of members in Marxism-Leninism and in the spirit of dedication and loyalty to the Party and its policies is an important aspect of the Group's responsibilities.

The Group has the function of enhancing the role of the Party in the community, in the place of work and study, in mass organisations and in all organisations in which the working class and other oppressed sections of the community live and work.

The Group has as its task to agitate and struggle for the promotion and acceptance of Marxist-Leninist principles and Party policies. It is expected to apply criticism and self criticism in all its work. Its final function, according to Article 13 of the Party Constitution is to implement the decisions of higher Party bodies.

But our Party Constitution goes much further in assisting members in Groups to understand their functions and responsibilities. Article 4 of the Constitution which has 14 clauses, explains in full detail the duties and rights of members. For example, members who are

eligible are advised to belong to their respective trade unions, peasant and mass organisations. Party members are advised to work in mass, community, fraternal and other organisations.

In this vein, another Article of the Constitution clearly, and in plain language, sets out the principles of organisation, describing in full the meaning of democratic centralism. Thus, all aspects of what is expected of groups, how they are formed, how they work within the Party structure, what principles guide them, etc., are all set out clearly and fully in the Party Constitution, which exemplifies the Party's acceptance and practice of democratic centralism.

The building of strong groups is essentially linked up with the task of building a strong party. Our 21st Congress slogan "**Strengthen The Party, Defend The Masses, Liberate Guyana**" pointed strongly to this basic task of building and strengthening the Party.

Many Party groups have existed right from the beginning, and if they have lasted 36 years, we can expect such groups to stand on their own feet. Even so, as old as are some Party Groups, the need to strengthen them is always present as a duty and task. Some Groups are weak on education and must be pulled up and guided on the necessity of devoting at least one meeting a month to an educational.

Certainly, the aspect of education is vital to the transformation of the party which is an on-going process. New members are always entering the Party and they must be taught and guided to understand Marxism-Leninism, the theory which the Party is equipped with to carry out its goals.

Monthly educationals at meetings must be held and if not, the higher body, the District Committee, has the task of seeing that this function is carried out. This is an important part of party building. Without a sound theory, we cannot have activists equipped to carry out the functions of a party such as ours, which has heavy responsibilities on the national and international levels.

Winning new members (an essential aspect of Party building) cannot succeed unless hard work is done to make the Group a respected body in the community and one to which persons would aspire to join. It requires hard work in making members, going house-to-house, meeting workers at their workplace or students at their

schools and succeeding in making them new members.

Building groups also means applying the second section of the 21st Congress slogan — **“Defend the Masses”**. The Party Group must be there where the need and action is — supporting workers on the picket line, joining farmers in protests, delegations or petitions; being there, on-the-spot, to organise villagers for water and electricity supplies, better distribution of goods, defending old folks seeking pensions, and so on. All of these help the Group grow and serve to build the Party as well as the group.

Thus, community work at dozens of levels, struggling for the rights of women and youths, defending workers and farmers, bringing people into purposeful struggle — all of these build strong groups within the community or workplace, wherever they exist.

Historically, Party Groups have developed on a geographical or residential basis, that is, groups have been established village by village, where people live. Except for our groups which exist in sugar estates and are therefore based close to the workplace, most are not related to where people work. For long, industrial groups have been a serious objective of the Party — to have groups established in factories and in industries. **Greater efforts need to be made to get this idea off the ground.**

In the past, there was very strong opposition to the ideas of Marxism-Leninism. Due to the steady and valuable work of our members and all Party bodies, anti-communism has been greatly reduced. On the whole, we now work in an atmosphere where those against the tenets of Scientific Socialism are in the minority. But we have always to keep in mind that the enemies of Marxism-Leninism are strong and always working. Therefore our struggle to promote these ideas is a continuing task and one which we can never sit back and say **“no more is to be done”**.

We must keep up the tempo of this agitational and educational work by literature sales, seminars, and support for the various friendship societies of the socialist world.

A strong Group means an efficiently run group where meetings start on time, all members attend unless they have valid excuses and where record keeping and minutes are carefully taken care of. Also, meetings should be purposeful and interesting. Once they are well organised, well planned and lively, they will encourage

members to be present at all times and to give of their best.

We will learn, by long experience, that we can build a stronger Party, a stronger group when we apply the principles of criticism and self criticism to our work. On January 3, 1981, our Party's Central Committee adopted a paper on **criticism and self criticism**. This paper outlines the principles governing the application of criticism and self criticism so that groups and other party bodies can be guided correctly. This subject should be on the agendas of meetings of all Party bodies.

Groups will be stronger if the principles of accountability are applied, that is, that members given assignments are answerable and are expected to give full accounts of how they have (or have not) fulfilled missions and assignments.

Since, under the Party Constitution, District Committees are responsible for the formation of Party Groups, it also follows that District Committees are responsible for overlooking Groups and guiding them, seeing that they function, meet regularly and fulfil their many important responsibilities.

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Selling Out State Firms

Sales of state enterprises to private owners and the limitation of financial State participation in other enterprises are some of the ways which the present-day West German governmental coalition believes should improve the state budgetary balance, reduce the public debt and enable businessmen to boost the activity of the enterprises in question.

However, the fact is that this is a decision with the objective of providing profit increases for big business in the management of enterprises running in the black — as nobody has shown any interest in state enterprises condemned to bankruptcy.

Among plants and enterprises being offered to private capital are the Volkswagen car manufacturer and Lufthansa airlines.