

# The New York Times

NEW YORK, THURSDAY, MAY 26, 1983

THE NEW YORK TIMES, THURSDAY, MAY 26, 1983 11



United Press International

Ellisabeth Lulse Reuther Dickmeyer and Alfred Brush Ford at the mansion they made into a Hare Krishna center.

## For the Krishnas, a Rebirth in Detroit

Special to The New York Times

DETROIT, May 25 — Buried deep in a neighborhood on Detroit's crumbling near East Side, almost to the mouth of the Detroit River, a cream-colored stucco mansion built by the automobile magnate Lawrence Fisher, a cruel reminder of the once-unlimited wealth of this city, was recently brought back to its original 1920's splendor.

Its purchase and resurrection were brought about by the unlikely alliance of Henry Ford's great-grandson and the daughter of the labor leader Walter P. Reuther soon after becoming members of the Hare Krishna movement in the early 1970's.

In 1975, Alfred Brush Ford and Elisabeth Lulse Reuther Dickmeyer purchased the house for \$300,000 with money they had inherited.

Mr. Ford said that the founder of the Hare Krishna movement in the Western world, Bhaktivendanta Swami Prabhu-

bada, on a visit to Detroit, had told him to purchase the mansion and make it into a show place for Krishna consciousness.

Since then Mr. Ford has spent over \$2 million in renovating the house, adding a small movie theater for multimedia presentations on the society and lending to it many pieces of Indian art, some of them priceless. Tonight, Mr. Ford and Mrs. Dickmeyer are hosts at the opening of the Bhaktivendanta Cultural Center, a "cultural mecca of the Midwest."

The house, whose value is estimated at over \$9 million, is a Moorish-Italian design set on the Grayhaven Canal at the mouth of the Detroit River. Work on the estate was completed in 1927 and the world of the 20's roared throughout the place when Mr. Fisher, who remained a bachelor until late in life, gave parties in the ballroom of the 40-room mansion. The ballroom now is the place of worship for temple members.

The local Krishna members, about 40 or 50 who are active in the temple, live nearby in middle-class homes that were built in the 1940's and 1950's.

Elisabeth Reuther, who is still known as Lisa although her spiritual name is Lekhasravanti Dasi, married Bruce Dickmeyer in the temple in 1977. She and her husband and two children live in an apartment nearby.

She said she did not think her father, who was a major organizer of the United Automobile Workers in the 1930's and who died with his wife in a plane crash 13 years ago, would have any problems with her life style today.

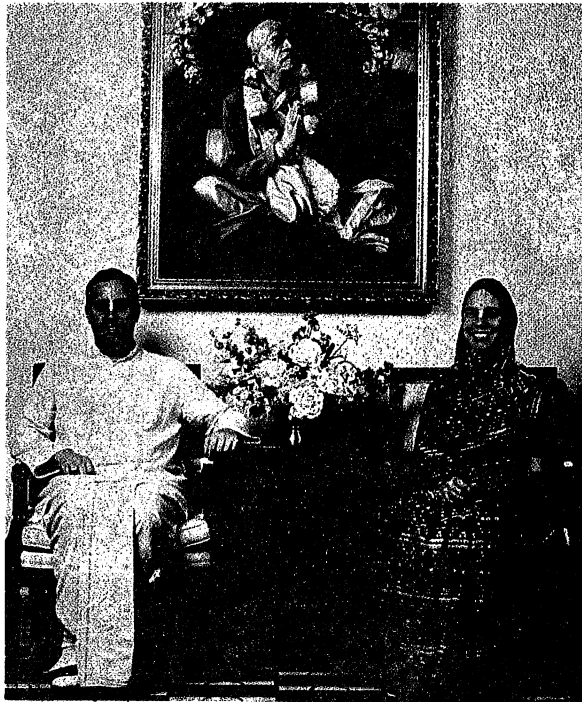
Nor does Mr. Ford think that his great-grandfather, Henry Ford, would mind. "If anyone would object I guess it would be Lawrence Fisher," he said, laughing. But added seriously, "I think he would probably have a personal sense of gratification that it is now being used to glorify God."

# Newsweek®

May 30, 1983 / \$1.50

## NEWSMAKERS

*Degas's 'Waiting': The price was right  
Ford, Reuther: The American Dream?*



Lekhasravanti and Ambarish renounced material possessions years ago, but the perks that accompany their worldly incarnations as, respectively, **Elizabeth Reuther** and **Alfred Ford** still come in handy. Reuther, the daughter of the late UAW chief, and Ford, Henry's great-grandson, jointly purchased a mansion built in 1927 for Cadillac president Lawrence P. Fisher and this week, after seven years and \$2.5 million for renovations, they will preside over its opening as the Krishna Society's Detroit headquarters. Ford's great-grandfather would no doubt appreciate his business acumen. In an effort to become financially self-sufficient, the Detroit sect has transformed Fisher's marble and antique-rosewood dining hall into a vegetarian restaurant called Govinda's.