



EUROPEAN
CONTINENTAL ASSEMBLY

T H E
EUROPEAN CONTINENTAL 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

January 31, February 1 and 2, 1986



EUROPEAN
CONTINENTAL ASSEMBLY

ATTENDANCE

AUSTRALIA:

Ramai Swami
Balarama
Cittahari

BELGIUM:

Batu Gopal
Gauragadadhara
Jaya Gopal

CANADA:

Bahudak
Rocana

ENGLAND:

Sivarama Swami
Ajamila
Akhandadhi
Bhagavat Asraya
Bhaja Hari
Krpamaya
Mahakratu
Mrgupati
Ranadurmada
Ranchor
Rohininandana
Rasamandala
Vimuktasanga

FINLAND:

Dhirasanta

FRANCE:

Sundararupa Maharaja
Visvambhara Swami
Adiraja
Advaita Candra
Aristanasana
Devaratha
Gopaswami
Jaya Gaura
Kalyapani
Krsna Baladeva
Krtagamyā
Maharsi
Pitavasa
Prasanatma
Ramavijya
Ratnagarbha
Siksaskatam
Sivatmaka
Treya das
Visnumurti

GERMANY:

Suhotra Swami
Avinascandra
Krsna Ksetra
Sacinanda

GREECE:

Citraka

HOLLAND:

Brahmanatha
Danavira
Radhavinode
Srila

INDIA:

Surabhi Swami

ITALY:

Somaka Swami
Dayanidhi
Durgamta
Madhusevita
Mahaprakash
Matsya Avatara
Mukundananda
Maha Purusa
Mrtyuhara
Padma Purana
Pancajanya
Supta Vighraha

PORTUGAL:

Mahadhyuti

SOUTH AFRICA:

Adi Karta

SPAIN:

Kesava Bharati Swami
Agraya
Datta
Devaratha

SWEDEN:

Devamrta Swami
Dhumrakesa
Kirtiraja
Smitakrsna

SWITZERLAND:

Guru Gauranga

ZONAL MINISTRY:

Ayodhyapati
Hari Krishna das
Indradyumna Swami
Sri Giridhari

USA:

Asranga
Ravindra Svarupa
Sukhavak



EUROPEAN
CONTINENTAL ASSEMBLY

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Officers: Hari Krishna Das - Chairman
Devamrita Swami - Vice-Chairman
Akhandadhi - Secretary

AGENDA

- ITEM 1. Review of previous minutes.
- ITEM 2. Report to the European Continental Assembly of reactions to the resolutions of the last E.C.A. meeting
- ITEM 3. The Guru Issue
 - a. expansion
 - b. qualification
 - c. protocol
- ITEM 4. The Australian Issue
- ITEM 5. Sridhar Maharaja (a position paper to be published by the European Continental Assembly)
- ITEM 6. GBC Issue
 - a. meeting procedure
 - i. voting
 - ii. the concept of unanimity
 - iii. the calling of regular meetings
 - b. the role of the GBC
 - i. job description
 - ii. advisory or governing?
 - c. judicial system
 - d. visibility
 - e. duties
 - f. GBC Zones
- ITEM 7. Reports on previous European Continental Assembly minutes
Presentation by Bahudhak and Ravindra Svarupa Prabhus
- ITEM 8. U.S.S.R.
Report from Kirtiraja
- ITEM 9. ECHO
Report from Hari Krishna das
- ITEM 10. Property Committee
Report from Guru Gauranga
- ITEM 11. GBC and Temple President's Meeting Mayapur '86
- ITEM 12. ISKCON and Varnashrama Dharma
- ITEM 13. Improprieties of GBC Chairman in relation to organization and conducting of New Vrindaban meetings, September 1985



FRIDAY, 31 JANUARY 1986

Hari Krishna das welcomed all the assembled devotees and introduced the purpose of the meeting.

ITEM 1. Review of Previous Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved.

ITEM 2. Reports on reactions

There were a number of reports from the devotees on reactions to those minutes.

ITEM 3 a-b. The Guru Issue--expansion and qualification

RESOLVED: (Nem. con. = no opposing votes, only some abstentions)

- 18.1 Any temple/regional/national/zonal council or any GBC member may nominate to the entire GBC body someone who they feel is qualified to become an initiating spiritual master for ISKCON.

RESOLVED: (Unanimous)

- 18.2 Acceptance as an ISKCON spiritual master must be based on the following criteria:

1. his service record
2. references from those with whom he has served
3. evidence of philosophical competence and purity
4. cooperative attitude
5. adherence to the guru parampara
6. other rules and guidelines resolved at New Vrindaban, Sept. 85
7. previously relevant ratified GBC resolutions

RESOLVED: (Unanimous)

- 18.3 The GBC body will record nominations at the Mayapur meetings, and, after one year has passed, during which the GBC will observe the qualifications of the prospective guru, they will vote whether or not to accept the nominee as an ISKCON guru, or whether to extend the observation period for another year.

RESOLVED: (Unanimous)

- 18.4 Nominees must be accepted by a two-thirds majority vote of the GBC body to become an ISKCON guru.

RESOLVED: (Unanimous)

- 18.5 Local leaders in consultation with their GBC member may decide to invite any authorized ISKCON spiritual master(s) to initiate in their area.

ITEM 4. The Australian Issue

Reports on the present situation in Australia were given by:

Balaram das
Cittahari das
Ramai Swami

There was an extensive discussion on the issue.



SATURDAY, 1 FEBRUARY 1986

Hari Krishna das welcomed the representatives from the North American Temple Presidents Council.

ITEM 5. Sridhar Maharaja

Topic opened with presentation by Guru Gauranga reading extracts from "Guardian of Devotion". There followed an open discussion on Sridhara Maharaja's influence on ISKCON.

RESOLVED:

19. A sub-committee consisting of Suhotra Swami (chairman), Sundararupa Maharaja, Visvambhara Maharaja, Guru Gauranga, and Hari Krishna dasa be formed to draft a position paper on Sridhara Maharaja's influence on ISKCON, particularly in light of recent publications. Suhotra Swami is assigned the responsibility of writing the text.

ITEM 7. Reports on previous European Continental Assembly minutes

Bahudhak Prabhu presented some reactions from the North American Temple Presidents to the E.C.A. proposals

Ravindra Svarupa Prabhu offered a defence of his paper "On My Order" and engaged in discussion with the European Continental Assembly members.

ITEM 3c. Guru Issue -- Protocol

Sukavak presented a summary of his paper regarding protocol in worshipping the spiritual master. There followed an extensive discussion.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 1986

ITEM 8. U.S.S.R.

Kirtiraja made an inspiring presentation on the situation of the devotees held captive in the U.S.S.R. and on the attempts and successes in trying to free them.

RESOLVED:

20. Because of the serious situation of persecution in the Soviet Union of ISKCON members, the European Continental Assembly hereby pledges their full support and assistance to Kirtiraja Prabhu and THE COMMITTEE TO THE FREE THE SOVIET HARE KRISHNAS.

ITEM 9. ECHO (European Council of Hindu Organizations)

Hari Krishna das reported on the recent achievements of ECHO and the latest copy of ECHO News was distributed. All temples and projects were recommended to take full advantage of ECHO.

ITEM 10. Property Committee

Guru Gauranga reported on the efforts to compile information on all ISKCON properties, and requested an expedient response from countries who have not yet replied.



ITEM 4. The Australian Issue

Report from Sub-committee and further discussion.

RESOLVED: (Large Majority)

21.1 The Privilege Committee should regularly review Bhavananda Maharaja's following of the rectificatory measures already decided by the Privilege Committee.

RESOLVED: (Large Majority)

21.2 That great consideration should be given to the involvement of the local leaders in Bhavananda Maharaja's zone in regards to his rectification. Specifically to arrange that:

1. he always has senior association from amongst them
2. he is fully engaged in his responsibilities, and
3. his lifestyle has been adjusted to not exceed the needful

RESOLVED: (Large Majority)

21.3 The European Continental Assembly members are of the opinion that a successful rectification will inspire the world community of devotees, and increase its faith in the potency of the principles of devotional service to overcome offences even of a very grave nature. The recovery of one of ISKCON's great preachers and intimate disciples of Srila Prabhupada would be pleasing to Srila Prabhupada, and a significant and wonderful precedent of how an advanced devotee can be rectified by surrender to the order of the ultimate authority of Srila Prabhupada's GBC body.

ITEM 6a,iii. The GBC Issue -- Meeting procedures, The Convening of Regular Meetings, (Serving Notice of Meetings and Motions of Topic)

20.0 In addition to our previous resolution (No. 11), the European Continental Assembly would like to submit the following recommendations to the GBC for improving the effectiveness of their meetings:

RESOLVED: (Unanimous)

22.1 Notice to convene a general meeting at Sri Mayapur shall state the time and shall invite proposals from GBC members regarding agenda and proposals from the temple presidents, and it shall be sent by mail to every GBC member and temple president, and separately to committees from which proposals, reports and/or recommendations shall be required not less than 120 days before the date of the meeting. No general meeting shall be invalidated by the non-receipt of any notice thereof by any member.

RESOLVED: (Nem. Com.)

22.2 Motions on any topic must be submitted by any GBC member to the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary, via the clerical office, not less than 90 days before the annual meeting.

RESOLVED: (Unanimous)

22.3 After receiving all the agenda topics from the GBC members via the clerical office, the officers shall compile all the proposals received and formulate a provisional agenda. The compilation of proposals as well as the provisional agenda shall be mailed out to all GBC members,



temple presidents, and committees from which proposals, reports and/or recommendations have been required, not less than 75 days before the annual meeting.

RESOLVED: (Unanimous)

22.4 The GBC members may then query or raise objection to the provisional agenda to be received in writing at the GBC clerical office not less than 45 days before the Annual meeting.

RESOLVED: (Unanimous)

22.5 The GBC officers will then mail out the final agenda to the members not less than 30 days before the Annual meeting, thereby enabling the members sufficient time for their personal consideration of the agenda items.

RESOLVED: (Unanimous)

22.6 However, the chairman may present to the convening GBC body, an emergency proposal which will be accepted for inclusion in the agenda only if a 2/3 majority approves.

RESOLVED:

23. A sub-committee, consisting of Suhotra Swami, Giriraja Swami, Sundararupa Maharaja, Visvambhara Maharaja, Mahadhyuti, Batu Gopal, Madhusevita, Datta, Guru Gauranga, and Hari Krishna das to meet, discuss and prepare proposals on the GBC, meetings, procedure, role, etc.

ITEM 6a,i. The GBC Issue -- Meeting procedures, Voting

RESOLVED: (Nem Com)

24. We recommend that the current GBC resolutions regarding the voting procedure and voting majorities in GBC meetings be maintained.

ITEM 6b. The GBC Issue -- The role of the GBC

Topic deferred to sub-committee dealing with the GBC issue

SUNDAY, 2 FEBRUARY 1986

ITEM 6d. The GBC Issue -- Visibility

RESOLVED (Unanimous)

25. That the visibility of the Governing Body Commission as the highest spiritual authority in ISKCON should be increased, for the information of the devotees, the congregation, and the public at large. To this end we suggest that a formal photograph be taken of the GBC body each year and distributed to all ISKCON temples for display. The photograph would bear the date, and the names of the GBC members and of its officers.

ITEM 6c. The GBC Issue -- Judicial system

RESOLVED: (Unanimous)

26. There should be judicial bodies on the global, zonal and temple levels of the ISKCON organization. To facilitate the formation of these judicial bodies, the GBC should establish a Ministry of Justice.



RESOLVED: (Passed)

27. A sub-committee consisting of Visvambhara Maharaja, Pitavas, and Mahadhyuti to meet, discuss and propose details of a judicial code and technicalities of setting up a court system.

ITEM 13. Improprieties of GBC Chairman in relation to organization
and conducting of New Vrindaban meetings, September 1985

RESOLVED: (Large Majority)

28. That the following sub-committee proposals from the sub-committee meeting held in Zurich in December 1985 as per resolution No. 4 of the Nov. 1985 ECA meeting, pertaining to the GBC Chairman's improprieties in organizing the New Vrindaban meeting should be contained in a letter to Balavanta Prabhu as an explanatory note of the Nov. 1985 ECA Meeting resolution No. 2 in that regard.

Item 1: Reasons for vote of no-confidence in the GBC Chairman on the part of the European Continental Assembly

1.1.1 The vote of no-confidence was staged on the basis that the members of the ECA felt that the meeting in New Vrindaban was manipulated, and was not conducted or organized in an objective and Vaishnava-like manner. These are the reasons for this assertion:

1.1.2 No agenda was circulated, and without agenda any meeting is open to manipulation. Furthermore, extraordinary general GBC meetings must be limited to the specific issue at hand, which was in this case, according to information we had received, the issue in relation to Bhavananda Maharaja.

1.1.3 The istaghosti was called without world-wide consensus, and without prior discussion with all parties concerned world-wide. As a local North American issue, it may well be that a meeting of the North American members was desirable because the issues may have already undergone extensive discussion there. However, resolutions were passed that affected ISKCON world-wide. Yet, the world-wide membership of the istaghosti was not given any opportunity to hear what the topics were, what to speak of discussing them before arriving at the decision whether a world-wide meeting was actually necessary. This is a perception shared by leading devotees "not just in Europe", but also in Australia, South America, parts of North America, Africa, and parts of India.

1.1.4 Serious flaws in the recording of the GBC minutes and resolutions during the New Vrindaban meetings. Resolutions were passed which had not even been composed and finalized on paper. Investigating devotees from Europe discovered that various members of the GBC had recorded different versions of the resolutions they had voted upon. The final, "official version" of the resolutions was drawn up after the GBC members had departed New Vrindaban. This, we feel, is legally and morally indefensible.

1.1.5 Not all GBC members and other participants of the meetings were properly/timely informed about time and place of the meeting.



Proposal made by the subcommittee to be presented to the GBC for the rules of order for extraordinary or special GBC meetings:

1.2.1 Refer to Prabhupada's letters (see Srila Prabhupada's letter to Hamsadutta dated April 11, 1972, and Srila Prabhupada's letter to Rupanuga dated April 4, 1972). These letters particularly emphasize the need for circulating agenda and prior discussion on the part of all those who are supposed to participate in the meeting.

1.2.2 International meetings (especially those including Istaghostis) require at least 2-3 months of preparations.

ITEM 6b. The GBC Issue -- the role of the GBC

Discussion on GBC as siksa gurus was referred to sub-committee.

ITEM 6e. The GBC Issue -- duties of the GBC

RESOLVED: (Unanimous)

29. That the annual Mayapura Vrindavana Festival is one of the most important functions that Srila Prabhupada personally established to guard the spiritual purity and cohesiveness of our movement. During Srila Prabhupada's physical presence he personally invited every member of his ISKCON family to be his guest in the holy dhama for an annual period of spiritual rejuvenation. Srila Prabhupada never neglected to personally receive his guests in the dhama, or to give his personal association throughout the duration of the festival. He attended every morning program without fail. After Srila Prabhupada's departure the members of ISKCON are looking to, nay, longing for, the GBC body to fulfill that same important role of leadership and association. We therefore humbly request that the GBC body see to it that all of its members attend the full festival each year in both Mayapur and Vrindaban, and that during the festival they faithfully attend mangala arotik, Srimad-Bhagavatam class, and guru-puja. In addition, it would be inspiring to see the GBC members present on the daily parikrama, as far as possible. Especially in these times of crisis, this would go far to restore faith in the GBC, and thus unite our society.

ITEM 6f. The GBC Issue -- GBC Zones

RESOLVED: (Large Majority)

30. We uphold the general concept of the zone as it existed during Srila Prabhupada's presence. We reject the idea that anyone can go anywhere in the world to preach or start a project without the concurrence of the local GBC.

ITEM 3a. The Guru Issue -- protocol

RESOLVED: (Large Majority)

31. That standard guidelines for the worship of the guru in ISKCON are necessary. However, in view of the fact that much more discussion and research is needed to achieve consensus on such guidelines, we recommend that local leaders may determine for the time being the practical details of such worship.



ITEM 11. GBC and Temple President's Meeting Mayapur '86

RESOLVED: (Passed)

32. The Next European Continental Assembly to be held in Mayapur sometime between March 15 - 25. The precise date will be determined by the ECA officers at the Mayapur festival.

RESOLVED: (Passed)

33. The ECA members and the representatives of the North-American temple presidents Council agreed to have joint European Continental Assembly and North American Temple President meeting before the annual Temple President meeting in Mayapur.

The Secretary noted that the following topics on the agenda had not been (fully) covered and/or were delegated to sub-committees:

- ITEM 3. The Guru Issue
c. protocol
- ITEM 5. Sridhar Maharaja (a position paper to be published by the European Continental Assembly)
- ITEM 6. GBC Issue
a. meeting procedures
ii. the concept of unanimity
b. the role of the GBC
i. job description
ii. advisory or governing?
c. judicial system
e. duties
- ITEM 12. ISKCON and Varnashrama Dharma

Gratitude was expressed for the devotees from around the world for attending the meeting, specifically, the North American representatives, Bahudak, Ravindra Svarupa, Rocana, and Sukavak, the devotees of the Australian yatra, Ramai Swami, Balarama, and Cittahari, and Surabhir Swami from India, as well as all the members of the European Continental Assembly, and in particular Hari Krishna das for his most significant contribution.

Standing invitation was issued by the ECA, that the chairmen or any officers of all other continental assemblies are invited to attend any of our European Continental Assembly meetings. Bahudak Prabhu returned the invitation, and stated that officers from other Continental Assemblies were also invited to attend the North American Temple President's meetings.

A subcommittee, consisting of Sivarama Maharaja, Bhagavat Asraya, Sundararupa Maharaja, Giriraja Maharaja, Visvambhara Maharaja, Pancajanya, Rohininandana, Citraka, and Hari Krishna das, was formed to meet Monday 3 February, for further discussion with the North American representatives.

Statement of Intent issued by Representatives from North America and Europe:

After intense and constructive discussion, representatives of both the North American and European ISKCON leaders firmly resolved to carry on discussions and exchanges on a basis of mutual respect and openness for each other's viewpoints. Furthermore, it was felt that such discussions would eventually lead to a consensus in many areas, since present discussions revealed significant common ground.

Letter to Rupanuga, April 4, 1972

"...I had no information that you all GBC members have met and decided such big big issues without consulting me. So I have issued one letter in this regard to all of you and you may take note that I consider both the meeting and the resolution is irregular and immediately there should be no change. Again, I am so much burdened by this administration work that I feel great difficulty. I was very anxious to return to my L.A. home to sit down for translating work. But if you all, my right hand men are doing things without consulting me and making such big big changes within our society without getting my opinion and the opinion of all the GBC-members then what can I do? I am so much perplexed why you all have done this. I have appointed originally 12 GBC members and I have given them 12 zones for their administration and management, but simply by agreement you have changed everything, so what is this I don't know. You mentioned that you have taken great help from Atreya Rsi, but Atreya Rsi is not a member of the GBC nor has he any position in my scheme to manage the whole society. And I am wondering what is Hansadutta's idea to leave Germany and take larger position in the United States? I have just sent him one letter where I have told him to remain permanently in Germany ... and I do not think that we shall change any of our managers throughout the world except as I shall direct ..."

Letter to Hansadutta, April 11, 1972

"The meeting of the GBC appeared to be very unconstitutional, because all the men were not informed or invited ... but you cannot convene without announcement to all the members and myself, giving a proposed agenda, like that, the topics to be discussed, why the meeting is being called, etc. Then there is correspondence for deciding these things and if 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 plus myself ... ~~as~~ there was immediate action without divulging the matters to the devotees. 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 GBC? So for the time being, let the GBC activities be suspended until I thoroughly revise the whole procedure ..."