

## PARTY LIFE:

# Representations For The People

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A very special feature of Party life concerns representational work. This takes place at several levels in the Party — directly at Freedom House, headquarters of the Party; at our two County offices, Berbice and Essequibo; at meetings when leading members, Parliamentary members and Regional Democratic Council members are present, or by correspondence and telephone.

Generally speaking, most persons or groups seeking representation go to Freedom House, which is in a central location in Georgetown. They come for a variety of reasons. Some come for help in obtaining old age pensions. Others come for assistance in getting their passports, when they have gone through normal procedures and failed. Sometimes there is a huge delegation of stallholders being harassed by municipal authorities. Groups of farmers come for representation on repairs to sea walls, kokers, dams, roads, no payment for produce, lack of agri-inputs, etc.

Frequent cases that come to the Party for help are those involved with the police — arrests, searches, harassment of all sorts, and even murders in the lock-up or beatings that lead to death. An example of this was the case of a farmer on a remote island in the Essequibo River who was assaulted by a posse of police. He was beaten and taken to Police Headquarters in Georgetown where he subsequently died in his wife's arms. Police refused to acknowledge any responsibility. Legal help was sought, and in a case that took great efforts and over two years to come to court, there was success when the court recognised that the deceased was killed by police and substantial damages were awarded.

There are every day, persons coming to Freedom House for help in seeking their rights. Some require legal assistance; some need help in obtaining medical attention; some have problems with employers; some are swindled or robbed; some homeless and destitute.

There was the case of an old Frenchman who escaped to Guyana from Devil's Island more than 40 years before and was now destitute. The PPP after trying many avenues to assist him through government agencies failed. Finally, the French government was approached to have him repatriated to his homeland, and to have him taken care of there. With the co-operation of the French authorities he reached France. Soon afterwards however, he died.

Representation is made in many ways. Some matters are referred to the Regional Democratic Councillors to raise at Council meetings, some are taken up by Members of Parliament who write letters, lead delegations, telephone ministers or government officials or put questions or motions in the National Assembly. Letters are sent, appointments made, follow-ups carried out and all efforts made to resolve problems.

The Party deals with a broad range of problems brought by people in one form of distress or another. Some just need comfort and someone to talk to. A cup of coffee and a sympathetic ear may be all that is required. There are many who want to speak to the General Secretary personally, having an abundance of confidence that he can solve the problem. People from all walks of life come to Freedom House for help or guidance, people of all races and religions.

Some matters require publicity, and a journalist from the *Mirror* is asked to take notes on what is going on; or the results of a delegation or an on-the-spot report of flooding, a raid by bandits, the search for medicine for a patient, and so on.

Freedom House is an office of constant movement — people coming in and out, discussions going on. It is rarely quiet with no one about. There are times when delegations are so big, that the Auditorium upstairs has to be used.

This particular feature of Party life is part of the uniqueness of the PPP and exists because of its heritage as the defender of the people's rights.