

14 April, 1978

Peoples Temple Agricultural Project  
P.O. Box 893  
Georgetown, Guyana

Dr. Ptolemy Reid  
Deputy Prime Minister  
Ministry of National Development

Dear Dr. Reid:

We are facing a crisis situation in which it seems evident, at this juncture, that you are the only one who can resolve it for us satisfactorily. We were given assurances regarding the matter of licensing our doctor, Larry Schacht, which were subsequently reversed. It is impossible for us to accept the new decision as it would have an adverse effect on the health and well-being of too many persons— not just Peoples Temple members.

Originally, we were told that the situation would be worked out by the doctor who heads the decision making medical board. We were told that Dr. Schacht would only have to come into Georgetown for a couple of weeks. After that he would have consultations with a preceptor over radio telephone from Port Kaituma.

You can check with the Soviet Embassy to confirm the type of work our clinic is doing. It would make you proud. The Embassy official—who is a Tass correspondent—and his wife were overwhelmed by what they saw. (We are inviting all the Embassies from socialist countries and hope to have the Chinese as our next visitors.) The couple said they were very impressed after seeing some serious disorders and medical problems treated in our facilities. They saw our staff of some 30 persons which include nurse practitioners, respiration therapists, an x-ray technician, RN's, EMT's, lab technicians, EKG technician, pharmacist, and a pediatric dispenser who have treated all kinds of critical medical cases. Our doctor has meant the difference between life and death on a number of occasions. The medical board doesn't doubt this but some on the board insist, nevertheless, that Dr. Schacht must do a year's internship in Georgetown. We said that if he had to be away for any extended period, it would likely result in some unnecessary disabilities and even deaths. The response by a few of the more outspoken board members was shocking. They said there would just have to be a few deaths, as there were deaths before we came. They used the argument that they wouldn't be able to go to the States and practice without the proper training and credentials. To us, this indicated a petite bourgeoisie attitude toward professional standards. (In other words, "We went through the process, and so must you.") For a third world developing country, this attitude seems highly impractical. Some sort of amendment to the rules (if that's what it would take) should be made for remote areas where no ~~adequate~~ <sup>adequate</sup> medical services exist. We know you have deep compassion for the Amer-Indian people, and we provide the only adequate medical care they can get in the area. As many as 50 a day have come into the project, having walked from miles around. A number have complained of the treatment they received from the dispenser in Matthews Pidge who is not qualified to treat

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treat any but the most minor cases. Our doctor has actually had to treat people for the mistakes that the dispenser made.

When we began to describe some of the more critical and complex cases that Dr. Schacht has successfully treated, we were stopped by one board member who said that our doctor's competence was not in question. He said it was a legal issue. (One woman did say that something ought to be done on humanitarian grounds; but it seemed that the ones who were pushing the legal aspect had an intimidating effect on the others.)

If it is strictly a legal issue, then surely there is some way the board can credit the work that Dr. Schacht has already done, which is documented and which is more intensive than any internship program. Some of his work has been the result of expert consultations from specialist in the best medical clinics in the States and Caribbean, via our radio. Surely Dr. Schacht can somehow be licensed without having to leave the area that is so dependent upon his services which he provides around the clock. It is ironic, to say the least, to charge that our doctor is seeking special treatment when the opposite is true. A prominent physician in the U.S. views Dr. Schacht as a "modern-day Dr. Schweitzer," as the enclosed letter indicates.

It would be tragic if our doctor had to be out of the area in another emergency situation such as that which took the life of the Port Kaituma PNC head, Ken Green's child. The child's condition was very treatable and the life would likely have been saved had Ken known about our doctor at that time. So it is deeply distressing when we are given a message emanating from Minister Loyte that we cannot post a message offering our medical services and which would have conveyed the appropriate days and times for the people's convenience.

Morally, our doctor feels (and we absolutely agree) that he cannot leave the project beyond the time period originally agreed upon, because it would be inhumane to do so. You can imagine how difficult it would be to say "no" to the Amer-Indians who seek our medical services and the effect it could have when suddenly the free services are no longer available with no reasonable explanation being given. It is generally known that we are PNC members, and so I'm afraid it will reflect badly on the government and us if the services are eliminated. Dr. Reid, would you please help us in this matter?

#### CUSTOMS

We still have made no progress in customs. We submitted a letter requesting various duty-free concessions which were all denied. The letter was issued from Minister Hope's office. The effect of the answer to our letter is to penalize socialists and give incentives to those who are capitalists. The regulations are obviously archaic. The Deputy Comptroller, Stanley White, stated flatly, "The law makes no concessions for co-operatives. I know it makes no sense but it's a holdover from British law."

In Jonestown we distribute equally to everyone. Thus, personal items are never earmarked for a single individual. If it were otherwise and every individual had to claim their own goods, everything would be chaos when the goods arrived as each person would have to come to town. That would mean

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bringing up to 1000 people into Georgetown to get their belongings which would be an insane and impractical situation that would halt production on the project.

Something needs to be done when the favor is being given to people who live non-communally. We've been given duty-free concessions in the past, so we know it can be done. A government official told us that our trouble began when Interpol (which we have proof is part of the conspiracy against us) sent customs a letter stating we were smuggling banned items in our shipments. Then one of the dock owners told us our crates were broken into by six special police officers. The approval on our forms was rescinded before the officers went through the crates. Of course nothing illegal was found (although we did fear that something could have been planted on us). From that time on we have gotten no cooperation from customs—only a series of endless frustrations and closed doors. The heart-breaking thing is that we have had to actually purchase the same type of items that were in the crates because we could not get them released and they were urgently needed.

The customs roadblocks are also costing us many thousands of dollars in increased fees for rental of space for our crates. The longer it takes to get release of the crates approved, the higher the rental cost. This is money that would otherwise be used in ways that could only benefit Guyana through increased development. Again, we are looking to you for some way to resolve this problem, which is having a crippling effect on our goals which are your goals.

Very respectfully,

Cde. Sharon Amos

P.S. The Tass correspondent and his wife said they loved Jonestown and were particularly amazed at the medical program. (He was very thorough and probing, just like most press.) Only after it became evident that they were very favorably impressed, did we tell them that we felt it was critical that they support Prime Minister Burnham and his party. We said that although we have the highest regard for the Soviet Union, we are disappointed at Jagan's approach (e.g., the campaign strategy of "vote your own"). We said the best thing they could do was support the leadership of the Prime Minister. That was all that was discussed about the government (except that we did give the highest praise to your work and the work of Minister Mingo).

*encl: copy of medical cert degree*

*cc: Min. Mingo*

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