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Guyana: 'We Fear a Cover-Up'

Charles Krause has written a news item on Jonestown and Guyana in your paper on Feb. 1 that does not reflect the truth. I refer specifically to this paragraph: "Meanwhile, Cheddi Jagan was in the Soviet Union for two weeks in December. While his newspaper [the Mirror] is still pressing for an official inquiry into the Jonestown affair, its charges against the Burnham government have softened noticeably over the past few weeks."

The impression gained is that Cheddi Jagan went to the Soviet Union *after* Jonestown, implying some sort of consultation on the issue. The facts are that he left Guyana *before* the Jonestown massacre, returning in mid-December.

However, the main point I wish to make concerns Mr. Krause's remarks about the "softening" up of the Mirror. The newspaper, which I edit and which because of government's control of newsprint, printing machinery and accessories can print only four pages of a daily paper and 16 pages of a Sunday edition (coming out only 5 days per week) carried, between Jan. 7 and Jan. 28, four editorials on Jonestown, all sharply attacking the Burnham government in its cover-up. The Mirror, during the same period, carried at least nine major stories on Jonestown, also strongly critical of the government. One, for example, entitled "Guyanese Kept in Dark About Jonestown," showed that tapes from Jonestown were being played for visitors to the country, while Guyanese were not even told of their existence (information from the Los Angeles Times).

The Mirror is the only newspaper in Guyana that has consistently probed the Jonestown tragedy, which has carried all the news about the awful and tragic events in the face of the black-

outs and non-cooperation from the government and the government-owned press, the refusal to allow our reporters to visit Jonestown, etc.

In Guyana, we are deeply concerned about what took place at Jonestown, not as a sensational event, but as a serious problem that faces the nation. Why did it happen in Guyana and how much was the government (which cannot claim to be elected in any free and fair elections) involved or responsible for what took place at Jonestown? We believe that had Jonestown not been allowed by the government to become "a state within a state," but open and accessible like other villages and settlements in Guyana, the terrible events of Nov. 18 might not have taken place.

There will probably now be a public inquiry, but by whom and under what conditions we do not know. But we fear a cover-up.

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