

# How temple planned to shift funds to Soviets

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**MATTHEWS RIDGE, Guyana** — Letters written by a 70-year-old black woman from Mississippi have disclosed how Peoples Temple arranged to turn over nearly \$7 million to the Soviet Union.

The letters were introduced at an inquest here to determine the cause of the deaths of 913 temple members in a mass murder-suicide ritual Nov. 18.

The woman was Annie McGowan, described by surviving temple members as "just an old lady" and by police, on the basis of interviews with temple survivors, as "semiliterate."

McGowan, who according to her passport had been a resident of St. Louis, apparently was not one of the ranking temple aides.

Her passport showed, however, that she had traveled to Venezuela and Panama, where, according to letters presented at the inquest, the temple had millions in Swiss bank accounts.

One McGowan-signed letter was addressed to "Dear Comrade Timofeyev (the Soviet consul in Georgetown)" and had instructions for "all our assets which we want to leave" to the Soviet Communist Party.

"I am doing this on behalf of the Peoples Temple because we, as communists, want our money to be of benefit for help to oppressed peoples all over the world or in any way that your decision-making body sees fit," the letter said.

"The embassy does not intend to make any comment on the Jonestown tragedy or on any aspects of it since we consider it to be a matter exclusively for the United States of America, whose citizens were involved, and of Guyana, on whose territory it took place. We understand the entire thing is being investigated by the American and Guyanese authorities and that's why we think all inquiries should be directed to them."

Shown a photocopy of the McGowan letter addressed to Ambassador Timofeyev, the attache refused to look at it or read it, saying:

"We are not interested. We are not involved. Anybody can address a letter to anybody he wants...I wouldn't acquaint myself with any documents or papers deemed to be documents of the Peoples Temple."

He said he had heard reports that money would be given the Soviet government, but firmly added:

"I think you can draw a conclusion from what I tell you. Since we have nothing to do with that, you can conclude it's fiction, somebody's attempt to get the embassy involved."

In addition to three letters that bore the large, scrawled signature of McGowan, there was a letter signed by Maria Katsaris, one of the top aides to temple leader Jim Jones, dated Nov. 18.

The letters, along with passports of Katsaris and McGowan, were found in a suitcase taken out of Jonestown by Tim and Michael Carter and Michael Prokes, three temple aides who have been detained in Guyana pending their inquest testimony.

According to the letters, the money was in Swiss bank branches in Panama and Venezuela.

Assistant Police Commissioner Cecil Roberts noted in testimony at the inquest that on two of the typewritten letters signed by McGowan the signature was at the bottom left of the page, and not in a place where a person would put a signature.

He said it appeared that McGowan had signed blank pieces of paper. All the letters she signed, he said, were at the very bottom, even though some were very short.

Roberts said very little was known about Annie McGowan and all he knew "was that she was a person at the temple for a long time and would do whatever Jim Jones wanted her to."

He said he has reason to believe that the letters were written possibly before Nov. 18 "to have in case of an emergency."

The missives probably never reached their intended recipients, Roberts believes.

"I believe the letters are originals and I doubt that the instructions reached the banks. I expect the money is still there."

The passport stamps showed that Katsaris had been to Venezuela Nov. 1, to Panama the following day, and out of Panama on Nov. 5. McGowan also had been to Venezuela Nov. 1, then had gone to

## Attache claims, 'Not involved, not interested'

Panama, leaving there for Venezuela Nov. 6 and leaving the latter country the following day.

The Katsaris letter said: "I, Maria Katsaris, leave all the money in the Banco Union de Venezuela in Caracas to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The person to contact is Mr. Hedderich, in the main branch of Banco Union. This is my final wish before I die."

The letter bore her signature and that of two witnesses, Jim McElvane, who has been described as a top man in Jones' security force, and Marilyn Bogue, one of the temple aides who died at Jonestown.

Another letter, which bore the McGowan signature, went into fiscal details, which would be remarkable for a "semilliterate" person.

It was addressed to Rudolf Keller, Union Bank of Switzerland, P.O. Box 6792, Panama City, Panama.

"Dear Mr. Keller," it began. "The following are my instructions for the account Number 121-00-191A. As each deposit comes through, please send a cashier's check for the amount plus the interest earned to:

"Mr. Fedor Timofeyev, consul  
"48 Chandra Nagal Street  
"Prashad Nagar  
"Georgetown, Guyana.

"The following is the list of deposits and maturity dates which I

want checks made out for and sent to the above person."

The letter then listed the following dates and check amounts: May 31, 1979, \$300,000; July 5, 1979, \$200,000; July 25, 1979, \$1,623,000; Aug. 21, 1979, \$1 million; Sept. 21, 1979, \$1,036,000; July 25, 1981, \$1 million.

Soviet consul Timofeyev had visited Jonestown in early November, a U.S. Embassy source said.

The letter which bore the McGowan signature and was addressed to "Dear Comrade Timofeyev" also said:

"There are two basic accounts which are in fixed time deposits. One is located in Swiss Bank Corporation, P.O. Box 3370, Panama 4, Panama. In this account are two deposits. One is for \$557,000 and it is on a 30-day rotation so it can be withdrawn almost immediately which the letter of instruction so instructs. The other is for \$1,486,000 and it matures on July 6, 1978, so at that time you should receive a cashier's check for that amount. The other account is located in the Union Bank of Switzerland, P.O. Box 6792, Panama No. 5, Panama. In this account are seven fixed-time deposits."

This letter also listed the same accounts as given in the McGowan letter to Keller. It was assumed that the reference to the account maturing on last July 6 meant to say that the money was available and that any party drawing that amount would have the principal plus interest available.

A letter over McGowan's signature to Andre Menne of the Swiss Banking Corp. in Panama City instructed him to send cashier's checks, including interest, for the \$557,000 and \$1,486,000 deposits to the Soviet consul.