

FBI

TRANSMIT VIA:

- Teletype
- Facsimile
- AIRTEL

PRECEDENCE:

- Immediate
- Priority
- Routine

CLASSIFICATION:

- TOP SECRET
- SECRET
- CONFIDENTIAL
- UNCLAS E F T O
- UNCLAS

Date 3/15/79

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (89-4286)
 FROM: SAC, SACRAMENTO (89-191) (P)
 SUBJECT: RYMUR

1049 DKM
12/16/92

Re Sacramento teletype to Bureau dated 3/14/79 (u)

Enclosed for the Bureau are four copies of an LHM. (u)
 Enclosed for San Francisco are two copies of same LHM (u)

ARMED AND DANGEROUS - SUICIDAL TENDENCIES (u)

(1)

REC-120 DE-5 89-4286-2035

EX-112

MAR 17 1979

ENCLOSURE

- 2 - Bureau (Enc. 4)
 - 2 - San Francisco (89-250) (Enc. 2)
 - 2 - Sacramento
- DTS/kmc
(6)

15096
1 state
133

3/20/79
DEB/god

(Signature)

Approved: 1979

Transmitted _____

(Number)

(Time)

Per _____

FBI/DOJ

58 APR 5 1979



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

In Reply, Please Refer to
File No.

Post Office Box 13130
Sacramento, California 95813
March 15, 1979

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 12/16/92 BY 1049DKM/udm

ASSASSINATION OF CONGRESSMAN
LEO J. RYAN, NOVEMBER 18, 1979

At approximately 7:20 p.m., the Modesto, California Police Department officers were dispatched to the Motel Six, 722 Kansas Avenue, Room 106, Modesto, where People's Temple member and survivor of Jonestown, Guyana suicide, Michael Joseph Prokes, white male, born May 31, 1947, 5'9" tall, 155 pounds, residence 1701 Concord, Modesto, had shot himself in the head with a .38 caliber Smith & Wesson revolver, two inch barrel, bearing serial number 979561. (u)

Prokes had arranged with various news media on March 12, 1979, a news conference to be held at the above location at 7:00 p.m., on March 13, 1979. Prokes completed reading a five page statement of prepared press release when he excused himself and went into the bathroom, where he had apparently secreted the above described weapon and placed a suicide note. The note is attached herewith. (u)

Guyana

89-4286 -
2035

ENCLOSURE

Don't accept anyones analysis or hypothesis that this was the result of despondency over Jonestown. I could live and cope with despondency.

No, was it an act of a "disturbed" or "programmed" mind -- in case someone tries to pass it off as that.

The fact is that a person can rationally choose to die for reasons that are just, and that's what I did.

If my death doesn't prompt another look at what brought about the end of Jonestown, then life wasn't worth living anyway.

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12/16/92 BY [signature]

RYMUR

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MAR 12 1992 BY 10495 km/rdm

Prokes immediately taken to Doctor's Hospital in Modesto and was later pronounced dead at 10:44 p.m. (u)

Interview of news media present at Modesto Police Department substantiated Proke's prior arrangement of press conference and reading of five page statement. Prokes was asked by a newsman, Edmond Kent Pierce, employed by KCRA TV, Channel 3, Stockton, California, "Was Jimmy Jones responsible for ordering the murders in Guyana?" At that point Prokes excused himself to go to the bathroom and after about one or two minute interval, they heard a shot ring out. (u)

Prokes' brother, Thomas Prokes, perfectly described the weapon, stating it had belonged to his brother for several years and was obtained from unknown persons of the People's Temple in San Francisco, California. Prokes' statement to the press is attached. (u)

Why did Jonestown end the way it did? I believe at least a good part of that answer can be found on the tape recording of the last hour of life in Jonestown. Unfortunately, the tape has never been played publicly and is being kept locked up by either the Attorney General's office or the F.B.I. But I don't find that surprising in light of what an American Embassy officer told me was on that tape. Last December at the Matthews Ridge Guest House (located about 40 miles from Jonestown), a young man attached to the American Embassy named Charles English (who is 27 years old and had spent one year in foreign service) described parts of the tape recording to myself, Tim Carter and two reporters whose names I can't recall. Probably the most significant thing he said was that he thought the tape would never be played publicly because it would be an embarrassment to the United States. He said it reveals that the people of Jonestown were not coerced into taking their lives, but rather the deaths resulted basically from a collective decision based upon the perception that the community was doomed and there was no use to continue. English said that while he and a number of others were listening to the tape in Georgetown, U.S. Ambassador John Burke came into the room and also listened to it. When it was finished, Burke told those in the room, in no uncertain terms, that they had better not breathe a word of what they heard. He then took the tape into his personal custody.

Another official, the man who headed the Guyanese end of the investigation into Jonestown, corroborated what English said was on the tape. But he went even beyond what English said. Skip Roberts (Guyana's Crime Chief) told me in a private conversation, the day before I left Guyana, that the tape showed solidarity of the people of Jonestown. He said he was deeply moved by what he heard. He said that if he were in Jonestown at the time of the deaths, he could see how he would have willingly died with the people, had he been part of the community. Moreover, he told me he believed there was ^{some} outside plan to destroy Jonestown.

This was no crackpot making wild statements, but Guyana's number two law

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(u)

enforcement official, trained by academies in the U.S., who is highly respected and has a reputation for being incorruptible. But it's doubtful that he can admit publicly the things he said to me in private. He may do it but it's a touchy political issue. Guyana feels it can ill afford to offend or embarrass the U.S. while it has an outstanding I.M.F. loan and is seeking additional aid. (English of course would be risking his ^{position} to admit what he told us about the tape and Ambassador Burke.)

But if there is nothing to hide, then whoever has the tape should be willing to make it public. It seems to me that a recording of the last hour of life for over 900 people is extremely relevant and crucial for the public to hear. I have no doubt whatsoever that the recording was made intentionally. It was found on the tape machine in the pavilion, where meetings ~~are~~ ^{were} normally recorded and where it was in full view of scores of people. Jones asked that all meetings be recorded and I have no doubt that the last meeting was any exception because I believe he wanted to leave something that would prove why the people died. An article in Rolling Stone magazine said it concisely: It stated, "The mass suicides of history, Masada and Saipan, had occurred when a people were under siege and surrounded by enemies. Jones and the people of Jonestown were no exception: for months they had been harassed, persecuted, surrounded and besieged by shadow forces. When the final attack was imminent and undeniable, they chose to die."

I believe the tape will corroborate this, and I am convinced that its contents have been deliberately misrepresented to the press. Why is it being kept locked up? Because its contents would help to reveal the truth about Jonestown, that's why. The press should demand that the tape be made public. I'm not talking about a transcript, either, because the Embassy officer (Chas. English) said a transcript would not give an accurate portrayal of what was going on-- there were too many overlapping voices. In order to be properly evaluated and understood, the entire 50 minutes of the original tape should be played to the press, unedited and

uncensored. (The Guyanese were provided a copy of the tape by American officials, but it may not be the same one Skip Roberts heard.)

It would take a lot of pressure for that tape to be played because I believe, from the accounts I've been given, it would reveal too clearly something that the government does not want to admit, and cannot admit-- that Jonestown represents a symbol of the massive institutional failure of this country to meet the needs of its own citizens. It's no coincidence that most of the members of Peoples Temple were black, when you consider that most of the inhabitants of the huge slums and ghettos in virtually every large city of America are black. They don't like living in misery and if they could get out they would, but they aren't being provided the opportunities they need to do so. That's why so many blacks joined Peoples Temple-- it provided the opportunity to escape the misery of their lives in the ghetto. Jim Jones jumped into the vacuum created by the failure of this system to meet the needs of its black people. He then met those needs that had been neglected and gave the credit to socialism. The U.S. Intelligence apparatus would obviously feel duty-bound to stop him, particularly in light of their history and reputation for going after progressive political and civil rights organizations.

(u)

Beyond the satisfaction of their material needs, people found dignity and pride in the Temple that racism had previously denied them. But attempts to deny Temple members their new found freedom--and to us it was freedom--still persisted even after the move was made to another country. And that's why so many chose to die in the end. It was a moral act of courage and commitment to their beliefs. They were saying, "We're not going to take anymore. We'll die by our own hand rather than be destroyed or broken-up by the long arm of the oppressor."

What I'm saying is that the reason so many people died and took their children's lives is because they believed their community--that they had built with their own hands--was under siege by the United States government, which I agree was the case. The State Dept. was well aware of the Temple's negotiations to move to the Soviet

Union in order to escape the threats to its security in Guyana. Undoubtedly the State Dept. and the CIA wanted to prevent a tremendous Soviet propaganda victory based upon nearly 1000 Americans moving to the Soviet Union in quest of the Human Rights they had been denied in the U.S. But to what lengths was the State Dept. prepared to go to discredit Jonestown? Would they sacrifice a congressman? Evidently. Otherwise, why did they allow Congressman Ryan to go to Jonestown when they were told in a legal affidavit that there was arms there and they knew the visit would be considered an act of provocation. Why did they allow it? Because the State Dept. wanted an incident. Well, they got it. I'm not even convinced that they got more than they bargained for, since the affidavit also told of suicide rehearsals-- and warned the State Dept. that they should be taken seriously. Moreover, in a letter from Peoples Temple to the State Dept., it was stated that Temple members would rather die than be harassed from continent to continent. The State Dept. purposely called the bluff by sending Ryan; it was a deliberate act of provocation.

Y

(U)

I believe in the basic rightness of the life and work that went on in Jonestown, and I can't disassociate myself from the people who died, nor do I want to. They were beautiful people who cared about each other and who identified with all people who suffer oppression and persecution around the world. Jonestown functioned on a high level of ethical behaviour and human devotion that you had to see and experience in order to comprehend. The rights of the individual were respected and defended; sharing and concern for others was a requirement. These things were like a code of the community. The people weren't brainwashed fanatics or cultists-- the Temple was not a cult. It was a political organization that built its own socialist community. It might be fair to say they were fanatical in one sense: After moving 6000 miles to get away from racism and harassment, they weren't going to be pushed around anymore. Maybe it sounds trite but they were saying basically the same thing as Patrick Henry, that is, "Let us have our freedom, or we will die."

But the State Dept. and C.I.A. couldn't afford to let such a large group of socialists from the United States find freedom in another land. So they harassed us by sending their lackeys, through Tim Stoen, to Guyana and deliberately played upon the paranoia that existed in Jonestown, until they finally got what they wanted.

The truth about Jonestown is being covered up because our government agencies were involved in its destruction up to their necks. I am convinced of this because, among many other reasons, I was an informant when I first joined Peoples Temple. I didn't remain one, however, because I came to realize that the Temple was probably the only hope for the many people it was helping off the streets, off of drugs, out of crime, and out of mental institutions, jails, and prisons. I learned to identify with these people until they became my brothers and sisters and then I understood what it meant to be black and old and poor in this society--the hell of living everyday in fear.

(M)

The people of Jonestown died--as one suicide note said-- because they weren't allowed to live in peace. They died because they didn't want to be left with no choice but to come back to live in the rat-infested ghettos of America. They died for all those who suffer oppression. I refuse to let my black brothers and sisters and others in Jonestown, die in vain.

One man they tried to use was Jos. Major, a
part det. who said he was hired to get the
children out of JIT by using Goph weapons &
mercenaries. He told us he abandoned ~~the~~ the plan
when he saw there was no border wire, no gun
towers & no armed patrols as he was led to believe. (U)
Major knew there ~~was~~ was a conspiracy & that's
why he ~~ended up~~ ^{insisted on getting} gathering of a 2 ft. vest & ~~offering~~ ^{offering}
JIT security personnel on the use of weapons

RYMUR

Photostatic copies of additional papers in the possession of Prokes at the press conference, which were apparently distributed to the various news media present, attached.

(u)

In October of 1972 I called Jim Jones' house at the number listed in Redwood Valley to try to set up an interview with him for the news. I talked with a woman, a senior named Ester Mueller, who Jones had taken in. I told her of my interest and she suggested I call the S.F. Temple where Jones was at that time. I called but was told to call back on the weekend. A few days later I received a call at my office from a man who asked if I would meet with him to discuss the Peoples Temple. I found the request very curious; I said o.k. and we met the next day in a Stockton restaurant. The man told me his name was Gary Jackson. I asked him what he did and he said that he worked for the government, but I couldn't get him to be more specific. He asked what prompted my interest in Peoples Temple. I asked him how he knew that I was interested in the Temple. He paused for a few moments, then said something to the effect-- "There are ways if you think about it." The answer was obvious-- Jones' phone was tapped. I told him that a series of articles in the S.F. Examiner prompted my interest. I said I wanted to look into some of the things the articles said about Jones and the Temple, and if I found them to be true, I was planning to do an exposé for our TV news program. Jackson (somehow I doubt that was his real name) said there was a lot more to the Temple than what the Examiner wrote. He said it was a revolutionary organization led by a dangerous man, bent on destroying our system of government. He talked to me a while longer, telling me various things Jones had supposedly said and done, then he made a proposal. He said if I could be successful at joining the Temple full time as a staff member and report regularly on what was going on inside the organization, he would arrange for me to be paid \$200 a week.

In thinking back upon it, I must have been checked-out and considered to be a good prospect since I had been a dedicated Christian church-goer, attended college in conservative Orange County, good student with no involvement in any kind of organization or activity that could be considered "questionable." I told

the man that I found his offer intriguing but that I first wanted to pay a visit to the Temple. He agreed, saying I wouldn't be able to join on the first visit anyway. But he said I wouldn't be able to get a good picture of the organization until I was inside it, because the public meetings were only so much posturing. I arranged to attend a service at which I heard Jones preach. Later, I got to talk with him privately. I was surprised to hear him speak so openly against the system in my presence, particularly so soon after the negative publicity about him. But I was fascinated by his ministry and I thought it would make great stuff for a book or screenplay, which I thought I might like to write. I talked with Jones for at least two hours. I asked him if he needed more staff. He said he could use as many as were willing to work voluntarily with the Temple providing only living expenses. I told him it was something I wanted to give serious thought to, and he said he would be thrilled to have me. (M)

Jackson called me a couple of days later and I told him I was going to quit my job and accept his offer. I didn't tell him I wanted to write a book about the Temple. Arrangements were made for me to be paid (the payments were left for me at various predesignated locations, always in the form of cash enclosed in plain white envelopes.) My reports were made verbally (from pay phones at which I was called) because it was too risky to write anything, as there was a lot of suspicion in the Temple (as one might imagine) of a reporter who quit his rather prestigious job as a bureau chief to join an organization that didn't pay any salaries.

As time passed, I gradually began to feel conflict over my role as an informant, even though I wasn't providing what one might call valuable or sensitive information. I was starting to identify with the problems and sufferings of the members. As I observed various ones troubles being resolved by the Temple's program, the conflict I was feeling turned to guilt. I had been watching Jones for sometime, as closely as possible without drawing attention to myself. His schedule was unbelievable. He was up at all hours calling people on the phone, consulting, reading

reports, and staying in touch with every phase of the organization. It was obvious he worked harder than anyone-- but I questioned his motives. Personally, I didn't like the man after the first few months I was in the Temple. But I recognized that it was for reasons that were subjective and which I didn't want to affect my judgment of his character. One thing I was noticing was that he was almost always the first to notice someone's need and point it out-- a senior in a packed auditorium without a chair, for example, or ~~inquisition about~~ ^{interest in} someone's health who lived alone. He was always dealing with needs and often ones that weren't that obvious to others. He seemed unusually sensitive. Everytime I saw him he was expressing concern, or doing something for someone or asking that it be done. But he didn't leave it at that. He was keen on following-up on whether the thing he had asked be done for someone, was actually carried out. Still, in view of all this, I didn't give him the benefit of the doubt. I had to be sure about him.

One day I had taken some letters to his apartment in the S.F. Temple just as he was coming out the door. He was late for an appointment, so he told me to put the letter on a table inside. He left and then I went out. I started back to my office and then changed my mind and went downstairs to get a drink from the water fountain. Down the hall I noticed Jones had stopped and watched for a moment as an elderly woman moved slowly up another staircase. Jones didn't see me as he was facing the other way, and there was no one else around. Even though he was late for his appointment, he was going to take another five minutes to help that woman up the long flight of stairs (She could not have seen Jones as her back was to him.) He went up and began assisting her and then I intervened and told him to go ahead to his appointment. That act of kindness did it for me. I had become virtually convinced of Jones' sincerity. I had finally seen him do something in private that I had suspected he only did in public or when others were around to see it. I became even more convinced of his basic integrity on subsequent occasions in which

I observed his actions--for example, toward animals--when he was unaware that I (or anyone for that matter) was around.

But that first occasion was enough for me. I could no longer justify informing on Jones and his organization. During my next contact, I told Jackson what I thought of Jones and he desperately tried to convince me I was wrong. I told him I had to act according to what I had seen and experienced, and my conscience simply wouldn't allow me to continue selling information that might be used against an organization I believed in. I told him that even though I didn't particularly care for Jones and I didn't agree with some ways in which his organization was run, I felt it was making tremendous achievements in terms of human rehabilitation and improvement in the quality of peoples lives and character. He asked me what I planned to do. I told him I was going to stay with the Temple and possibly write a book about it. He urged me not to tell Jones about him and I told him I saw no reason why I should do that unless I suspected someone else was taking my place.

Handwritten marks on the right margin, including a vertical line and a circled '4'.

6 2

that it would not be able to confirm its yellow headlines of the past because it would hurt its credibility and, more importantly, it would mean fewer bucks from the sale of other headlines in the future. After all, the Examiner created some of its most sensational banner headlines using the Temple.

One got the feeling, in Jonestown, of being backed up against the wall-- not being able to win for losing. But when Congressman Ryan--whose May, 1978 letter to us declared his sympathy for Mr. Tim Stoen--announced his intentions to come, with media, the feeling of being entrapped turned to belief-- it had to be a set up. Paranoia? I doubt it, but even if it was, the key question in all this is-- who created it? Who tapped the Temple's phones in California? Who was blackmailing Dennis Banks to get at us? Who was putting up all the money for the Stoen-Mazor operations? Does Joseph Mazor now deny that when he came to Jonestown last year he told us that he was hired to come there months earlier with sophisticated arms and mercenaries on a mission to "get the children out" and that if he had to wipe out hundreds of adults in the process, he was prepared to do that. But the plan was abandoned, he said, because he saw no evidence--such as gun towers, barbed wire and armed patrols, which he was told existed--that anyone was being held against their will. (A Ukiah Daily Journal article or editorial once mentioned a "concerned relative's" desire to use mercenaries to get people out of Jonestown.) Was that venture what turned Mazor against Tim Stoen-- because Stoen had lied to him about Jonestown? (Both during and after Mazor's subsequent visit to Jonestown, he said, on at least two occasions, "I hate your politics, but I love what you're doing here.") If there wasn't a conspiracy to destroy Jonestown, why did Mazor insert or get into a bullet proof vest and offer to train the community's security personnel in the use of weapons?!

(u)

I believe Tim Stoen was a CIA operative, if not from the beginning, then certainly long before the end. Where was the money coming from to keep him on the Temple's case full-time with an office, to hire a private detective (Mazor) and a prominent S.F. public relations firm (Lowery, Russom, & Leeper) to work against the Temple. Where was the money coming from to send relatives and attor-

neys to Guyana and put them up in the best hotels while they did their dirty work? There was too much money behind Tim Stoen. And why did he suddenly decide he wanted his wife's son back, who he knew was fathered by Jim Jones-- a fact both he (Stoen) and she acknowledged publicly and privately in the Temple. Moreover, Jones had no reason for claiming the child from virtually the time of his birth, if the child was not in fact Jones'. But suddenly Grace and Tim Stoen were back together again, in public, acting as if they were reconciled, after literally hating each other for years (since 1972, in fact, when I lived with them near Redwood Valley) and during a period when Grace was living with another man. But Stoen's announced goal was the destruction of Jim Jones and the Temple. He realized the child was a point of vulnerability because he knew Jones wouldn't give him up even if a court directed him to do so. Stoen knew he had an advantage, being the husband of the child's mother, and he also knew it would be virtually impossible to prove he was not the father since he and Jones had the same blood type. But when the Guyana courts failed to make a decision in the case, Stoen applied more pressure on another front. Using the so-called "Concerned Relatives", Stoen kept the pressure on by hitting again at what he knew to be Jones' most vulnerable area-- his loyalty to his members. He promised never to give up anyone who didn't want to leave. So all these "concerned relatives" show up in Guyana with Congressman Ryan (supposedly on separate missions)-- some of whom were so concerned that they hadn't bothered to even call or write their Temple relatives in years. They suddenly show up and discover that all of their relatives in Jonestown are happy and don't want to leave. But unfortunately, in the process, about 20 persons (~~some of them~~) did want to leave, triggering the tragic incidents that Stoen and the forces backing him were hoping for. And now Stoen has quietly disappeared from the scene.

↑
 (M)

For clarification: I am convinced beyond all doubt that there was no conspiracy from within Peoples Temple to kill Con. Leo Ryan. Tim Carter was sent to the States to deliver some legal documents. While he was there, Terri Buford left the Temple and said she was going underground to get information about the conspiracy against the Temple. Jones and others around him (i.e., Harriet Tropp, Carolyn Layton, & Maria Katsaris) doubted that her real intention was to get information for the Temple. They thought her letter was a smokescreen for getting out altogether. According to Harriet Tropp, Jones instructed her to give a message to S.F. to have Carter infiltrate the "Concerned Relatives" to see what he could find out about Buford. That was Carter's mission. It was already known that Ryan was planning to come to Jonestown. When Carter returned to the project, he told Jones that Stoen & the "Concerned Relatives" were counting on an overreaction on the part of Jones and the Temple to Ryan's visit. From that point on, Jones desperately tried to keep Ryan from coming in. Jones feared that Ryan was coming to deliberately provoke an incident and that he was bringing the media to record it. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ ~~xx~~ One thing in particular that added credence to Jones' and others fears was that Ryan showed up totally unannounced at the Temple's Georgetown headquarters late one night (just prior to flying out to the project). Then the next day at a press conference, it appeared evident that he was attempting to set the stage for ~~his~~ the ~~xxxxxxx~~ type of investigation he would seek to make into Jonestown. He said he was concerned about a church that had no signs of religion at its headquarters. He also made deprecating remarks about members of the Georgetown household because they appeared to be stand-offish. After Ryan's press conference, Jones and his staff were convinced that the community was in for a rough time with Ryan. Then Ryan announced that he was coming in, welcome or not, with the media. That was the worst thing he could have said. It came across as a virtual threat, made by an arrogant white person representing the American ~~xxxxxx~~ "establishment" which had failed the blacks and the poor who--for that very reason--were attempting to build a new life where ^{they had feared} ~~there was~~ an opportunity to do so. Ryan's actions only served to confirm

the suspicion that he was coming to discredit Jonestown ~~x~~ by provoking an incident which, if it didn't serve ~~to~~ pre-empt the planned move to the Soviet Union, at least would lessen or ~~him~~ eliminate the propaganda value for the Soviets. (The State Dept. was well aware of the Temple's plans to move and that Sharon Amos was meeting regularly at the Soviet Embassy. The American Embassy called the Temple's C/town headquarters after the first two meetings or so and asked why were we visiting the Soviet Embassy. Deborah Blakey who later defected also informed the American Embassy and the State Dept. of the Temple's plans.)

A final effort to prevent Ryan's visit ~~was made following~~ came via instructions from Jones to block the runway at Port Kaituma so that his plane couldn't land. The instructions couldn't be carried out, however, because members of the Guyana Defense Force were at the airstrip ~~repairing~~ repairing an airplane. ~~and~~ It was felt by Johnny Jones and Jim McElvane that the GDF would have interfered with any attempt to prevent a Guyana Airways plane from landing. ~~After~~ So the plane landed, and after much discussion, it was decided that it would be better to let Ryan come in than to have him ^{come out} ~~come out~~ to the entrance of the project with the media and create a scene for the benefit of the cameras. ~~Thus~~ Thus, Ryan and his aide were allowed in and, later, Jones succumbed to the pressure to allow the media in also. The rest is history.

(M)

I don't believe the knife attack on Ryan in Jonestown was ordered. Ryan had announced that he was still going to give a favorable report on the community even after the 20 or so people chose to leave. The individual who attacked Ryan was a machismo-type ex-Navy man. Some of the young guys he worked with in Georgetown would make fun of him because he was always trying to outdo the others in their work, such as loading the Temple truck and boat. Also, this man admitted during a ~~his~~ catharsis meeting that he fantasized being a hit-man. I believe this man, Don Sly, was acting on his own.

I don't know how the final attack at the airport came about. But I do remember hearing Jones say, following Ryan's departure from Jonestown, something to the effect that the lid was off or he didn't see how he could keep the lid on any longer. (I took ~~his~~ this statement to be in reference to those who always wanted to answer the Temple's problems with violence.)

(W)

When speaking during a service in one of the California Temples, Jones would usually trace the oppression of blacks and other minorities to current times. It was almost like a history lesson. He would give long and specific accounts of how blacks, particularly, have been victimized by racism and capitalist exploitation. He would rattle off relevant statistics and examples in meticulous detail. For many blacks who came with no education to speak of, often blaming themselves for conditions they didn't understand, having little sense of self-worth and actually feeling inferior because they had been beat down by white standards and white institutions for so long-- for them, Jones was a hell of an eye-opening experience. It wasn't brainwashing that Jones was engaged in-- it was more like deprogramming. Jones was educating and the effect was therapeutic for thousands who heard him and whose lives were in a state of confusion from feeling imprisoned in a society they were told was free. He liberated many minds out of their confused states by demonstrating why there are huge ghettos in every large city of America and why those ghettos are populated mostly by blacks. He laid the blame squarely at the feet of white racism and a socio-economic system that clearly puts profit motives above human values, resulting in the lack of opportunity necessary for blacks to enter the mainstream of American life. This was not a demagogic approach Jones was taking, either. He had too much of a grasp of his subject; he was too concerned about minute details-- details that a demagogue need not bother with in order to achieve his objectives. Not that emotion wasn't involved-- it was. But it was aroused by the sheer logic of his presentations which were backed up by an impressive array of facts, statistics and documentation gathered from a massive amount of reading.

There was no way anyone could dispute what Jones said about the social ills of the society and how blacks were the victims. Others, far less progressive than he, were saying the same things. It was Jones' lucidness that made him effective-- what he said made sense. When he would spend hours attempting to show how the system

was to blame for the conditions of blacks in the U.S., he was convincing. He became even more convincing when the government, inspite of itself, gave credibility to his thesis. For example, in 1968 the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, a bi-partisan committee formed by the Johnson Administration, concluded its report with a seering indictment of our system, which declared, "This nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white--separate and unequal." It put the basic blame on "white racism" which it said was created, maintained, and condoned by white institutions. Here was a respected commission, made up of respected public leaders who were charged by the President with determining the root causes of civil disorder, and it laid the blame right where it belonged. Not surprisingly, however, its recommendations for remedying the situation were not carried out and thus we^{are} still left with conditions akin to urban apartheid and the danger of blacks taking to the streets again, as moderate voices (such as Vernon Jordan and Benjamin Hook) warn us. The American system continues to fail its black citizens, and not from any lack of prompting by black leaders. The significant thing is that it is this failure that allowed Jim Jones--no matter what perception one might have of him--to do what he did with Peoples Temple. There is no getting around it-- Jones jumped into the vacuum created by this system's failure to meet the needs of its people. And that may^{well} be the key lesson to be learned from Jonestown.

W

It is with reluctance that I discuss the healing aspect of Jones' ministry because it will doubtless take away from the credibility of things I say about other areas, at least in some people's minds. First of all, some don't believe in the paranormal at all and will automatically use this to discredit other items they choose not to believe. While there are those who believe in its possibilities, they've been so prejudiced by news stories portraying Jones in the worst possible light that they won't allow themselves to be open to this aspect. Thus, I'm left with appealing to perhaps a few persons who can realize that I have nothing to gain by getting into this area. I'm doing so because I don't want to be accused of avoiding it; moreover, I want to tell what I know to be the truth. The last impression I would want to give anyone was that Jones was some superhuman being because he had the ability to heal. On the contrary, he was only too human. But somehow he was able to utilize a dimension of the mind that most people haven't tapped. (4)

There were times when Jones would request that everyone in the particular service he was conducting, who had some form of crippling affliction, form a line. Usually hundreds of people would respond on such occasions. It wasn't only people who were crippled in some way who got in line, however. People with all kinds of physical problems and infirmities--thinking it might be their only chance--also got in line.

The healing session was usually the last part of the service, coming after Jones had spoken anywhere from two to four hours. But when he called for people to line up for healing, it would usually take at least several hours more to get through the line because he worked with each person individually. After it was over, virtually every person said they had received some measure of relief, if not total healing. It was too much to be denied even by the most hardened skeptic. Some of it was no doubt psychosomatic (which Jones said himself)-- but not all of it. One could observe actual physical transformations take place with hands or

fingers crippled up with arthritis, for example. Elderly persons who were familiar to everyone and who for months and sometimes years had moved painfully slow, suddenly walked at a more brisk pace after Jones had attended to them. There can be no question that Jones possessed a phenomenal ability to heal. Normally, he would call people out from the pulpit, one-by-one, for healing. But on those infrequent occasions that he allowed people to get in line, the visible results would convince the most cynical observer. Also, Tim Carter and Laurie Efrein were among those who handled hundreds of letters a month containing expressions of gratitude and testimony from persons who said they were healed through Jones.

The significance of all this to me, however, is not that Jones could heal, but rather that if he had wanted power in terms of gaining the largest number of worshippers and raising the maximum amount of money, he knew that all he had to do was limit his ministry to healing. This is ^{an UNDO} where those who have accused Jones of being power-hungry are misguided. He could have had hundreds of thousands of followers and raised many more millions of dollars than he did, because the vast majority came to Jones' services to get healed, not to hear his social-political message. If he had just stuck to healing alone, he could have had tens of thousands of people in idolatrous worship of him, and he knew it. But his main thrust was ^{socialist} politics and the struggle for civil rights and social justice, and when he got into it, most of the healing crowd was turned off. His message was what kept people from returning, but he kept on with it knowing full well the effect it was having. He would often say, "If I would just keep my mouth shut and stick to healing, I could pack out the largest auditoriums."

People didn't want to hear Jones' message because it required something of them. It made them feel responsible to do something ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ to help improve or correct the conditions they were hearing about. They didn't want to hear ^{the} ~~the~~ message because it upset their lives by pricking their consciences, particularly

those who were living rather well off and were looking for ways to feel good about themselves. But they came to the wrong place to feel good because Jones always spoke about a world filled with inequities and the myriad injustices that created them. He spoke in a manner that compelled people to face themselves in terms of viewing their lives in relation to such a world (populated by "have" and "have-not" nations and peoples). That's no doubt why few people of means (or those who aspired to it) stayed with the Temple. The only thing they understood about equality was that it meant sacrifice-- something they were not prepared to do.

(4)

Misc. Reflections

If you can believe anything anyone says about Jonestown, you can believe this: For an integrated community, populated by a virtual cross-section of the human race, it was the most racially harmonious I've ever seen or heard about. It's value system was different. It was based on a code of consideration, respect and concern for people, and the progress being made along these lines was remarkable considering the number of so-called misfits and outcasts that were there. The children were learning how to share and to be concerned as much about the welfare of others as they were about their own welfare.

The vast majority of the people (well over 90% I would estimate) loved Jonestown, and there was a tremendous will for it to succeed, against all the odds. And it was succeeding. It was an incredibly productive and creative community that was viewed as a co-operative model by virtually everyone who visited. Not that it was without faults; however, its bad points were nothing compared to the way it was portrayed by those who left the Temple-- individuals who simply did not like living in the jungle under an extremely structured program, most of which was essential in dealing with the various types of people there.

It is important to realize that Jonestown had ex-cons, former drug addicts, individuals who were classified as social deviants, youth who came or were brought to the Temple as emotionally disturbed, maladjusted, and hyper-active, (not to mention those who were physically handicapped and mentally retarded)-- you name it and they were there. Why did they end up in Peoples Temple? Obviously, because U.S. society and its institutions had failed them. With these types of persons there had to be a tight structure. Sure there were some excesses, but nothing like the fabrications and exaggerations made up by those who decided to leave because they considered it too much of a sacrifice to make. (The vast majority of them were selfish whites.) They had to justify to themselves why they were leaving, in order to be able to live with their consciences. That's why they made Jonestown out to be something it was not. Well, it may not have been paradise to them, but it was paradise to those who suffered the day-to-day struggle of life in America's slums.

Misc. reflections

All kinds of people came to Peoples Temple and with every kind of problem. For many it was their last resort. Seeing their problems made my worst ones seem petty. I became conscience-stricken and, realizing there was nothing more worthwhile that I could do with my life, I decided to stay on indefinitely. Somehow, as difficult as it may be to believe, I don't regret that decision. The experience made me a realist about life and about people. It gave me as much insight into myself as I had the courage to face. (I know the same is true of others, as I have heard different ones make similar statements). Beyond that, it gave me about as accurate a picture as a white person can hope to get of what it means to be black in America. It also gave me a unique perspective and insight into the nature of the American system, and how that system functions.

Except for the first few months in the Temple, I never really liked Jim Jones. I guess it was his authority that bothered me, although I often saw the necessity for it. I recognize that my dislike for him stems from feelings that are purely subjective and which I don't want to color my portrayal of him. One thing about the man that I had to respect was that he did practice what he preached. Despite how some have portrayed him, he really didn't live above the people. (Maybe he did in minor ways but he always had a very modest lifestyle, even in the U.S.) In Jonestown, he spent most of his time in his quarters which consisted of one, approximately 12' x 18' room. Basically the same thing was true of him in San Francisco where he lived in a small apartment inside the Temple. And, in fairness, I know that the vast majority of Temple members did not feel the dislike for Jones that I felt.

~~Why was the move made?~~

Why was the move ^{to Guyana} made? Perhaps the answer is best stated by former Methodist District Superintendent, Dr. John Moore, who now pastors his own church-- First Methodist of Reno, Nevada. Rev. Moore had two daughters in the Temple, and he and his wife, Barbara, visited them in Guyana. He was familiar with ~~XXXXXX~~ Jim Jones, the Temple, its programs, and a number of its members. In a statement to the House Committee on International Affairs, Rev. Moore wrote--

"The people went to Jonestown with hope, hope which grew out of a loss of hope in the U.S. There can be no understanding of movements such as Peoples Temple and Jonestown apart from this loss of hope. They migrated, because they had lost hope in any commitment of the American people or the Congress to end racial discrimination and injustice. They had lost hope in the people and the legislatures to deal justly and humanely with the poor. ...Older people went to Jonestown hoping to become free of purse snatchings, muggings, and the harshness of the urban scene. Some young people hoped to learn new skills, or to become free from pressures of peers in the crime and drug scenes. People went to Jonestown to find freedom from the indignity our society heaps upon the poor. They went with hope for a simple, quiet life. ...They saw themselves leaving a materialistic society where things are valued more than people. Many went as pioneers to create a new community in the jungle. Still others saw in Jonestown a vision of a new society, a wave of the future."

It's interesting that Rev. Moore says the people went to Jonestown to escape indignity. The President of the Southern Christian Leadership ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Conference, Rev. Joseph Lowery, has never met Rev. Moore, but came up with the same assessment after doing his own investigation. Rev. Lowery went to Guyana in

the aftermath of the tragedy out of concern that Jonestown represented a failure of American churches to meet the needs of the "hopeless." After visiting the project and interviewing a number of survivors, he concluded that it was "dignity-creating programs" that drew the people to Guyana, and he expressed surprise at the "incredible progress" Temple members had made in developing the project.

It is true, the Temple had lost all hope and faith in America. Jones saw no hope for changing the basic profit-greed system. Capitalism was too entrenched, there was no strong socialist movement, and the working-class consciousness was misdirected. Additionally, in light of what was happening to other progressive groups and organizations, Jones knew that Peoples Temple would come under increasing scrutiny and harassment, particularly in view of the way the Temple was operated. Its activism brought too much notoriety. And already the Temple had suffered damaging publicity; already the phones had been tapped; already the San Francisco headquarters had been destroyed by arson; and already a number of persons had left who had shown themselves to be active enemies. It was obvious to Jones that his organization would not be allowed to survive in the U.S. as a socialist entity. He saw no choice but to build an alternative community in another country.

Jones didn't think it would be possible to move everyone en masse to the Soviet Union, which he would have preferred doing particularly for reasons of collective security and protection from U.S.-based enemies. The information that he was given from persons supposedly knowledgeable about Soviet affairs was that the Soviets would not take in such a large group directly from the U.S. Thus, Jones concluded that he would have to establish in some other country first, and Guyana was it.

In 1975, a push toward communal living began in San Francisco and Los Angeles. The Redwood Valley Temple already had most of the members in that area of the state living communally, as it was the original headquarters of Peoples Temple in California. After S.F. became the headquarters, approximately 70 communal residences were organized in that city alone. Virtually everyone who lived communally planned on moving to Guyana. Actually, communal living was an understood requirement for those who wanted make the move to Jonestown. The members understood that becoming a communal member meant, by its very concept, turning over all of one's financial assets, including homes and property. The Temple, in turn, would then provide for the person's housing, food, medical-dental and educational needs, and living expenses, such as transportation, clothes, toiletries, etc. (W)

It was through the communal process that the Temple ended up with so much property. It wasn't a matter of coercing people into giving it, as has been charged. It was something the members knew was a requirement if they expected to stay in the Temple and go to Guyana. Many people stayed in the Temple, right to the end, who never tithed, much less went communal. And most people who did go communal had no property or savings to give. The ones who did turn over assets were given no special privileges. Once communal, everyone lived on the same basic level. *(The finances were being kept in reserve in preparation for another move, which would have meant starting all over again after Guyana.)*

In Jonestown, the vast majority of the people loved their new life. They were building their own community, their own future and their children's, with their own hands. They took great pride in the fact that the Guyana government considered it a model co-operative project in line with the country's own goals.

Although living conditions were crowded, the people were reasonably comfortable, particularly when you consider that this was truly a pioneering effort. A sawmill had been built for lumber production, and some 70,000 board measurement of lumber was on its way from Georgetown for use in the construction of over 100 new houses.

Although the food was limited in variety and consisted mainly of vegetables, cassava (the main crop), and rice mixed with pork, chicken or fish, it was adequate in meeting the nutritional needs of the community. Anyone having a special dietary need (e.g., protein deficiency, diabetes, pregnant mothers etc.), was put on an appropriate diet. I, personally, was ordering 1000 chickens every three weeks, a process that was to continue until there was enough production for everyone to be served eggs ^{daily} for breakfast. In addition, the diet was supplemented regularly with pork from the piggery and fish which was brought in every two or three weeks on the Temple's boat. Temple agriculturalists said that we would have been self-sufficient in food production within a year to a year and a half from last October. Thus, despite what some press reports have stated, the land was productive-- it just took some trial and error to learn how to farm in a tropical climate. Guyanese agriculturalists who were familiar with the area, including visitors from the government Ministry of Agriculture, were surprised to see the farming achievement in Jonestown. Information and techniques were exchanged regularly. Visitors were particularly amazed at the amount of land that had been cleared and either developed with facilities or put into agricultural-livestock production, in light of the fact that the project was entirely covered by dense jungle growth when it was begun. More than one visitor referred to the project as a "labor of love", which is perhaps the most apt description given to it.

~~Violence~~ On only one day of the total time period I was in Guyana (which was a year and three months), did a fight break out in the community, which I find remarkable considering the number of members who had been violence prone. (Ironically, it was two ^{first} fights that broke out in that same day-- one of them was between two young men who were friends, and the other was between two girls over some petty difference. The participants, incidentally, were all of the same race.) During the last five months of Jonestown's existence, violence was totally banned from the meetings, where it had been used on occasion and in extreme cases, as a last resort. However, not once did I witness any brutality, nor did I hear of any.

It is sadness beyond tears to think of my brothers and sisters from Jonestown, hundreds of them, not only unidentified, but still unburied. It is significant and tragically symbolic that they have laid for so long, in coffins piled-up like so many matchboxes, waiting for a final resting place. They are back in their homeland, but they have no home. Peoples Temple was their only home, their only family, their only life. They are nameless and alone-- forgotten by America. They died courageously--as one of their sisters wrote--because outside forces wouldn't let them live in peace. Is it any wonder that officials didn't want them all buried together, fearing their place of interment would become a shrine-- and an all too painful reminder of a tragic American failure. Though I'm white, when I die, I belong with them, for their struggle was mine also.

Mark Lane on KGO AM Program Wed., Jan. 31st.

"There is a continuing operation by American Intelligence to focus attention away from what really happened in Jonestown, away from their role in the murders of over 900 Americans in Jonestown, onto peripheral questions. And they are using their friends, what they refer to in the C.I.A. documents as our assets at CBS, our assets at the C.I.A., our assets at the New York Times, to prevent the facts from being known."

"I begged Congressman Ryan not to go; I called his office in San Mateo and asked him not to go; I wrote a letter to him telling him that Jim Jones would see his visit as a provocation; I called Jim Scholar of the House International Relations Committee and said that if Ryan went down there Jones would see it as a great provocation--could they at least put it off for several weeks. I told them that Jim Jones was very ill and under the circumstances he would see it as a provocation. Why did they go? In the face of those warnings, in the face of the fact that Debbie Blakey, a high-ranking official who defected from Peoples Temple in May of last year, went to Richard McCoy, then of the American Embassy, previously with Air Force intelligence for six years in the Office of Special Investigations of the U.S. Air Force, she went to him and said there are two or three hundred semi-automatic weapons in there, 25 pistols, a homemade bazooka, the lives of the people are in danger--they practice suicide. Now she told that to the State Dept." (u)

"Why did he go? Because he went to the State Dept. and Mr. McCoy of Air Force Intelligence, of the American Embassy, and then of the Guyana Desk in the State Dept., said it's perfectly safe down there. He knew when he sent Ryan in there, he knew that Ryan might be killed. He knew of the mass suicide drill--that was discussed on radio broadcasts from Jonestown and the FCC during that entire year of 1977-78, those two years, had monitored the broadcasts from their Douglas Arizona Proving Station, about this there is no question, the FCC admits that. McCoy knew that they had practiced mass suicide, Debbie Blakey told him that, many people had told him that. What did he tell Congressman Ryan who raised the question. After all, I had begged him not to go. I said that it would be seen as a provocation. What did McCoy say to him? McCoy said, "Congressman Ryan, the only problems you may have down there, you will find the food and housing accommodations may not be up to your standards. Why did the State Dept. send Mr. Ryan down there after I begged him not to go?"

*Hannabuden is one of the most respected journalists
in Guyana and the Caribbean. This is the most accurate
appraisal by a journalist. I-P (for broadcast 25/11/78) by Mohamed
Hannabuden*

Peoples Temple

It will be a long time before the truth about the Peoples Temple mass suicides and murders is fully known.

What is certain at this time, at least according to the ~~the~~ investigators, is that at least 775 men, women and children perished in a single night of horror in their remote jungle commune.

The Temple and its members were wrapped in a virtual blanket of secrecy, and the distant location of their agricultural settlement, Jonestown, strengthened their privacy. (u)

But this secrecy has followed them into death and is providing fertile ground for speculation as to what led to the virtual liquidation of the ~~most~~ organisation in the most final way.

The grim adjectives that followed Jim Jones and his people in life follow them into death also, and establishment churches and political organisations compete to denounce them.

Often overlooked in the speculation is the history of persecution against which the organisation protested for many years.

The situation had reached the stage over the past year or so where virtually all the Temple's spare time, and even some that could not be spared, had to be dedicated to countering allegations from many directions.

The allegations, which the Temple saw as high-pressure harassment, persisted even after they were, from time to time, rejected not only by the organisation but also by outsiders invited to see for themselves.

Peoples Temple was, indeed, a community of human beings virtually under siege for many long months.

Those who met some of the senior members, including the leader, Jim Jones, could not help feeling that they existed with a seige mentally and that they could not go on in that way forever.

Investigators are beginning to agree that the Jonestown deaths took place because the critical point had been reached with the visit by congressman Leo Ryan and the American press, and it was triggered by an attempt to stab Mr Ryan in the settlement.

After that, the organisation apparently felt that there was no use going on, and a death plan was put into operation.

It appears that many of them killed themselves while others were forced to do so. The plan started with the babies and young children who were first killed, the investigators believe. (u)

What causes the world to recoil is this bizarre act of defiance which the Temple staged as the final solution to its problem.

The Temple must have been living for some time with the knowledge that one day, the death plan would have had to be put into operation.

They would have known that, even as they lived, loved, reared children, and farmed on the commune.

That is a rather unique sort of theology. Most religions preach the celebration of life and the sanctity of life.

Peoples Temple apparently respected life but was prepared to end it all if necessary, as its last act of defiance against the persecution which it suffered as a non-conformist religious organisation with a leftwing political ideology.

It would appear that, by dying, the Temple, has proved its point. The conscience of the world refused to stir when the Temple cried out against persecution.

35

Now, instead of searching itself, the world is persecuting the Temple even in death, *(and its conscience)* ~~and some have begun fresh harassment of them.~~

even in death, and some have begun fresh harassment of other groups which do not conform.

The world is still a very long way from the tolerance and understanding which even the establishment religions preach.

The self destruction of the Peoples Temple is hardly likely to change that.

But it will certainly stand as an eternal monument to it, and of man's inhumanity to man.

The violence which the Peoples Temple did to itself should serve to remind the world that there are some people always willing to die for what they believe in.

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Peoples Temple
P.O. Box 15073
San Francisco, CA 94115

April 18, 1978

F O R I M M E D I A T E R E L E A S E

The following is a transcript of the message read to members of the press by Harriet Tropp, member of Peoples Temple Agricultural Project at Jonestown, Guyana, South America. She read the statement via amateur radio phone patch at Charles Garry's office:

"I am speaking on behalf of Peoples Temple in response to the grossly false and malicious statements that continue to be made about our community here in Guyana. Individuals participating in a self-styled group of "Concerned Relatives" have now threatened publicly to hire mercenaries to illegally enter Guyana and use whatever means necessary, including armed attack and kidnap, to capture relatives in the Peoples Temple community. These threats were made public in a California newspaper. Peoples Temple has already alerted the President, the U.S. State Department, and appropriate government officials in Guyana. This group of "Concerned Relatives is a cruel hoax. If they have to send mercenaries -- hired guns who will violate laws and resort to killing and mayhem to fulfill their contract -- then they reveal the real nature of their efforts. (44

"We demand to know where the money is coming from to allow them to hire killers. We also demand that the media, which has shown such eagerness to attack our organization, show equal vehemence in condemning this criminal effort and its perpetrators. Actually, this is not a new tactic in the move against the Guyana community; armed agents have already been sent in illegally and have tried to assassinate Rev. Jim Jones and others, as well as kidnap people. Those attempts have been successfully thwarted. We hope that the public will see the cruelty and evil

behind the base, nasty motives of these public liars. The people involved have been brought together and have been given assurances that they would be backed up in whatever they were trying to do against Peoples Temple. Their number is very small compared to the many relatives and parents who are coming here to visit the project.

"Our community is a dramatic expression of our deep desire to build a meaningful future for mankind through cooperation and sharing and eradication of class division. Our contribution has been recognized by many, many people who have come to visit this democratic cooperative. Teachers, workers, government officials -- people from all walks of life in Guyana, as well as representatives from nations the world over have come and congratulated us for what is being accomplished. They have praised us for the example of cooperative living and diligent development of this beautiful region. (M)

"The chairman of the Guyanese Livestock Corporation, a man who is a member of one of the most important business families in Guyana, called this project the purest egalitarian society he had ever seen, a community without elitism. Just this week 35 educators from an attending school district, together with a delegation of the most outstanding students in the entire nation, visited us unannounced and spent the entire day. They were overwhelmed with what we are doing. We are making tons of friends here. We are building good will. Providing a constructive presence, we can only enhance cooperation and counteract the negative stereotype of North American people.

"Our medical department is known far and wide for its excellent services, and many lives have been saved. We have programs in agriculture, livestock development, a complete school system and a host of community projects. Just a few days ago, representatives from one

of the largest news agencies ^(TASS) in the world spent several days with us. Representatives from other news agencies have been to the project as well, and have pronounced it a remarkable, impressive achievement. Within three to four weeks, several relatives and parents who are not members will be visiting here. They are coming even with a degree of cynicism because they have been approached by this committee. We do not ask that people who come agree with us; however, these relatives are not coming with an intention to harass, and so they are very welcome. One is the leader of another church denomination. We object to this small committee of "concerned relatives" because we have firm proof that all involved in that group have talked about kidnapping and mercenaries. That type of element is not welcome by ourselves nor by the people of Guyana. (u)

"Young people here are finding productive, new lives, free from the pitfalls of inner city environment that would have caused a large percentage of them to become involved in one form of anti-social behavior or another -- behavior which would have cost the U.S. taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars. We are tired of seeing people and organizations that are trying to develop constructive alternatives, to build cooperative lifestyles, being harassed unmercifully, lied about, falsely accused of crimes, and, in many cases, brought down. In recent months alone, there have been several examples of this in the Bay Area.

"Here in Guyana, we have come to build a community for a significant number of people, well over a thousand, who have been hurt, angered, alienated and victimized by adverse conditions that prevail in the declining inner cities of advanced western society. Many who were not in such desperate circumstances have also come to join us and build because of the peaceful, natural environment, ideal weather, and the chance to

serve. The vast majority of our members remain in the U.S.

"Finally, we would like to address ourselves to a point that has been raised, it seems, about some statement supposedly issued officially by Peoples Temple whose contents we here are unaware of. It is supposed to have been to the effect that we prefer to resist this harassment and persecution even if it means death. Those who are lying and slandering our work here, it appears, are trying to use this statement against us. We are not surprised. However, it seems that any person with any integrity or courage would have no trouble understanding such a position. Since it is clear that the persons who are plotting so actively to destroy our organization have neither integrity or courage, we are not at all surprised that they would find it offensive. Dr. Martin Luther King reaffirmed the validity of ultimate commitment when he told his Freedom Riders: "We must develop the courage of dying for a cause." He later said that he hoped no one had to die as a result of the struggle, but, "If anyone has to, let it be me." And we, likewise, affirm that before we will submit quietly to the interminable plotting and persecution of this politically motivated conspiracy, we will resist actively, putting our lives on the line, if it comes to that. This has been the unanimous vote of the collective community here in Guyana. We choose as our motto: not like those who marched submissively into gas ovens, but like the valiant heroes who resisted in the Warsaw ghettos. Patrick Henry captured it when he said, simply: "Give me liberty, or give me death."

"If people cannot appreciate that willingness to die, if necessary, rather than to compromise the right to exist free from harassment and the kind of indignities that we have been subjected to, then they can never understand the integrity, honesty, and bravery of Peoples Temple nor the type of commitment of Jim Jones and the principles he has

struggled for all his life.

"It is not our purpose to die; we believe deeply in the celebration of life. It is the intention of Jim Jones, and always has been, to light candles rather than curse the darkness, to find and implement constructive solutions rather than merely complain about problems. But under these outrageous attacks, we have decided to defend the integrity of our community and our pledge to do this. We are confident that people of conscience and principle understand our position. We make no apologies for it.

** Q U O T E S **

Charles Garry, Attorney: "I have been to Paradise. It's there for anybody to see....I saw a community where there is no such thing as racism....There is no such thing as age-ism....I have never seen so many happy faces in my life as I did in Jonestown the three days I was there....Why are those people so happy? They are learning a new social order. They are learning an answer to a better life. When I returned to the States, I told my partners in the office that I had seen paradise. From what I saw there, I would say that the society that is being built in Jonestown is a credit to humanity."

* * *

Dr. Peter Fernandes, Chairman of the Guyana Livestock Corporation and world traveler: "Jonestown is the purest egalitarian society I have ever seen."

* * *

Dr. Ng-a-Fook, Guyanese Dental Surgeon: "The Peoples Temple Agricultural and Medical Mission is a first-class example of community life. I have never before seen so many people of varying races working happily side-by-side....I could not help but be impressed."



Pastor

San Francisco, CA 94115

(415) 922-6418

August 21, 1977

"For I was an hungered
and ye gave me meat:
I was thirsty
and ye gave me drink;
I was a stranger
and ye took me in;
Naked, and ye clothed me;
I was sick and ye visited me;
I was in prison,
and ye came unto me.

"Then shall the righteous
Answer him, saying,

When saw we thee an hungered
And fed thee?
Or thirsty.

And gave thee drink?

When saw we thee a stranger
And took thee in?

Or naked, and clothed thee

Or when saw we thee sick?

Or in prison,

And came unto thee?

"Verily I say unto you,

Inasmuch as ye have done it

Unto one of the least of these...

...Ye have done it unto me"

Matthew 25: 35-40

NEO-McCARTHYITE CAMPAIGN PERSISTS AGAINST PEOPLES TEMPLE

The same pattern of smear attacks against Jim Jones and the Peoples Temple continues. The unsubstantiated charges, exaggerations, misrepresentations, half-truths and outright lies have projected a portrayal of the church that bears no resemblance to reality.

We know that behind the specific charges that have been made there is a WELL-COORDINATED CONSPIRACY, SEVERAL YEARS IN THE MAKING, to destroy an organization that is developing alternatives to massive institutional failure. We are not alone, by any means, in being so victimized. We have seen over the years how the media can be used to silence the proponents of serious social change, and can work to create a climate of public opinion that will pressure governmental agencies to carry out persecution in the form of investigations, indictments, etc., against individuals and organizations portrayed as a "menace" to society. We have even heard one reporter involved in the campaign against us brag that he and his colleagues had the power to "make monsters" out of individuals and groups, if they wished.

Much has been written of late about our Guyana project. Now a bustling, co-operative community of several hundred, the project has developed recreational, educational, medical and other community facilities. We have a plant nursery, and are engaged in a host of agricultural, livestock, and small-scale technology projects. We are working in full co-operation with the Guyanese government to develop and bring vital services and health care to the interior of the newly-developing nation. Characterizations of the community in the press as some sort of "slave colony" are abominable, outrageous lies. Residents enjoy excellent health, an abundance and wide variety of wholesome, natural foods, and professional medical care. There is absolutely no truth to stories of "hard labor" or deprivation. Guyanese officials

and agricultural experts are constant visitors, and the project has been acclaimed by the government as a model co-operative, the most successful of its kind in the nation. Finally, the Temple is not moving its "home base" away from San Francisco, and we are determined to maintain a strong ministry here in this city.

Other reports have attempted to show that Peoples Temple has been made "wealthy" by individuals who have freely decided to give over houses and lands to our church. Those who give to the church have done so in accordance with our religious belief in a community where members hold all things common, (Acts 2:44-46). The offerings received into the church are used for the benefit of the total membership, the "household of the faith". This is not an unusual arrangement within some churches. All members of the Peoples Temple "household" strive to live according to the same standards.

The disciples of Christ set an example for a higher form of social organization by living communally, and sharing all of their worldly possessions. The church is the center of our lives, a community of love and sharing that not only sustains and nourishes its members, but reaches out in support of good work being done in a variety of areas. By giving to and participating in the church-community, we are witnessing to this very basic idea, set forth by Jesus to His disciples. Like any family (and our church is a large, "extended family"), we have tried to husband our resources, and have kept funds aside in order to build and develop our work, to provide a decent future for children who have very little to look forward to in the urban ghettos of America. Our work has been directed towards building an equalitarian community without class or racial distinctions and discrimination, as Jesus taught all people should live. Our labor to build God's kingdom ON EARTH requires wise stewardship.

In a world where we see greed and materialism driving the human race toward self-annihilation, we have decided to witness for the truth of Jesus Christ's mission on earth by aspiring to live according to His teachings of total equality, sharing, compassion, and love for one another.

We see this as a solution to the crises created by a social order predicated upon selfishness. Such a social order fosters inequality, poverty, and war, and is therefore neither capable nor serious about correcting such conditions.

So we are not surprised by the attacks upon our church. Christ taught a revolutionary faith, and those who live their lives according to His enlightened social teachings, as we are told in Scripture and as we know from long experience, suffer persecution.

We hope that our friends in the movement for thoroughgoing justice, for a compassionate, caring society, for a decent life guaranteed for everyone, for an end to racism, will not be swayed by the viciousness of the reactionary attacks on us and others engaged in this struggle. We are another in a growing number of "test cases" for neo-McCarthyite forces in America. If such forces can discredit Jim Jones, and decimate Peoples Temple, they will be emboldened to come after others and will gain confidence that they can intimidate, buy off, or otherwise dissuade those working for serious social change and economic, racial and social equality.

We have been extremely gratified by the many, many people who have been supportive. We shall continue to resist these attacks, and stand in solidarity with many others who are undergoing similar experiences. **WE SHALL NOT BE MOVED.**

May, 1978

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Notes and reflections on our trip to Guyana, particularly our three days at the Peoples' Temple Cooperative Agricultural Project.

"Impressive" was the first word to come to mind when I was asked what I thought of the project. The clearing of more than eight hundred acres from the midst of the jungle, and the planting of crops is impressive. To imagine more than a thousand Americans migrating to Guyana and working in the project is impressive. Every aspect of the work and life there I found impressive.

As we rode into the area of the buildings we saw Annie and Kimo. Carolyn was quickly there. They took us for a walk of the area. Senior Citizens were engaged in calisthenics under the direction of a young woman. We walked to the nursery where infants and toddlers were being cared for.

(Annie + Carolyn were Rev Moore's daughters)

Later in the day, probably early in the evening, we visited the clinic and talked with Larry (M.D.) who is obviously exceptionally bright. He showed slides and pictures of some of their work. He has equipment for cellular studies, tests, and a new portable x-ray. Two X-ray technicians are there. Two or three nurse practitioners, with varying specialties, and five or six R.N's (or more) round out the medical staff. Annie, in addition to nursing, is in charge of medical supplies. They provide family planning for members of their own community. Clinic hours on Sundays for residents of the region were posted at the entrance to the Project, however, they treat people whenever they come.

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They are in instant communication with a network of physicians through amateur radio operators. Larry has consulted with specialists a number of times, including his delivery of twins by caesarean section. They have been visited by the president of a medical association which provides consultative services by radio, and have his full support.

Two Guyanese dentists have held clinics at the Project. Upon one occasion the dentist found only two cavities among the children. This is probably attributable to diet. I think that there are more than forty pre-schoolers living there, in addition to other children of all ages.

The educational program is accredited by the government department of education. I think that they have had, this year, classes through jr. high, with high school work being offered in the fall. The teachers are enthusiastic, for they are able to do some of the things they've always wanted to do in teaching, but have never been free to do. They make their own educational tools, as well as a variety of play toys. Classes are offered for people of all ages including reading and writing, as well as current events. The p.a. system keeps the people abreast daily of events throughout the world. Both dramatic and educational films are shown every evening. "There Heart Is A Lonely Hunter," and a film on the status of women in the Soviet Union were shown one night we were there.

Our first evening at the project, a Friday, people gathered to listen to the band and enjoy the entertainment. The band has performed in Georgetown and has received good press coverage. They play jazz, soul, rock, etc. A seventy-five year old woman did her "Moms Mabley" routine, and a preacher the same age sang and danced. A twelve year old boy sang a solo. A Guyanan from that region brought his flute, played and sang. It was good entertainment.

Single people live in dormitories while families live in houses. One older woman wanted her own house, so they constructed a tiny house for her. The elderly live close in where they were checked with daily to ascertain the status of their health. The buildings are simple, with wood siding and sheet-metal roofs. Throughout Trinidad and Guyana the roofs were of sheet-metal. There was running water in the guest house, and I presume in the dorms and houses. Showers and toilet facilities are in separate buildings.

All of the cooking is done in a central kitchen on wood stoves. Imagine serving three meals a day to more than a thousand people! People are free to eat in a small dining area or take their food wherever they choose. All of the buildings, except where people sleep, have open sides. Some of the meeting areas are covered with heavy tenting, still open sided. What is needed is protection from sun and rain with structure for circulation of air to keep cool. There is not need for fuel for heat. We ate well. Most of the food has been grown or produced on the land there. They are not producing enough rice or potatoes for their use. Casava is a tuber which is used for flour for bread, and I suspect hot-cakes, as well as for feed for the animals.

They grow casava (and use both leaves and tubers) custard apple, citrus, pineapple, coconut, bananas, I think pineapple, edoes, cutlass bean and corn. They are still working on dry farming of rice. (Guyana is a rice exporting nation.) Starting with 12 seeds of the winged bean, which is 38% protein, they hope to plant eight or ten acres this fall. They produce their on eggs and frying and stewing chickens, as well as pork. They have some cows, and soon will have modern dairy equipment.

Their first priority is to become self-sufficient. I think that their major cash outlay is for animal feed, fertilizer, and petroleum for generating electricity. Of course they must pay cash for medical equipment and supplies. They have a 60 foot trawler which they use to haul in supplies and equipment to Port Kaituma, and they sometimes take pay loads, as they do with a truck in Georgetown. One of their members travels up and down the river engaging in barter.

They have a nutritionist who is engaged in continuing research. They have found some ways to use plants that he been considered un-edible. The Amerindians share their wisdom with the people about food and medicinal herbs. They have their own herb garden, as well as a smoke house. They are exatating for underground cold-cool storage.

They have a machine shop with a tool and die maker teaching younger people to do the work of machinists. They have a mill where they can cut material and erect a house in a day. They are making furniture and toys. They, of course, maintain all of their equipment. They are constructing a windmill which they hope may help with some generating power.

We heard after we returned that the President and Prime Minister of Guyana, and the Prime Minister of Surinam visited the 'project unannounced. Officials of the U.S. embassy have visited, as well as officials in the departments of health, education and agriculture. (Guyanese) The Guyanese have a vital interest in developing the interior of the country. The people live on the coastal plains. If the Peoples' Temple Agricultural Project can become self-sufficient, it has significant implications for the nation as well as similar countries.

I have never been anyplace where I saw the older people so much a part of the community. We have visited P.T.'s homes for the elderly,

infirm, and retarded in the U.S. Those homes were superior. In Jonestown the elderly receive superior health care. They work and contribute to the community life as they are able. One woman was out hoeing her own little garden. Others had picket fences around their houses. I know of no retirement home which provides better food and health care and a more wholesome environment. They are part of a community with babies and children as well as of young people and adults. This fact is a two way street, benefiting the young as well as the old. When I saw the woman hoeing, I thought of Micah's words "...they shall sit every one under his vine and under his fig tree, and none shall make them afraid:...." The fears that are a part of city life are gone.

The Project has expertise and inexperience. They are proceeding by trial and error. They have had serious accidents, but no fatalities. (Jim Jones' mother died and is buried there.) An agronomist, with a B.S., supervises their farming. They turn to the best advice they can find in Guyana and outside for assistance. A man from an urban area is in charge of the piggery. Another man with no experience is in charge of the chickery. In both instances they have been successful and are learning. Young people who have never had opportunities to learn trades or skills are being given these opportunities now.

The morale is high. There is no possible way for this Project to succeed apart from high morale. No one is paid anything. Everyone eats the same food and sleeps in comparable quarters. Everyone is expected to work. Workers were in the fields early in the morning. They do a lot of work with manual labor, even while they are bringing in some labor saving devices. There is no way they could have done what they have done apart from hard work on the part of many men and women. I was asked by a reporter if I had asked people if they were happy. AS I thought about that question later, it seemed like asking people celebrating at a party if they were happy, or coming down out of the stands and asking members of the team who were moving the ball toward a touchdown if they were happy.

Some parents have charged P.T. with brainwashing their children, (who are in their twenties and older.) and holding them against their will. We saw nothing to suggest any truth in this. Furthermore, I am much more ready to believe that P.T. would expend energy to facilitate unhappy people leaving the Project rather than expending energy to restrain people. In my judgment, they simply do not have the luxury of using any energy to restrain and coerce people. They need all of the energy they can muster devoted to their common task of developing that land and becoming self-sufficient.

The project is entitled "Peoples' Temple Cooperative Agricultural Project. The people working in specific areas meet regularly, sometimes daily, to discuss their work. Suggestions and criticisms are encouraged.

The Project provides an opportunity for some to use education and skills, and for others the opportunity to try new things. The man in charge of the piggery is from Chicago. An attorney is developing the winged bean and citrus crops. Young people for whom doors in the city were closed are learning mechanical and agricultural skills.

I would add to the paragraph on the cooperative the following. There is a sense of ownership which is not present under private ownership. I suspect that this same sense of ownership is often absent even where the legal ownership is corporate, including the workers. The people give themselves in hard work, in part because it is their project. All share the same food and housing. I think that all spend some time in manual labor.

RYMUR

The attached articles appeared in the "Modesto Bee",
Modesto, California newspaper on March 14, 1979.

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Prokes' statement defends Temple, asks tape be made public

EDITOR'S NOTE—The following is the statement read by Michael Prokes at a Modesto press conference before he shot himself.

Why did Jonestown end the way it did? I believe at least a good part of that answer can be found on the tape recording of the last hour of life in Jonestown. Unfortunately, the tape has never been played publicly and is being kept locked up by either the attorney general's office or the FBI.

But I don't find that surprising in light of what an American Embassy officer told me was on that tape.

Last December at the Matthews Ridge Guest House (located about 40 miles from Jonestown), a young man attached to the American Embassy named Charles English (who is 27 years old and had spent one year in foreign service) described parts of the tape recording to myself, Tim Carter and two reporters whose names I can't recall.

Probably the most significant thing he said was that he thought the tape would never be played publicly because it would be an embarrassment to the United States. He said it reveals that the people of Jonestown were not coerced into taking their lives, but rather the deaths resulted basically from a collective decision based upon the perception that the community was doomed and there was no use to continue.

English said that while he and a number of others were listening to the tape in Georgetown, U.S. Ambassador John Burke came into the room and also listened to it. When it was finished, Burke told those in the room in no uncertain terms, that they had better not breathe a word of what they heard. He then took the tape into his personal custody.

Another official, the man who headed the Guyanese end of the investigation into Jonestown, corroborated what English said was on the tape. But he went even beyond what English said. Skip Roberts (Guyana's crime chief) told me in a private conversation, the day before I left Guyana, that the tape showed solidarity of the people of Jonestown. He said he was deeply moved by what he heard. He said that if he were in Jonestown at the time of the deaths, he could see how he would have willingly died with the people, had he been part of the community.

Moreover, he told me he believed there was some outside plan to destroy Jonestown.

This was no crackpot making wild statements, but Guyana's No. 2 law enforcement official, trained by academics in the U.S., who is highly respected and has a reputation for being incorruptible. But it's doubtful that he can admit publicly the things he said to me in private. He may do it but it is a touchy political issue. Guyana feels it can ill-afford to offend or embarrass the U.S. while it has an outstanding I.M.F. loan and is seeking additional aid. (English, of course, would be risking his position to admit what

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he told us about the tape and Ambassador Burke.)

But if there is nothing to hide then whoever has the tape should be willing to make it public. It seems to me that a recording of the last hour of life for over 900 people is extremely relevant and crucial for the public to hear.

I have no doubt whatsoever that the recording was made intentionally. It was found on the tape machine in the pavilion, where meetings were normally recorded, and where it was in full view of scores of people. Jones asked that all meetings be recorded and I have no doubt that the last meeting was any exception because I believe he wanted to leave something that would prove why the people died. An article in Rolling Stone magazine said it concisely: It stated, "The mass suicides of history, Masada and Saipan, had occurred when a people were under siege and surrounded by enemies. Jones and the people of Jonestown were no exception: for months they had been harassed, persecuted, surrounded and besieged by shadow forces. When the final attack was imminent and undeniable, they chose to die."

I believe the tape will corroborate this, and I am convinced that its contents have not been deliberately misrepresented to the press. Why is it being kept locked up? Because its contents would help to reveal the truth about Jonestown, that's why. The press should demand that the tape be made public. I'm not talking about a transcript, either, because the embassy officer (Chas. English) said a transcript would not give an accurate portrayal of what was going on — there were too many overlapping forces. In order to be properly evaluated and understood, the entire 50 minutes of the original tape should be played to the press, unedited, and uncensored. (The Guyanese were provided a copy of the tape by American officials, but it may not be the same one Skip Roberts heard.)

It would take a lot of pressure for that tape to be played because I believe, from the accounts I've been given, it would reveal too clearly something that the government does not want to admit, and cannot admit—that Jonestown represents a symbol of the massive institutional failure of this country to meet the needs of its own citizens. It's no coincidence that most of the members of Peoples Temple were black, when you consider that most of the inhabitants of the huge slums and ghettos in virtually every large city of America are black. They don't like living in misery and if they could get out they would, but they aren't being provided the opportunities they need to do so.

That's why so many blacks joined Peoples Temple — it provided the opportunity to escape the misery of their lives in the ghetto. Jim Jones jumped into the vacuum created by the failure of this system to meet the needs of its black people. He then met those needs that had been neglected and gave the credit to Socialism. The U.S. Intelligence apparatus would obviously feel duty-bound to stop him, particularly in the light of their history and reputation for going after progressive political and civil rights organizations.

Beyond the satisfaction of their material needs, people found dignity and pride in the Temple that racism

had previously denied them. But attempts to deny Temple members their newfound freedom — and to us it was freedom — still persisted even after the move was made to another country. And that's why so many chose to die in the end. It was a moral act of courage and commitment to their beliefs. They were saying, "We're not going to take any more. We'll die by our own hand rather than

be destroyed or broken up by the long arm of the oppressor."

What I'm saying is that the reason so many people died and took their children's lives is because they believed their community — that they had built with their own hands — was under siege by the United States government, which I believe was the case. The State Dept. was well aware of the Temple's negotiations to move

gressman? Evidently. Otherwise, why did they allow Congressman Ryan to go to Jonestown when they were told in a legal affidavit that there was arms there and they knew the visit would be considered an act of provocation. Why did they allow it? Because the State Dept. wanted an incident. Well, they got it. I'm not even convinced that they got more than they bargained for, since the affidavit also told of suicide rehearsals — and warned the State Dept. that they should be taken seriously. Moreover, in a letter from Peoples Temple to the State Dept., it was stated that Temple members would rather die than be harassed from continent to continent. The State Dept. purposely called the bluff by sending Ryan; it was a deliberate act of provocation.

I believe in the basic rightness of the life and work that went on in Jonestown, and I can't disassociate myself from the people who died, nor do I want to. They were beautiful people who cared about each other and who identified with all people who suffer oppression and persecution around the world. Jonestown functioned on a high level of ethical behavior and human devotion that you had to see and experience in order to comprehend. The rights of the individual were respected and defended; sharing and concern for others was a requirement. These things were like a code of the community. The people weren't brainwashed fanatics or cultists — the Temple was not a cult. It was a political organization that built its own socialist community. It might be fair to say they were fanatical in one sense: after moving 6,000 miles to get away from racism and harassment, they weren't going to be pushed around any more. Maybe it sounds trite, but they were saying basically the same thing as Patrick Henry, that is, "Let us have our freedom, or we will die."

But the State Department and CIA couldn't afford to let such a large group of socialists from the United States find freedom in another land. So they harassed us by sending their lackeys, through Tim Stoen, to Guyana and deliberately played upon the paranoia that existed in Jonestown, until they finally got what they wanted.

The truth about Jonestown is being covered up because our government agencies were involved in its destruction up to their necks. I am convinced of this because, among many other reasons, I was an informant when I first joined Peoples Temple. I didn't remain one, however, because I came to realize that the Temple was probably the only hope for the many people it was helping off the streets, off of drugs, out of crime, and out of mental institutions, jails, and prisons. I learned to identify with these people until they became my brothers and sisters and then I understood what it meant to be black and old and poor in this society—the hell of living everyday in fear.

The people of Jonestown died—as one suicide note said—because they weren't allowed to live in peace. They died because they didn't want to be left with no choice but to come back to live in the rat-infested ghettos of America. They died for all those who suffer oppression. I refuse to let my black brothers and sisters and others in Jonestown die in vain.

to the Soviet Union in order to escape the threats to its security in Guyana. Undoubtedly, the State Dept. and the CIA wanted to prevent a tremendous Soviet propaganda victory based on nearly 1,000 Americans moving to the Soviet Union in quest of the Human Rights they had been denied in the U.S. But to what lengths was the State Dept. prepared to go to discredit Jonestown? Would they sacrifice a con-



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See photo by J. Robert Bazemore

Still under house arrest in Georgetown, Guyana, Prokes was allowed to walk the streets after his release from jail detention and stopped to talk with a young boy.

Prokes was top student, TV newsman before Jones

Many Modestans knew Mike Prokes from the days he grew up and went to school in Modesto.

And many other people in the Stanislaus area came to know him as a television newsman who worked as the Stockton bureau chief for KXTV, Channel 10, in the early 1970s.

Late last year, he became known to a nationwide audience as one of the surviving top aides of the Rev. Jim Jones after the Jonestown bloodbath in the Guyana jungle which left Jones, more than 900 of his followers, Rep. Leo Ryan, and three newsmen dead in November.

Now Prokes, who followed Jones in life, has chosen to follow him in death.

Prokes was born in Modesto in 1947. He was a 1965 graduate of Davis High, where he was a four-year honor student and member of the football team. He attended Modesto Junior College, then earned a bachelor of science degree

in communications from California State University, Fullerton in 1969.

He began working for KXTV in 1970, and left in 1972, shortly after doing an interview of Jim Jones.

His former colleagues at the television station described him as quiet, stable and sensible. His friends in high school had talked of his good nature and sense of humor.

"If anything he was quiet and very conservative," said Dale Muratore, a close friend who was one of the few to keep in contact with Prokes after high school.

Family members described him as deeply religious. He initially was a devout member of the Christian Science faith and had been elected reader for the Second Church of Christ, Scientist in Modesto, the top post in a local church.

Late in 1972, after a news interview story, he personally turned to Jones and the Peoples Temple, apparently feeling Jones and his social beliefs offered a stronger message to those in need of help.

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Serving the Peoples Temple, he turned his communications abilities to public relations, handling correspondence and media contacts for the temple.

One of his friends in Modesto said Prokes fell under the spell of Jones, even though Prokes knew Jones was not really that religious. Jones was using religion to get enough followers to force social justice in this society, Prokes had explained in one of several letters to his friend.

The friend described a meeting with Prokes in 1976, saying Prokes was "frightened — everyone involved with the Peoples Temple was frightened."

But Prokes remained loyal to Jones. When he was arrested by Guyanese authorities following the killings and suicides, Prokes and two other temple members were armed with pistols and were carrying \$600,000. They said they were told to deliver the money to the Russian embassy in Georgetown, Guyana.

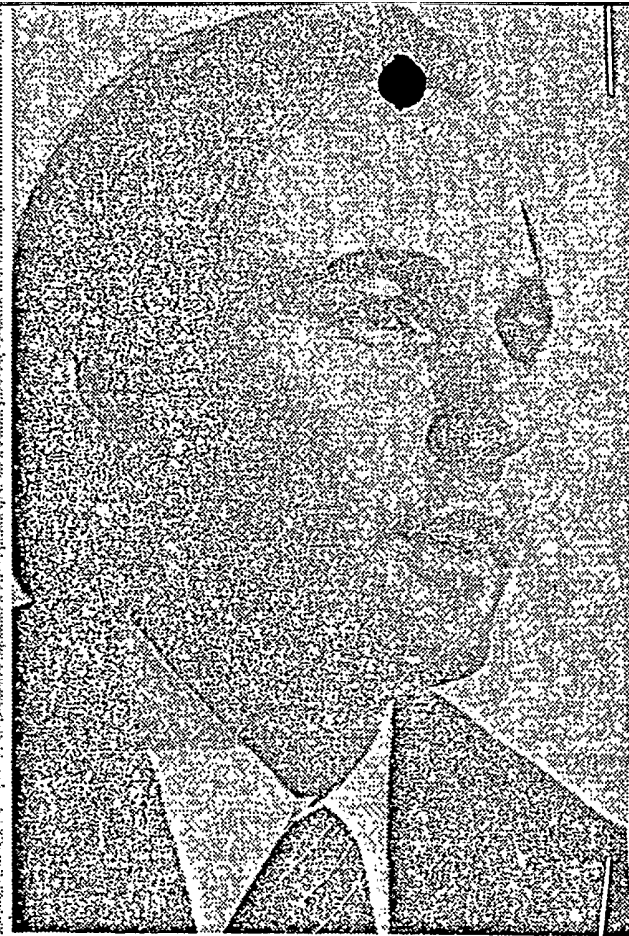
Prokes had adopted a young black boy as his son and married a temple follower to give her child, not his, a name. They all died in Jonestown.

After being jailed for four days, Prokes was released but told not to leave town. Instead, he escaped Guyana during December, without official permission, to fulfill a promise to his family to come home for Christmas.

In January he was called to appear before a federal grand jury in San Francisco which is investigating whether a conspiracy hatched in the United States led to Ryan's murder. For the most part, he took the 5th Amendment, answering only questions as to his name, age and address as well questions about his attorney, he said.

Prokes was the son of Mary Prokes of Modesto. Other survivors include two brothers, Tom Prokes of Modesto and Jim Prokes of Sacramento; and two sisters, Mary Beth Rasmussen of the Fresno area and Vickie Prokes of Modesto.

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"I refuse to let my black brothers and sisters and others in Jonestown die in vain," Michael Prokes states



at the press conference he called Tuesday evening.

Friend shocked on learning of Prokes' suicide

By Thorne Gray
Bee staff writer

News of Michael Prokes' suicide came as a shock to Michael Carter, who with Prokes and Carter's brother Tim left Jonestown carrying more than \$500,000 in U.S. money addressed to the Russian Embassy in Georgetown, Guyana.

"I'm in shock. This is the worst I've felt," said the the younger Carter brother, now 21, from the apartment in Boise, Idaho, where he lives with Tim.

"We were friends," Mike explained. "I didn't think he would do this."

He explained he had been talking with Prokes about writing "some kind of a book" about Jonestown and Guyana. The project never got off the ground.

But the last time Tim talked to Prokes was only two weeks ago. Mike planned to call Prokes the past several days, but "didn't get a chance."

The Carters and Prokes were arrested by Guyanese authorities several days after Rep. Leo J. Ryan was killed with three newsmen and a Jonestown defector on the small airstrip near the Jonestown settlement.

The Ryan murder triggered the mass suicides in which 913 of the Rev. Jim Jones' followers died.

Among them were Tim Carter's wife, Gloria, and son, Malcolm, 15-months; Mike Carter's wife, a black, and a daughter, and their sister, Terrie Carter, 24.

The brothers spoke of a "strange mixture" of fundamental Christianity

and Marxism, according to reports from Paul B. Rogers of the Idaho Statesman from Georgetown where he interviewed the Carter brothers on a hotel veranda.

He said they spoke of a troubled childhood. Tim had been a Marine radioman in Vietnam, returning home in 1967. The Vietnam War changed his life, Tim claimed, and for a time he was lost, a wanderer, until he heard about Jim Jones and the Peoples Temple from a black woman he met in Sparks, Nev.

Tim hitched a ride to the Peoples Temple in San Francisco in January 1973. Soon he persuaded Terrie to join him, then Mike.

Rogers reported Tim was sent to San Francisco in the weeks before Rep. Ryan made his visit to Jonestown, to infiltrate parents who were agitating to free their children from Jim Jones.

He claimed he went to see if anyone was plotting to assassinate Jones, and said he had been present during five previous attempts on Jones' life.

Tim returned to Jonestown three days before Ryan arrived to report the parents were out to get Jones. The leader almost went berserk, Tim Carter recalled in the interview with Rogers.

But during the Ryan visit to Jonestown, it was Tim who jumped forward to pull a knifer attacker way from Ryan, saving the congressman for the moment.

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AP Laserphoto
Miko Prokes, center, and Tim Carter, right, sit in custody of Guyana troops in a helicopter at Port Kaituma after they fled Jonestown with guns and orders to take a suitcase full of cash into the Georgetown capital.



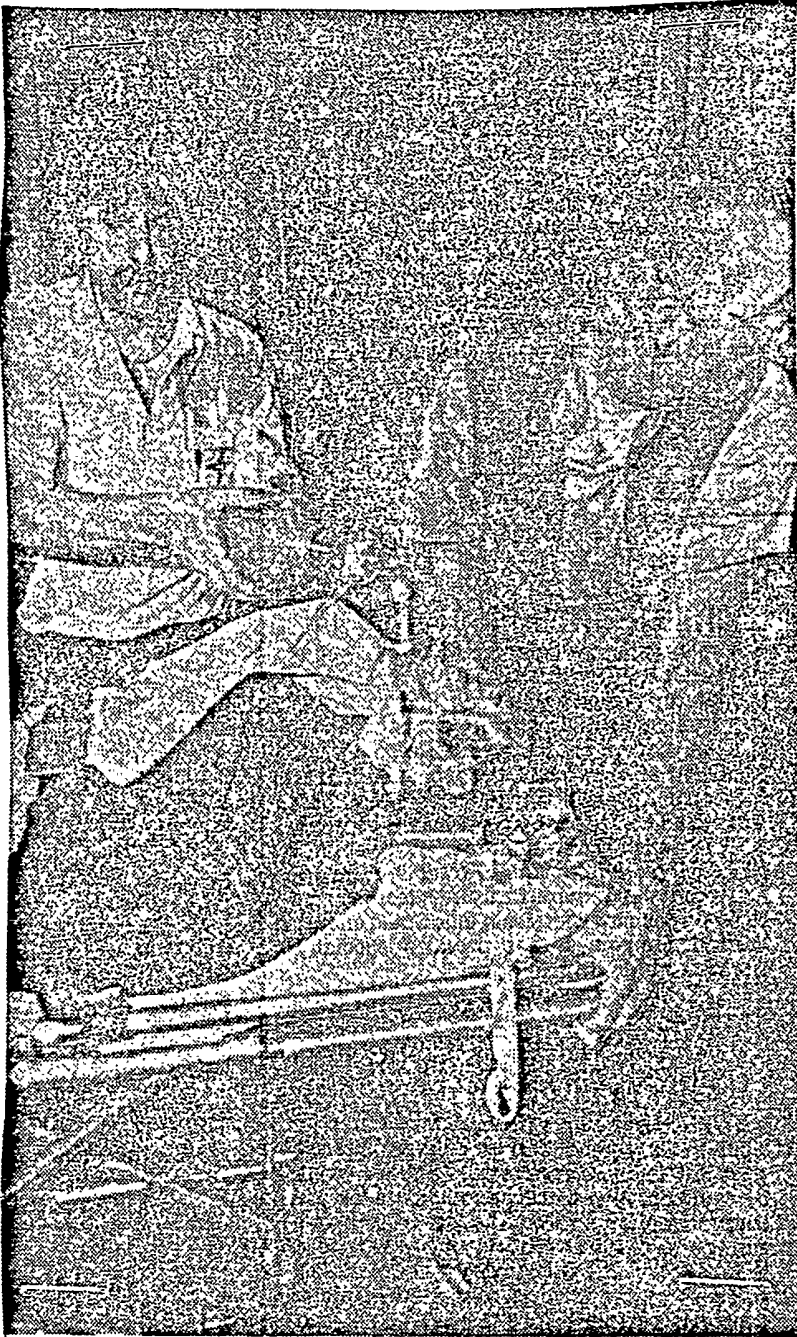
Bee Photos by Debbie Neda

Rushing into the motel bathroom, newsmen find Prokes lying face down on the floor. Bee reporter Bob Bazemore applies wound compresses with the aid of KCRA television reporter Kent Pierce and a cameraman.

When Ryan left Jonestown, all seemed well. Then word came of Ryan's murder. Jones called his people to the pavilion and the mass suicides began. The Carter brothers

watched as their wives and babies died, then were tapped to carry the suitcase of money from the compound with Prokes.

Mike Carter refused to talk about



Paramedics move their patient to the ambulance.

that episode, noting he and his brother remain under federal restrictions in investigation of Ryan's murder.

Their father, M.L. Carter of Garden City, Idaho, said the brothers testified briefly before a federal grand jury in

San Francisco in January, just two days after Prokes appeared.

In Guyana, Prokes and the Carters were jailed four days, then released and finally allowed to leave the country in late December.

Cultist Mike Prokes stages own suicide

By J. Robert Bazemore

See staff writer

Jonestown survivor Michael Prokes shot and fatally wounded himself in a Modesto motel room Tuesday night, nearly four months after the mass suicides of Peoples Temple followers in Guyana.

In a death which appeared to be as coolly planned as those in Jonestown, Prokes put a .38-caliber revolver to the left side of his head moments after he stepped into the bathroom. Eight members of the press were attending a press conference in the adjoining room.

It was the first death of a Peoples Temple member since 913 persons died Nov. 18 in the Guyana massacre. A psychiatrist who counseled a number of the survivors in Georgetown, Guyana, before their return to the United States and has set up a program to help them in the bay area predicted there would be suicides among the survivors.

Prokes, 31, shot himself at 7:18 p.m., immediately after he read a lengthy five-page statement praising

the work of his former leader Jim Jones. He died nearly three hours later at Doctors' Hospital. The statement claimed the United States was engaged in a conspiracy to eliminate the Peoples Temple settlement in Jonestown.

Prokes left a suicide note in the bathroom of the room he rented in the Kansas Avenue motel where he isolated himself for the shooting. In it, he said he didn't kill himself over despondency about Jonestown because he could live with that. He also said he did not kill himself because he was "programmed."

The last sentence in the page-long suicide note said, "If my death doesn't prompt another book about the end of Jonestown, it wasn't worth living."

Seemingly in good spirits, Prokes greeted six television newsmen from three Sacramento-based television stations, and a reporter and photographer from The Modesto Bee.

Before the press conference, held in a room at Motel 6, he had promised to make a major statement.

Just prior to the 7 p.m. press conference, Prokes told The Bee he was going to make a telephone call. He walked into the small motel room a few minutes after 7, entered the bathroom and emerged to take his place

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behind two microphones and two tape recorders on a small table.

He read from a 42-page package of statements with inflections in his voice for emphasis. He sipped water from a styrofoam cup, got up and handed a large envelope of statements to KCRA television reporter Kent Pierce to distribute to the others.

Pierce asked Prokes if Jones ordered the killing of Rep. Leo Ryan. Without answering the question, Prokes walked toward the bathroom and closed the door. As he closed the door, he pulled a plug on one of the television lights. Prokes said, "I'm sorry to leave you guys in the dark." He tossed the cord out and another reporter turned the room lamp on. Prokes turned on the water in the sink and no more than 15 seconds later the eight newsmen in the room heard a gunshot.

Stunned for a moment the reporters looked around. "My God, he shot himself," said Pierce.

Two television cameramen pushed the door open. Pierce and this reporter rushed inside.

Prokes was crumpled on the floor with a .38-caliber revolver with a 2-inch barrel lying on the floor next to him.

There was a massive head wound on the right side of his head above the ear and a lesser wound on the left side. Reporters grabbed face cloths from a rack and applied pressure to the wounds. Another reporter ran to telephone an ambulance and the police.

Prokes continued to breath heavily and this reporter asked if anyone had CPR (cardio-pulmonary resuscitation) training. No one replied. Prokes' pulse remained strong but his breathing began to cease. This reporter administered mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

Several minutes later two teams of paramedics arrived and took over.

There was no indication Prokes may have planned to shoot himself.

He planned the press conference on Monday after a visit to The Bee. He had asked to hold the press conference in the office of the newspaper, but was told that would not be appropriate if other news media were to be invited.

Even after repeated pleas, Prokes refused to discuss the nature of what he would say at the press conference. His only statement was, "You will have a headline."

After he made the arrangements for the motel room Tuesday morning, he telephoned the three television stations. Rich Ibarra, a reporter for KOVR of Stockton-Sacramento, said the person who took Prokes' call quot-

ed Prokes as saying he would "drop a bombshell" at the news conference.

During the weeks after the Jonestown massacre, while Prokes and some 80 other survivors were detained in Georgetown by the Guyanese government, psychiatrist Dr. Hardat A.S. Sukhdeo visited and talked with the survivors.

Sukhdeo is a native of Guyana and currently is chief of psychiatry and deputy chairman of psychiatry at the New Jersey Medical School.

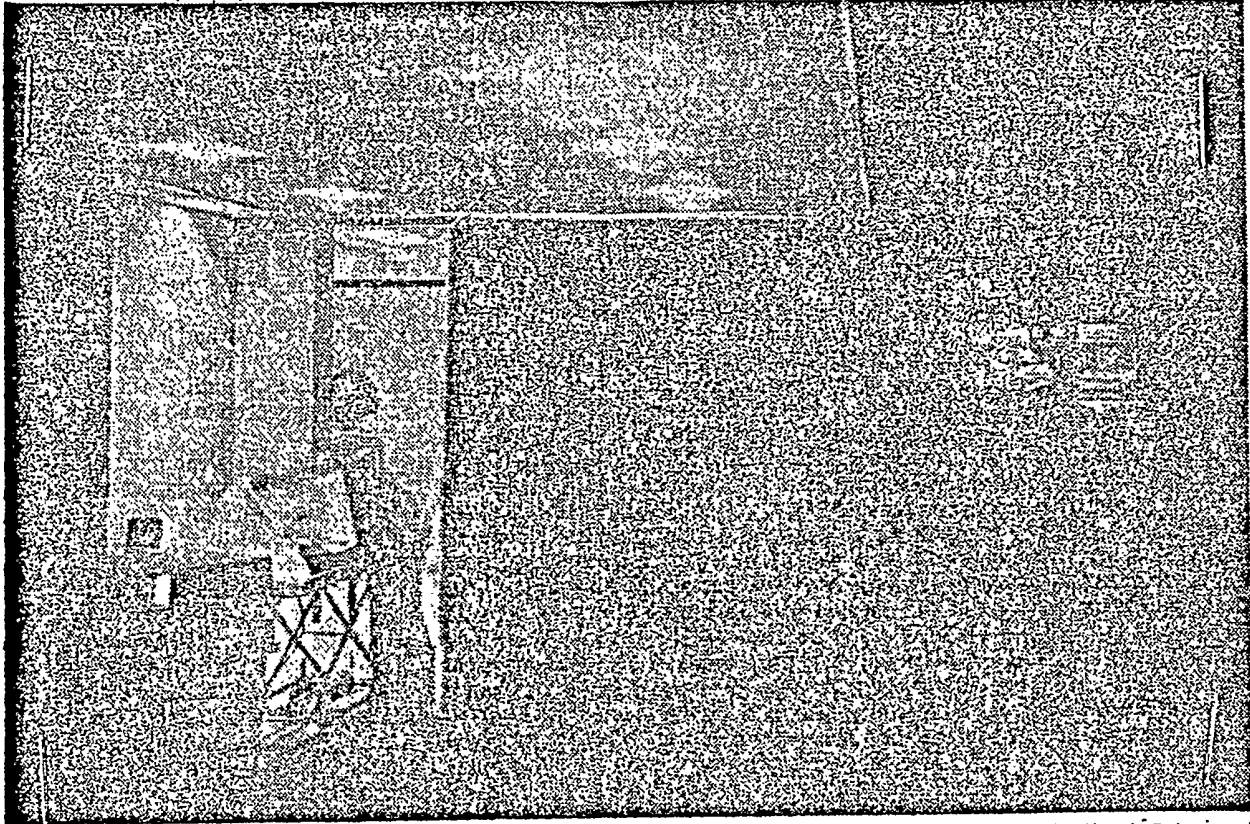
It was Prokes whom the psychiatrist had told The Bee was despondent and could be a candidate for suicide. Sukhdeo and this reporter talked with Prokes about his mental state and

Prokes said he was fine and would "keep his head together."

When told Prokes had shot himself Tuesday night, Sukhdeo said, "It's one thing to make predictions and it's another to see them come true."

He expressed regret that Prokes did not contact him after returning to the United States and that his efforts to reach Prokes had been unsuccessful. When contacted two weeks ago by The Bee, after a visit to California, Sukhdeo asked that Prokes call him. Prokes' mother was advised as was Prokes. The message was repeated on Monday when Prokes said he planned a press conference.

But it was not just Prokes who Suk-



At Doctors' Hospital emergency room, the gurney stretcher is remade.

See Photo by Ted Benson

hdeo said he was worried about. The East Coast psychiatrist has set up a center in Berkeley to help Peoples Temple survivors move back into society.

"I was quite upset at seeing what I predicted in San Francisco. People were in a much more serious state. They were not coping in the United States society. They do not have the financial and psychological support," he said.

Sukhdeo revealed that he prescribed antidepressants and sleeping pills to Prokes while he was in Georgetown by giving them to his companion, Tim Carter to administer. "I felt

that at that point Tim and Mike Carter were in a better frame of mind than Mike," the psychiatrist said.

He said he had wanted to get in touch with Prokes. "If I had I might have been able to make an impact. ... I don't know.

"There are others I'm just as much concerned about. Some I have not seen and others I have seen. And I'm still worried. "My opinion is as life becomes more difficult this will be one way out and maybe the easiest.

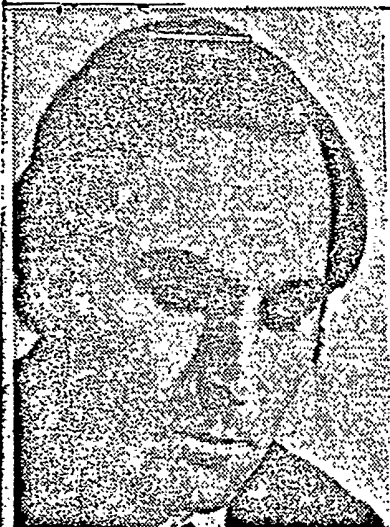
"Like I have said in the past they were all programmed for suicide and this will be the easy way out," the psychiatrist added.



(W)

Mortally wounded, Michael Prokes lies in the motel bathroom as Bee reporter Bob Bazemore and other newsmen rush to apply first aid compresses and resuscitation. More photos Pages A-16, A-17. Bee Photo by Debbie Noda

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)



Michael Prokes

Prokes had no chance for survival

By Steven Paul Motenko
and
Becky McClure
Bee staff writers

Michael Prokes was pronounced dead at 10:35 p.m. Tuesday in Doctors' Hospital, the victim of a self-inflicted gunshot wound through the left temple.

Prokes survived, just more than three hours after shooting himself during a press conference at a Modesto motel. "The only part of his brain not destroyed was the breathing center," a hospital spokesman said.

The Bee learned that a decision was made not to connect Prokes to any life support systems.

Doctors' Ambulance paramedics delivered Prokes to the hospital emergency room at 7:43 p.m., only minutes after he shot himself in a motel room bathroom.

Paramedics said Prokes was "essentially dead" when they arrived at the motel. They said he stopped breathing on his own in the ambulance but began breathing again without the aid of a respirator after he arrived at the hospital.

Fragments of the single bullet were said to be scattered throughout his brain.

Prokes was transferred from the emergency room to a private room at 9:45 p.m. after doctors decided his condition was inoperable and in the words of hospital spokesmen "extremely critical."

The transfer to the room was undertaken quickly while reporters and cameramen were diverted to a press briefing.

Eight emergency room personnel surrounded the gurney on which Prokes was transferred, his head swathed in white bandages.

Prokes' older brother, Tom, who lives in Modesto, was at the hospital. He spent much of his time trying to contact other family members who were out of town.

Jim Prokes, Michael's younger brother, arrived at the hospital at 10:10 p.m. from Sacramento. Prokes' mother had been with Jim and report-

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

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edly returned to Modesto, distraught, but did not go to the hospital.

"There will be no statement until the family has worked through its grieving period for a beloved member of our family. We are a very close-knit family," Jim Prokes said through a hospital spokesman.

Tom and Jim Prokes were at their brother's bedside when he was pronounced dead.

Prokes' sister, Victoria, was vacationing in Yosemite National Park and could not be immediately contacted. She called the hospital about 10:30 p.m. saying she had just heard about her brother.

When word spread around Modesto that Prokes had shot himself, friends began arriving at the hospital. Most were solemn and composed, but one young woman was crying. One friend,

who did not wish to be identified, said "I just heard it on TV; I've known him for a long time." He added he had not seen or talked to Prokes since his return from Guyana.

At 9:20 p.m. hospital officials received a call from Tim Carter in Idaho, who had escaped from Jonestown with Prokes. While waiting to talk to Tom Prokes, Carter told The Bee that he had just gotten home and heard about what happened. Carter would not answer questions, saying he would have to check with his attorney before talking to the press because of a federal probe into Jonestown. But he was full of questions about Prokes. "How is he? How did it happen? Can you give me the scenario?" he asked. "I understand from my brother that Bob (Bazemore, Bee reporter) was the first one there, is that right?"