

12/1/78 Yama Outlines Handling of Cult Funds

By Fred A. Kravuse

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The government, angered by the Washington article in The Washington Post, said today that the questions about the handling of the \$1 million in bank records and evidence to show money has been deposited for the Peoples Temple in the Bank of Guyana.

Prime Minister I. Forbes said most of the money was in the national bank within days after it was brought from Georgetown last November during the first few days after the late Rev. Jim Jones' followers died of cyanide poisoning at the remote agricultural commune.

At the time the article was written last month, police officials here were reluctant to provide information about where the valuables were being kept, which led some of Burnham's political opponents to suggest privately that the money would be converted to campaign or private funds for use by the prime minister.

Nascimento said it was true, as reported, that almost \$700,000 in U.S. and Guyanese currency — as well as 38 pieces of gold jewelry found in the Jonestown complex — were transported from Port Kaituma to Georgetown aboard a plane that also carried Viola Burnham, the wife of Guyana's prime minister, and Ptolemy Reid, the country's deputy prime minister.

But Nascimento said that the money and jewelry were in the custody of two Guyanese police officials also



FORBES BURNHAM
Burnham's government denied yesterday

that Jones' cult fund was mishandled. aboard the plane, which Nascimento said was the only means then available to transport the money quickly to Guyana's capital city, about 200 miles southeast of the Port Kaituma area where Jonestown lies.

Mrs. Burnham knew before they left Nascimento said neither Reid nor to inspect Jonestown last Nov. 20 that any money had been found there.



JIM JONES
Jones' cult fund was mishandled.

They learned of the situation after they arrived and Reid agreed to allow the policemen to ride back to Georgetown with him and the valuables "because it was the only way of getting it (the money) out of there," Nascimento said.

Mrs. Burnham and Reid "had absolutely nothing to do with escorting the money out," the minister of state

said, other than providing space on their plane for it and the two police escorts.

The Post article quoted Guyanese police officials as saying the valuables found at Jonestown were "still intact." But the government said the article was unfair nonetheless.

Nascimento said today the bank deposit receipt and the government's willingness to allow a reporter to question police and bank officials should be put to rest any question about the disposition of the money. A final decision whether the money belongs to the government of Guyana or to the Peoples Temple has not yet been made, he added.

In addition, Nascimento said that an announcement last week that the government has decided to create an independent commission of inquiry into the Jonestown tragedy should demonstrate that the government has acted and intends to act honorably in attempting to determine whether any of its officials were compromised by Jones' followers, as has been alleged.

Nascimento said all the cash thus far recovered from properties owned or leased by the Peoples Temple has been deposited in the Bank of Guyana. He also said that various bank accounts maintained by Jones' followers in Guyana have been frozen until the government determines how all monies belonging to the temple should be disposed of.

He added that the Guyanese government has turned over to the U.S. embassy here all the jewelry found at Jonestown and an estimated \$65,000 in Social Security and Veterans Administration checks recovered after the mass suicide-murder at the Peoples Temple commune.