

Today's Opinion Section examines past and current U.S. policy toward the cartel's price hikes, and offers a suggestion for undercutting OPEC's power.

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away, the government to charges it had lost authority and raised the possibility of more "no" votes from the right wing in the national referendum. Spaniards are being asked to vote

HO, HO, HO—AND BEAT IT!

Krishna Kringles Beard Santa on His Own Turf

BY JOHN J. GOLDMAN
Times Staff Writer

NEW YORK—A coast-to-coast Santa Claus rumble is brewing over control of prime jingle-bell turf.

From New York's Fifth Ave. to busy shopping streets in Los Angeles, Denver, San Francisco, Cincinnati and Nashville, the confrontation pits traditional Christmastime Santas sponsored by the Volunteers of America against new Santas who are members of the Hare Krishna religious sect. There have been no fist-fights or pulling of beards yet, but emotions are running high.

The Volunteers of America contend that the Hare Krishna Santas are discouraging shoppers along Fifth Ave. near Rockefeller Center from contributing to their Santas, and the charges against the Krishna Kringles are echoed elsewhere.

"These Hare Krishna Santas ask people for donations; they grab them by the arm and follow them down the block," Lt. Col. Don Schwartz, director of operations for the Volunteers of America in the New York metropolitan area, said Friday.

"They are discouraging people from coming up to the sidewalk Santas' chimneys. In many cases they block our chimneys and ask donors not to give to the Volunteers of America. This has affected our contributions considerably."

In Los Angeles, the Krishna Klausens are in hot competition with Santa's Belles. "They mill around with Santa's Belles, the girls who ring the bells, and try to get donations."

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KRISHNA KRINGLE—SANTA DISPUTE

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David Heim, a spokesman for the city's social service department, said. "It confuses the public because they don't know who they are."

San Francisco policemen report that Krishna Klausens "give people a flower and follow them down a street until they get a donation or their flower back."

In Cincinnati, patrolman Thomas Kellison arrested four Krishna followers for soliciting funds without a license, then had to face the teasing of fellow officers who chided him for "arresting Santa." One suggested that Kellison should get back to his beat because "there's a sleigh double-parked."

Complaints of aggressive tactics and of Santas with split personalities have been registered in Denver and Nashville.

In New York, Schwartz said that the sight of double Santas was leaving the public "entirely confused."

"If our income drops off too much more it will certainly curtail the services we provide to needy families," he added.

The Volunteers of America spokesman said that the week after Thanksgiving his organization began receiving up to 20 phone calls a day from irate shoppers who complained that Santa Klausens were grabbing them, following them and bothering them.

The reports were puzzling at first, Schwartz said, because Volunteers of America Santas are instructed to stand by their red brick chimney collection boxes and not to walk away until a relief Santa appears.

The Santas attend a meeting at a

school, which covers the "dos" and "don'ts" of Santa Clausing.

"A 'do' is they must stand by their chimney, they must ring their bell," Schwartz said. "Don'ts" are they must not eat garlic and onions and they must not overdo the ho-ho bit. Don't promise children they will get all the gifts they ask for. Send them away hopeful."

Volunteers of America Santas are trained to be pleasant and courteous at all times and to "think jolly." They are instructed to wish people Merry Christmas with sincerity.

Romapada Das, a New York spokesman for Hare Krishna religious sect, Friday denied any rudeness or competition. "Before we began this whole program this year, we instructed our devotees not to interfere at all with the activities of the Volunteers of America. We request that they (shoppers) give a donation. It is a voluntary thing," he said.

On Friday a chill wind swept down Fifth Ave., hurrying the steps of shoppers on the crowded street. Directly in front of the statue of Atlas holding up the world at Rockefeller Center, a pair of fleet-footed Krishna Kringles, who had exchanged their robes for Santa suits, stopped shoppers.

"Ho, ho, ho; have you been a good boy this year?" William Halvorson asked an apparently uninterested bystander. Halvorson sought to present the shopper with a small candy cane but was rebuffed.

In contrast to John Kovac, a Volunteers of America Santa who

stood by his red brick chimney, Halvorson carried a small pail with some change and a few dollar bills in it and wore vivid red rouge on his cheeks.

Kovac complained that Hare Krishna Klausens were running back and forth near his chimney. "If they want to do their thing, they should do it over there," he said in annoyance, pointing up the street.

A shopper walked by and stopped in front of Kovac's chimney for a moment.

"Merry Christmas," the Santa said, a tone of warm sincerity suddenly appearing in his voice.