

# 11 Linked to Krishna Cult Indicted in Narcotics Case

L.A. TIMES 11/6/79

BY EVAN MAXWELL  
Times Staff Writer

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Eleven men identified by investigators as present or former members of Southern California Hare Krishna temples have been indicted on federal narcotics smuggling and income-tax evasion charges, the U.S. attorney's office reported Monday.

The 11 are charged with involvement in the smuggling of large quantities of hashish oil, a potent marijuana derivative from Pakistan into the United States in 1976 and 1977.

Arrested Sunday night at his Laguna Beach home was the alleged ringleader of the operation, Joseph Shelton Davis III, a former member of the Laguna Beach Hare Krishna temple who was convicted last year in an Orange County narcotics-related kidnapping case.

Still being sought were a number of other persons identified by investigators as having been affiliated with the Laguna Beach or San Diego Temple, including Roy Christopher Richard, a former president of the Laguna group.

Officials of the International Society of Krishna Consciousness, a Los Angeles-based corporation which runs local Krishna temples, quickly disavowed any connection with the persons named in the indictment.

A spokesman for the local Krishna temple, Eric Larsen, said the church has strict rules against use of or involvement with intoxicants of any kind.

"If anyone breaks these rules, they don't belong to our movement," Larsen said.

Michael Grant, official spokesman for the international movement, said in a telephone interview from London that some of those named had been involved in the Krishna movement in the past, but that they were part of a splinter faction ousted for violations of church policy.

"Categorically, we state we in no way condone these kinds of activities," Grant said. "And their religious

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## NARCOTICS CASE

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affiliations have no more meaning than if they were Roman Catholics."

Police investigators have said, however, that they believe some of those indicted by the federal grand jury have remained active in the church.

Evidence introduced last year in the Orange County kidnapping case, in which the intended victim, Steven Bovan, was killed, indicated that members of the Krishna faction had contributed thousands of dollars to Krishna operations in the United States and in India.

The indictment in the case did not mention the Hare Krishna church, but ten of the 11 men indicted were named by both their Christian names and by their adopted Krishna names.

The indictment alleges that the smuggling ring imported hashish oil from the Far East in the hollow sides of type writer carrying cases that were carried by couriers disguised as American businessmen.

It also alleges that Davis set up several legitimate businesses as fronts through which the proceeds of narcotics sales could be laundered, according to the U.S. attorney's office.

Included among those businesses were Prasadam Distributing International, Inc., which had offices in Newport Beach, and Govinda's Restaurant, a vegetarian restaurant in Laguna Beach.

The overt acts listed in the indictment were committed in 1976 and 1977. The operation of Prasadam Distributing International was discontinued late in 1977, after Steven Bovan was shot to death outside a Newport Beach restaurant.

Davis, the alleged ringleader, also was charged with being involved in a "continuing criminal enterprise," a federal crime which can lead to life imprisonment, and willfully filing a false income tax return.

After arraignment in federal court, Davis was ordered held in lieu of \$300,000 bail. Ordered held in lieu of \$50,000 bail were Patrick William Kenealy, arrested with Davis Sunday night in Laguna Beach, and Douglas Hart Snyder, who was arrested Monday morning in an apartment across the street from the Los Angeles Hare Krishna temple.

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NEWS RELEASE RE: HARE KRISHNA PROBE

A special investigating committee appointed by the Governing Body Commission of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness flew to Berkeley, California last night in response to reports from the news media that large amounts of ammunition are being held by a person allegedly affiliated with the Hare Krishna movement. The Commission is a democratic body which determines the spiritual and moral guidelines for the Hare Krishna Society. Although each Hare Krishna temple is independently incorporated, the Commission may sometimes act to advise local temples to take remedial measures in response to the activities of persons claiming to be acting in accordance with the principles of the movement. While officials of the Society are very concerned about recent reports, they insist that the International Society has no purpose in keeping any stockpile of ammunition (AP mistakenly reported in a widely-read release printed in the New York Times that police "found nine tons" of gunpowder, whereas the actual figure was nine pounds.) Officials of the Society caution against what they term "post-Watergate dog-pack journalism being employed to highlight a particular incident because it relates to an active minority religion" Hare Krishna members also resent being called a cult because their religious tradition is thousands of years old. Officials of the Society claim any balanced look at the activities of the Hare Krishna movement would reveal it working for exclusively benevolent purposes.

Hayward, CA  
(Alameda Co.)  
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# Hare Krishna leader arrested

BERKELEY (AP) — A leader of the Hare Krishna movement has been arrested in a case involving an illegal weapon and a stolen car, police said Tuesday.

Srila Hansadutta Swami Maharaja, a German-born nationalized American citizen whose non-Krishna name is Hans Kary, was taken into custody Sunday at a Berkeley house owned by the religious sect, investigators said.

Hansadutta, 40, was booked for investigation of auto theft, possession of a stolen car and possession of a machine gun. He was released on recognizance on orders of Alameda County Superior Court Judge Vilmont Sweeney.

Rameswara Swami, who described

himself as the spiritual leader of the movement in the western United States, said in a telephone interview from his Los Angeles headquarters that the movement denies "any involvement with either the vehicle or weapons found in the vehicle. The vehicle is not registered to any Hare Krishna guru and the weapons are not owned by the society."

He predicted the case against Hansadutta would be dropped.

Police said gave this explanation of the arrest:

Patrol Officer Joseph Sanchez noticed a 1968 Mercedes car parked near the Krishna house bearing a license plate which Sanchez remembered seeing on another car

during a March 4 search warrant raid at the sect's Mount Kailasa farm in Lake County.

A check with the Department of Motor Vehicles showed the license number was registered to another vehicle, so police contacted a sect member at the house who unlocked the car looking for registration papers.

Officers reported they subsequently found seven pistols and rifles, an illegal submachine gun and more than 1,000 rounds of ammunition in the car.

During the Lake County raid, police reported finding 17 weapons, including a grenade launcher. Authorities said several of the weapons were purchased fraudulently with checks that had been reported stolen by Krishna devotee William Benedict, who owns a wholesale business in Rodeo that sells drug paraphernalia to so-called "head shops."

Krishna officials have insisted they obtained the weapons at the ranch only for self-defense, saying they had received threats.

Hanasadutta's attorney, Michael Ciruolo, said he has advised his client to make no statements about the case.

The sect, officially the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, was brought to the U.S. in 1965 by A.C. Bhaktivedanta Prabhupada, a spiritual master of the faith followed by millions.

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Krishna Leaders Arrested

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12  
Krishna  
leader  
arrested

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On the decision of the Governing Body Commission (GBC) of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), Hansadutta Swami stepped down from his position of management and initiating new ISKCON students. Founded in 1970, the GBC is the ultimate ecclesiastic authority of ISKCON and determines the spiritual and moral guidelines for ISKCON worldwide. The collective spiritual power of the GBC is greater than that of any individual leader, irrespective of whether or not that member can initiate students.

"An ISKCON guru must be exemplary in all respects," said Srila Bhagavan Goswami, Chairman of the GBC. "Hansadutta Swami was not strictly keeping his vows of chanting, studying, and leading temple services as is the duty of one in his ministerial position. Moreover, it was found that he would frequently minimize the authority of the GBC." Further, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness has no purpose in keeping any stockpile weapons or ammunition for any reason.

ISKCON is concerned that media reports in the San Francisco Bay Area have in recent weeks portrayed ISKCON as an organization with paramilitary tendencies (a Bay Area AP office issued a widely-published wire story stating that police "found nine tons" of gun-powder in a member's possession. The actual figure was nine pounds). ISKCON cautions against sensationalistic and inaccurate journalism being employed to highlight a particular incident because it relates to an active minority religion.

# Krishna Arms Caches Draw Police Scrutiny in California

By WAYNE KING

Special to The New York Times

SAN FRANCISCO, June 8 — Hare Krishna groups are coming under increasing scrutiny by the police in California amid disclosures that the group has been stockpiling large stores of weapons and ammunition.

Lieut. Jeff Markham, an investigator for the Lake County Sheriff's Department, whose jurisdiction includes a Krishna ranch near Ukiah, where officers discovered a cache of weapons and ammunition last March, said, "They have pretended for years to be a peace-loving group that was only concerned about their religion but events of the last six months have shown me personally that they are not what they pretend to be."

Members and leaders of the Krishna sect maintain that the gathering of weapons is not sinister and stems from a need for self-defense.

The authorities were trying to trace a stolen credit card when they visited a seemingly placid farmhouse on 450 acres of rolling, newly planted land in the Maycamas Mountains on March 4. There they uncovered several thousand rounds of ammunition, a grenade launcher, three rifles and four short-barrel shotguns, which are normally used by the police as riot guns. None were illegal to own, the police said,

## Another Discovery in Berkeley

Later that month, the Berkeley police discovered a Krishna-owned warehouse in El Cerrito containing casings, powder and slugs for making 50,000 rounds of ammunition. The cache was legal because the warehouse was owned by a licensed gun dealer, Sgt. Pepper's Guns.

In Moundsville, W. Va., property owners near a Krishna retreat have complained about members stockpiling a large arsenal of weapons and conducting target practice in the woods.

In May the Berkeley police, acting on a warrant, searched an automobile near the Berkeley temple and found two loaded pistols, a Walther P-38 and a 9-mm. Browning, two military-type assault rifles, two .22-caliber rifles, ammunition and a locked attache case containing an Ingram submachine gun, a commando-type 9-mm. automatic weapon capable of being fitted with a silencer.

## Leader of Sect Arrested

They arrested a 39-year-old leader of the Krishna movement, Srila Hansadutta Swami on charges that included possession of an automatic weapon, a Federal offense. The charges against Hansadutta Swami, one of 11 worldwide spiritual leaders of the Krishna movement, were dropped and placed against a Krishna member who asserted that the weapons were his. The police said that one of the weapons, a pistol, was registered under the name of Hanskary, the German-born Hansadutta Swami's given name.

Tapancarna Das, the current manager of the Krishna farm near Ukiah, said in an interview after the raid that although the group did have "some guns" at the farm, "the armament isn't for ourselves." He explained: "I want to protect

the diety, Lord Krishna. I want to protect my god-brothers. Any bona fide religion can be persecuted. We're here to protect our god."

## Being Sought by Police

The Krishna guru conceded that a former official at the farm had a stolen credit card, but he described him as "a person with a bad habit." The former official is being sought by the police.

Commenting on the recent developments, Lieutenant Markham of the Lake County Sheriff's Department, remarked: "Are they dangerous? Well, I don't believe they're going to come down on a town, armed to the teeth, and start attacking people."

"But, on the other hand, what legitimate religious organization do you know that keeps an arsenal? I'm sure that some who join are sincere about it, they want to dedicate themselves to this religion, but I also think the hierarchy of the group has some other motives."

"After the Jonestown tragedy, it's a matter of great concern to us," he said, referring to the suicides and murders of more than 500 followers of the Rev. Jim Jones in Guyana in 1978.

## Police Are 'Baffled'

Richard Berger, a spokesman for the Berkeley Police Department, said: "This inordinate interest in weapons has us baffled. Normally you would attribute that kind of activity to a militant political group."

He said that the department had "direct knowledge" that the Berkeley temple had spent "many thousands" of dollars on weapons in recent months. But he noted that most of the weapons, with the apparent exception of the submachine gun, were "legally obtained and lawfully held."

Until recently, he said, the 10-year-old Berkeley temple had caused "only occasional and routine" police problems. "From time to time we have had an altercation, almost always between members," he said. "These things sometimes have started when a street hawker didn't bring in enough money to satisfy the others."

The Hare Krishnas, formally known as the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, were founded in 1965 in New York by an Indian businessman, A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, who died in 1977, after designating 11 spiritual leaders, including Srila Hansadutta Swami, as ruling gurus, or "spiritual masters," of the international sect.

The order exists by begging, and its often aggressive members are a familiar sight at airports where they seek contributions. Last year, according to published depositions of the sect leaders, solicitations brought in \$772,000 in the Bay Area alone.

J. Stillson Judah, emeritus professor of the history of religion at the Graduate Theological Union and Pacific School of Religion at Berkeley, who has researched the Hari Krishna organization said that he was "dismayed by this acquisition of guns," which he described as "totally out of character with the sect."

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## Topics

### Protecting a Deity

The logic of Americans buying more and more guns to protect themselves can be tragic. But the explanation of a religious cultist for the cache of arms the police found stored at his Hare Krishna farm in California sounds even worse. He said, "I want to protect the deity, Lord Krishna. I want to protect my god-brothers . . . We're here to protect our god."

One should not have to argue theology to oppose these arsenals of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness — those sometimes shaven-headed, saffron-robed people who for 15 years have been begging for money in cities and college towns. The Berkeley police say they know of thousands of dollars in recent gun purchases. Neighbors of a Hare Krishna commune in West Virginia have complained of incessant target practice. One of the cult's leaders has been arrested for violating Federal gun laws. And among the arms recently discov-

## Armed Causes

ered on Hare Krishna properties, there weren't just pistols and hunting rifles but also riot guns, a submachine gun, a grenade launcher and assault rifles, with appropriate ammunition.

State and Federal authorities ought to inquire very carefully into this military preoccupation of one-time pacifists. The cult ought to be pressed to explain what is going on. And charitable pedestrians, meanwhile, ought to think twice about contributions to these beggars. Around San Francisco alone last year, Hare Krishnas reportedly raised \$772,000. For what?

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OFFICIAL STATEMENT GIVEN BY THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA  
CONSCIOUSNESS (ISKCON) IN REGARDS TO N.Y. TIMES ARTICLE  
"KRISHNA ARMS CACHES DRAW POLICE SCRUTINY IN CALIFORNIA"  
OF JUNE 9, 80

NEWS CONFERENCE

A special investigating committee appointed by the Governing Body Commission (GBC) of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) flew to Berkeley, California, on March 30th in response to reports from the news media that large amounts of ammunition were being held by a person allegedly affiliated with the Hare Krishna Movement. The Commission is a democratic body which determines the spiritual and moral guidelines for the Hare Krishna Movement. Although each Hare Krishna temple is independently incorporated and managed the GBC may sometimes institute general or specific remedial measures to insure the preservation of the spiritual standards of the Society as formulated by the Founder-Acarya His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. ISKCON leaders are expected to strictly follow the teachings of Srila Prabhupada if they expect to remain in a position of responsibility.

The findings of the special GBC investigating committee required an emergency general meeting, which was convened by the Chairman in Los Angeles on the 10th of April. The meeting was attended by twenty Commissioners from around the world, including Africa, Australia, India, South America and Europe. As a result of the decision reached at the meeting, Hansadutta Swami, the Commissioner assigned to the Northwest United States, including Berkeley, was removed from his responsibilities of management and initiation of new ISKCON students. The Chairman of the GBC, Srila Bhagavan Goswami, summarized the basis of the decision in the following statement: "The collective spiritual power of the GBC is greater than that of any individual leader, irrespective of whether or not that member can initiate students. An ISKCON guru must be exemplary in all respects. Hansadutta Swami was not strictly keeping his vows of chanting, studying, and leading temple services as is the duty of one in his ministerial position. Furthermore, it is against the policy of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness to keep any stockpile of weapons or ammunition for any reason."

Bhagavan

The recent events in northern Ca. have been unfairly exploited by the news media, which is implying that ISKCON policy now advocates the stockpiling of weapons by its members. Individuals in any organization may from time to time act in a way which is contrary to the goals and best interests of that organization. But, the true test of any institution is how quickly and effectively it rectifies such problems, as has been recently demonstrated by ISKCON leaders. ISKCON does not advocate or place any value on storing guns. Those who do so in the name of ISKCON or deviate in other ways will always be disciplined by the Society. However, the media, and the N.Y. Times in particular, has made no attempt to report this undeniable fact, although it was made public. Instead, they have acted in clear violation of point four in the Professional Journalistic Code of Ethics: "News reports should be free of opinion or biased and represent all sides of an issue." Repeatedly the N.Y. Times has avoided or neglected to contact the Hare Krishna Movement officials to check allegations before publishing a story.

IN ESSENCE, THE MEDIA IS UNOFFICIALLY PUBLICISING THAT ISKCON IS JUST ANOTHER JONESTOWN, ABOUT TO HAPPEN. THE PRESS HAS REPEATEDLY SHOWN LITTLE REGARD FOR BALANCED INVESTIGATIONS. IT APPEARS THAT AS FAR AS THE PRESS IS CONCERNED, THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT IS SOMEHOW "GUILTY" AND IT IS JUST A QUESTION OF TIME BEFORE THIS WILL BE REVEALED TO THE PUBLIC. Certainly, we can understand that the alleged activities in Berkeley are, as Prof. Judah stated in the Times article of June 9th, "totally out of character" for ISKCON. However, ISKCON is organized in such a way that such alleged activities can be rectified within the Society and/or referred to law enforcement agencies or courts when necessary.

I would like to briefly review some of the public misconceptions resulting from the N.Y. Times article of June 9th and the irresponsible



editorial that followed on June 10th.

Point 1: Only a few individuals were involved -- and they have been censured and removed from positions of responsibility within the Society.

Point 2: This problem in northern CA. was a recent problem only and inconsistent with our institution's history. No Hare Krishna Temples are stockpiling weapons.

Point 3: The so-called stockpile of ammunition was in fact a warehouse inventory of cartridges to be used for resale purposes to finance a new gun shop which had no direct connection with ISKCON. The gun shop was privately owned by an adherent of the faith, who was not financially connected with the Society.

Point 4: No money accepted as a contribution to ISKCON has ever been spent on guns. The guns in question were all privately owned and legally registered, with the exception of one, which is under investigation by the police. To suggest that a donation to the Hare Krishna Movement might very likely be used towards the purchase of guns (which is exactly what the N.Y. Times has seen fit to suggest) is simply without basis in fact.

Point 5: The statement repeatedly made by the press that ISKCON is supported by "begging" ignores the fact that like all churches and religious organizations, ISKCON has a congregation which contributes its hard-earned money on a regular basis. ISKCON has thousands of lay followers who contribute out of a genuine appreciation for what ISKCON has added to their lives. As far as street solicitation is concerned, why does the press repeatedly ignore the published fact that ISKCON has distributed well over 60 million pieces of religious literature since 1972? Missionary work in the form

of street solicitation is engaged in by only one tenth of the members who live in Hare Krishna temples -- a small fraction. Why does the press choose to ignore the fact that the publishing arm of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, is the largest publisher of authorized Vedic texts in the world? These same books which are ignored by the press are in 95% of all university libraries of the U.S. and Europe and have been highly praised by thousands of recognized scholars.

Point 6: Finally, the N.Y. Times again refers to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the Founder-Acharya of ISKCON, merely as an "Indian businessman," again ignoring the fact that he took to monastic life in 1952, fifteen years before bringing his missionary activities to the West. Srila Prabhupada is recognized as one of the most prolific and renowned Vedic scholars in the world. In short, the media will praise Henry Miller, the avowed hedonist, who said he wrote in order to "kick God in the pants," but it finds fault with those who work to preserve a valuable religious culture in the face of advancing materialism. We are a new organization in this country, made up of people dedicated to higher religious principles, including strict vegetarianism, no gambling, no intoxication, and no illicit sex. If we make mistakes, we are not afraid to face them and correct them. But please let us do away with post-Jonestown dogpack journalism. Thank you.

In June of 1972 an armed motorcycle gang raided the ISKCON West Virginia community, which includes women and children. They shot four people and took the leader of the community into the woods at gunpoint and told him, "Dig your grave." They also walked on and destroyed the altar. Police did not

respond to calls for help until more than one and a half hours later. The gang was later taken to trial and acquitted by a jury. The community, founded in 1968, never had guns on the property until after the raid of 1972. A total of 8 guns, all of a nonmilitary type, have been purchased since that time. The community consists of more than 350 people living on more than 1,000 acres, which means that there is less than one gun for every 40 individuals. (Local police estimate that the local farmers own 3 guns apiece.) The N.Y. Times and the news media in general repeatedly publish hearsay about "incessant target practice." Upon purchase of some guns in 1973, target practice was initiated under the supervision of the local sheriff. No target practice takes place on the ISKCON farm property. Two local shooting ranges regularly used by local farmers border the ISKCON property. Some ISKCON members on occasion practice on these ranges.

In short, the media is misleading millions of Americans into thinking that the Hare Krishna Movement has become militaristic. Yet nothing can be further from the truth. Everyone in ISKCON accepts the exemplary teachings of the Founder-Acarya, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. If some individual goes astray, it is not that the whole Society should be considered impure. And no honest person has ever seriously questioned the character of Srila Prabhupada; his behavior and scholarship were always above reproach.

# Krishna Sect Denies Policy on Guns

Special to The New York Times

6/17/80

BERKELEY, Calif., June 16 — Two members of the international governing board of the Hare Krishna sect said today that widely publicized incidents linking its members with the stockpiling of weapons had resulted from individual actions, not from policy.

One board member, Shrila Acharyadev, whose responsibility is the San Francisco Bay area and Latin America, said Iskcon — the formal name of the Hindu sect is the International Society for Krishna Consciousness — "has no purpose in keeping any stockpile of weapons or ammunition for any reason."

He acknowledged that some of the sect's 200 or more temples did keep weapons for self-defense, but he said those were local decisions, not sect policy.

## 'Not Our Policy'

Another board member, Robert Corens, a chaplain at the University of Maryland, said in a statement read and distributed to reporters at the Berkeley Temple, "These past events are not our policy," adding, "They have been isolated and we have already taken all necessary steps to correct them."

Mr. Corens referred to several recent incidents, notably the discovery of rifles, short-barreled shotguns and ammunition at a Krishna ranch near Ukiah, Calif., and the discovery of rifles, pistols, ammunition and a submachinegun in a parked car near the Berkeley Temple.

A Krishna leader, Srila Hansadutta Swami, was detained in the Berkeley incident, but proceedings against him were dropped when another devotee purport-

edly said the submachine gun was his.

At the time of the incident, Srila Hansadutta Swami was described as one of 11 ruling spiritual leaders of the worldwide Hare Krishna movement. However, he subsequently "stepped down from his position of management and initiation of new Iskcon students," the sect announced, and today Shrila Acharyadev said that "he no longer has administrative or spiritual duties in the Bay area." But he has not been removed as a member of the governing commission, the board members reported.

## 'Dogpack Journalism'

Mr. Corens characterized the publicity given the weapons incidents as "post-Jonestown dogpack journalism."

The leaders asserted that no temple funds had been used to purchase weapons, and that what weapons remained at the Berkeley Temple were for protection and were known to the authorities.

They maintained that the sect had been subject to oppression and bigotry both in the United States and elsewhere, and said that police accounts of the weapons incidents had been exaggerated.

Mr. Corens said that complaints by neighbors about target practice and a cache of weapons at a Krishna retreat at Moundsville, W. Va., concerned "no more than nine weapons" in a community of 200, where a need for self-defense had arisen from an armed assault on the retreat by outsiders.

The board members denied a suggestion that some devotees had been trained in the use of automatic weapons.

# Hare Krishna Maligned?

By Todd R. Eastham

Among the many new and exotic religious movements which have come to this country from the "East," one of the most pervasive — and perhaps the most pervasively maligned — is the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, or Hare Krishna Society.

While the impact of this changing international movement upon American society, the motives of followers and their leaders, the potential for danger and positive cultural innovation are still unclear, one thing is certain — It gets lousy press.

Is it deserved? the "Krishna" movement as we know it is the extreme western arm of an increasingly worldwide movement which has its roots in the "Bhakti" or devotional religious traditions of India. It extends from the Far East to Europe, Australia and the North American continent.

Although the traditions from which it borrows are as old as Hindu society and the "Bhagavad Gita" from the Vedic scriptures, the growth of this "cult" into an international movement embracing 30 nations is largely the work of one man.

Bhaktivendanta Prabhupada, an Indian civil servant in his 60s who had spent much of his life in translating Vedic scripture into English, came to New York City in 1965. He established the International Society for Krishna Consciousness with the purpose of bringing "Krishnaite" devotional ideas and practices from India to the Western world.

The first Krishna monks who ventured on to the streets of American cities in shaven heads and saffron robes seemed peaceful, if a bit kinky; sincere, if a bit overzealous. Even when they took to soliciting donations for the incense they pressed into travelers' hands in airports and train stations, they seemed harmless.

But it has become increasingly apparent, say law enforcement officials

Prabhupada's death in 1977, the society, which numbers at least 5,000 sworn devotees in the United States alone, has come under the control of 11 disciples, hand-picked by the Master, who have taken their respective followers along paths which seem to diverge ever more from the principles of its founder.

One of the 11 is Srila Hansadutta Swami, or Hans Kari. Until recently he oversaw Temple affairs in the Northwestern United States, Southeast Asia and the Peoples Republic of China.

Hansadutta, who has encouraged followers to purchase and learn the use of arms, was detained recently by Berkeley, Calif., police after several high-powered weapons, including an illegal submachine gun, were found locked in a briefcase in a car parked outside the Berkeley Krishna Temple.

Although a temple member, Vladimir Panasenko, has confessed to owning the submachine gun, other discoveries — including a cache of arms, several thousand rounds of

ammunition and a grenade launcher at the sect's Mt. Kailasha Farm in Lake County, Calif. — have made authorities increasingly suspicious of Temple intentions, especially in California and West Virginia.

Following the Berkeley incident, the sect's hierarchy decided to remove Hansadutta from his post as "commissioner" in the northwestern United States and director of the Berkeley Temple, but he remains active in sect affairs.

The conviction last January in Los Angeles of three "former" members of the sect of conspiring in a multi-million dollar hashish oil smuggling operation further aroused the suspicion of law enforcement agencies.

One of the three, the alleged ringleader of the operation in which smugglers posing as American businessmen carried the

Shelton Davis.

Davis, 30, was found guilty of possessing and importing a controlled substance, participating in a criminal enterprise and filing a false income tax return.

Prosecutors in the case speculated that the Hare Krishna Society may have set up phony businesses through Davis and others to launder money from the sale of illegal drugs.

A Temple spokesman disavowed their actions, calling the participants "fallen devotees," and added that "a religion cannot be held responsible for the actions of persons claiming to be followers of the faith."

Temple member Michael Pugliese, or Gover Dan, a former aide and confidante to Hansadutta, is wanted for questioning for credit card theft, forgery and assault on another Temple member in Berkeley. He is wanted by Tokyo Police on three jewel theft warrants. Govar Dan, who uses at least five aliases, is believed to be in hiding in Hong Kong.

Other former members include Peter Kaufmann, or Chakavarty, a German national with a record of illegal arms possession who had a key to the Mt. Kailasha "armory," and Walter Bernstangle, another German citizen wanted on grand theft warrants in Mendocino County, Calif.

Bernstangle, who also had access to the Lake County arms cache, is wanted for questioning in a fraudulent passport probe in which charges are pending against another temple member — Ronald Ray Walters, also German-

born.

Walters, who lived at the Berkeley temple through at least March 1980, is part owner of Sgt. Pepper's Guns in El Cerrito, Calif.

When police raided the shop in March in search of items believed bought with stolen credit cards, they discovered 300,000 military-type rounds of ammunition, nine tons of gunpowder and a large stock of high-caliber weapons. The weapons are legal, but authorities said the discovery of so large a cache was a source of concern.

Bharata Das, a Hare Krishna Society spokesman in Berkeley, told UPI the group has never sanctioned illegal activities.

"The point we want to stress," he said, "is that the Hare Krishna Society and the illegal activities of a few individuals are completely separate."

Another Berkeley temple spokesman called media coverage of alleged criminal activities "a flurry of post-Jonestown dog-pack journalism."

"Anyone who has studied the history of religious persecution in this country will see that any newly arrived religion has undergone severe persecution," said Los Angeles Krishna spokesman Michael Grant in reference to the "bad press" and "harassment" from law enforcement agencies the group has experienced.

"It's irresponsible for people to lump us in with the cults," Grant told UPI. "We want to get back to plain living and high thinking, to preserve a simpler way of life and set an

example for all Americans."

The group's ascetic monastic philosophy dictates abstinence from meat, alcoholic beverages, drugs and sex except for procreation, combined with a rigorous daily regimen of chanting, work and prayer.

"Our tradition goes back 5,000 years," he said. "The

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method of study the practice is time-honored. Grant denied knowledge of the Lake County cache, but said he saw anything incongruous about monks' attitudes toward themselves in self-discipline.