

Harried Krishnas Picket Pacific Beach Temple

By ARTHUR GOLDEN
Staff Writer, The San Diego Union

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"Hare Krishna," mumbled the pilgrim.

The formalities over, the man in white got right to the point.

"Now go away," he said. "You are not welcome. You are trespassing. You are an embarrassment."

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But the demonstrators said they were barred from the temple be-

cause they are reformers, who want to make the organization more respectable.

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And the bizarre scene offered an unusual insight into friction within the mysterious cult that claims hundreds of thousands of followers since its introduction in the United States

(Continued on A-12, Col. 1)

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San Diego Union 6/20
— Front Page —

A-12 THE SAN DIEGO UNION

Monday, June 20, 1983

Harried Krishnas Picket Temple Here

(Continued from A-1)

in 1965.

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Morrill said that about 30 uninvited pilgrims from the Berkeley branch of the cult "barged into" his temple Saturday night. They wanted to spend the night there, and Morrill said he reluctantly allowed them to stay.

"There is a saying in India, 'If you give milk to a serpent, it increases his venom,'" Morrill said. "I tried to be kind but it was a mistake. I never should have let them in the building."

Morrill said the pilgrims began disrupting a program he was holding for about 25 followers and 40 guests. He asked the visitors to leave. They refused. A police officer was called, and the pilgrims left around 11:30 p.m. They slept at a campground.

Yesterday afternoon, Morrill sat on a bench in the shade of the temple's front porch and attacked the Berkeley group with the intensity of an exorcist rooting out a demon.

The Berkeley temple "has caused our movement much pain," he said. "The problems range from ideological, to mundane morality, to common decency. You can start anywhere you want. Their track record fills the bill."

In the realm of the spiritual, Morrill said, members of the Berkeley temple award themselves phony titles of piety. In the material, he said, the Berkeley temple owes the cult's publishing house \$400,000.

Also, he said, the Berkeley members have had problems with the police for illegal possession of guns. "They steal and they lie," he added.

"They have the audacity to say that they are pure-hearted. But it is they who are taking the good name of Hare Krishna through the mud."

Suddenly, two vans pulled up and double-parked on Grand Avenue. About 20 saffron-robed Hare Krishnas from Berkeley piled out. While motorists slowed down to gawk, the pilgrims began to form a picket line on the sidewalk outside the temple.

Berkeley leader Jones strode towards Morrill, who stood on the porch, in front of the door. Morrill's arms were folded across his white robes like an Old Testament

prophet. He and Jones exchanged religious greetings.

Then Morrill told Jones to get lost.

So the pilgrim became a picket.

His sandals flopping on the pavement, Jones walked stately at the head of the pickets. "This temple is sectarian," complained one of their signs. "We're Hare Krishna's, too," said another.

A few minutes later, Jones stood under a tree and said that everything Morrill had been saying about the Berkeley temple was "totally a lie. He is ruining our good name."

What about the alleged police problem with guns? Jones was asked. "We have had no problems with guns," he replied. "Yes, we have guns at our farm in Ukiah. But every temple in the movement has guns at its farm. Every American has a gun."

As for the charge that he and his men were nothing but a group of thieves, Jones looked at the demonstrators — they were chanting "Hare Krishna" over and over on the picket line — and said: "These are good men, honest and truthful."

The claim that his temple owes Hare Krishna publishing house \$400,000 is all wrong, Jones insisted. "An audit proved it," he said. And disputing the charge that he had no right to call himself a holy man, Jones said he had worked for years to obtain the title.

Behind the schism, Jones said, is the Berkeley temple's effort to lead a reform wing that wants to "purify and cleanse the movement" so that people will take it seriously. He said his efforts are opposed by the Hare Krishna entrenched leadership.

Jones, a slender man whose right hand clutched a cloth bag that contained prayer beads, said he did not come to San Diego to seek a confrontation. "We just wanted to come and chant Hare Krishna and bow down before the statues of the deities in the temple," he said.

As the picket line trudged on the pavement, Morrill said with a laugh that even the police officer who cleared the pilgrims from the temple Saturday night looked to the great beyond for help.

"The cop was a nice guy," Morrill recalled.

"He said, 'look, I'm giving you guys 30 seconds to get out.' They asked where were they going to spend the night, and the cop replied, 'Depend on the Lord.'"

Krishna sect splitting up over reform questions

Copley News Service

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newsclip

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JULY 14 '83

Hare Krishna

Religious cult finds split continues to grow

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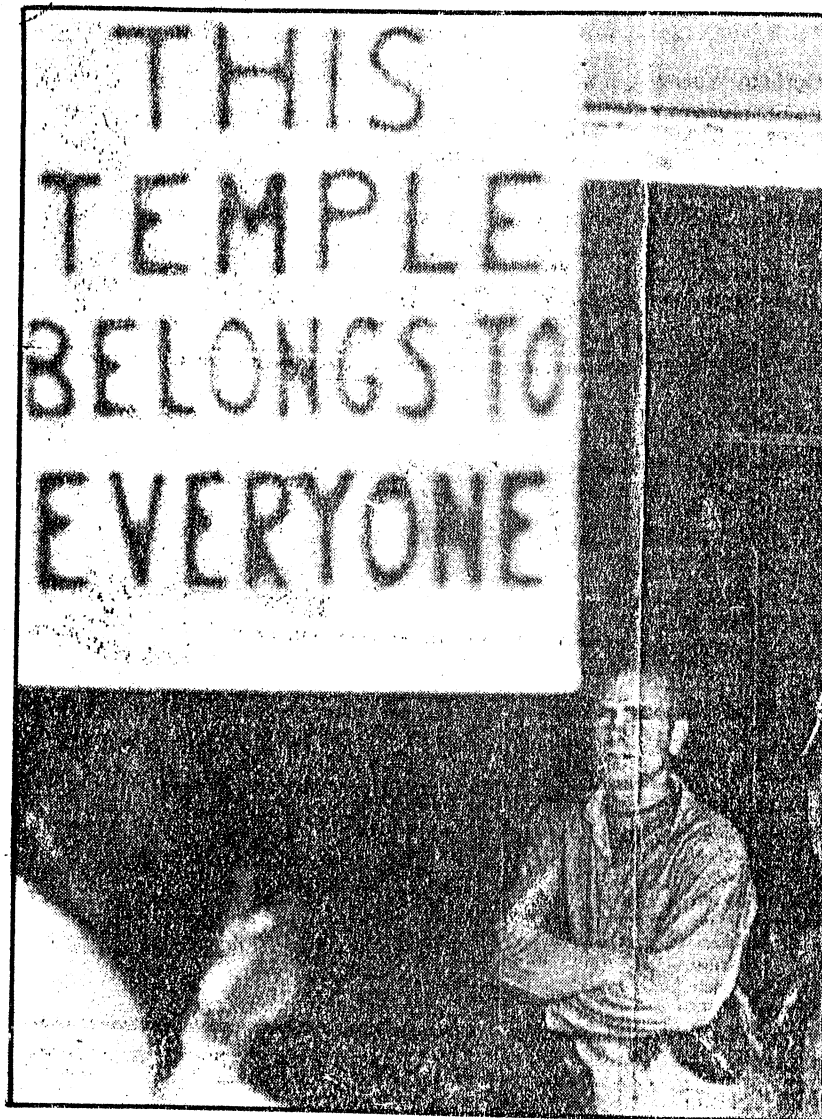
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Tribune photo by Jerry McClard

KRISHNA PROTEST

Member of the Pacific Beach Hare Krishna temple watches pickets.

25 Krishnas leave after clash here

About 25 Hare Krishnas from Berkeley are on their way home today after picketing the Pacific Beach Hare Krishna temple yesterday in a dispute over religious principles.

Tom Gallery, attorney for the Berkeley temple who is also a member, said the group came to Pacific Beach Saturday to take part in worship services, but started the picket line after they were thrown out by temple president Robert Morrill.

Gallery said temples are supposed to be open to the public, especially to visiting Krishnas. He said the picket line also tried to make a point that the religion calls for preaching, chanting and distribution of religious literature.

The Pacific Beach temple, he said, seems more interested in raising money.

But Morrill said the Berkeley group was thrown out because they disrupted services, and because they are well-known "troublemakers" who are not welcome at any temples on the West Coast.

"The Hare Krishnas in Berkeley are a little far out," he said. "Wherever they go, they cause trouble. I can see a certain amount of wry humor (in the picketing) but we have standards to protect and enough is enough."