

In the remote jungles of northern Guyana, over 1000 Americans have carved out a sprawling co-operative community on one of the world's last frontiers.

24

They are members of Peoples Temple, an interracial civil rights church organization, led by Rev. Jim Jones, a socialist. The multi-thousand member Temple has had a stormy twenty-five year history in the United States.

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"We've been under attack for our stands on social justice, and for our attempts to create a society totally free of racism, based upon economic equality," explains the vigorous, outspoken 47-year old Rev. Jones. "Even though most of us are poor, we have managed to save and pool together enough to bring this community into being."

56

Anyone who comes to the community (named Jonestown by the Guyanese), recognizes right away that something phenomenal, perhaps unprecedented, is taking place.

22

A thousand acres of cleared jungle are producing well, and feeding the residents. Colorful cottages and community buildings, carefully maintained and landscaped with fruit trees and decorative fencing, are framed in a peaceful setting of rolling fields and orchards. Public utilities, extensive and sophisticated medical services, and a full educational program have already been developed.

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An amazingly diverse amalgam of people have made the 5000 mile journey to pioneer in the tropics: a California pharmacist and his family; a country musician from Alabama; a man who worked as a brickmaker for half a century, and his wife, who managed a

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C-11-e-70 284

convalescent hospital in Los Angeles; a former Navy drill instructor; a writer for the Black Panther newspaper; a former State College professor, a syndicated astrology columnist, a poverty-program co-ordinator, a big-city legal secretary, ex-ministers, ex-convicts, an airline pilot; a successful Midwestern salesman; a shoe repairman from Camden, New Jersey... and hundreds more, many of whom had only a dim identity in urban ghettos, (holders of a thousand odd-jobs that helped patch together the tattered garments of survival.)

84

Then there are the children, mostly city kids, and a few refugees from suburbia and the emotional tyranny of parents who didn't understand their longing for something else, something more. And, of course, the hundreds of senior citizens, all brought together by the fiery, controversial Jones who himself started out as an angry yet sensitive child of the Depression in rural Indiana.

85

Several home-made 'industries' have sprung up. A feisty 103-year old, Pop Jackson, makes furniture. Another old-timer has perfected a soap-making process from local materials, and a factory has been set up to produce it in quantity, under her supervision. A number of residents are engaged in toy and clothing manufacture.

87

Ingenuity and resourcefulness characterize Jonestown. An outstanding example is the work of 32-year old Don Fitch, the wizard of the community machine and welding shop. From scraps, old parts, and practically anything else, Fitch (known as "the Doc") fashions all kinds of useful gadgets and accessories, from wheelbarrows to pancake griddles. (The improvisational technologist is currently perfecting a huge mass of pipes, chambers, and ducts --a "smoke generator" -- which will convert wood smoke into fuel to power a gasoline engine and save the community thousands of dollars.)

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Heading the teaching staff is a veteran in helping children overcome learning disabilities, Tom Grubbs. A creative manufacturer of educational materials, Grubbs has developed an array of home-made interlocking wood puzzles, board games, and special types of blocks that make learning fun and challenging. Primary-level classes are small, emphasizing expressive skills, and the fully-accredited high school uses the community as an open-air classroom, training ninety students in over twenty different fields, from veterinary medicine to mechanics to food processing.

82

On one occasion, a science class discovered a deposit of a white substance, analyzed it, and found it to be a high grade of fire clay. It all led to the establishment of a fire-and construction-brick factory, now in production. The development of this "indigenous technology" has attracted wide attention and may even revolutionize building construction in the region.

63

In the huge food-preparation facilities (3000 meals per day, plus snacks, special dietary meals, etc.) new specialties and delicacies are frequently cooked up from locally grown products. Many jungle teas, herbal and medicinal recipes have been concocted. The diet is balanced with a variety of vegetables, poultry, fruits, and even whole-grain rice (a non-paddy variety), grown right in Jonestown. Nutrition levels are high, [as witnessed, for example, by a visiting head of a Guyana dental school. He examined 87 children and found a total of two cavities.]

87

The 65-member medical team has helped upgrade community health levels in surrounding areas. Up to three hundred people a week, mostly Amerindians, come from as far away as fifty miles by canoe and on foot to get treatment at the Jonestown free clinic. The young project physician, Dr. Laurence Schacht, who is now training a team of young "barefoot doctors," has done significant work in prevention of parasite-caused diseases, and has consulted with scores of physicians in many countries via amateur radio. Under his supervision, a remarkably thorough

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C-11-e-7c 324

system of preventive care and monitoring has been instituted, [including breast exams, blood-pressure checks, weight-watching, and periodic complete physicals for the entire community].

25-

Education is of critical importance in Jonestown. Classes of all kinds are offered to the community at all hours. A campaign is underway to wipe out illiteracy among the elderly, some of whom had virtually no formal schooling. Community education and entertainment is enhanced by a 10,000 volume library and a large-screen television system with over a thousand hours of high-quality video-taped programming. Spirited "town forum" meetings form the cornerstone of an elaborate structure of participatory government. All have a voice, from the oldtimers down to the children.

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The community functions around a system of social sharing, and personal money is not used. [This, along with an adherence to equalitarian principles, has eroded destructive forms of competition, and even though many residents formerly depended on the "welfare state," they have assumed a high degree of individual responsibility for the collective good.]

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People coming to Jonestown often find themselves marveling at the staggering amount of development that has been accomplished in a place that, not long ago, was an almost impenetrable jungle. Clearly, Jonestown is a community where things get done.

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Sitting around the table in the community's agricultural office for a farm-analysts meeting are some of the people who are responsible for it all: field crop supervisor Jan Wilsey, a young Pomo Indian woman from northern California; expert tractor operator Phil Blakey, who grew up in Northumberland, England; an attorney who manages the 5000-tree citrus project; the project agronomist, Russell Moton, an ~~ex-convict~~ from the Philadelphia ghetto who the church

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C-11-E-7d

284

Philadelphia ghetto who the Temple sponsored through school; Dorothy Buckley, a teenager who grew up in the racism and poverty of rural Mississippi (where she watched a friend starve); Jack Barron, a 57-year old chemical engineer from a prominent family in Delaware. This sort of diversity, reflecting a cross-section of the American experience, characterizes Jonestown. 67

If there is any group approaching homogeneity, it is the 250 senior citizens. Mostly black, many started out in the rural South, but found themselves at the end of the line in the inner-city slums of Chicago, Los Angeles, and Houston. Today, in a place where gentle, persistent trade winds temper the tropical sunshine, they have found peace, and a new lease on life. They are pleased to be useful and to participate in every area of community activity, and they enjoy the respect that elderly people deserve. 90

Another important dimension of Jonestown can be found among the over two hundred teenagers and young adults who were unable to find the handle for their lives in the big cities: many were sinking into the crime/drug morass. Talk to them, and you hear much the same story: they have found something to put themselves into, a community to build, a future and a challenge in a young, "third-world" nation that doesn't make people feel useless, or stigmatize them as "niggers", or young "punks." Recently eighty of them staged an electrifying variety show at the Cultural Center in Georgetown (the capitol), seen by 2000 people. Several of the young men [in the "Soul Steppers," a fast-paced dance/mime group] were members of [the "Crips,"] a notoriously tough Los Angeles street gang. But you wouldn't know it today. 143

Phenomenal? Yes. But how did all this happen. We have to look for answers to the moving force behind Jonestown, one of

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the most dynamic crusaders for social justice on the American scene: Jim Jones. 12

Barely into his twenties, he founded Peoples Temple in Indianapolis during the McCarthy period on a platform of human service and complete racial equality. He had been dismissed from his first church assignment for insisting that blacks be seated in the front. It wasn't long before many people were calling the controversial young minister a "nigger lover" and a "communist." (With small qualification, he pleads guilty on both counts). And it wasn't just name-calling: gunshots, rocks, molotov cocktails, sugar in the gas tank, dynamite, endless hate calls.... 9

"It was a struggle all the way, year after year," says Marceline Jones, a Registered Nurse and Rev. Jones' wife for nearly thirty years. The couple took in needy people (up to twenty-five at a time), and adopted many children of all races, in addition to their natural-born. At the age of 29, Jim Jones became Indianapolis' first Human Rights director, and spearheaded an intense drive to integrate all public facilities. 23

Threats on his children finally caused him to seek a place of more toleration. In the mid-60's, the Joneses moved to California, and Peoples Temple flourished. By the early 70's it had branched out into several cities with a combined membership well into the thousands. The Temple organized effective drug rehabilitation programs, medical and emergency services for the needs, <sup>and health</sup> working in the inner cities on many levels to combat racism and poverty, even setting up a network of urban communes. Harassment continued, culminating in 1973, when the huge San Francisco community center was gutted by an arsonist. The church council got together and decided to look around for a place to start a co-operative community in a setting of peace -- a lifelong dream of Jim Jones. The big question: where? 28

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304

Another Country  
Charting - Path out  
from ~~the~~ ~~community~~ ~~to~~ ~~the~~ ~~Marx~~ ~~Society~~  
7 Marx Society

In the early 1960's, while on a missionary tour, Jim and Marceline Jones passed through British Guiana. They had a good feeling about the people, the climate, the atmosphere. In late 1973, Rev. Jones and several staff members went back there -- the nation had won its independence in 1966 and was now called Guyana -- to discuss setting up an agricultural project. They were offered a large tract of land in the interior, where the government has been trying, with limited success, to encourage the Guyanese to settle (practically the entire population is concentrated on the narrow coastal plain), and develop the rich potential of the land. Back in California, members of Peoples Temple discussed the offer, and soon dispatched a "team" to Guyana to pioneer that initial land-clearing and construction.

131

The pioneer team overcame great obstacles (a story in itself), and, before long, the land was opened up. Supplies were brought in, houses erected, wells dug, and the first crops harvested by Christmas, 1974. People began arriving, at first slowly (the population was still under 100 at the end of 1976), and then in large numbers through 1977 until today, there are over 1100 residents.

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Although much has been accomplished, the community is still in its early stages of development, and a host of projects and plans are in the works: more agriculture, handcrafts, bee-keeping, food processing, (toy and clothing manufacture), fish-farming...even gold prospecting. The area is full of possibility, and virtually unexplored. (Jonestown is actually located at the edge of what has been designated as one of the world's last frontiers, the "Guiana Highlands.")

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Today, Jim Jones is proud of the Temple's new efforts at establishing a collective society in Guyana. "It's been a kind of new birth for many of us, young and old. In the States, those of us from black, Indian, or minority backgrounds especially,

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In the remote jungles of northern Guyana, over 1000 Americans are carving out a community on one of the world's last frontiers.

They are members of Peoples Temple, a mostly-black civil rights church organization, led by Rev. Jim Jones, one of America's most unusual ministers. The multi-thousand member Temple, which functions socialistically, has had a stormy 25-year history in the United States.

"We've been under attack for our stands on social justice, and for our attempts to create a society totally free of racism and economic inequality," explains the sharp-featured, outspoken 47-year old Rev. Jones. "Even though most of us are poor, we have managed to save and pool together enough to bring this community into being."

Anyone who comes to the community recognizes right away that something phenomenal, perhaps unprecedented, is taking place.

An amazingly diverse amalgam of people has made the 5000 mile journey to pioneer in the tropics: a California pharmacist and his family; a country musician from Alabama; a man who worked as a brickmaker for half a century and his wife, who managed a convalescent hospital in Los Angeles; a former Navy drill instructor; a writer for the Black Panther newspaper; a former State College professor, a syndicated astrology columnist, a poverty program co-ordinator, big-city legal secretary, ex-ministers, ex-convicts, airline pilots; a successful Midwestern salesman; a shoe repairman from New Jersey...and hundreds more, many of whom had only a dim identity in urban ghettos, holders of a thousand odd jobs that helped patch together the tattered garments of survival.

C-11-e-11c

Then there are the children, city kids mostly, plus refugees from suburbia, the 'rat race,' or the emotional tyranny of parents who didn't understand their longing for something else, something more. And, of course, the hundreds of old people. All brought together by the fiery, controversial Jones who himself started out as an angry child of the Depression in rural Indiana.

A thousand acres of cleared jungle are producing well. Colorful cottages and community residences, carefully maintained and landscaped with fruit trees and decorative fencing, are framed in a peaceful setting of rolling fields and orchards. Public utilities, extensive and sophisticated medical services, and a full educational program have already been developed.

All kinds of home-made 'industries' have sprung up. A feisty, 103-year old, "Pop" Jackson, makes furniture. Another old-timer has perfected a soap-making process from local materials, and a factory has been set up to mass-produce it, under her supervision.

32-year old Don Fitch is the wizard of the community machine and welding shop. From scraps, old parts, and practically anything else, Fitch (known as "the Doc") fashions all kinds of gadgets, contraptions, and devices. The improvisational technologist is currently perfecting a huge mass of pipes, chambers, ducts, and doors -- a 'smoke generator' -- which will convert wood smoke into fuel to power a gasoline engine and save the community thousands of dollars.

Heading the teaching staff is a veteran in helping children overcome learning disabilities, Tom Grubbs. A creative manufacturer of educational materials, Grubbs has developed an array of home-made interlocking wood puzzles, board games, and special types of blocks that make learning fun and challenging. The fully-accredited high school, in addition to regular academic subjects, uses the community as an open-air classroom, training

C-11-c-11d

ninety students in over twenty different fields, from veterinary medicine to food processing.

On one occasion, a science class discovered a deposit of a white substance and found it to be a high grade of firing clay. The find led to the establishment of a fire- and construction-brick factory which now is in production. The development of this "indigenous technology" may even revolutionize construction in the district.

In the huge food-preparation facilities (3000 meals per day, plus snacks, special dietary meals, etc.) new specialties and delicacies are frequently 'cooked up' from locally-grown products. Many jungle teas, herbal and medicinal concoctions have been developed. The diet is varied and balanced with a variety of home-grown vegetables, poultry, fruits, and even whole-grain rice (a non-paddy variety is used), produced right in Jonestown (the community was named in honor of its founder by the Guyanese government). Nutrition levels are high, as witnessed by a visiting head of a Guyana dental school. He examined 87 children and found a total of two cavities!

The 65-member medical team has assisted in several childbirths, and has helped upgrade community health levels in surrounding areas. Up to three hundred local people come from as far away as fifty miles by canoe to get treatment at the Jonestown clinic, and the young project physician, Dr. Laurence Schacht, along with nurse practitioners, RN's, therapists, and paramedics, has been responsible for saving many lives. Dr. Schacht, who is now training a team of young "barefoot doctors" has done astounding work in prevention of parasite-caused diseases (notorious in the tropics), and has done amateur radio consultations with scores of physicians in many countries. He has been called a "modern-day Dr. Schweitzer." Under his supervision, a remarkably thorough system of preventative care has been set up, including breast exams, blood-pressure checks, weight-watching, and periodic complete physicals for the entire community.

C-11-e-11e

Classes of all kinds are offered to the community at all hours. A campaign is even underway to wipe out illiteracy among the elderly, some of whom had virtually no formal education. The driving force behind it is a former college teacher and senior citizen, Edith Roller. Community education (and entertainment) is enhanced by a 10,000 volume library, and a large-screen television system with over a thousand hours of video-taped programs. Spirited "town forum" meetings form the cornerstone of an elaborate structure of participatory government, with central steering committees, various departmental meetings, and the like, where all can have a voice, from the oldtimers down to the children.

Jonestown is a community where things get done. Often, people find themselves marveling at the staggering amount of development that has been accomplished in a place that, not long ago, was an almost impenetrable jungle.

Sitting around the table in the community's agricultural office for a farm analyst's meeting are some of the people who are responsible for it all: field crop supervisor Jan Wilsey, a young Pomo Indian woman from Northern California; expert tractor operator Phil Blakey, who grew up in Northumberland (England); a former attorney from California who manages the 5000-tree citrus project; the project agronomist, Russel Moton, an ex-wino from the Philadelphia ghetto who the church sponsored through school; Dorothy Buckley, a teenager who grew up in the racism and poverty of rural Mississippi (where she watched a friend starve); Jack Barron, a 57-year old chemical engineer from a prominent family in Delaware. This sort of diversity of backgrounds characterizes Jonestown.

If there is any group approaching homogeneity, it is the 250 senior citizens. Mostly black, many started out in the rural South, but found themselves at the end of the line in the inner-city slums of Chicago, Los Angeles, and Houston. Today, in a place where gentle, persistent trade winds temper the tropical sunshine, they have found peace, and a new lease on life. Besides, they are able to be useful and to participate in every area of community activity, and enjoy the respect that elderly people deserve.

C-11-c-11

October 30, 1978

James N. Wall, Editor  
Christian Century  
407 S. Dearborn St.  
Chicago, Illinois 60605

Dear Mr. Wall:

Today I received in the mail an envelope containing photos I had submitted to the Century to accompany an article I had submitted somewhat earlier. There was no note of explanation, nor have I received the manuscript back. I do not know if the manuscript has been rejected and if so, if there is a reason for its not being returned (insufficient postage?). I would sincerely appreciate hearing from you about the manuscript. If it is indeed the case that it has not been returned due to insufficient postage, I am enclosing some international postal coupons for that purpose.

Thanks for your attention to this.

Sincerely yours,

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Richard D. Tropp

encl.

C-11-e-1

November 3, 1973

Vera Backstrom  
Editorial Assistant  
East West Journal  
233 Harvard Street  
Brookline, Massachusetts 02146

Dear Ms. Backstrom:

Thank you very much for your letter of August 31st. I sincerely hope that the enclosed manuscript and photos will be suitable for publication in the Journal. Please feel free to edit the manuscript as necessary. I consider the manuscript to be only a very brief overview, and you may want me to add material in certain areas. Please write me if there is anything more you may need from me.

You do not have to return the manuscript. I have, however, enclosed international postage coupons for print returns. There is already considerable international interest in Jonestown, and if the enclosed article is published in the Journal, I would like to be able to circulate reprints to many nations. Also let me know if you would like additional photos or photos on specific subjects, and I will try to accommodate you. Thanks for your interest.

Sincerely yours,

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Richard D. Tropp

enc.

C-11-c-2

November 3, 1978

Ruth Kaswan  
The Urban Alternatives  
Box 303  
Worthington, Ohio 43085

Dear Ms. Kaswan:

Thanks for your letter of October 11th. I sincerely hope that the enclosed manuscript and photos will be suitable for publication in Green Revolution. It's a little long, but feel free to edit it down however you wish, change the title, etc. I consider the manuscript to be only a very brief overview, and it has been hard to keep everything down to article-length dimensions. We are currently preparing a book that we hope will make an impact -- Jonestown is a very unique and exceptional story. There is already considerable international interest in our co-operative, and if the enclosed article is published in Green Revolution, I would like to be able to circulate it to people in many nations. If you have any questions or want more or different material, please contact me. Thanks very much for your interest.

By the way, the fact that there is no honorarium is absolutely okay. It seems that so many who are doing good work are having to struggle along. If what I have to say about Jonestown brings some hope and encouragement to just one reader, we are well-paid. Best of luck,

Sincerely,

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Richard D. Tropp

C-11-2-3



**EAST  
WEST  
JOURNAL**

233 Harvard Street, Brookline, Massachusetts 02146 • (617) 738-1760

August 31, 1978

Mr. Richard D. Tropp  
P. O. Box 893  
Georgetown, Guyana

Dear Mr. Tropp:

Thank you for your recent letter and pamphlet about Jonestown. It seems like a most remarkable place and we would like to see your article about it for possible publication in the Journal...but only if the Jonestown tenants eat only locally grown foods. If that is the case, please do tell us about it and other aspects of their life, and we would be delighted to review ~~the~~ article for possible publication in East West Journal.

I am enclosing a copy of our editorial guidelines for your reference. Are you familiar with our macrobiotic focus?

Sincerely,



Vera Backstrom  
Editorial Asst.



enc.

C-11-e-4



**EAST  
WEST  
JOURNAL**

233 Harvard Street, Brookline, Massachusetts 02146 • (617) 738-1760

Dear Friend:

Thank you for your interest in East West Journal. We hope you will look through past issues to see the subjects we tend to cover.

We publish articles that show wholistic common sense rather than dualistic analysis. The style preferred is simple, concise and personal. Emphasis should be on practical and constructive alternatives, with avoidance of an aggressive or critical tone. Prose must be correct. Please avoid faddish phrases and human potential jargon. We do not solicit poetry or fiction.

All manuscripts should be typewritten, double-spaced, with sixty characters to a line, twenty-five lines to a page, and should include a brief biography of the author. The deadline is the last Monday three months prior to an issue's publication (for example, April 26 for the July issue). We pay between 4¢ and 8¢ a word upon publication. Length should be between 2,000 and 6,000 words. Please include photographs or illustrations whenever possible; payment is contingent upon size and use, and ranges from \$15 for a small black-and-white (which should be glossy and no smaller than 5" x 7") to \$150 for color (which should be a transparency and is used only for the cover).

A kill fee of 15% is paid if a commissioned story is not accepted. We pay expenses only when pre-arranged. Please do not request passes, tickets, or review copies of books or records in the name of East West Journal. We will make these arrangements for you if we wish to have a story on the subject.

We prefer submission of a clear copy which can be marked up without having to be returned. However, if you wish the manuscript to be returned, please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

If you are interested in writing for East West Journal but have no specific articles suitable at this time, please send samples of your work, a résumé, and your areas of interest. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

*Vera Backstrom*

Vera Backstrom  
Editorial Assistant

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CONFIDENTIAL

Another innovation of the  
Bostonian community (named  
in honor of the founder of the  
company) is the round, the  
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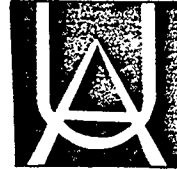
C-11-E-56

*Revise an article + submit.  
Christian Century? (referred?)*

**THE  
URBAN ALTERNATIVES**

BOX 303  
WORTHINGTON,  
OHIO 43085

**GROUP** (614) 885-8964



11 October 1978

Richard D Tropp  
P. O. Box 893  
Georgetown  
Guyana

Dear Mr. Tropp:

Sorry to be so slow answering your letter.

Jonestown certainly sounds like an impressive place, and one from which we may have much to learn. But I should begin by telling you that doing it! --or Humanizing City Life, as we renamed it--had to suspend publication. We are, however, not completely dead. We have sort of merged with another alternatives magazine, Green Revolution, which has been around for 35 years. They carry a few pages under the Urban Alternatives heading as a sort of Newsletter for us, and in addition I serve as a contributing editor. However, since they are in eastern Pennsylvania (York) and we're in central Ohio, the association is somewhat lacking in intimacy. So far there have only been two issues of GR, under the present arrangement. The situation is somewhat tentative, but I'm pretty confident that material I submit will be published. GR is going to our subscribers and is the publication our members receive with their membership.

I would be very interested in a story about Jonestown--1500-2000 words. You understand, of course, that there's no money for honoraria. But GR is quite a respectable magazine and is read by many activists in the alternatives movement.

I hope to hear from you. And good luck with your projects.

Cordially,

*Ruth Kaswan*

Ruth Kaswan

C-11-2-6