

ZONAL MINISTRY OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS,

Western & Southern Europe, South Africa and Mauritius

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS

Founder-Acharya: His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada
Governing Body Commissioner: His Divine Grace Bhagavandas Goswami Maharaja

15.11.85

Dear GBC member

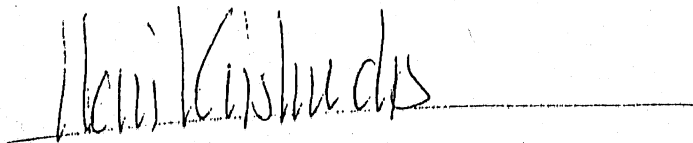
Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Enclosed you will find copies of the minutes of our European Assemblée meeting, held in Krishnaville, Paris, Nov. 8-10, 1985. As you will understand from reading the resolutions, the European Assembly is deeply concerned about the directions our society seems to have taken over the last few months. It is particularly alarmed by the events surrounding the New Vrindavan meetings held in sept. 1985, and the conclusions that were reached at that meeting. In light of this, the European Assembly has deemed it necessary to take a strong stance.

However, contrary to threats of non-cooperation made by the leaders of the New Vrindavan ista ghosti, the European Assembly firmly pledges its loyalty to the GBC body as the ultimate managing and spiritual authority of ISKCON. It is therefore in the spirit of humility and submission, that the European Assembly submits its resolutions to the GBC body, kindly requesting its members to carefully consider them.

We would certainly appreciate it, if you would be willing to give us your comments on our resolutions, and if further discussion on these important issues could take place.

your humble servant



Hari Krishna Das

Chairman of the European
Assembly

THE
EUROPEAN ASSEMBLY
MINUTES
OF THE
MEETING OF SANNYASIS, NATIONAL/REGIONAL SECRETARIES,
MINISTERS and TEMPLE PRESIDENTS
of the
INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS
IN EUROPE

Held at Krishnaville (Ermenonville) France
November 8, 9, and 10, 1985

A T T E N D A N C E

OF THE

EUROPEAN ASSEMBLY MEETING

(Krishnaville, Paris - November 8, 9 and 10, 1980)

Total Attendance - 52 ISKCON Leaders

AUSTRIA

H.G. Jaya Gurudeva

BELGIUM

H.G. Batu Gopala

H.G. Jaya Gopala

ENGLAND

H.H. Sivarama Maharaja

H.H. Krishan Das Maharaja

H.G. Akhandadhi

H.G. Bhagavat Asraya

H.G. Bhaja Hari

H.G. Hari Sauri

H.G. Jagat Purusa

H.G. Mrgapati

H.G. Partha

H.G. Ranchor

FRANCE

H.H. Sundararupa Maharaja

H.H. Indradyumna Maharaja

H.H. Visvambhara Maharaja

H.G. Adi Raja

H.G. Aristanasana

H.G. Ayodhyapati

H.G. Gopa Swami

H.G. Kalyapani

H.G. Sivatmaka

H.G. Siksastakam

H.G. Trey Das

GERMANY

H.H. Suhotra Swami

H.G. Avinaschandra

H.G. Krsna Ksetra

H.G. Sacinandana

GREECE

H.G. Citraka

H.G. Gokulananda

HOLLAND

H.G. Danavir

H.G. Srila

ITALY

H.G. Madhusevita

H.G. Matsya Avatar

H.G. Pancajanya

SCANDINAVIA

H.H. Devamrta Swami

H.G. Dhirasanta

H.G. Dhumrakesa

H.G. Kirtiraja

H.G. Praphujaka

H.G. Smita Krishna

H.G. Sri Rama

SPAIN

H.H. Keshava Bharati Maharaja

H.G. Datta

H.G. Dravinaksa

H.G. Suci Srava

SWITZERLAND

H.G. Guru Gauranga

H.G. Citraka

H.G. Sankararanya

H.G. Sudarsana

ZONAL MINISTRY

H.G. Hari Krishna Das

H.G. Sri Giridhari

Friday, 8th November, 1985 Morning Session -- opened 10:30 a.m.

The assembled devotees were welcomed and an introduction to the meeting was given by Hari Krishna das, Zonal Minister of Public Affairs, Legal Affairs, and Finances of Southern Europe.

Election of Officers for the meeting:

Chairman	Hari Krishna das
Vice-Chairman	Devamrta Swami
Secretary	Akhandadhi das

Discussion on format of and agenda for the meeting.

AGENDA

1. Review of the September 1985 Ista-gosthi/GBC meeting in New Vrndavana, particularly in relation to procedures as well as its consequences.
2. Preliminary discussion on the historical legitimacy of the guru institution in ISKCON after Srila Prabhupada's departure.
3. The position and the functions of the GBC body in ISKCON, both before and after Srila Prabhupada's departure.
4. The relation between B.R. Sridhar Maharaja and ISKCON.
5. Further discussion on the position of the guru in ISKCON:
 - a) Historical legitimacy: Ravindra Svarupa's paper entitled "Under My Order" versus Acaryadeva's paper entitled "The Guru in ISKCON".
 - b) Expansion of gurus, what should be the standards, qualifications and criteria for becoming a guru in ISKCON.
 - c) Spiritual management and preaching strategy in relation to gurus.
 - d) Protocol in relation to gurus.
6. The position and functions of the GBC body:
 - a) the issue of proportionate representation of GBC members in relation to the devotee population in GBC zones.
 - b) is the GBC a representative body
 - c) the issue of GBC expansion
 - d) the issue of "parallel GBCs"

- e) should GBC zones be managed through councils, (the Zonal Council).
- f) how to strengthen the influence of the GBC body
- g) GBC or ABC -- is the GBC an advisory body or a governing body?

- 7. The European Assembly
- 8. Election of officers for the European Assembly
- 9. The issue of participation of grand-disciples of Srila Prabhupada in the European Assembly, if they occupy a position of leadership
- 10. ISKCON's constitution
- 11. European judicial council
- 12. Date and place of next meeting of the European Assembly

Guru Gauranga read a prayer to Lord Nrsimhadeva, which is being recited daily in the temples in Switzerland, for the recovery of Srila Bhaktipada.

ITEM NO. 1 Review of New Vrndavana meetings and consequences

There was a general discussion on the procedure and events surrounding the meetings at New Vrndavana, September 1985.

RECESS at 1:20 p.m.

AFTERNOON SESSION Opened at 3:45 p.m.

Kirtan

Introduction to afternoon session by Chairman. Call for proposals regarding review of New Vrndavana meetings.

There was further discussion on the meetings, focusing more on direct experiences of events following the meetings.

RESOLVED:

1. That a sub-committee consisting of Sundararupa Goswami, Suhotra Swami, Sivarama Swami, and the secretary, be formed to draft a preface to the European Assembly meeting, to express the Assembly's views on the procedure and events connected with the New Vrndavana meetings of September 1985, to be presented to the Assembly for discussion and ratification at the Sunday morning session.

ITEM NO. 2 The Guru in ISKCON

There was extensive preliminary discussion on the topic of the historical development and legitimacy of the present guru institution.

The Chairman then read a telex just received from Kuladri in New Vrndavana, describing the attack on Srila Bhaktipada and his condition in hospital.

Kirtan

MEETING ADJOURNED 8:15 p.m.

SATURDAY, 9th NOVEMBER: Meeting opened 9:30 a.m.

Presentation of proposals from sub-committee regarding review of New Vrndavana meetings.

RESOLVED: (Nem. con.)

Preface

- 2.1 We, the leaders of ISKCON in Europe, with due respect to the GBC, and acknowledging the great significance of those subjects

being discussed at the New Vrndavana meetings, especially at this crucial time in our movement's history, would humbly present to the GBC and to the North American Temple Presidents the following objections to the organization and conducting of the Ista-gosthi for Srila Prabhupada disciples, held at New Vrndavana September 16th - 20th, 1985.

RESOLVED: (Nem. con.)

- 2.2 There was a lack of consultation with leaders in Europe, who felt hampered, having not been supplied with the relevant information about the procedure, attendance and agenda of the meeting (c.f., Srila Prabhupada's letter to Hamsadutta, dated April 11th, 1972, following similar improprieties of GBC procedure during his presence).

RESOLVED: (Nem. con.)

- 2.3 Rather, misinformation was received about the nature of the meeting, e.g., both the GBC Chairman and Correspondence secretary stated that only Srila Prabhupada's disciples in good standing in ISKCON would be allowed to speak, and no defectors to B.R. Sridhar Maharaja would be allowed to attend. However, in actuality, followers of Sridhara Maharaja were allowed to attend the meeting.

RESOLVED: (large majority)

- 2.4 There were clear insinuations made to certain devotees in Europe of the unfavourable consequences of not attending. However, while at the meeting, we felt an inequitable reception of our points of view.

RESOLVED: (Nem. con.)

- 2.5 The allowance of non-Vaishnava speech and conduct during the aforementioned meetings.

RESOLVED: (Nem. con.)

- 2.6 The improper threats of non-cooperation and secession made to the GBC by the leaders of the Ista-gosthi if the GBC did not accept the Ista-gosthi's proposals. E.g., a statement was made by the Executive Committee of the Ista-gosthi that if their proposals were not accepted, they would be sent back again for reconsideration by the GBC, and if not accepted the second time, a vote of no-confidence in the GBC would be passed, followed by a programme of immediate non-cooperation.

RESOLVED: (Nem. con.)

- 2.7 In view of the above-mentioned procedural improprieties, we consider both the meetings and their resolutions to be irregular, (c.f., Srila Prabhupada's letter to Rupanuga, dated April 4th, 1972) and question the validity of both. Furthermore, we urge that any future meeting must avoid these improprieties.

RESOLVED: (Nem. con.)

- 2.8 Since we did not have the opportunity to discuss the topics in full beforehand, and did not have an acceptable forum at New Vrndavana, we have deemed it necessary to hold a meeting of the leaders of ISKCON Europe, to have proper discussion on these most important subject matters in order to prepare proposals to present to the GBC body at their 1986 meeting in Mayapura, to be considered before the ratification of the resolutions made at New Vrndavana.

ITEM NO. 3 Position and Functions of GBC Body

There were extensive presentations and discussions on this item.

RECESS at 1:30 p.m.

AFTERNOON SESSION Meeting opened at 3:40 p.m.

Kirtan

The discussions on Item No. 3 continued.

RESOLVED: (Nem. con.)

3. A sub-committee, consisting of Sundararupa Maharaja, Hari Sauri, Suhotra Maharaja, Danavir, and the Secretary, to be formed to draft proposals on the subject of position and function of the GBC body, in consideration of the discussion in this European Assembly, to be presented to the Assembly on Sunday, 10th November, 1985.

ITEM NO. 6(a), (b), (c), (f)

There followed a deep discussion on the above items.

RESOLVED: (large majority)

4. A sub-committee composed of Suhotra Maharaja, Sundararupa Maharaja, Kesava Bharati Maharaja, Hari Sauri, Guru Gauranga and Hari Krishna das to discuss and prepare proposals on:

1. Measures for adoption by the European Assembly concerning the impropriety of the GBC Chairman's actions in calling

the GBC meeting in New Vrndavana. Suhotra Maharaja, Sundararupa Maharaja and Hari Krishna das to investigate and gather evidence for the above.

2. A description of the qualifications of being a GBC member in representing Srila Prabhupada.
3. System for the expansion of the number of gurus.
4. A constitution for ISKCON.

ITEM NO. 4 B.R. Sridhar Maharaja

Discussion on history of the relationship between B.R. Sridhar Maharaja and ISKCON and the resulting influence in our Society.

RESOLVED:

5. Visvambhar Maharaja and the Secretary to finalise draft of proposals on the necessity of the GBC repudiating B.R. Sridhar Maharaja.

MEETING ADJOURNED 7:00 p.m.

SUNDAY, 10th NOVEMBER Morning Session Meeting began 7:50 a.m.

Kirtan

RESOLVED: (unanimous)

6. We, the European leaders unanimously wish to express our deepest concern at the insidious influence that B.R. Sridhar Maharaja and his philosophy is having on ISKCON, thereby directly and indirectly contributing to the present crisis in our movement. We find particularly alarming the links that some of our GBC members appear to be maintaining with B.R. Sridhar Maharaja, his followers and his philosophy and we therefore feel it essential that each GBC member should repudiate publicly, and in writing, any connection with, or sympathy for, B.R. Sridhar Maharaja, his followers or his philosophy, or else be removed from the GBC body.

ITEM NO. 5(a) Historical Legitimacy of the Guru in ISKCON

RESOLVED: (unanimous)

7. This body unanimously recognises the legitimacy of the initiating spiritual masters as appointed by Srila Prabhupada before his departure and as appointed by the GBC after Srila Prabhupada's departure. We fully support the institution of the initiating spiritual masters according to currently ratified GBC resolutions. (This does not include those

resolutions passed by the GBC at New Vrndavana which are yet to be ratified at Mayapura).

We unanimously reject the idea of a guru who considers himself, or is considered by others, either the ultimate authority for the entire Institution and/or the ultimate authority for part of the Institution, independent of the ultimate authority of the GBC body and/or a guru who considers himself, or is considered by others, to be inherently the exclusive spiritual master for a geographical area.

RESOLVED: (unanimous)

8. We condemn the gross philosophical distortions and deviations present in both the methodology and conclusions of Ravindra Svarupa's paper entitled "Under My Order". Specifically, we point out:

1. The complete obscuring of the reality of Srila Prabhupada's selecting disciples to initiate their own disciples.
2. The introduction of information on very important spiritual issues from sources not authorized by Srila Prabhupada, e.g., the reliance on input from the Gaudiya Math; specifically the citing of Pradyumna's letter.
3. For faults in the paper's premises and conclusions, c.f., Srila Hridayananda Maharaja's paper "The Guru in ISKCON".

That such a paper was unanimously endorsed by the North American Temple Presidents meeting shows a philosophical weakness and a failure to use Srila Prabhupada's books as the exclusive basis for decision-making.

RESOLVED: (unanimous)

9. The Assembly will send a letter to Srila Bhaktipada expressing our sentiments on the hideous attack on his life.

RECESS 12:30 p.m.

AFTERNOON SESSION Meeting opened 2:15 p.m.

ITEM NO. 5(d) "Parallel GBC's"

RESOLVED: (unanimous)

10. We unanimously agree that the simultaneous and independent co-existence of two or more GBC Zonal Secretaries in the same geographical area is unacceptable, totally unprecedented and blatantly contradictory to Srila Prabhupada's instructions on these matters. This concept is a clear indication of B.R. Sridhar Maharaja's influence.

ITEM NO. 5(a), (b), (c), (f) continued

Presentation from Sub-committee (Resolution No. 3)

RESOLVED: (unanimous)

11. This body unanimously feels that many problems have arisen within this Society as a whole due, in part, to a lack of interaction of the GBC as body, with the members of the Society.

The following suggestions are presented for the GBC body's consideration, as being ways and means of increasing the "visibility" and accessibility of the body to the Society's members.

- 11.1 It should be the responsibility of the GBC officers to familiarise themselves, through travelling and preaching together, with the state of the preaching throughout the world within the jurisdiction of every zone and ministry, and to give a report to the GBC body at the end of their tenure. This report should be an assessment in their estimation of the respect for Srila Prabhupada's instructions and GBC resolutions within each zone and ministry. It shall also be expected of them to inspire preaching, cooperation and exchanges wherever they see opportunity throughout the world. Furthermore, they shall be responsible to coordinate the participation throughout the world in the international projects that have been specifically designated by Srila Prabhupada or subsequently by the GBC body.

RESOLVED: (unanimous)

- 11.2 In order to assist the functions of the GBC body, there should be an office limited to clerical functions, e.g., record-keeping, coordination of communication to and from the GBC body, etc., which does not serve any other division or interest other than the GBC body.

RESOLVED: (unanimous)

- 11.3 For these purposes a staff and budget should be provided by the Society at large.

ITEMS NO. 7, 9, and 12 European AssemblyRESOLVED: (unanimous)

12. All authorised European leaders holding positions as Temple President or above (including Ministers of all levels: Zonal, National, Regional) are invited to attend all European Assembly meetings.

The next meeting of the European Assembly is tentatively scheduled for the latter part of January 1986. Suggested venues included France, Italy, U.K.

RESOLVED: (Nem. con.)

13. That the officers for the current meeting be returned as the officers for the European Assembly for the coming year.

ITEM NO. 5(b) Expansion of Gurus

RESOLVED: (large majority)

14. Due to the procedural irregularities in the meetings held in New Vrndavana, September 1985, as well as the philosophical contamination mentioned in our resolution No. 8, we request in the strongest possible terms that all proposals in regards to the addition of new gurus be suspended, and the existing GBC resolutions in this regard remain intact until an equitable balanced discussion takes place at the Gaura Purnima 1986 GBC meeting.

RESOLVED: (large majority)

15. The European Assembly expresses a vote of no-confidence in the present Chairman of the GBC body, because of the aforementioned procedural improprieties described in our resolution No. 2 in organising and conducting the GBC meetings held in New Vrndavana, September 1985. The reason for this stems from Srila Prabhupada's suspension of the GBC in 1972 on the grounds that a GBC meeting was called "without...giving a proposed agenda...the topics to be discussed, the way the meeting is being called, etc." Furthermore, Srila Prabhupada stated that he desired in regards to any proposed special meeting of the GBC, that there be first "correspondence for deciding these things", and only afterwards, "when there is great necessity a meeting may be called, but not whimsically, and after much thought is given and there is clear intimation of all the members". Prabhupada objected to any meeting in which "there was immediate action without divulging these matters to the devotees".

In conclusion Prabhupada stated, "and I am surprised that none of the GBC members detected the defects in the procedure. It was detected only when it came to me. What will happen when I am not here, shall everything be spoiled by the GBC? So for the time being, let the GBC activities be suspended until I thoroughly revise the whole procedure". (c.f., Srila Prabhupada's letter to Hamsadutta, April 11, 1972).

RESOLVED: (Nem. con.)

16. In principle, contrary to the New Vrndavana resolutions, we strongly feel that the GBC body procedure for recognising new spiritual masters within ISKCON must first of all consider the qualifications of the candidate before he should be considered by an aspiring disciple to be available to seek initiation from.

RESOLVED:

17. These resolutions are the results of three days of intense Krishna conscious discussions. Due to the complexity of the issues involved, the European Assembly will meet at least once more before the 1986 Mayapur Festival to complete the Agenda and present further resolutions for the consideration of the GBC body. The topics still to be considered on our Agenda are the following:

- 5(b) Expansion of gurus
- 5(c) Spiritual management and preaching strategy in relation to gurus
- 5(d) Protocol in relation to gurus
- 6(a) The issue of proportionate representation on the GBC body
- 6(b) The representative function of the GBC
- 6(c) GBC expansion
- 6(e) The Zonal Council
- 6(g) GBC as advisory or governing body
- 10 Constitution of ISKCON
- 11 European judicial council

Vote of thanks passed for all those devotees who helped to organise the Assembly meeting and provided the back-up and hospitality.

MEETING CLOSED 7:00 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

