

411 Lakeview Drive
York, Pa. 17403 - U.S.A.
Nov. 17, 1977

Hon. Forbes Burnham, Prime Minister
Government Buildings
Georgetown, Guyana

Your Excellency:

I am writing to you about the Rev. Jim Jones and the Peoples Temple, whom I understand you have been so gracious as to permit to build a town of "true socialism" in your nation. Here, as I understand it, the poor and unemployed, youth gone astray with the various temptations of society, the illiterate and others are given a chance to build their own community and thus rebuild themselves.

I can well understand that Jim Jones would undertake such a project. He has done so elsewhere, for the greater good of his congregation, people who come to them for help, and all the surrounding community. While I am not a member of his religious persuasion, it was more than 20 years ago that I came to know him well and to appreciate his works. I am a newspaperman, and at the time was employed by a Black newspaper, The Indianapolis Recorder. I noted that his congregation was strongly integrated -- about half Black and half white -- which was an otherwise unknown phenomenon in our state. He and the Peoples Temple were pioneers in brotherhood, civic advancement and socialism in every way and without compromise.

It was because of this that Rev. Jones' difficulties with our reactionary elements began. Although he was appointed chairman of the Human Relations Commission of Indianapolis -- because they could find no one else who was sincerely concerned with the poor and the Blacks -- he and his family and the Temple were subject to constant harassment by racists such as the Ku Klux Klan. Dynamite was set off in the church basement. He and Mrs. Jones adopted a Black child, now grown to manhood as Jim Jones Jr., and one day while Mrs. Jones was carrying the baby, a racist white woman spat in her face. I could multiply these examples by many.

Jim Jones for a long time has shown a deep interest in Latin America. He operated a mission for two years in Brazil and made a brief visit to Cuba after Fidel Castro came to power there.

Now I learn from the press that the Fascists of whom we North Americans have unfortunately our share are pursuing him again. An obscure journal (owned by a newspaper tycoon, Robert Murdock, has leveled all kinds of charges at Rev. Jones. I personally have been through all this with him at the hands of another newspaper chain about 10 years ago, and the charges were so ridiculous that they never were brought to a grand jury. Now it appears, however, that an arm of the U.S. Government may be cooperating in the "witch-hunt."

Mr. Prime Minister, anything you can do to protect Jim Jones, to prevent his extradition if that is called for, etc., will be a distinct service to racial brotherhood and to the true unity of the people of Guyana and of the United States. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,
Charles S. Preston
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of Older Persons)

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