

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I am writing this in regard to the rationale of our action and the desperateness of the situation. Many of the suspicious nuances have not been outlined in the earlier chronology, but I will briefly allude to them here in confidentiality. I have asked Harriet to add some of her thought since she is far more articulate than I am.

One set of circumstances which added to our apprehensions was that various ministers high in government said that we could not trust the word of another minister. This seemed to happen to us repeatedly. We were beginning to wonder if there was anyone to trust.

Secondly, we got many promises of "Don't worry", but no tangible strategy laid out to us of how the whole situation should best be handled. We had asked on a few occasions for specifics and they were never forthcoming. We followed Luckhoo's advice but he too was counting on the return of Dr. Reid to put some sort of halt to the illegal proceedings.

Pragmatically the issue of John Stoen is not an isolated custody case to us. From the political perspective we know that if we do not get backing on this issue, how could we ever have confidence in the government backing us on far more controversial issues. We also know that if John Stoen were taken from the collective, it would be number one in a series of similar attempts. It was indeed a precedent which if successful would give many others courage to make similar attempts. It was very much for the good of the collective that we decided as a group to make a stand on the John Stoen issue. Jim had presented to the entire group the alternative that he go to jail or that he simply take John and go. Both of those alternatives were totally unacceptable to the group. Jim was willing to give up John entirely if that was the collective will. This was against the recommendation of many of us with him that it was definitely for the collective good that we defend even to death the John Stoen issue. An added factor is that no child here would ever again feel secure if we had handed over John Stoen. There would be no way to conceal this from his peers.

We had also reached the point where it was conceivable to us that a coup had indeed taken place in the absence of Reid, and the other officials. We certainly had many concrete facts to lead us to this possible conclusion. Plus; we are very aware of the political realities of the country at this time. We know its an election year, there is a serious sugar strike which will substantially impair the economic stability of the country and there is some increased desire to maintain detente with the U.S. for aid money. We are most empathetic to the struggles of this third world country. We are also aware of the fact that we must have government backing to survive here as a Socialist group. We are "more Communist" than many here, we know and we are a model to many in a very positive sense.

I feel, and others do as well, that the backing of other Socialists and Communists is most crucial to our survival here. U.S. imperialism is the main tenacles and the main counterbalance is how this country looks to the eyes of other socialists and third world nations.

If you had seen the pathos of the situation, you would immediately have known that we were not involved in any strategy. With a view of those peering at us from the bush with their binoculars, and shots fired at certain times, and with the knowledge that at any moment the Marshall could be coming in to arrest Jim, or with a search warrant (Luckhoo said a search warrant was possible), we had decided that we would die if that were required and it seemed to us that it was. We had received at that time no concrete assurances of anything. No one who has not faced death would fully understand it. --A line of people with cutlasses just waiting--

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One final factor to keep in mind was that a government official very high up told us when the John Stoen case first came up that we would just have to follow the process and that they could do nothing for us. He also said that Jim might just have to sacrifice John in the long run. This fact along with all the other events which followed added to our final resolve that we had to bring the case to the attention of all, and make a commitment on it, if the future security of the group was to be maintained. If pressure (enormous pressure) had not been brought to bear, we know that the steps later taken to help us would not have been taken. When we made our resolve we had no idea at all what the outcome would be, so we genuinely felt our resolve could easily end up in violence or death.

I have not captured the totality of the situation, nor am I fully able to translate the complexities involved. I remember just now two important points that I had earlier forgotten. A constable came just a few days prior and taped our people who were being interviewed about a robbery. I also forgot to mention that Potmore was indeed a policeman who had been sent to check us out. (that was later admitted to us by the police.) Perhaps Harriet can elaborate more on points I have missed.

*Carolyn Layton*