

The challenge to the UN will come again in Cambodia, Western Sahara, maybe elsewhere in Africa, and possibly in Europe and the Middle East. In the Commonwealth, election observer

missions are becoming an important new function for the Heads of Government and Commonwealth Parliaments and Legislatures.

As important as this historic

election was for the Namibians, it may ultimately turn out to have been even more important for the international community.

PARTY LIFE:

Caring for People

A political party is not a charitable organisation, yet a good party worth its salt cannot divorce itself from the personal problems of people. That has been the practice of the People's Progressive party from Day One. That may also be the reason why the PPP is so close to the hearts of all Guyanese and remains, after 42 years, the best loved and most popular party in Guyana. The PPP has a heart!

Helping people is part of the credo of the PPP, but obviously, the Party is first of all concerned with helping the majority of people in their struggle to survive, to have a roof over their heads and to be able to purchase the necessities of life with a living wage packet. It is concerned with health, education, taxes, environment, the economy, uplifting cultural life and a host of matters vital to life and the building of a strong, confident and happy nation.

But, in dealing with the large or macro problems, the smaller problems cannot be overlooked. That is why within the Party structure, Groups are asked to be involved in community problems - water and electricity supplies, garbage disposal, mosquito menace, servicing health centres, etc. Groups are also advised through the Party's monthly Group Newsletter, to be concerned with the problems of people in their everyday life - sickness, death, family disputes that might be settled, or the intensity reduced by a friendly negotiator and also the happier moments of being involved in weddings, births, birthdays, etc.

Freedom House, the centre of

by Janet Jagan, MP

Party life, has many visitors who come in a steady stream, requesting help. It might be only help in obtaining a birth certificate or a deed poll or a passport. Some need dire medical help and a call to a friendly doctor is all that is needed. Many come to Freedom House for help in getting their old age pensions or with problems relating to National Insurance.

There are those who seek help from the PPP in legal matters, and once there is a possibility to assist, a friendly lawyer is asked to help. There was a case in which the Party and the lawyer who helped worked for over a year to obtain justice in the case of a farmer killed by police in circumstances that did not warrant any such violent action. Good compensation was won for the widow and her children. Many matters pertaining to police abuse or neglect are brought to PPP Headquarters.

A poor man may need help with a pair of shoes which he cannot buy and the Women's Progressive Organisation comes up with a pair that just fit. Or a mother needs some clothing for her infant, and again the WPO comes up with needed garments. There are many different forms of assistance requested. One example comes to mind of a matter which we solved, and which took a lengthy period of consistent representation. A Frenchman who came to Guyana from Cayenne (Devil's Island) many years ago wanted to return to his homeland, as he was destitute. After a great effort, we arranged his return.

In another incident, an Amerindian travelled many difficult miles with his injured wife who had fallen from a tree and broken her shoulder. He arrived on a Saturday and would have had a hard time getting medical attention. We called a friendly doctor who immediately arranged for an X-Ray at his own office and treatment for the injury. We provided transportation and assisted with all arrangements. Everything turned out satisfactorily.

We have visits from blind persons, the physically handicapped, fire victims, those just robbed and no money for passage home, etc. In respect to a group of impoverished blind persons who came for help, we were able to prepare a project for Futures Funding - making mattresses. This is in the process of being completed and will help these persons to be self reliant.

We have helped a partially blind child with no living parents into a unit for the visually handicapped. We assisted a woman who was beaten while in police custody, obtain redress through representation from the Women Lawyers Association.

Parents of an escaped prisoner who died under mysterious circumstances wanted the matter investigated and we assisted in carrying it through the courts, but, unfortunately, the matter was thrown out.

And on and on it goes every day or so, with the disabled, the hungry and the abused coming to PPP Headquarters for help. And there, they get a helping hand, because the Party is a caring organisation.