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Congress of the United States

Committee on Foreign Affairs

House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

April 17, 1979

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JOHN J. BRADY, JR.
CHIEF OF STAFF

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr.
Federal Bureau of Investigation
10th and Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20535

Ryman

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HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 4/9/95 BY 9803/101/ndc

Dear Mr. Shaffer:

In connection with the staff inquiry I have ordered into the death of Representative Leo J. Ryan and the resulting incidents at Jonestown, Guyana, the Committee respectfully requests the following additional information and materials:

- (1) A copy of the personal history of Jim Jones cited in the attached December 20, 1978 New York Times article.
- (2) An evaluation of the authenticity of the above document.

Thanking you in advance for your cooperation and assistance, I am

Sincerely yours,

Clement J. Zablocki

Chairman

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Attachment
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MAY 1979

INTERVIEW WITH COMMUNIST IN 1950'S

Document, Said to Be the Writing of Cultist, Says Religion Was Means to Political Ends

By NICHOLAS M. HORROCK

Special to The New York Times

GEORGETOWN, Guyana, Dec. 17 — Jim Jones, whose People's Temple settlement here espoused more socialism than religion, was a Communist from the early 1950's on, according to a rambling, disjointed personal history found among his effects and published by the Government-owned newspaper here.

Carl Blackman, editor of The Chronicle, this nation's largest newspaper, said the document appeared to be legitimate, to be Mr. Jones's personal writing and thoughts, prepared in 1974.

The document implied throughout that Mr. Jones was always a Communist and that he used his religious connections only to further Communist ends and to politicize congregations.

Interviews with members of the People's Temple who survived the Nov. 18 death ritual indicated that the group had not been formally religious for several years, even though it registered as a religion with the state of California and took advantage of the provisions for religious organizations in Federal income tax laws. And they said they heard a great deal of "socialist rhetoric."

Attachment to the Technique

Several survivors, like the former farm manager, Jim Bore, suggested that Mr. Jones's attachment to religion was not to the substance but to the technique. Mr. Jones, he said, had found evangelical speaking, music, faith-healing and other tent-meeting techniques useful in attracting and controlling the many working-class members, particularly the aged, whose Social Security and Government support checks were an important resource.

According to the document, Mr. Jones, while studying at the University of Indiana, "somewhere along in 1949-1950," became convinced there was a conspiracy in the United States to ostracize Communists.

"And if you had any Communist connections, your grandma or your cousin, or your trade union, you wouldn't get into this country (the United States). Immigration barriers were horrible. But Nazis kept coming in by the umteen thousands. That is why I became very pro-Jewish. The strongest on the Communist side were Jews."

He recalled "I was in a coma when the Rosenbergs [Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, convicted of treason in the sale of atomic secrets to the Soviet Union] were being executed. I was ready to die, infectious hepatitis." Mr. Jones said that he would have "marched till there were holes in my shoes trying to petition" to save them and that he kept asking his wife, Marceline, "Are they dead yet?"

"I just see thousands of deaths. I wish I could have had them. Hell, you can have only so many revolutionary deaths," he wrote. Some time after the Rosenbergs were executed, Mr. Jones said, "I quit crying. Don't cry any more. Rough being a Communist. Lot of persecutions would make good stories but I don't know how to get them out, too painful."

The document continued: "I'd get picked up hitch-hiking, talking Communism — car would come to a screeching stop, and I'd be ordered out of the car, middle of nowhere. Happened not once but dozens of times."

It said that talking about Communism was what put Mr. Jones in touch with a man he called "Martin," a Methodist superintendent, who put him into his first church.

"He said I want you to take a church. I said, you giving me a church. I don't believe anything. I'm a revolutionary ... and he appointed me, a Communist, to a church, and I didn't even meet him through the party, I met him in a used car lot. This was in 1953," the document said.

Religious Trappings Absent

At Jonestown, newsmen noticed that there were no religious placards, or outwardly religious trappings, in the community. There was a map of the Soviet Union; a sign over Mr. Jones's mother's grave read: "Lynette P. Jones, in commemoration of a true fighter for the just, who gave the ultimate, a son, so he could serve the people in the struggle for justice, for freedom from oppression and for the foundations of socialism."

Two survivors, both of whom asked during interviews that their names not be used because they feared retaliation, strongly believe that, even if Mr. Jones did not have a clear ideological position, a tight croup of militant Marxists surrounded him.

Indeed, several Jonestown leaders went to great lengths during the settlement's last hours to bequeath some \$7 million to the Soviet Union. The money, in Panamanian and Venezuelan bank accounts, was placed in the names of several of the Temple's leaders.

The rambling memoir has little detail on Mr. Jones's understanding of Marxist socialist ideology, but it contains a rather superficial view of 20th Century Communist political history:

"I Went With the Maos"

"But when [Mao Tse-tung, the late Chinese leader] turned against the Soviets, I had troubles with that period even though I idolized him for what he did in the long march, I thought that was tremendous; but I had real trouble. Because Mao was the lover of the Soviets, he loved Stalin [Joseph Stalin, former Premier of the Soviet Union]. I never would accept that Stalin was all that bad as he was portrayed."

The document added that when revisionists condemned Stalin "that's when I broke with the C.P. The American C.P. [Communist Party]. I broke all my connections and went with the Maos. Because of loyalty again, deep-seated loyalty."

One long section of the document extols the virtues of Stalin, stating, "If it hadn't been for Stalin, Russia would have never won the war."

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