

Washington Post

METRO

Obituaries

Classified

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1978

Cult Deaths Arouse Strong Feelings

Interviewees Voice Concern for Young, Suspicion of Eccentric Groups

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Just as the Rev. Jim Jones and his Peoples Temple gathered a varied flock by race, age and economic wherewithal, so the story of the cult members' gruesome demise has been followed rapidly by Washingtonians in all walks of life.

"I indulged myself too much, actually," said a woman interviewed yesterday afternoon at the Sears store near Alabama Avenue and Good Hope Road SE. "I'm hoping it doesn't cause me to have nightmares," she said.

The woman, an accountant who asked that her name not be used, said the 900-plus deaths in Guyana had rekindled her earlier worries about her daughter, who is a Black Muslim.

"I had heard that you couldn't come out once you've joined (the Muslims)," she said. "But later I was satisfied to learn that this was not true."

After the sheer bewilderment that came through in virtually all of two dozen interviews conducted yesterday in suburban Virginia and Washington, the two most common reactions to the Guyana horror story were a concern for the susceptibility of American teen-agers and young adults, and a growing suspicion of eccentric religious groups.

"I'm amazed that a person could really hold that much Charisma," said a postal worker who

had gone to shop at the Seven Corners shopping center yesterday morning. "I have six sons and I would hate to see any of them get into such a hassle."

A retired insurance salesman said it was "absolutely ridiculous how so many people can behave like a bunch of sheep."

"I think they were brainwashed," said Willie Mitchell, a longtime resident of downtown Washington who was waiting with friends for a bus at the Greyhound terminal. "It's very interesting to see how weak some people are."

Susan Quail, a keypunch operator making a bus connection on her way from a Florida vacation to her New York home, said there was a lesson to be learned about the dangers of joining certain groups. "And I hope it's the younger ones that learn something from it," she said.

Two spokesmen for the Rev. Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church said the press, in articles and broadcasts about "cults," had made an inaccurate connection in some people's minds between the Unification Church and the Peoples Temple.

"We don't want to be put in the position of a cult because we're not a cult," said Michael Littwin, the Unification Church's educational coordinator. "We're a church. Like any other Christian Church, we react with horror to the whole thing."

"A reporter asked a minister of the church the other day whether he would die for the

Reverend Moon," Littwin said. "The minister said, 'No, we're too busy living for God!'"

Littwin said the anti-Communist Unification Church attributes the mass suicides to the Peoples Temple's Marxist leanings. "Marxism says man has no spiritual value. You are a material being and that's it. In that case life doesn't mean anything."

But the Washington correspondent for the Daily World, a newspaper supported by the Communist Party, denied that the mass suicides were a result of Jones' Marxist leanings. "Marxism stands for human values and not death," said Tim Wheeler, the correspondent. "This said Tim Wheeler, the correspondent. 'This thing that happened in Guyana has the marks of a fascist mentality.'"

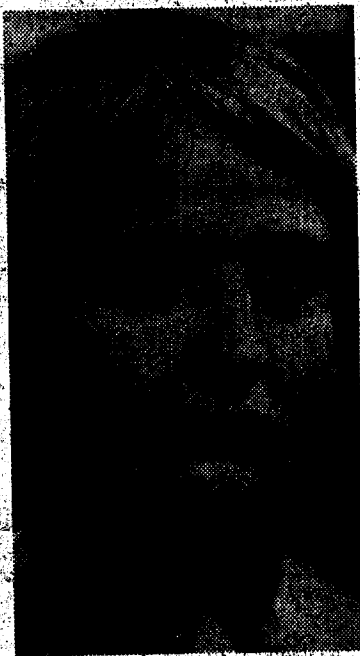
Dr. Thich Giac Duc, president of the Buddhist Congregational Church of America, told his Washington congregation yesterday that "the first precept of Buddhism is do not kill."

Although several Buddhist monks set themselves on fire in the 1960s to protest the Vietnam War, Buddhists do not consider such acts as suicides, said Thich Giac Duc.

In any case, only certain monks are "high enough spiritually" to set themselves on fire, he added.

Leaders of other churches here blamed the mass suicides in Guyana on Jones' ability to make himself the center of worship and attention rather than encouraging worship of God.

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SUSAN QUAIL
... "a lesson to be learned"

'I'm amazed that a person [has] that much charisma . . I have six sons and I would hate to see any of them get into such a hassle.'



WILLIE MITCHELL
... "they were brainwashed"

'It's a tremendous expense to our government . . they went there voluntarily and wanted something better . . . We should have left them there.'



Associated Press

U.S. troops leave Jonestown after the last bodies were removed from Peoples Temple encampment.

Cult Deaths Stir Concern, Suspicion

VOICES, From C1

Jones was able to attract so many followers because "traditional churches have failed to transmit to people what they needed and wanted in worship," said Jim Ellenberg, pastor of the Pentecostal Holiness Church Northwest, a fundamentalist congregation. "So people have looked to the Eastern religions and to occult groups, like Jones'."

The question of who should pay for moving and burying the dead aroused strong feelings among some of those interviewed yesterday.

"I don't think they should have been brought back," said Mary Pat McKenna, an Arlington housewife. "It's a tremendous expense to our government when they went there voluntarily and they were socialists and everything and wanted something better than this country could offer. We should have left them there."

"It seems like we ought to go and find all that money they left there and seize it (to pay the transportation expenses)," said Jim Slawson; a homicide detective interviewed at D.C. police headquarters.

Some of those interviewed suggested that the government should have monitored the Peoples Temple more closely.

But a retired insurance salesman shopping at Seven Corners disagreed. "What could the government do?" he asked. "Everybody now is screaming that they should have done something, but then the minute the government steps in they scream 'government interference.'"

At the National Gallery's new east wing, a recent Soviet emigre waiting in line to see the paintings of Norwegian artist Edward Munch said that nothing like the Peoples Temple saga could have begun in Russia.

"You cannot get poison to commit suicide," said Vladimir Freysman, now a systems analyst in New Jersey. "And all groups are restricted there so you cannot start a new religion, and you can't go abroad."

"It may be an advantage of totalitarian system," he said. "And maybe not."

Krishna Group Wants to Buy Former Air Base in Oregon

CONDON, Ore. (AP)—The International Society for Krishna Consciousness has offered to buy the former Condon Air Base, and the owner of the property, Paul Vaden, said he will sell it for \$1.5 million if he cannot get financing to turn it into a retirement community.

The site has 27 houses, 22 commercial buildings and its own water and sewer system.