

Hare Krishna cult excommunicates an 'eccentric' founding father

By RICK HIRSCH
Herald Staff Writer

From around the world, 21 leaders of the Hare Krishna movement gathered on Miami Beach in secrecy Saturday because of an "eccentric."

To the Hare Krishna cult, whose disciples shave their heads, wear saffron robes, bang on drums, chant and beg for cash on street corners and at airports, it is important not to be too eccentric.

So Saturday, the sect's Governing Body Commission expelled one of its founding fathers, Hans Kary, because of his "bizarre, aberrant behavior."

Kary is from Queens. He talks with a New York accent. And in 1966, he joined the Krishna movement as one of its 16 original American members.

The Krishnas issued their excommunication from their oceanfront, 96-room headquarters at 2445 Collins Ave., which used to be the Broadway Plaza Hotel.

In the words of Michael Grant, spokesman for the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, Kary had become an embarrassment: "It's kind of like having a Billy Carter in the family, you might say."

Kary wasn't available for comment. But his secretary, Paramahansa Swami, said Kary was expelled because the Krishna leaders felt he had become "too spiritual, too mystical."

"It's a character assassination and it all comes down to money," he said. "Our leader no longer wants to go to the airports anymore [to collect money]. He said that turns people off to our movement."

space in Berkeley from the First Church of Divine Life, a source of mail-order divinity degrees.

When pressed for back rent,

Kary's visions of a mountaintop temple evaporated. He filed a Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

But it was his spiritual deviance,

Grant said, that "really tipped the scales" against him.

Kary strayed from the teachings of Krishna founder His Divine

Kary used to lead the Krishna movement for the entire West Coast of the United States, Southeast Asia, Southern India and Ceylon. By 1978 he had founded temples in Berkeley, Calif., Boston, Vancouver and West Germany and in some Soviet-bloc nations.

His troubles began in 1980. Police in Northern California busted him three times on weapons charges.

Once, Lake County police confiscated 300,000 bullets and gunpowder from Kary and his followers. Another time, cops seized a Browning 9mm automatic pistol, two foreign-made military assault rifles, two Remington .22-caliber rifles, a Walther P-38 pistol, a manual for an Ingram submachine gun, a loaded 30-shot clip for a machine gun and assorted ammunition.

"Self-defense," Kary professed.

"Kary seemed to be developing a fascination with these things," Grant said Saturday. "I don't have any idea why. I certainly can't understand why anyone would be so fascinated with that sort of thing."

Kary got in trouble in Germany in 1977. He was tried in Frankfurt for begging and collecting more than \$1 million under false pretenses. He was acquitted.

In November 1982, Kary announced that his followers would build a 100,000-square-foot temple in the mountains north of San Francisco. At the time, he was renting

Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, Grant said.

"We tried repeatedly to rectify him . . ." the press release said.

Explained Grant: "He no longer respected our governing body . . . He had gotten to be extremely eccentric."