

How Jonestown happened under Carter/Mondale

by Kathleen Klenetsky

In November 1978, the world received the shocking news that nearly 1,000 Americans, including 276 children, had died horrible deaths in the jungles of Guyana after being forced to swallow cyanide-spiked Koolaid by their leader, the mad cultist Jim Jones. Even before the bodies could be shipped back to the United States for burial, a massive cover-up was put into motion, run from the top of the Carter administration through the State and Justice Departments, the FBI, and the U. S. Congress.

The administration had plenty to hide. Information which emerged in the immediate aftermath of Jonestown, and elaborated by later investigations, revealed that Jones and his People's Temple had functioned as an asset of the Carter-Mondale wing of the Democratic Party, and operated under its protection and probable control.

Although many prominent figures in the Carter administration, including Rosalynn Carter, the wife of the President, Attorney-General Griffin Bell, Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare Joseph Califano, and other leading Democrats like Hubert Humphrey, had been supporters of Jones, it was Walter Mondale who played the pivotal role in setting up Jones's slave-labor, drug-running colony in Guyana.

According to unimpeachable sources, Mondale, Mrs. Carter and then-California Lieutenant Governor Mervyn Dymally personally went to the Guyanese embassy in Washington sometime in late 1976 or early 1977 to plead Jones's case for relocating his cult to Guyana. Mondale wrote a testimonial effusively praising Jones: "Knowing of your congregation's deep involvement in the major social and constitutional issues of our country is a great inspiration to me," he said.

Based on Mondale's intercession, and testimonials from friends of the Vice-President like Hubert Humphrey and from left-wing organizations, including the Soviet-linked Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, the Guyanese government agreed to let approximately 1,000 People's Temple members enter the country. The mass exodus began in the spring of 1977 and continued through that August.

The timing was important. Jones and his bizarre operations had finally begun to draw adverse public attention,

including an exposé in the August 1977 issue of *New West* magazine. A group of People's Temple defectors and relatives of Temple members called Concerned Relatives had started to lobby actively for government action, particularly on the question of Jones's claim to legal guardianship over more than 100 children. By assisting Jones's exit from the United States at this time, Mondale and his friends contributed to the 1978 slaughter.

Jones, who had become a leading figure in the California Democratic Party, home base of current Democratic National Committee chairman Charles Manatt, first came into contact with Mondale during the 1976 presidential campaign, according to several sources. Mondale met Jones personally several times, entertained him aboard his campaign jet, and reportedly spoke before a People's Temple rally.

On Sept. 14, 1976 Jones sponsored a Carter-Mondale rally in San Francisco which was keynoted by the wife of the future President. Mrs. Carter was so impressed with Jones that she dined with him privately that evening at her suite at the Stanford Court Hotel. According to *The Children of Jonestown* by Kenneth Wooden, the main topics of their conversation were Jones's desire to expand his operations in Guyana and Carter's campaign in California. A mutually satisfactory agreement was reached. Jones provided muscle for the "get-out-the-vote drive" for Carter-Mondale in San Francisco. In return, the Carter-Mondale crew got Jones the means to move to Guyana.

The KGB angle

The Democrats weren't the only ones implicated in the horrors of Jonestown. The Soviet KGB had also cultivated close ties with Jones's operation, both before and after its exodus to Guyana in 1977, and had apparently offered Jones the chance to relocate his cult to Russia, at an unspecified location on the shores of the Black Sea.

Aside from the moral issue raised by the fact that the leadership of the Democratic Party, including today's front-runner for the party's presidential nomination, Walter Mondale, was a public supporter of Jim Jones, the KGB link poses an equally important question: Was Jonestown an experiment in cult creation run *jointly* by the KGB and its assets in the United States?

This is not as far-fetched as might at first appear. *EIR* has documented massive and long-standing connections between the Kremlin and the Mondale wing of the Democratic Party. DNC Chairman Chuck Manatt, for example, was a business partner of KGB officer Dzhermen Gvishiani, son-in-law of the late Alexei Kosygin. There is a pattern of KGB involvement in various U.S. cults, exemplified by the case of "est," whose founder, Werner Erhard, has been a featured guest lecturer at the U.S.A.-Canada Institute in Moscow. The California-based Esalen Institute, one of the prime forces behind the proliferation of drugs and religious cults in the United States, has maintained an exchange program with its counterparts in the Soviet Union. Esalen founder Michael Murphy has gone to the U.S.S.R. several times over the past 15 years

to discuss "joint concerns."

What is definitely known is that myriad direct and indirect links existed between the KGB and Jonestown.

Hours before the Jonestown carnage, several trusted cult members were instructed to take a trunk containing at least \$600,000, passports, letters, and other documents to the Russian embassy in Georgetown.

Some of these documents were recovered. According to these and other People's Temple documents released by the Guyanese government after Nov. 18, 1978, the cult had bequeathed more than \$7 million in assets to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, including money in its accounts at the Panamanian branches of the Swiss Bank Corporation and the Union Bank of Switzerland. Some of the letters of instruction signed by Maria Katsaris, the daughter of a Greek Orthodox priest who functioned as the People's Temple financial officer, instructed bank officials to deliver People's Temple assets to Fyodor Timofeyev at the Soviet mission in Georgetown.

Timofeyev, later identified as a major in the KGB, had been the chief contact point between the self-styled "socialist commune" at Jonestown and the Soviets in Guyana. He held regular meetings with People's Temple leaders; one memo found at Jonestown, detailing a March 30, 1978 meeting between Timofeyev and Jones's people, says the Soviets had offered to let Jones move his colony to Russia.

In a March 14, 1978 letter on People's Temple stationery sent to all U.S. senators and congressman, a top Jones aide wrote: "Even Russia's *New Times* magazine has praised this work [of the Jonestown colony]. . . . We receive letters weekly from Russia. . . . In fact, several overtures have been made from Russia which sees our current harassment as a form of political persecution."

Other Soviet representatives who kept up contact with Jonestown included Alexander Kramerenko and Vladimir Kasatkin, both believed to be KGB officers. Temple members had also met with representatives of Yugoslavia, North Korea, Cuba, and East Germany, ostensibly to seek "development aid" for their colony. And Temple members took part in seminars sponsored by The Guyana-[North] Korean Friendship Society to study *juche*, the revolutionary thought of North Korean dictator Kim Il Sung.

Jones's links to the KGB may have begun as early as 1960, when he reportedly visited Cuba. During his California days, he became a leading light of the San Francisco-based radical community. Some of his strongest support came from groups affiliated with the Communist Party in America (CPUSA), including Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, the Black Panthers, and CPUSA guru Angela Davis. Another strong supporter was attorney Charles Garry. Prominent in the pro-terrorist National Lawyers' Guild, Garry's list of law clients included the CPUSA, Daniel Ellsberg, and Angela Davis. In 1977 he added the People's Temple and Jim Jones to his roster. In his will, presumably drawn up by Garry, Jones left all his assets to the CPUSA.

Garry and another People's Temple lawyer, Mark Lane,

visited Jonestown the day of the massacre. Lane later stated that Garry knew in advance that Jones was planning the mass suicides, and claimed that on Oct. 6, 1977, thirteen months before the final mass suicide, Garry, Angela Davis, Huey Newton, and Dennis Banks of the American Indian Movement joined in a shortwave radio conversation from San Francisco "begging Jones not to kill the 500 Americans in Jonestown." After the Nov. 18 carnage, according to Kenneth Wooden in his book *Children of Jonestown*, Garry collected and destroyed a number of Temple documents, including the written "confessions" extorted from members during all-night interrogation sessions.

The rise of Jim Jones

Spawned in Indianapolis by a network centered on the Eli Lilly Foundation, Jones was sent in 1965 to California, where he turned his People's Temple into the most effective grass-roots electoral machine in the state. The cult was integrated into the California Democratic Party, particularly by the "New Age" factions typified by Jane Fonda, Tom Hayden, San Francisco Mayor George Moscone, and Governor Jerry Brown, all of whom supported and were supported by the Jones group. Hayden, Fonda, Moscone—and later Walter Mondale—all appeared at People's Temple functions.

Jones's followers worked as volunteers for Democratic Party political campaigns, supplying most of the labor for voter registration drives, pre-election call-ups and other menial tasks. Even young children were pressed into service. It was widely acknowledged that Jones's vote operation provided the victory margin for Moscone's mayoralty race in 1975.

In return, important jobs in sensitive governmental departments (Mendocino County Welfare Department, the office of the district attorney, the sheriff's office, the Police Dispatch Unit) were made available to Jones and his followers. Jones was named chairman of the San Francisco Housing Authority, and the cult's attorney, Tim Stoen, became an assistant city district attorney.

The party apparatus afforded Jones political protection. Jones's financial empire was built largely on the assets of his followers, many of whom were children and the elderly. Combining brainwashing and intimidation, Jones gained legal guardianship over a number of children, and effective control over any financial assets to which they were entitled. Jones illegally obtained access to the significant inflow of government money, primarily Social Security and welfare payments, that came to his members. (At the time of the Jonestown massacre, the People's Temple's assets were estimated at a whopping \$26 million, most of it deposited in accounts in London, West Germany, Switzerland, Romania, Panama, and Venezuela.)

Despite reports, beginning as early as 1972, that Jones mistreated his youthful charges, no probe ever took place. As one social worker in San Francisco later said, "Jones's political power was well known, and we knew not to hassle him or else our jobs would be on the line. Therefore, we

didn't check on the children within People's Temple. It was too much of a political time bomb!"

The local press, especially the *San Francisco Examiner*, continually plumped Jones, as did Carlton Goodlett, a publisher who became Jones's personal physician and introduced him to the radical elements of San Francisco's black community, including Goodlett's patients Angela Davis and Black Panther leader Huey Newton.

By the mid-1970s, Jones had been transformed by his patrons into a local hero. At a 1976 testimonial to Jones sponsored by San Francisco's major political leaders, including Carter-Mondale campaign representatives, State Assemblyman (now State Speaker) Willie Brown introduced Jones to the adoring audience as "a rare, rare specimen." Added Brown: "Jim Jones is a symbol of what we all ought to be about. . . ." With this powerful backing, Jones became effectively immune to investigation.

Although Jones's protectors in the Democratic Party later claimed that they hadn't known what the People's Temple was all about, that excuse can hardly be credited. Jones had indulged in overtly lunatic behavior for at least a decade before he arrived in Guyana. Even a superficial probe would have revealed, by the early 1970s at the latest, Jones had: expunged the Bible from his "church" services; declared himself to be God and to have been resurrected from the dead; forced members to turn over all their material assets—and their children—to him or other Temple members; insisted on having sexual relations with Temple members in front of their wives and husbands; coerced his followers to sign statements confessing to murder, child abuse, and other crimes; instituted a regime of physical and psychological abuse rivaling the worst features of Moscow's Lubyanka Prison; and conducted numerous rehearsals for "revolutionary suicide"—the "White Night" in People's Temple lingo.

Jones was not the "aberration" that Carter termed him in the wake of Jonestown, but a vivid indication of the moral corruption that has infested the Harriman-Mondale-Manatt faction of the Democrats.

Slave plantation

Once he had arrived in Guyana, thanks in part to Mondale's help, Jones set up a slave-labor plantation rivaling the ante-bellum South, described by a reporter who traveled with the ill-fated Ryan party as "a scene out of *Gone with the Wind*." Although the majority of People's Temple members were blacks whom Jones had recruited by preaching racial equality, only white members got administrative or security jobs. Everybody else, from small children to the elderly, slaved in the fields. The main cash crop was marijuana. That, combined with the colony's several trawlers maintained at Port Kaituma, suggests that Jonestown was intended to become a major station in the lucrative Caribbean drug trade.

People's Temple members were ill-fed and ill-clothed. Hundreds were packed into stinking, unbearably hot barracks, known as the "slave ships." Torture, sexual humiliation (including sodomic rape of young children by Jones and

his lieutenants), beatings, jailings—all of which had been a way of life for the People's Temple members for years—intensified. Aside from functioning as a transshipment point for illegal drugs (and probably weapons), the colony used drugs to control members' behavior. The drugs were administered by Dr. Larry Schacht, a former heroin addict who had entered medical school through Mervyn Dymally's intercession, and later supervised the mass cyanide poisoning.

During the entire Guyana period, up to and after the massacre of Nov. 18, 1978, Jonestown enjoyed Carter administration protection. U.S. embassy personnel in Georgetown were careful never to visit Jonestown without prior clearance; they spoke to members only after getting permission from Jones. Affidavits by cult defectors, attesting to the savage conditions endured by People's Temple members, were supplied to the embassy, which forwarded the information to the State Department. The leads were never pursued. After a custody case was initiated in the Guyanese courts by cult defector Grace Stoen, whose son, John Victor, was being kept in Jonestown, an embassy official visited the encampment and reported back that no one was being kept against his will.

In the fall of 1977, the San Francisco Social Security Administration stopped certain social security payments to Jonestown members for legal reasons. The White House intervened directly, and the flow of money into the death colony's coffers resumed.

The Concerned Relatives' group repeatedly sent letters and other documents to the State Department and other government offices about conditions in the Jones cult. The group sent a petition to Secretary of State Cyrus Vance in May 1978 with specific allegations of illegal detention, violence, and mind control, and copies of Temple press releases and letters to congressmen containing suicide threats. Like all other requests for assistance, the petition was ignored.

This behavior intensified after the Jonestown carnage. Attorney General Griffin Bell, who, together with Mondale, had visited Jim Jones in San Francisco after the Carter administration took power, refused to release the tape recordings found in Jonestown. HEW Secretary Califano claimed that there was no illegality in the social security payments through which Jones had built his financial empire. State Department and congressional investigations also obfuscated the real facts about Jones and his cult.

Attempts to identify the bodies of the Jonestown victims, already hampered by lack of identification and the physical deterioration of the corpses, were obstructed by the Carter administration, according to author Kenneth Wooden. The administration ordered removal of all identity tags that had been attached to the bodies by the first team to get inside Jonestown after the massacre.

The order came from none other than Robert Pastor at the National Security Council. Pastor, a foreign policy adviser to Mondale's presidential campaign, was recently discovered to have been involved in the Soviet operations on Grenada which prompted the U.S. military intervention in October.