



PEOPLES TEMPLE AGRICULTURAL MISSION  
P.O. Box 893, Georgetown, Guyana, South America

September 3, 1978

A COMMUNITY LETTER

TO: Hon. John Van de Kamp  
District Attorney  
Los Angeles County  
210 West Temple Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA USA 90001

Dear Mr. Van de Kamp:

As we learn more about the schemes to 'get Peoples Temple' through a criminal indictment out of your office, we are increasingly putraged. But we are not naive.

For twenty-five years, Jim Jones and Peoples Temple have worked tirelessly for equality, justice, and humanitarian service. We have organized around issues of civil and human rights, inhuman conditions, and the crying need for world peace and international co-operation. We have a solid record of achievement in drug rehabilitation, in providing opportunities for jobs and education for thousands of young people, in helping untold numbers of people who were destitute, despondent, in need of medical help, counseling, food, clothing, and shelter. We are all personal witnesses to this staggering achievement. You can well understand how a man like Rev. Jones will be the subject of malicious gossip, lies, hate-campaigns, and even conspiracies orchestrated inside government institutions and the intelligence establishment. We have been the object of constant, organized harassment, vandalism, violence, smear campaigns, arsonists, racists, and even hired assassins.

Political frame-ups are not unfamiliar to us, and truthfully, we are not surprised that there is an effort to destroy us through the courts. But the reality of it is no less offensive just because it was anticipated, even expected. We cannot stand idly by and stoically endure th

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this injustice without protest. In fact, Peoples Temple has earned its unpopularity with certain elements in the United States precisely because it has actively fought against injustice for so many years. We do remember history, and we prefer not to repeat it. These efforts that have been mounted against us are indeed part of a shameful heritage of subterfuge that has claimed many victims over the years: individuals and organizations that were pursuing progressive directions in American life, seeking to bring together oppressed people, overcome racism, and work for economic and social justice.

You have been informed that there is an effort to destroy Peoples Temple. Though we have not 'cracked' this conspiracy completely, we are certain of enough facts to arouse any just-minded individuals, and those who wish the democratic system in the United States to survive would surely be alarmed. Some of these facts have been presented to the press; the mass media, however, has been distinguished by its refusal to print any reports that would point to what is really happening. Additional facts will be brought to light soon. The story began years ago when certain individuals joined Peoples Temple who had prior experience working with the U.S. intelligence establishment and in ultra-right wing organizations. The hard facts came to light beginning in late 1976 when two military officers connected with Senator Stennis were caught trespassing near our church while a black woman mayor from Mississippi was speaking to our congregation about her trip to the Peoples Republic of China (we have no political alignment with any country, and have always attempted to keep informed about alternative forms of government and their accomplishments). The very fact that we pursued these agents and published our startling findings about their spying mission no doubt intensified the determination of those out to harm us. Would it have been proper, or moral, to remain silent about it? We think not. Democracy depends upon the people knowing what is happening to them. What happens to Peoples Temple is only an example, in some instances a harbinger, of what is planned for other minority groups.

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We are confident that when you have the full picture of how the current group of people who are specifically organized to harass and persecute Peoples Temple have operated over the past year and a half, first secretly meeting to plot how to push smear and slander articles in the sensationalist press (they even hired a prominent, expensive public relations firm to help), then conspiring to pressure and recruit people who would join them in lies and subterfuges, then going further to harm innocent people using government officials, and even threatening to hire mercenaries, you would not allow your office to be used and compromised to further their schemes.

Some of the devices that have been used in the attempts to destroy us include the following:

--Government agents who have conspired directly with members of the group of 'concerned relatives' that have pushed this campaign have offered bribes and blackmail to various people to lie about and denounce Jim Jones and Peoples Temple. American Indian Movement leader Dennis Banks was pressured to do this and was offered help with his own serious legal difficulties as an enticement.

--We have documented efforts to cut off pensions and other payments to elderly members of Peoples Temple residing in Guyana. Checks have been re-routed -- hundreds of them -- with the active complicity of the U.S. Post Office Department.

--Our mail and other communications have been monitored and regularly sabotaged. One large batch of mail, including important legal documents, was doused with a wine-smelling substance. There have been many similar instances.

--Shipments of vital medical and food supplies have been interfered with by U.S. Customs Agents. Some have never been delivered.

--The same group of people now trying to pressure your office into moving against us has also engineered a series of legal maneuvers to force their children to return to the U.S. As you know, the most notorious case involved Jim Jones' own son, whom Timothy Stoen fraudulently claims to be his. Stoen, not surprisingly, is leading the current vendetta.

--News articles, letters, and other communications designed to cast aspersions on our organization and sow confusion

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have been planted in various publications on the 'left' and circulated everywhere in Guyana in the modus operandi GOINTELPRO has used against various progressive and civil rights groups in the United States.

--Other 'dirty tricks' have included making phone calls of an harassing nature, impersonating members of Peoples Temple -- some to your own office -- to create hostility against Peoples Temple. There have been numerous innuendoes to the effect that Peoples Temple has been guilty of break-ins, bomb threats, vandalism, rape, and even murder -- without a shred of evidence. What you are now apparently being asked to participate in is only the latest in a series of trumped-up, fraudulent devices.

The people in the group of 'concerned relatives' formed by Timothy Stoen are only the front line of a conspiracy. They have spent tens of thousands of dollars to pursue their schemes. We are currently investigating the source of their funding. They have brazenly masqueraded as pious, outraged, morally-offended people who are seeking honest redress of grievances. But what lies behind the mask?

Most of the people who have decided to collaborate in these maneuvers (some, evidently, after much pressure), are operating out of personal resentments against Peoples Temple and Jim Jones. They did not want to follow the path of human service except on a very superficial level, while they fancied themselves humanitarians, they were only posturing. Eventually, they couldn't go on in the contradiction, yet they could not simply leave goodness alone. They became eager to destroy Jim Jones, who represented to them the kind of human commitment that they were incapable of. This is a familiar syndrome, and made many of these people susceptible to being used by others who were interested in destroying Peoples Temple for many years -- people with strong right-wing, reactionary impulses, who could not stand to see people of all races and backgrounds co-operating and pursuing their rightful share of rights and opportunities in life. Another group of individuals, not part of Peoples Temple, were furious that their

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that their (grown) relatives chose to spend their lives in service to humanitarian goals and ideals of Peoples Temple rather than to fulfilling others' expectations of them. They, too, have a personal grudge against Jim Jones and Peoples Temple, and have joined the efforts to harm us.

These are the people who are now trying to use your office, and whoever else they can, in a desperate vendetta that we are convinced (and have much evidence) is being pushed, orchestrated, and financed from 'above.'

It is a scenario that is not unfamiliar to veterans of civil rights struggles and the McCarthy period. Thousands of people all over California and the nation -- progressive leaders, civil rights and community activists, government officials, private citizens, people who have worked with Jim Jones and who have seen the day-in - day-out devotion to justice and humanity of Jim Jones and Peoples Temple are aware of the fact that we are just another target in a long history of what amounts to a form of treason against ordinary people who are trying to secure a decent life for themselves. We are unusual, perhaps, because we are actively demonstrating a successful alternative for people oppressed by racism, and we sense a deep responsibility to keep alive the hope and opportunity we express for others.

The growing body of individuals who we have just alluded to are, with us, infuriated and outraged and profoundly disturbed by what is happening. We are determined to expose the conspiracy against Peoples Temple. We ask that you not co-operate with it.

Mr. Van de Kamp, among us there are people who would have been dead, in prison, in street gangs, in organized crime, involved in drugs, prostitution; who would today be swelling the welfare rolls, who would be a drain on an already overburdened economy, who would have nowhere to turn, who would have been abandoned in their later years in squalid hotel rooms, who would have been victimized by rapists, thieves, and muggers -- had it not been

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for Peoples Temple and Jim Jones. Many of us were caught in that vicious cycle of poverty, crime, and despair. We want you to know just exactly who it is that your office is being pressured to proceed against: people who have had very little, if anything of their own, lousy neighborhoods to live in, terrible educational facilities, unsafe working conditions (if jobs were available); people who have had to work hard for just a little bit of hope for a future for their children. And many of us here are children of broken homes, and some of us have even been sold into human slavery, right here in the twentieth century, in the United States. Today, thanks to our people's collective and our community organizations, built on care and concern for people, as exemplified by a most principled and self-sacrificing leader of men, we have been able to achieve a measure of security and well-being that we never before have had, and which we are determined will not be taken away from us.

Yet this is precisely what is intended by the group of people who are trying to use your office to hand down indictments against members of Peoples Temple. There is a sinister dimension to all of this that we think you may grasp. The efforts to frame up a few of our staff members in Los Angeles is actually a device to tie up our finances, and to effectively cut off the pioneer community here in Guyana from vital assistance. This is no mere attempt to proceed against one or two or a few people who are accused of 'crimes' they have never committed or would have ever conceived of committing: it is a move against an entire people, Mr. Van de Kamp, an act of violence and violation of the human rights and inalienable rights of all of us, a despicable attack on our work, our hopes, our achievements, our lives, our future. And it will be publicized to the world as such, and be written and widely spoken about as such by many around the United States and in many nations of the world who have taken a profound interest in what Peoples Temple is doing for international co-operation in Guyana in setting up a model, multiracial community, and in what is happening to wipe out perhaps the most successful and active peoples organization

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in the United States.

For that reason we have come together to compose and send you this letter, which we hope will move you to reevaluate and perhaps more completely comprehend our situation, and to understand more completely the kind of frame-up that is being prepared against us.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Signed,

RESIDENTS OF THE PEOPLES TEMPLE AGRICULTURAL  
COMMUNITY, NORTH WEST REGION, GUYANA,  
SOUTH AMERICA.

x Richard Dross	x Danny Moten
> Liane Harris	Timothy Sarinny
x Barbara Hoyer	> Maria Kateris
> Paula Adams	> Charles Touchette
x Robert Cruster	x Marlene Wheeler
x Carrie Langston	x Joyce A. Paulson PNP
> Diane Lundquist	x Glenda Polite
x Mrs. Mutschman	> Joyce Touchette
x Mrs. Forten	x Carolyn Lamm
DOROTHY L. HARRIS	
x Jessie Neal	
x Amede Field	

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