

April 9, 1978

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

Prime Minister Forbes Burnham  
Public Buildings  
Brickdam

Dear Prime Minister Burnham:

We have been informed that the judge in the child custody case has talked in open conversation about the exact time that he is going to give the decision and that it is not going to be favorable to us. Originally, we got nothing but encouraging reports, but now they are discouraging. We hope they do not reflect the reality of the situation, for Jim Jones can't live if the case goes against us.

There is a disgusting lie being told about us supposedly harassing the judge's wife. We were told by a reliable close acquaintance of the judge that he said his wife had gotten a letter from us about the case. We are not that stupid; we would not do that. Someone else who checked it out told us that she did not get any letter and had heard nothing from us about the case. This is the most abominable affair that we have ever seen, when a co-op and its leader would die for this country but cannot get a favorable resolution even when the law clearly shows that the judge made an erroneous decision. We are apparently considered of little value to Guyana by the majority of the few prominent leaders of the party at the very top echelons. Even a high official of the U.S. Embassy said that the decision should go in our favor from legal standpoint alone. In fact, he said in all of his assignments abroad, he has never known a nation in a case like this to ever decide against the resident or citizen; and he said it is absolutely Guyana's prerogative to make up her mind in our favor. We made no comments to him and he raised the issue. He said he thought the process should be speeded up so there would be no accusation from the U.S. that the decision is deliberately being sat on. Although he said he didn't expect broad support for Tim Stoen, in any event, because Stoen lost his credibility after having been caught in lies to the State Dept. and to congressmen.

We see no reason why this decision cannot be favorably handed down in our behalf. Our people cannot continue to try to live with this kind of alienation and apprehension. It is very destructive and we do hope someone is listening to this quiet desperation.

We were told there is a rule given to immigration authorities that the child is not to leave Guyana until the case is finished. We were informed by several persons that the rule was a concession to the forces helping Tim and Grace Stoen. Only one person said it was to help us. We would like clarification please.

We are loyal, so we would know better than to give public assurances to our people on the specifics of the case. Please understand that we are tired, greatly disillusioned with life, and--as much as we stoically celebrate life through such events as we presented at the National Cultural Centre--we are mostly ready to die. No one can understand what another goes through. The 25 years of constant insidious harassment--even when we were in public good favor--makes death look beautiful.

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We are also perturbed that another little boy who is five years old and very ill in the hospital in Georgetown with a brain hemorrhage, calls on Jim, his pastor, and Jim cannot come because he is a prisoner of the arrest orders. Several people associated with the government say the orders are intentional, but we deny it. We can see no reason why you want Jim locked in like this because he does nothing but speak well of Guyana and its government-- and very little talking does he do at that. He is weary of the world of public leadership. He said he had his lion's share and wants no more. We know that many mutual friends of ours, both here and abroad, do not understand why this matter cannot be resolved favorably to us to allow our community to be a proud example of production to all.

Though some kind words from you and Dr. Reid and others dedicated to you do occasionally trickle down, we still keep hearing that we will be given no assurances. And we hear of other cruel and snide remarks reportedly by some cabinet members. For the life of us we do not understand it because the assurances we seek are minimal, necessary for survival, and even essential to Guyana. We simply want to be allowed to maintain our own school and medical department, which we hear through the grapevine is being worked out satisfactorily, and which is an absolute necessity to avoid attacks from abroad on both Guyana and us. When we submit customs papers to Minister Hope for clearance, we would like some assurance that the matter will be handled within some reasonable specified time period. And the matter of Jim's child, of course, is the most important moral concern of the entire community in Jonestown. An informant within the conspiracy has told us absolutely that if we were to yield on this case, which we would never do, then other cases will follow. So that would also be counter-productive to the interests of Guyana. Furthermore, we will never allow the child to be this kind of pawn for racists and outright fascists.

#### ADVISED TO GO SLOW

A month or so ago we were told that we needed to integrate more. After our successful cultural program that was praised by all sectors of government and community life which were in attendance, as well as countless others that heard about it since, we have been advised by an official whom we admire that we should "go slow." Can you give any explanation for this?

#### CULTURAL SHOW PRAISED BUT NO PRESS; HOYTE

It is grossly embarrassing when we are asked questions about why we didn't get a word of press on such a spectacular cultural and entertainment event as we presented on April first. Guyanese friends and acquaintances do not understand why it has gotten no coverage, and they've asked us if we are on the "outs" with the government. Of course we deny that we're on the "outs", but we've little evidence to support it-- particularly when we are told there will be no press and that we can expect even other attacks by Hoyte. If any article about the event does get published, it will only be because we raised the issue with the Ministry of Information.

A high ranking official said to us that if you didn't want our organization alienated and destroyed by lack of morale, then no one should be permitted

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to attack us who claims to be with the party, particularly when Hoyte's attack was clearly groundless. Even according to the statements of your own officials--and they volunteered their criticisms because we never bring up such matters, except with the one assigned to us who you trust--the attack was not based on fact. Friends unto death should be considerate enough to criticize each other privately, which is essential to unity. Although we have done nothing to Hoyte, we are told over and over that he doesn't like us. One person even told us (we must not name him, as we don't know how many others will read these letters now) that we are being set up at our project in the Northwest in case we must be eliminated at some point.

#### LETTERS RESENTED, NOT READ

We have been told that our letters are not read. Please realize that it's when we stop writing that all will be given up. So for God's sake tell us who to write to with the assurances that the highlights of the subjects will be given to you. We have not had assurances given to us to date that you read the material. Some matters, such as regarding Venezuelan officials, could be of critical importance to national security.

A high ranking person in U.S. officialdom told three of our people that "Guyanese people don't like Guyana but the U.S. government does, because Guyana has few people and many resources that the U.S. can utilize." This was said just before someone was put into a new post here. Please do read the others letters as this is something we need for life. It is up to you, but it would be foolhardy not to give us some peace on the matters of concern to us. We have few whom we can trust to discuss our feelings with--none but a few of you in government--because we do not trust easily. There is a lot of salient information in the letters, and much significant information pertaining to security; and our survival rests in them.

#### MEDICAL MATTERS

Recently we brought a five year old patient to the hospital. Isaac had brain hemorrhaging and we wanted to have our private professional medical personnel with him around the clock. Jim Jones was prepared to bring in a neurologist for Isaac or to even take him to Cuba if necessary. Jim wanted special RN's with him at all times, because his condition was so critical at first. The child could have died without private highly competent personnel to monitor his vital signs. We feel we have to be as perfect as possible in our medical care to avoid any problems for Guyana. We are deeply sensitive to everyone we take care of, whether they are Guyanese friends or someone in our own community. But with a person in that condition, we provide 24 hours of observation. As you know, reactionaries in the U.S. judge us not by Guyanese standards, not even by their own-- they expect perfection from us. Of course you realize that the U.S. even allows families by the bedside of the critically ill, and would judge us all harshly if we didn't have professionals by his side to monitor. Moreover, with brain damage, the vital signs can change immediately and complications and death can ensue-- so we wanted to be there. Obviously, it would be Guyana too that would be judged if we made one medical fauxpas. Thus, when we ran into difficulty in getting it cleared for our medical personnel to stay with Isaac, we wondered why we had to cut through red tape. Fortunately, the kindly Head Matron, Cde. Standiford, intervened and got it cleared for us. We appreciate that. It seems ridiculous when

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professional people cannot offer that kind of service which our personnel extend not only to the one patient but others around them. This was appreciated by the floor nurses. Anything can happen to a child in Isaas's condition, unless closely observed.

We believe that all socialists should be prepared to die and still continue being productive. It is the highest motivation to be prepared for the worst. But as much as we love and admire you, there are some things that we cannot live with. The last blow came when we were told by a prominent person in a government office that we cannot even put up a sign telling the day we give free medical care in our clinic, which has been lauded by every government official who has seen it. You can confirm that we have always given credit to the government for the medical program we have, just as we have abided by Hoyte's demands that we not give food to the people. But to not be allowed to erect a sign offering free medical services seems grossly inconsiderate to many people who are very sick. Every country has sick people needing such services, and Guyana is no exception.

#### NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN JONESTOWN

Just as a matter of possible interest, we are beginning to produce bricks in Jonestown, which we are sure will prove beneficial to Guyana. We have Kaolinite type clay for fire bricks. We are also mixing others clays for construction bricks. We should have quite a number finished in five weeks and success appears likely. We are also well on the road to perfecting soap totally from materials found in the beautiful jungle here and which requires no import of any kind.

#### LATE WORD

As I have been writing this letter, we have received word that the Youth Division of the Ministry of National Development has us under investigation. The information is reliable and we have felt that something was going on from the types of questions we've been asked lately by certain individuals. Our honesty has been clearly proven as we were told privately by a high official that we've already been investigated by the best, and nothing of a questionable nature was discovered. The fact of no crime or anti-social behavior in a group as large and mixed as ours is remarkable. So why this? Death would be highly preferable to us, particularly if there is any truth to the matter that a division under Dr. Reid is checking us out. That would be the final despair because our faith is in you, Dr. Reid and Minister Mingo.

Please give us the feedback on the above matters that we seek and very much need. It will be truly appreciated and never taken for granted.

Co-operatively yours,

*Mike Prokes*

Mike Prokes

Assistant to Cde. Jim Jones

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P.S. (For Dr. Reid): You expect us not to talk to you and we know you are very busy--busy beyond words--we realize. But when trust is needed, where do we go? We need one session of straight talk and assurances that are basic to survival, then we will not bother you. We would like freely in the lifestyle befitting compassion and concern and helping the government in the area of free medical services. If you read your letters from us, you know there are a lot of people in the party who you cannot trust. We want, out of our loyalty to you, to keep you posted about such evidence. We won't make this letter strictly confidential, but we implore you, we desperately need to communicate soon. This is all we have asked. You can send the few answers to the above questions we've raised, directly to Jim Jones through a trusted emissary. But we do need answers on these matters which are vital to our well-being.

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