



# PEOPLES TEMPLE

OF THE  
DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

Jim Jones,  
Pastor

May 17, 1978

## OPEN STATEMENT FROM MEMBERS OF PEOPLES TEMPLE TO THE MEMBERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Dear Members of the Commission:

Our organization has undergone repeated harassments and persecutions in the past year, both in the United States and Guyana, designed to destroy a work which has had unprecedented success in redeeming thousands from conditions of poverty, slums, unemployment, drug addiction, crime, neglect, denial of educational opportunities and chronic ill health. The work of Rev. Jim Jones has cut across racial, economic and social lines to promote social justice, and racial and economic equality in the United States for nearly thirty years.

The impact of the Peoples Temple has been widely recognized. Rev. Jones has received Certificates of Honor from the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, from the California State Legislature, and on a national scale has been honored as one of the 100 most outstanding clergymen in the United States by Religion in American Life. The Peoples Temple Agricultural Project, Jonestown, in Guyana, is receiving international acclaim as a model community to be emulated all over the world.

We are writing to directly address and refute the false charges made against Rev. Jim Jones and the Peoples Temple to the International Human Rights Commission, by a group calling itself, "The Concerned Relatives." This false front represents only the most recent effort to tear down a great humanitarian work on the part of a well-financed, premeditated, coordinated conspiracy.

The Peoples Temple has in its possession a massive amount of documented evidence to support our assertion of a conspiracy. Only limitations of space prevent a full disclosure in these pages, as we are about to deal with the specific charges leveled against Rev. Jones and the entire organization meticulously, at length. We find it unavoidable at the outset, however, to highlight the sham of charging Rev. Jones and the Peoples Temple with "human rights violations," when exactly the reverse is the case.

The very individuals spearheading this present effort—notably Timothy Stoen, but others as well—are working within a conspiracy that has already attempted the following:

1. To cut off our members' finances: Working through the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, and the U.S. Postal Service, an official memo was distributed throughout San Francisco Post Offices, which we obtained, directing that all Social Security checks to be (properly) forwarded to Guyana, to our senior and disabled citizens there, be withheld. This was later reversed by the Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare themselves, claiming it was a "misinterpretation of regulations," but declining to explain how it came about. Both the Postal Service and the Department of HEW (Social Security) had assured us on several inquiries the checks would be routinely forwarded, and this type of deliberate

*"For I was an hungered  
and ye gave me meat:  
I was thirsty  
and ye gave me drink:*

*I was a stranger  
and ye took me in:  
Naked, and ye clothed me:  
I was sick and ye visited me:  
I was in prison,  
and ye came unto me.*

*Then shall the righteous  
Answer him, saying,*

*When saw we thee an hungered  
And fed thee?  
Or thirsty,*

*And gave thee drink?  
When saw we thee a stranger  
And took thee in?  
Or naked, and clothed thee  
Or when saw we thee sick?  
Or in prison,  
And came unto thee?*

*Verily I say unto you,  
Inasmuch as ye have done it  
Unto one of the least of these...  
...Ye have done it unto me"*

Matthew 25:35-40

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obstruction is unheard of.

2. To cut off our communications: Working through the Federal Communications Commission, an effort was made to re-open a very minor complaint resolved a year ago, in an attempt to cut off our radio communication which is our only communication between the United States and Guyana.
3. To destroy our tax-exempt status as a church: Working through the Internal Revenue Service through lies and false charges, to provoke an investigation geared towards revoking our tax exemption; and attempting to destroy our State tax-exempt corporate status working through the State Franchise Tax Board (the latter has been resolved).
4. To destroy our affiliation with our religious denomination: A threat was made to our denomination, the Disciples of Christ, that if they did not expel the Peoples Temple by a specified date, they would themselves face severe public embarrassment. The denomination refused to go along.
5. To pressure for official intervention in the internal affairs of Guyana: Exerted pressures on the State Department, and too many persons in Congress to name, to force direct intervention of the State Department in a custody case pending legally and rightfully in the Guyanese courts.
6. To cut off shipments of needed supplies from the United States to Guyana: U.S. Customs broke into our shipping crates some months back, found nothing, but also refused to give any explanation, even officially to our attorney. We later discovered this was done because of a lie which was spread by Interpol, a lie alleging guns in our supplies, and another alleging drugs. (We are known to be inalterably opposed to both violence and drug use.)
7. To destroy our public image: A media campaign to destroy the church through bad publicity has been coordinated by one Joseph Mazor, a man with a 75-page criminal record and connections with Interpol. (This was brought to light by an investigative reporter in no way affiliated with the church.) Mazor refuses to disclose who funded several months of work with one of the most expensive public relations firms in San Francisco to bring about bad press for the church, which executives of the firm confirm.
8. To spy on us through electronic means: Two men were discovered spying outside our church building in San Francisco as far back as November, 1976. Their proof-positive identity was traced as electronics communications experts in the employ of the U.S. Air Force in Biloxi, Mississippi. Our inquiry to Senator Stennis, under whose jurisdiction these men fall, has never been answered.
9. To assassinate our leader and kidnap members of the Jonestown community: Such efforts were attempted in September, 1977, by individuals whose identity has not yet been revealed.
10. To threaten Jonestown with an armed attack by hired mercenaries for the purpose of kidnapping one or more persons from Jonestown: This threat was published in a California paper, attached. The paper is not friendly to Peoples Temple, and learned of the threat entirely independently.

We feel it is outrageous to be accused of "human rights violations", when we have violated no one's human rights, and have in fact been the victims of such violations for an entire year to date. But in all due respect to the Commission, we present the following point-by-point refutation of all charges leveled against Rev. Jones and the Peoples Temple. We would also welcome a visit from the International Human Rights Commission at any time, in fact we would feel honored to have the Commission as our guests.

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## REFUTATION OF CHARGES

(Introductory Page:)

*"Who are the 'Concerned Relatives'?"*:

The group signing the "Concerned Relatives" statement represents not one percent of the thousands of relatives of the over 1,000 people in Jonestown who maintain cordial and regular contact. Many of those have visited, who are not affiliated with the Peoples Temple in any way except through their relatives in Jonestown, and were extremely impressed. (Some of their responses are included in the attached sheet of comments about Jonestown.) More will be visiting soon.

The only ones of the small front calling itself "Concerned Relatives" who have been to Jonestown personally are Tim and Grace Stoen (the latter a very long time back), who both publicly praised the program enthusiastically to hundreds.

*"We are (friends and relatives)...of people isolated at the 'Jonestown' jungle encampment in Guyana, South America."*

No one is "isolated" in Jonestown, nor is it an "encampment". It is a modern, thriving community, with electricity, roads, modern sanitation and medical care, shops for every trade, excellent schools, extensive agricultural programs and several budding industries in sawmill, cassava processing, furniture making, livestock and dairy, and several cottage industries. It is very accessible by helicopter, boat, roads and train, and frequently hosts up to 50 visitors a week, many of them officials and/or foreign visitors. Freedom of movement for Jonestown residents is well-evidenced in the recent participation of 100 Jonestown youth in a cultural festival in the capital, with the youth staying at all different point over the city.

*"Brought together because of our love and concern for our dear ones...Families from all walks of life cutting across religious, economic and social lines."*

This rather melodramatic ploy evincing "love and concern" conceals a concerted campaign of many weeks and months to stir up the anxieties and animosities of said relatives, such as the approach of one "group leader" to the parents of a young white man who had recently married a young black woman, designed to stir up their prejudice against our interracial church.

The only reason the "relatives" group cuts across religious, economic and social lines is due to the success of Jim Jones and Peoples Temple in uniting people from disparate backgrounds, so that their respective relatives are also from different backgrounds. The persons in "Concerned Relatives" would not normally come into contact with one another, due to religious, economic and social divisions, a condition which will doubtless persist long after this front is dissolved.

*"Some, a few, are former Temple members. Most have had no affiliation with Peoples Temple other than through their relatives. It is the kind and quality of these contacts... coupled with an emerging picture of the true nature of the 'Jim Jones Cult' that has caused us to come together."*

This is entirely misleading. It seems designed to portray a spontaneous effort on the part of individuals who drew disturbing conclusions based simply on direct contact with their relatives; rather, these individuals were approached with lies about the church, and have likely also believed the lies they read in the newspapers. This is what really lead up to the formation of this group. In fact, many of the same individuals in the "Concerned Relatives" were the ones who instigated lies in the press.

The Peoples Temple is not, and has never been a cult. It is one of the most esteemed human service organizations in America, with almost thirty years of outreach with humanitarian service programs.

*"We espouse no political or religious viewpoints."*

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This is very open to question, in terms of the conspiracy as a whole, and even this particular arm. We have substantiated evidence of far-right-wing involvement, and Interpol involvement; and the source of funding for prohibitively expensive operations has not yet been disclosed. In terms of the document at hand, some attempts at slander fall into a standard anti-left rhetoric: accusing Jim Jones of giving a "party line" and exercising "totalitarian" control, both outlandish lies. ~~Mr. Katsaris~~ implies that his daughter has somehow been forced to become an atheist through her connection with Peoples Temple, another outlandish lie. Other claims promote that Jim Jones has somehow turned everyone against "God, country, and family". The overriding assumption seems that Peoples Temple must be comprised of "anti-American Communist atheists", a ridiculous lie which is obviously politically motivated. The news article chosen for inclusion, "Temple Trouble", is filled with all kinds of lies about Rev. Jones' political involvements, which are in fact non-existent.

*"We are bewildered and frightened by circumstances...that have torn the very fabric of our families lives."*

Far from "bewildered and frightened", those in control of this group have been so brazen in their activities, for so long, that this is obviously another false emotional ploy.

No families in question have been "torn". In the vast majority of these cases, the relatives in question had not lived with these complainants for a very long time, if ever at all. In all cases, it is ludicrous to state that any family had been "torn", as the facts all disavow this claim.

*"We believe that by coming together we can (bring)...the aid necessary to bring our relatives safely home again."*

The relatives in Jonestown are free to return to the United States any time they choose. They are also all, without exception, safe and happy in Jonestown. They spoke for themselves on the subject by radio-phone patch at the recent press conference in San Francisco.

*The three group leaders designated for contact:*

1. ~~Sherwin Katsaris~~, whose 24-year-old daughter, Maria, has repeatedly stated she was molested by him, even on the radio phone patch at the recent press conference. ~~He has never denied the charge. She also reiterated her own desire not to see him.~~

2. Sherwin Harris, whose 21-year-old daughter, Liane, is happy as a teacher at Jonestown. Her mother is also there, who reared Liane alone through many years of divorce. Mr. Harris has never lived with his former wife and daughter. Nor did he provide child support to raise Liane.

3. Tim Stoen: John Victor, the child he is claiming is not his at all, but Rev. Jones' own son. The child's mother, Grace Stoen, abandoned John in July, 1976, and subsequently signed for John to go to Guyana. Tim Stoen abandoned John in Guyana in the Spring of 1977, insisting he remain there to be reared by his natural father, Jim Jones. Grace was provided with a round-trip air ticket to visit John whenever she chose, and cashed the ticket in.

*"Accusation of Human Rights Violation by Rev. James Warren Jones Against Our Children and Relatives..."*

There is no young adult or relative who is in Jonestown without wanting to be there, nor are their rights being violated. Those in question are young adults, not minors, contrary to what is being claimed.

*"1. Introduction: We...are the relatives...of the persons you arranged to be transported to Guyana, South America..."*

Jim Jones made no arrangements for anyone to be transported to Guyana. In fact, the great majority of those there now came to Guyana when Jim Jones was already there, they went enthusiastically, and enthusiastically remain.

*"We are advised there are no...exit roads from Jonestown..."*

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False. The Project is accessible by boat, train or plane. The exit road of many miles is always accessible. Guyanese residents come in every day for medical care and visitors flock in sometimes 20-30 a day.

*"Sadly, your conduct over the past year has shown such a flagrant and cruel disregard for human rights...":*

The opposite is true. Everyone in Jonestown has the best of nutrition, medical care, housing, education, and recreation. Youth can master any trade or profession they choose, and senior citizens are given positions of honor and respect. There is an unusual degree of individual creative expression in every area of the community's life. Children are treasured and treated gently, with an abundance of individual attention.

Page 2:

*"II. Summary of Violations: 1. Making the following threat calculated to cause alarm for the lives of our relatives: 'I can say without hesitation that we are devoted to a decision that it is better even to die than to be constantly harassed from one continent to the next.'"*

We are a peaceful, non-violent people who have been subjected to threats, even attack. The Project has already had to endure an attack of several shots from unknown assailants on several occasions, and kidnap attempts on the lives of persons on the Project. The most recent threat of violence against us was made by A MEMBER OF THE "CONCERNED RELATIVES" GROUP- TO HIRE ARMED MERCENARIES TO "RAID" JONESTOWN! (See attached Ukiah Daily Journal article.)

What this document cites is from a letter THEY ACKNOWLEDGE WAS NOT WRITTEN BY JIM JONES, and which in fact the Press Statement from Jonestown claims no knowledge of To attribute a statement to Jim Jones which was authored by a person 5,000 miles away without his awareness is ridiculous. The Press Statement, moreover, explains the unanimous resolve of the community there in the face of repeated persecutions and attacks.

To distort this into the claim that Jim Jones is threatening the people of Jonestown is an obvious, deliberate, and malicious lie.

Nor was any such statement "calculated to cause alarm." This is another subterfuge. It seems apparent that this grotesque distortion of a principled stand was used by this group to cause alarm amongst relatives themselves, which is contemptible. The letter in question was obviously written not to relatives but to the U.S. Congress, and was moreover quoted entirely out of context.

Jim Jones, far from threatening anyone, is not even alluded to personally in the letter, except to mention in passing that he has been in Guyana for many months on the Project.

*"2. Employing physical intimidation and psychological coercion as part of a mind-programming campaign aimed at destroying family ties, discrediting belief in God, and causing contempt for the United States of America.":*

There is no coercion in Jonestown, either physical or psychological. Not a single family uses corporal punishment. People are, in fact, very self-motivated due to the great natural beauty and opportunities of the environment, and are remarkably harmonized and friendly. Leadership is by example, no coercion at all, to the contrary. Problems are solved by discussion and group counseling."

Regarding "mind-programming", whatever this means, we don't know about it. The Ambassador from the United States to Guyana interviewed one after another person on the Project, taking aside whomever he chose, individually offering them the chance to leave Jonestown if they chose. Everyone said they were happy in Jonestown and did not want to leave. The Ambassador said he would verify his experience in this regard. We are far too busy building a happy, productive environment, responsive to human needs, to "program" anyone's mind. Everyone's abilities, crea-

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tive ideas, and resources are utilized to the fullest, and everyone works in the area of their choosing.

We have destroyed no "family ties". The great majority of the residents of Jonestown are on good terms with their relatives in the United States. The relatives in question have made their reasons for dissociation clear: ~~Maria-Katsaris~~ <sup>her mother</sup> said she wanted no part in "the lies and schemes of ~~this~~ <sup>her</sup> man (the father)." Another young adult said his father was "strung out on drugs", and yet another said his parents did not care anything about him until after he was gone.

Belief in God is not discredited. Our church has always welcomed people of every denomination, and even people with atheistic beliefs have joined the church, attracted by its vast human service ministry. We believe "the highest service to God is service to our fellow Man" and Rev. Jones has worked tirelessly to implement the injunctions of Matthew 25: 35-40 in his everyday life. We have the respect and support of our denomination, the Disciples of Christ.

We believe that God is universal love, and it encompasses all religions. Some people who are narrow-minded cannot understand that concept.

It is false that Rev. Jones is "causing contempt for the United States of America". The reverse is the case. It is obvious that we love our country. We praise our country and our President publicly, and in the over 3,000 radio contacts made by Rev. Jones all across the United States and over parts of the world. We just praised President Carter in our recent presentation at a cultural festival in Georgetown, the capital. Moreover, we love our country enough to get thousands of people out of conditions in the inner cities where they had severe problems of adjustment, and many youth were turning to drugs and crime. The Peoples Temple has saved millions of dollars for the taxpayer, in what would have been the cost of institutions, welfare, and other programs; and provided a wholesome alternative environment where we could demonstrate a positive image for America in the Third World.

*"3. Prohibiting our relatives from leaving Guyana by confiscating their passports and money and by stationing guards around Jonestown to prevent anyone from escaping."*

These are lies. Anyone is free to leave Jonestown who wants to. No one's passports or money have been confiscated by Jim Jones, this is ridiculous. Anyone can check and see that there are no fences, no security, no gates or guards. There is a free train running by Jonestown that anyone can take if they wish.

It is clear that Yolanda Crawford and her relatives apparently had no trouble getting out of Guyana, whatever they claim are their complaints. In fact, it is amazing in the light of these charges that she and her mother, Mrs. Williams, came to church services in San Francisco for several months after they returned to the United States, of their own free will. They both spoke publicly saying how beautiful Jonestown is. Yolanda said she had come back for further schooling, and Mrs. Williams to take care of business, but that they both looked forward to returning at the earliest possible opportunity.

Her actions contradict everything she claims. If she and her mother had been "mistreated", why would they voluntarily return to the United States and make statements to the congregation praising Jonestown?

In both cases, this young woman has lied--both to the congregation in the United States, because she told our counseling staff in Jonestown that she did not like Guyana at all; and also to your Commission, as she was never mistreated or prevented from leaving Guyana. She was found in counseling to be a very superficial person, very materialistic and also dishonest. She was caught on several occasions taking things which did not belong to her. She lacked the capacity to identify with Guyana or with the struggles of Third World peoples, but was completely caught up with herself, her possessions and the impression she made on others. Lying

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for self-aggrandizement seems to come very naturally to Ms. Crawford.

In fact, not only is nothing in Jonestown "confiscated", but the residents all enjoy an excellent standard of living: beautiful, individual cottages, brightly decorated and landscaped; hand-crafted furniture from indigenous woods; excellent medical care; an abundance of fresh natural food, meat from our own poultry and livestock, all deliciously prepared; schooling for the children with teachers with advanced degrees; soccer fields, basketball courts for the youth, libraries, video-tapes and films, a large auditorium and every type of facility to sustain a community of that size.

"4. Depriving them of their right to privacy, free speech, and freedom of association by: a. Prohibiting telephone calls;":

This appears to refer to Georgetown, as there is regular radio contact in Jonestown, but as of this time, no phones. Ms. Crawford, who claims this, along with her mother, Mrs. Williams, did in fact make several crosscontinental phone calls to the United States. And moreover, these calls were made away from the Project in Jonestown, which indicates they were neither restricted in travel nor communication.

"(4.) b. Prohibiting individual contacts with 'outsiders' ":

This is ludicrous. Every day people are in contact with people in the surrounding communities. Up to fifty visitors a week are through the Project, many in an official capacity, and are free to go anywhere and talk to anyone, as our people without question freely communicate with them. Youth attend social functions, dances, movies and band events. 100 youth just went to Georgetown to a cultural festival, by different routes, and were separated in several different parts of the city during their stay. They were praised profusely in the Guyana Chronicle, the national paper, for their "unique and exciting presentations", showing their great creativity in expression.

"(4.) c. Censoring all incoming and outgoing mail;":

This is false. People on the Project are free to write to, and receive mail from anyone they choose, without interference. You can judge for yourselves, too, that the charges that "all letters sound alike" is false, just on the basis of the letters these relatives took upon themselves to print.

"(4) d. Extorting silence from relatives in the U.S. by threats to stop all communications;"  
(Cited is a letter from Donna Ponts to her grandmother: "I am sorry to hear that you called the radio station, but since you did I will not be writing you any more."):

This is false. Probably the best example is the letter cited from Donna Ponts to her grandmother. "The radio station" was not the Jonestown radio, but likely the local talk station in the United States, where these hostile "relatives" were taking hours of time broadcasting lies about Jonestown. We can not speak for Donna, but it seems her letter results from her adverse reaction to that call, which a child could not be expected to understand as Jonestown is a place where she is obviously happy.

Another point is Donna's is obviously not "censored". If it were "censored", it would be the last thing a so-called "censor" would have the child say! Who would want to further antagonize a relative who had already come out publicly with a biased viewpoint? This makes no sense.

"(4.) e. Preventing our children from seeing us when we travel to Guyana.":

Rev. Jones and the Jonestown community place no restrictions on family visits. In fact relatives are visiting Jonestown right now, and more are scheduled to do so in the near future. They are not members of the church, nor, we are sure, do they see eye to eye with us in many respects; but they are not coming with the intention to harass. These very few, hostile relatives who were thwarted in their efforts to visit Jonestown was the result of their

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relatives' desire to not see them. Ms. Katsaris and Bruce and William Oliver made this clear personally in a radio-patch at the recent press conference in San Francisco. In the case of John Victor Jones (Stoen), both parties had abandoned the child, and in the case of the mother, Grace Stoen, after a long history of neglectful, even cruel treatment of the child. The custody case is now being contested legally and rightfully in the Guyanese courts, and the U.S. State Dept. affirms that the Guyanese are under no obligation whatsoever to accept a U.S. Court order.

*"Page 3 III. Threat of Decision to Die":*

The Press Statement (attached) read from Jonestown, Guyana over the short-wave radio in San Francisco on Monday, April 17, 1978, addresses this issue directly and eloquently.

*"On March 14, 1978 you, Jim Jones, caused to be written on Peoples Temple stationery a letter...":*

This is ludicrous. Jim Jones was thousands of miles away at the time! The letter is neither signed by Jim Jones nor claims to speak on behalf of Jim Jones. Rev. Jones is not even mentioned except to allude in passing that he is working at the Project.

*"a letter..complaining of alleged "bureaucratic harassment":*

The harassment is not "alleged". Note from the partial enumeration at the head of this letter, the harassment is entirely factual.

The so-called "threat" is responded to under II. Summary of Violations, earlier in this letter; as well as the Press Statement issued from Jonestown. The charge goes on to state:

*"Your letter seeks to mask, by the use of irrelevant ideological rhetoric, its real purpose, which is to divert the attention of U.S. Governmental agencies towards your abuses of human rights by putting them on the defensive."*

This is a subterfuge, and the reasons are revealed by the facts. Firstly, it is not the U.S. government that is put on the defensive by said letter. It is to reveal to leaders in government that governmental agencies are being used (or rather misused) by "radical Trotskyite elements which..have been orchestrating a campaign against us." It is clear that it is an appeal to government, not an attack, and that the persons put on the defensive are individuals who are deflecting attention away from their own activities. We refuse their misrepresentation of the letter's clear and stated intent.

Another subterfuge is the reference to "radical Trotskyite elements" in reference to Cartmell and Cobb (and Stoen as well) as "irrelevant ideological rhetoric": This is no "mask", but based on documented facts. We have numerous affidavits regarding the terrorist activities and plans of these individuals. But since we can also see that affidavits can and do lie, i.e. Ms. Crawford's affidavit, we would not wish to leave the matter as our word against theirs. The persons in the Peoples Temple making such allegations stand ready and willing to take lie detector tests in the matter, and we challenge Mr. Stoen, Mr. Cartmell, and Mr. Cobb to do the same.

Tim Stoen, furthermore, misrepresented himself the entire time he was a member of the Peoples Temple, always claiming to be far to the left. We later discovered a news article identifying him as far to the right, denouncing Communism in East Berlin. He is entitled to his views, but he not only professed the opposite, but insisted to us he had never been to that part of the world. He always tried to push for violence and we would never go along, being non-violent, peaceful people. The elementary conclusion one would draw is that here is someone who failed as a provocateur and is now anxious to discredit the Peoples Temple so he can

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cover his tracks.

Page 3, bottom paragraph: "We frankly do not know if you have become so corrupted by power that you would actually allow a collective "decision" to die, or whether your letter is simply a bluff designed to deter investigations into your practices.":

It has already been clarified that this is not Jim Jones' letter, this is a misrepresentation. But follow the line of logic: Jim Jones, who has worked nearly thirty years to help provide a better life for poor and minority peoples is clearly not after "power". Nor has he made any statement about dying. But the argument given by the relatives' group does not even...make sense by their own claim: Why would someone who allegedly wants to die at the same time be smeared as someone seeking power?

The fact is, people have a great tendency to project their own motivations onto others, and it is Tim Stoen who had even written out his plans to become President of the United States.

The speculation that this could be "a bluff designed to deter investigations.." almost defies comment. The people charging this include those who have systematically gone from agency to agency with lies to provoke investigations of Peoples Temple. Every agency high and low, from District Attorney's offices, to State agencies, to Federal agencies, have already investigated and found absolutely no evidence of wrongdoing. When that many agencies have already investigated, and found allegations to be false, it is time to examine those who continue to press false allegations! It is clear that this is another subterfuge tactic on the part of the "Concerned Relatives".

As a case in point, Tim Stoen recently went to the Disciples of Christ denomination, threatening that if they did not disaffiliate the Peoples Temple from the denomination, they would themselves face severe public embarrassment. He also bragged that he had provoked the proposed investigation by the Internal Revenue Service, along with David Conn, a man already exposed for his blackmail attempt against Dennis Banks, unless Banks would publicly denounce Rev. Jones and the Peoples Temple. At that time, Conn also claimed to be working with both Treasury Department agents and Grace Stoen! This is only one of scores of similar incidents. We question who is "bluffing". The answer seems clear.

Page 4: "There is supporting evidence for our concern in the affidavit of Yolanda Crawford, which shows that you have publicly stated in Guyana that you would rather have your people dead than living in the United States and that you have solicited people to lay down their lives for your cause.":

Jim Jones never made these ridiculous statements: The fact is that there are thousands of Temple members still in the United States, very much alive, and not threatened in the slightest. And Jim Jones would never solicit anyone to lay down their lives for "his" cause! He never solicited anyone laying down their lives at all, but what is "his" cause"? Why don't these accusers mention what we stand for—social justice, racial and economic equality? Could Jim Jones have a monopoly on these things? This is preposterous.

"1. and 2: ...questioning at what point 'a decision that it is better to die' is reached, and what is it to be 'devoted' to such a 'decision'?"

The unanimous resolve of the Jonestown community is explained in the Press Statement, and needs no further elaboration. But given that the individuals behind "Concerned Relatives" are also the individuals behind the continuing harassment, these points raised have ominous implications. Given that members of this "relatives" group have gone so far as to publicly threaten sending in armed mercenaries, why are they questioning how far the Jonestown community will have to be provoked before the residents take defensive action? It seems logical to conclude that they are setting others up—mercenaries—to do their dirty work, regardless of whom might be hurt, and to blame it on Jim Jones!! In fact, they state:

Page 5: "Should any harm befall them (our relatives), we will hold you (Jim Jones) and the

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Peoples Temple responsible..": (!!!)

They offer two points to "support" this prior claim of liability:

"We know your psychological coercion of the residents of Jonestown to be so 'totalitarian'.." and "The evidence is that our relatives are in fact hostages..":

Both these charges are unmitigated lies. We would request the Commission to interview anyone on the Project, if you wish, to determine the falsehood of these outrageous claims. Moreover, freedom of movement for the people of Jonestown has already been proven beyond doubt, in the participation of 100 Jonestown youth in the cultural festival in Georgetown, during which time they stayed in all different parts of the city. In fact, there was a major power black-out during the festival, and obviously anyone could have gone anywhere they wanted to in the dark.

Page 5: "IV. Mind-Programming and Intimidation" and "V. The Human Rights Being Violated":

The affidavits of Steven Katsaris and Yolanda Crawford will be handled separately.

All alleged charges, through page 10, have already been answered. Of the three examples given for parents attempting to see their children:

(a.) Mr. Katsaris will be handled through his affidavit.

(b.) Howard and Beverly Oliver: The Oliver's sons, Bruce and William, are both married young adults, contrary to the parents' report. The decision to not see Howard and Beverly Oliver was made by Bruce and William, not Jim Jones. We also protest the implication of the Guyanese Foreign Minister in these lies, an esteemed Third World leader who has addressed the United Nations General Assembly on several occasions.

(c.) Timothy and Grace Stoen: As explained previously, the custody dispute involving Jim Jones' son, John Victor, and the mother who abandoned the child, Grace Stoen, is being handled properly in the Guyanese courts. The Department of State wrote recently regarding this situation: "Child custody orders issued in the United States are normally not accepted for enforcement in another country on the basis of comity. While any American custody decision might be given evidentiary weight in the Guyanese proceeding, by no means will it be binding on that court."

Moreover, Grace and Tim Stoen have been using this child as a pawn in this unfortunate situation, as neither have demonstrated any interest in the child. The child did not come about through Jim Jones' choosing, but from extreme and destructive pressures exerted on him by both the Stoens years back, threats against the entire work which they have subsequently shown themselves entirely willing to carry out. Rev. Jones has reared John from a very early age, and the child is very happy in Guyana with his dad. Grace abandoned the child in July, 1976, taking with her thousands of dollars Jim Jones had set aside for his son's future education; it was the culmination of years of neglectful, even cruel treatment of the child on her part. When she returned, she affirmed that the child should go to Guyana, in Tim Stoen's presence, and signed the prerequisite papers. Tim Stoen abandoned the child in Guyana in the Spring of 1977 insisting to everyone in Jonestown that John remain in Guyana with his father, Jim Jones. He was very open about the true paternity of the child. He also told the press at that time that John was well-cared for in Jonestown. Moreover, Grace Stoen was provided with a round-trip ticket to visit John any time she chose, and she cashed it in.

It is immoral for Grace and Tim Stoen to try and claim John. Additionally, it would be tragic for the child, who is very happy where he is, but remembers vividly the cruel things that were done to him and is traumatized at any thought of return to the Stoens.

Of course, the case is being handled in Guyana, where the child was abandoned, and as the State Department themselves acknowledge, the California Court Order is not binding.

The accusations by Tim and Grace Stoen that their lives were threatened is a lie.

"VI. Demands for Relief":

The charges are false, so the "demands for relief" are irrelevant. Point 4 should be resolved

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however: "Permit and encourage our relatives a one-week visit home, at our expense." At the press conference in San Francisco April 17, 1978, at which the relatives in question spoke from Jonestown by radio-phone patch, they all declined this offer. We also find it peculiar to make the further claim that "they (the relatives in Jonestown) do not know the full Peoples Temple story"—who would know better than people living right there?

*"Affidavit of Yolanda D. A. Crawford... :*

*(1. Statement as to her identity and when she was in Guyana.)*

*2. Jim Jones said that the United States is the 'most evil' nation in the world, referring to its political and industrial leaders as 'capitalistic pigs'. He said he would rather have his people dead than live in the United States."*

The reverse is true. Jim Jones is upholding the United States in Guyana. He is especially supportive of the policies of openness in the Carter Administration in the Caribbean, and U.N. Ambassador Andrew Young. He has made over 3,000 contacts on the short-wave radio all across the United States and other parts of the world, praising the U.S., President Carter, and in support of U.S.-Caribbean friendship. We praised President Carter at the recent cultural festival in Georgetown, the capital, as well.

It is outlandish to even think Rev. Jones could say he would rather see people of his own church dead than live in the United States! We have a strong work in the U.S., and no one is being pressured to move to Guyana at all.

*"3. Jim Jones prior to June said that people would be coming to live in Guyana for for a temporary period of time. In June, Jim Jones stated that the people he brings over from the United States will be staying permanently!"*

Being that people have come to Guyana on their own free will, and are free to leave, this is a moot point; but the statement is in fact false. No one was brought to Guyana on false pretenses, no one. And the fact that only four out of over 1,000 people have chosen to leave shows what a remarkable place to live it is.

*"4. Jim Jones said that nobody will be permitted to leave Jonestown and that he was going to keep guards stationed around Jonestown to keep anybody from leaving. He said that he had guns and that if anyone tries to leave they will be killed and their bodies will be left in the jungle and 'we can say that we don't know what happened to you.' He also said, 'I can get a hit man for fifty dollars. It's not hard for me to get a hit man anywhere.'" :*

This statement is malicious fantasy from beginning to end. It is difficult to even conceive how such a fiction could have been constructed. Of all the esteemed personages to visit Jonestown, listed in the Appendix, some of whom stayed for days at a time, could they have all missed the "guards", the "gates", the "guns", the "hit men"?? All those persons could already verify Yolanda Crawford is lying, because it is not that way in the slightest, and she obviously left with no difficulty at all.

We also wish to emphasize that not one person who has ever left Jonestown and/or Peoples Temple has been harmed in the slightest, nor has anyone ever stated that to be the case! It is obvious that such statements are unmitigated lies.

*"5. While still in the United States, Jim Jones asked the Temple members to turn all their guns over to him. I also saw ammunition being packed in crates for shipment to Guyana addressed to Peoples Temple from San Francisco. I heard Jim Jones say, 'If anyone tries to start anything, we are ready and prepared to die for our cause.'" :*

These statements about guns are lies. No one ever turned over their guns (if they had any) to Jim Jones. Ms. Crawford never saw ammunition being packed into crates because it was never done. We do know however, that U.S. Customs broke into crates headed for Guyana, refusing to give cause, and only later we learned it was because of a lie spread by Interpol alleging guns

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in our shipments. We can't help but wonder if Ms. Crawford has been induced to tell specific lies to cover the tracks for others.

The statement she attributes to Jim Jones, if she ever heard such a statement, is deliberately put into a trumped-up, non-existent context. Such a move is as devious as a "trick photograph", and is only positive proof of these people's intent.

"6. Jim Jones said that black people and their sympathizers were going to be destroyed in the United States, the 'Ku Klux Klan is marching in the streets of San Francisco, Los Angeles, and cities back east'. There was 'fighting in the streets, and the drought in California is so bad, Los Angeles is being deserted'."

The last statement, about Los Angeles, is ludicrous. We have a large membership in Los Angeles, and many of the people in Jonestown are in contact with relatives and friends in Los Angeles. The statement was never made, but it would be ridiculous to even speculate over.

Concerning racial tensions in the United States, Jim Jones and the church membership, which is mainly Black, are very concerned about this. There has been a trend toward growth of the Ku Klux Klan and the Nazis in the United States, which has been highly publicized, and we have taken open, public positions on the matter. This statement seems designed to distort things out of all proportion—like some kind of "scare tactic" so people won't want to go back to the United States. Nothing could be more ridiculous. We are a concerned people, and we will keep talking about what we see, news reports, and facts, despite any attempts to intimidate us from speaking out. We have a long, honorable, well-earned record for helping improve the conditions of life for all Americans, especially minorities, and we are concerned about the fate of minorities everywhere.

However, we make no negative aspersions on anything relating to "bad treatment of Blacks in the United States" to the Guyanese or anyone else. Our purpose is to strengthen goodwill between nations, and to build on the foundations of brotherhood and justice which are the highest American ideals. We are proud of our country and see her great strengths. We believe that eternal vigilance is the best way to preserve our freedoms.

"7. (Dealt with previously.)" and "8. (The question of dying dealt with.):

On point 8, however, the charge that "Jim Jones also asked (others) to commit themselves to kill anyone attempting to hurt him" is so insulting to anyone who has known Jim Jones, that it demands a further rebuttal. Whenever Rev. Jones has even thought there could be danger to him personally, he has insisted that no one take any risks on his behalf. Years ago, a man came up to him and stabbed him in the chest. He refused to let anyone lay a hand on the man, but insisted on talking with him to try and determine what drove him to do that, even though he was himself in great pain.

When Jim Jones was Commissioner of Human Rights in Indianapolis, Indiana, he was taken to the largest hospital in the city, critically ill, but absolutely refused admittance until the entire hospital was integrated, which took several hours to accomplish while Jim Jones refused critically needed medical attention.

This has always been the character of Rev. Jones. He has always put the wellbeing of others ahead of his own. He would never make such a statement as charged.

"Jim Jones ordered all of us to break our ties with families. He said that our highest and only loyalty should be 'the cause', and that the only reason for staying in touch.. was to collect inheritances when 'they died off' and to keep them pacified 'so as not to make trouble for the cause'."

This is false, and does not even make a bit of sense. As previously stated, the great majority of the people at Jonestown are on good terms with their relatives, the number of exceptions being obviously very small. And how can one "break all ties" and also "stay in touch"? And who would "stay in touch" for the sake of what may or may not be in a will 10, 20, or 30 years from now?

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Besides the majority of our members come from poor backgrounds, and they would likely have no "inheritance" to speak of even if this ridiculous argument made sense. So far as keeping anyone "pacified", the examples offered by "Concerned Relatives" are riddled with contradictions. Donna Ponts' grandmother claims Donna's mail was "censored" for the purpose of not "pacifying" the grandmother, but antagonizing her! And certainly no one speaking on the radio-phone patch from Jonestown in the recent San Francisco press conference was making the slightest attempt to "pacify" their relatives, although those relatives were already threatening the worst kind of "trouble"—armed mercenaries!

In addition, there are many, many entire families in Jonestown. Couples have their own cottages, parents have close relationships with their children. These charges are outlandish.

*"10. Jim Jones ordered us to 'report' on one another to prevent 'treason'. His technique was to have everyone report to him (or his two or three most trusted leaders) all suspicious talk or behavior of others."*

This is insulting and ludicrous. Who would even have any time or inclination to participate in 'reporting' on one another? The atmosphere in Jonestown is totally different than what is portrayed. This is a happy, active community. Everyone is involved in building, planning, finding ways to expand our medical outreach, to enrich the lives of our children, to give our seniors every comfort and respect. This is a constructive community in every sense, and this kind of destructive mentality just does not exist, except in the mind of Ms. Crawford.

*"11. Jim Jones ordered people punished when they broke his rules. The punishments included food-deprivation, sleep-deprivation, hard labor, and eating South American hot peppers. I saw a teenager, Tommy Bogue, being forced to eat hot peppers at a public meeting."*

This falls into the same category as point 10, above. Jonestown is a supportive environment, not a punitive one. The fact is people want to cooperate with one another, to work together, to share in the work and share as well in the recreation and numerous other benefits; and they do a magnificent job.

Moreover, there is no deprivation or abuse whatever, which we welcome having verified on site. The community is in excellent health, both physically and mentally, and all needs are abundantly met. The Jonestown community is building happy, healthy lives.

*12. (A long string of accusations about threats allegedly made if she, Yolanda Crawford, were to leave Guyana: that if she spoke against the church she would lose some kind of 'protection' and 'be stabbed in the back'; that she had to sign papers incriminating herself, and fabricate some story that she killed someone that was threatened to be turned over to the police; and that Jim Jones is supposed to have claimed he has 'Mafia connections.' :*

These accusations defy the most hyperactive imagination. It is obvious that this young woman has left Guyana, come back to the United States, caused all kinds of trouble through malicious lies, and is safe and sound.

*"13. I heard him state to the congregation in Guyana that Marshall Kilduff, who wrote the first articles exposing him, was dead. He said, 'The angels have taken care of him'. We all knew the 'angels' were his people who would do you in if you crossed Jim Jones."*

The smear campaign in the press did not even begin until July, 1977, a month after Yolanda Crawford left Guyana, so there were no "first articles" to even talk about! Marshall Kilduff wrote several articles from July, 1977 on. He is not dead, no one thought he was dead—no one thought he had even written anything yet!!

Who these mysterious "angels" are we do not know. Can Ms. Crawford identify such an

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"angel"?

"14. Jim Jones ordered all telephone calls to relatives in the United States to be made in the presence of Temple members and after coaching. When my mother tried to call her brother in the United States and get him to stop criticizing the Temple, Jim Jones stood by her side and told her everything she was to say and then faulted her for not being forceful enough. He ordered us to tell relatives in the United States to stop criticizing him or we would not be allowed to return home."

First "Concerned Relatives" claims phone calls were "prohibited". Now Ms. Crawford claims they weren't prohibited, but all these other conditions were imposed. It doesn't make a bit of sense. Why would what Mrs. Williams' brother said one way or the other have anything to do with what Mrs. Williams was or wasn't able to do? In one breath Jim Jones is supposed to be cutting off everyone's family ties, and in the next supposed to be punishing people on the basis of what their relatives say or do?!

The fact also remains that Mrs. Williams and Ms. Crawford did return to the United States without any trouble at all. They came to the Peoples Temple in San Francisco for several months, and praised the Jonestown life publicly to hundreds.

"15. On numerous occasions I was in the congregation when Jim Jones told us, 'I am God' and 'there is no other God, and religion is the opium of the people'. He stated he used religion only to get to the masses."

We believe no man is "God". God is universal love and it encompasses all religions. Some people who are narrow-minded cannot understand that concept. But even at face value, Ms. Crawford's statement is full of contradictions. Who could possibly claim they are "God" and then downgrade religion? Or "use" religion and also claim it is "an opiate"?

Opium is a drug, which prevents people from functioning, and our community in Guyana is just the reverse. Everyone is alert, concerned, interested in the welfare of others.

"16. I recall several instances of Jim Jones stating he could silence critics or defectors by accusing them of being homosexual, child abusers, terrorists or sexual deviates."

This is an obvious subterfuge. Now that Tim Stoen has been widely exposed for advocating terrorism, and his own deviant patterns; and ~~Steven Katsaris has been exposed for molesting his own daughter~~, these charges are now called, in effect, "trumped-up accusations". And the fact is also that no accusations have been made by Jim Jones!; and all individuals in Peoples Temple who have attested to the backgrounds of Stoen, Katsaris, and others would undergo polygraph tests in the matter. We challenge Mr. Stoen and Mr. Katsaris to do the same.

"Steven A. Katsaris: Affidavit: An Account of Some of My Experiences With Peoples Temple Church When I Attempted to Visit My Daughter in Guyana."

Although this affidavit is lengthy, there is little of substance to discuss. Past the introductory paragraph, Mr. Katsaris makes clear his proneness to believe the lies he read in the press. And many of the same individuals who instigated the bad press are involved in the "Concerned Relatives" group. The "source of information" for the group, Yolanda Crawford, is exposed as a liar many times over in the refutations above. This would seem to be part of why Mr. Katsaris jumped to false conclusions regarding his daughter's alleged "state of mind", if he in fact believed Ms. Crawford's lies. Although we question why he would believe these outrageous lies over his own daughter's word.

But let us examine the facts. On page 2 of Mr. Katsaris' affidavit, he mentions several phone calls. We know nothing about these phone calls. Mr. Katsaris claims to know little himself, only claiming they happened, and that at least one of the callers identified herself as an "ex-member" of Peoples Temple. It appears that he is trying to set the stage with "strange calls", to then bring out another so-called "strange call", that from his daughter Maria.

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for which he has ABSOLUTELY NO EVIDENCE.

But the fact is, that Rev. Jones and the Peoples Temple have been subject to blackmail, calumny, and character assassination in the press for nearly a year, the documented blackmail attempt against Dennis Banks, the threats of violence by members of the "Concerned Relatives" group; and a very suspicious murder of one of our own members on the streets of San Francisco as well. Why isn't Mr. Katsaris making his speculations about the very people he is working with, the conspiracy working against Peoples Temple?

Regarding the statements on Page 8 of the affidavit, no one has ever contested that Grace Stoen is the mother of John Victor, Rev. Jones' six-year-old son.

Whatever Maria may have said or not said about her theology, that is her business. ~~It is apparent that whatever concept of "God" Mr. Katsaris holds, it allows for molesting his own daughter, and it is grossly hypocritical to flaunt theology while rejecting morality.~~

So, in total, this is what "The Concerned Relatives" presented to the International Human Rights Commission:

1. A cover page, giving a deceptive and misleading picture of the "relatives" identity and purpose;
2. Accusations of Human Rights Violations: A series of false accusations, in numerous instances for the purpose of subterfuge, or even more sinister motives of facilitating an attack and setting up the intended "victims" of the proposed attack—the Rev. Jones and Peoples Temple—as the alleged "perpetrators".
3. The Affidavit of Yolanda D.A. Crawford: The attempt at lending this effort credibility through the sworn statement of someone who has been to Jonestown, but who has in fact sworn to a series of lies, false charges, and subterfuges.
4. The Affidavit of Steven A. Katsaris: A substanceless document for legal purposes, based upon rumors, innuendoes, faceless accusers, speculation, and evasion of the facts.

We hope this detailed rebuttal will effectively clarify any questions which are posed by the "Concerned Relatives" document submitted to your Commission. If there is any need for further inquiry, please write to the Peoples Temple Agricultural Project, P. O. Box 893, Georgetown, Guyana. We will do all in our power to assist in a satisfactory resolution of this matter.

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The Peoples Temple went through this once before, when Rosalie Wright, Editor of New West magazine claimed she received "strange calls in the middle of the night", which no one in the Temple knew anything about, but she presented it as having originated from the Peoples Temple. That was just a prelude to the alleged "break-in at New West," which the police themselves confirmed never happened, after an investigation was ordered by Jim Jones himself! The implication on the part of New West was: here were all the threatening phone calls this woman claimed she received, attributed to the Peoples Temple, and this "proved" that Peoples Temple must be responsible for the so-called "break-in". The police investigation proved the entire thing was a hoax, from start to finish!

If Mr. Katsaris did in fact receive these calls, as he claims, he has every right to put it into an affidavit, no matter how irrelevant and false are the resulting implications. And in fact, if the calls were in fact made, anyone could have made them, including people opposed to the Peoples Temple who wanted to cause needless distress which they hoped to turn to their advantage!

But since Mr. Katsaris chose to include this in his affidavit, the Peoples Temple has every justification in stating that if this is the deceptive tactic being used, it's not a new one.

Maria's own stated reasons for not wanting to see her father are a lot more obvious. ~~She has stated repeatedly that he molested her, and he has never denied the charge.~~ She had been cordial to him previously, but the sequences of events leading up to the trip to Georgetown when he met with her were, she states, "the straw that broke the camel's back". He himself tells what had happened: he believed the lies he read in the press; he went directly to hostile "ex-members" of the church and believed all the lies they told as well; and he even went to numerous government officials with complaints based on lies! Maria knows Jonestown first-hand because she lives there; but her word counted for nothing with him.

Maria did not want to meet with Mr. Katsaris in Georgetown at all, but finally agreed only on the insistence that she not meet with him alone but only in the presence of the U.S. Ambassador. And it is obvious that she confronted him at that time with all she had been holding back for a long time previous. If she appeared "agitated" under the circumstances, that is hardly strange, but rather understandable.

Her own statement to Katsaris over the radio-phone patch Monday, April 17, 1978, was as follows: "I'll set the record straight once and for all. I'm not being held in captivity. That's totally absurd. The statement by Mr. Katsaris is an insult to myself, Rev. Jones, Peoples Temple and Guyana." Reiterating her earlier charges, ~~that her father has molested her,~~ Ms. Katsaris called Katsaris "mentally sick" and said she wanted nothing to do with his "schemes" and "lies". "He cannot stand the fact that I'm grown up and refuse to work with him. I am fed up. I am leading my own life and want absolutely no part of his. I want him to leave me alone."

Regarding page 5 of Mr. Katsaris' affidavit, where he reiterated things Maria Katsaris has allegedly said or done or written, everything is prefaced by "I further learned from former members", or "I ascertained from people who had firsthand knowledge". These charges are ridiculous but it is more remarkable that they ever found their way into an affidavit. Who are the "faceless accusers" in this situation? It is obvious that Mr. Katsaris knows nothing except what he was told, and the individuals who "fed" him this "information" are not identified.

Thus far, this document does not even read like an affidavit: We have read innuendoes, rumor, faceless accusers, and the refusal to address the one charge which summarily dismisses all other speculation about why Maria Katsaris would not have wanted to see her father ~~the fact that he molested her.~~

But speculation about Jonestown alone does not appear sufficient. On page 6, Mr. Katsaris is speculating about some world order Jim Jones is allegedly setting up singlehandedly. Moreover, Katsaris states he is "convinced" that Jim Jones and they (meaning the entire church) "would stop at nothing, including calumny, character assassination, blackmail, threats of violence, and even murder to achieve their goal." This person claims to be convinced of "intended crimes"

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