

for Pro PNC people

see * articles attached

PEOPLES TEMPLE AGRICULTURAL and MEDICAL PROJECT
P. O. Box 893, Georgetown, Guyana (South America)

12 August, 1978

call go in both



Dear Friend in Christ;

As fellow Christians, we are writing to you because we know that there are some who do not appreciate the efforts of an interracial group to live cooperatively in a Christian lifestyle. As you know "those who live Godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." Because we know those words to be true, we are not in the least despairing that we have faced persecutions, but we wanted to pass on to you some of the things that we are doing so that you can judge for yourself.

Peoples Temple is a group that has for thirty years devoted its energies to racial and economic equality, a goal that has taken the toll of many lives such as Martin Luther King, Jr. There are those who are racist and reactionary who do not want anyone to survive and be successful in exemplifying these ideals, if they are in any way a living proof that an interracial egalitarian lifestyle can survive. You can see for yourself when you visit Jonestown, and we welcome many guests daily, that Jonestown is a beautiful cosmopolitan community in action.

It is an obvious tactic of racists and reactionaries to discredit a person through lies and innuendo rather than to come to grips with their dedicated efforts to improve the human condition. There has never in history been anyone who has tried to assist humanity, even in the slightest way, that hasn't found an element that is anti-humanitarian and threatened by any change that benefits other than himself.

In One World Magazine, of the World Council of Churches, Peoples Temple is described as "emulating the ideals of communal sharing of the earliest Christians (Acts 2:44-46)." The article goes on to describe the Jonestown community as "an amalgam of races and ages, including over 250 senior citizens (the oldest is 107), most of whom were ghetto dwellers in the United States. In Guyana they are finding a new 'lease on life', a peaceful, wholesome environment." This life is described as representing "the heart of Christ's teachings--a way of life where selfishness, greed, and exploitation are overcome." "Since it's founding 25 years ago in Indiana by Jim Jones, Peoples Temple has stressed total racial equality, extending vital social services to needy and desperate persons."

A Tass reporter visited Jonestown recently, and though we in Peoples do not have a pro-Soviet outlook, we do practice cooperative living. The reporter described the residents as pioneers who had left the urban centers

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of the United States to provide a new life for seniors and youth. He states: "Today's Jonestown has neat houses, farm buildings, dining halls, schools, kindergardens, some cottage industries, medical clinic, and a future hospital. The medical personnel give free medical services to not only members of the community but also to surrounding villagers. Special care is given to the children. There are about 250 children in the town, many of them adopted. No less care is given to the seniors in Jonestown. After being in Jonestown, one can hardly believe that everything was created in one or two years. The inhabitants of Jonestown are creative, they love work, and they celebrate life. They demonstrate real care and concern for children and seniors alike."

X The Tass reporter quoted Bishop Jim Jones, "I have chosen Guyana first of all because this country is socialist oriented and is working towards the establishment of socialism for the most just and humane society in the world." "Peoples Temple expressed its readiness to assist the people of Guyana in this endeavor," stated the Tass reporter.

Charles Garry, a very dedicated and well-known attorney for civil rights cases, wrote a letter to the Editor of the San Francisco (Friday July 7, 1978) with his concern that the other side of the story be represented. He quotes Rev. and Mrs. John Moore who spent "in excess of two weeks at the jungle mission." Garry, who has also spent a number of days in Jonestown, felt that the "1200 people who are in Guyana pioneering a new life" should get objective coverage. The words of the Moores follow:

"I'm John Moore. I'm pastor of the First United Methodist Church in Reno, Nevada. We have two daughters who are members of the Temple; obviously my wife and I are not members of the Temple. One, the older girl's a teacher and the younger one is a nurse. The two words that come to my mind, immediately as I was there and as I tried to reflect upon my experiences were 'impressive' and 'amazing.' It almost boggles the mind to see that great clearing and to understand how so much could have been done in the relatively short period of time. I think about a thousand acres have been cleared, and it's in the midst of jungle, and that's a part of what's impressive, and all except a part of the land that's not been finally cleared, has been planted with various crops."

"I had a feeling of freedom. Neither in Georgetown, where there were about 25 or 30 people living, coming and going, all the time, with total freedom, nor at the project itself, did we--did I have--I'll let my wife speak for herself--did I have any feeling that anybody was being restrained or coerced or intimidated in any way. What did impress me was that people who were living in Georgetown, in the house there, were all eagerly waiting for the time when they could return to Jonestown, and the project itself. One of the great things, I think, is the opportunity for some of the younger people, particularly, to be learning skills when that opportunity is not present here."

"They have probably 35 pre-schoolers. I don't know how many they have in school; they have newborn babies, several babies have been born there. They have a daycare nursery for parents who work, and there are those who are caring for them, and then they have the older people. That's really a part of the beauty of it, we felt."

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"The school is accredited by the government of Guyana. They have had people from the Department of Agriculture and the agricultural stations working with the people of the project." "Health services are provided for the Amer-Indians or people who live in the community as well as members of the project itself."

Mrs. Barbara Moore said: "My impressions are, having just experienced our visit there, that this is a beautiful, heroic, creative project! It is absolutely miraculous. There are excellent medical services, excellent educational services, and...it's a community of caring and sharing with an added dimension, and this dimension I would say, is love. If you want to use that term, in a sense it reminds me of...a New Testament community, in the purest sense of the word, in the love and concern for all, that we observed. And with complete freedom for creativity; those who want to farm, are farming; those who want to teach, teach; those who like to cook, cook; they have an excellent nutritionist who is working scientifically all the time to discover new uses for the indigenous plants and growths there, and is in contact with the Guyanese experts to discover new and useful uses for these various crops there. That was very impressive to me. It was most impressive to see the elderly people, the older folks, who had their neat little yards, their white picket-type fences, and their opportunity to take classes if they wished to, or to garden, or to just sit. They also have a lovely library of over 8000 volumes, from poetry to 'how-to-do-it'..."

"It's a complete city and one thing they do encourage is the nuclear family. You can choose to have you own home, or if you're a single person, you may live in a dormitory, whichever you prefer. They have a lovely nursery for infants. They have a nursery for toddlers, and, of course, a fine educational set up."

Though we have given you the above viewpoints of Jonestown, we invite you to visit and see for yourself the kind of community that has been created there. We welcome constructive criticism and invite you to contact us directly if you find any area of our work that we can evaluate to make improvements. We also include a couple of articles for you to read. The author, Tom Fleming, is a very prominent editor of a black newspaper, the Sun Reporter, the most prestigious newspaper of its kind in California. The publisher and owner of the paper, Dr. Carleton Goodlett (Ph.D, M.D.) is President of the National Newspaper Publishers Association--head of all black press in America as well as Publisher of the Sun Reporter and Metro-Reporter Newspapers. Both gentlemen are planning to visit Jonestown and have followed and supported the work of Peoples Temple very closely in the United States. Ebony Magazine mentions Carleton Goodlett as one of the 100 most prestigious black leaders in the United States.

Thank you again for your sensitivity and understanding of our work and we are always interested in working with you and your church in Guyana in Christian endeavors.

Sincerely yours,

Sharon Amos

Sharon Amos
Assistant to Bishop Jim Jones

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