

A Soviet Diplomat Says Russians Want No Part of Cult's Bequest

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GEORGETOWN, Guyana, Dec. 18 — The Soviet Embassy here sent out its lowest-ranking diplomat this morning to fend off reporters' questions about the more than \$7 million that members of the People's Temple bequeathed to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in their final hours at Jonestown.

Yes, he had heard about the gift, the attaché, Aleksandr Kramarenko, said, speaking in halting English across the embassy's white wrought-iron gate. There had been reports published in the newspapers, hadn't there? The details, he didn't know.

No, he did not want to see copies of the letters that the followers of the Rev. Jim Jones had addressed to his colleague, Fyodor Timofeyev, explaining that the money would be sent to Mr. Timofeyev in Georgetown in a series of cashier's checks.

"It can't have anything to do with us," Mr. Kramarenko said. "Anybody can address a letter to anybody he wants to."

"We wouldn't like to have anything to do with it at all," he continued in the hot, still morning that caused the huge Soviet flag to curl limply around its staff.

But how could anyone refuse such a large amount of money?

"If somebody wants to give some money to somebody and that somebody doesn't know anything about it, how could that somebody be concerned?" he asked, unsmiling.

Mr. Timofeyev, also a junior member of the mission, visited the cult's Jonestown settlement in late August or early September, and later met with cult members at the Soviet Embassy in Georgetown.

Shortly after the visit, according to survivors of the mass killings and suicides on Nov. 18, Mr. Jones began teaching his followers Russian, sometimes refusing them food unless they could ask for it in the new language, and talking about moving the settlement to the Soviet Union.

Mr. Timofeyev would not speak with reporters, Mr. Kramarenko said this morning, nor would the chargé d'affaires, Viktor A. Tkachenko.

At the Park Hotel, where many of the Jonestown survivors are staying, awaiting permission from police in Guyana to return to the United States, Harold Cordell, one of the survivors, recalled that Mr. Jones had frequently told his followers: "If anything happened to Jonestown, our money would go to the Soviet Union or something like that. He wouldn't have it fall into the hands of some imperialist nation."

Without exception, the survivors have seemed surprised and somewhat amused that the signature on the letters informing Mr. Timofeyev of the gift, and issuing detailed instructions to the banks on how to transfer the money, was that of Annie Jane McGowan, a 70-year-old cultist who sometimes helped out in the commune's kitchen and is best remembered for the delicious sweet rolls she baked.

"She was a sweet little old lady," said Paula Adams, a board member of the People's Temple Corporation. "She wasn't very educated. She was the last person you'd expect to have anything to do with international finance."

No doubt, the survivors and the police say, that is why Mr. Jones, chose to use her name in the cult's banking transactions.