

AP23

WHY COMMUNITY PROJECTS

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IN AN ATTEMPT TO RESPOND TO THE ABOVE TOPIC WE SHALL COME UP WITH A NUMBER of observations that, we believe, will help to elucidate issues under consideration. In so doing this paper will have no pretensions to being an authority on the subject but will focus on some of the mundane considerations we may have overlooked or tend to overlook in our zealous attempt "to help the needy".

We shall assume that we are all familiar with both the emotive and connotative meaning of community.. Community projects - though not the only way in which to maintain a cohesive bond between the community and the organisation - are an effective and viable means of achieving this close affinity. There are several other aspects that community projects, if correctly orientated, can contribute to achieving the objectives or elements of the objectives set by political organisations like AZAPO.

BESIDE the fact that community projects may solve or help to solve the immediate needs of the people, which in itself is of considerable significance they can also contribute to the attainment of long term political goals.

Community projects - by creation, in which people are encouraged to help themselves - throws up people whose administrative capabilities would otherwise not be revealed or realised. People gain more confidence in their own abilities to solve their problems and thereby to articulate their aspirations for themselves. Communities realise that their impotence and inability to deal with their own problems can be overcome and begin to plot their own destinies rather than having the government or surrogates of the government decide their future for them. The wretched of the earth become participants of change instead of passive victims of their environment.

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON COMMUNITY PROJECTS:

- Community projects by their very nature are short lived because they are geared to alleviating immediate needs.
 - When embarked upon by a political movement, directed at the liberation of the people, they should not be or serve to perpetuate the status quo.
 - The organisation, through its field workers, should not adopt the "big brother" attitude.
 - We should be careful of "self-help" projects which will result in being apologia for the system.
 - Any programme which does not relate or respond to the social question is doomed to be a furtherance of the system's aims.
 - The organisation should be careful not to inculcate the idea of accepting poverty because "we will always be there to provide help" We-AZAPO
 - Any educational or cultural programmes must be embarked with the view and purpose of giving political direction since people live in a political environment.
 - Finally, for any project to be successful, we should shed the paternalistic approach towards the struggle whereby we may appear to be deciding what is right for the people or what they want. We should rather work with the people and decide together with them on what is desirable and only with the political acumen we have at our command can we provide political direction necessary for an efficacious implementation of such projects.
- FORWARD WITH THE PEOPLE'S STRUGGLE! ...FACING THE CHALLENGES!

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