

Facts Behind Terror by Jeffrey Steinberg

Hare Krishna: from cult to terrorism

A major arms cache was discovered on premises operated by a well-known, mystical cult.

Within the past two weeks a series of police raids in California have uncovered massive stores of weapons along with enough ammunition to fight a small war. The cache was found on property owned by the Hare Krishna cult. Police investigations into a stolen credit card ring in Berkeley, Calif. had led investigators to the Krishna mountain-top ranch, "New Mount Kailasa," 15 miles south of Ukiah. Since the 1920s, Ukiah has been a center for cult activities. During that period, leading British intelligence kooks including Sir Aldous Huxley, Christopher Isherwood and Lord Bertrand Russell, helped found cult groups in the Ukiah area. These cults used peyote, mescaline and other psychotropic drugs. More recently, Ukiah was the West Coast headquarters of the Peoples Temple of Reverend Jim Jones.

At the ranch, police found an arsenal of rifles, shotguns, a grenade launcher and thousands of rounds of ammunition. Several days later, the same investigation led police to the El Cerrito gun shop of Roy Walters, a Krishna member, where they discovered nine tons of gunpowder, 300,000 rounds of military type ammunition, and 50,000 copper jacketed slugs. Police are presently searching for three German nationals whom they believe to have been involved in training the Krishna cultists in weapons use.

While the Hare Krishna cult

has been engaged for years in criminal activities similar to this new stolen credit card operation and have also been linked to criminal violence, this new pattern of evidence strongly indicates that the cult is being molded for terrorist actions.

The Krishna cult's orientation toward violence extends back a number of years. In the mid-1970s, Krishna members were frequently involved in physical attacks on other organizations or individuals who criticized their cult. In 1978, five Krishna members were indicted in a California court on charges of hiring three mafia hit men to assassinate Steven Boven, a man who had maintained business dealings with Krishna members. Following an unsuccessful hit attempt, police were able to track down Krishna member Alexander Kilik who had ordered the hit. They discovered nearly 1.1 pounds of pure "China white" heroin in his possession. A Krishna spokesman immediately denied that Kilik was a member of the cult and succeeded in insulating themselves from further investigation.

During this same period, the Krishna group began a recruitment drive among prisoners, former prisoners and Vietnam Veterans which corresponded to an increase of violent attacks against "outsiders." Among those recruited were former Green Beret special forces personnel and others trained in assassination techniques.

The Krishna cult was originally set up in the East Bengal province of India during the 1920s by a wealthy family engaged in international commerce. The cult was initially a tax shelter and a channel for laundering funds in and out of the country. Strong evidence suggests that from this early period, the cult was a front for international contraband, likely including large shipments of heroin.

Among the current U.S. operational centers of the Krishna cult are: Houston, Tex., where the cult retains a computer bank and commercial enterprises shipping "incense" and other products in and out of Mexico; Moundville, W. Va., where they have a second weapons cache and retain a federal weapons purchase dealers license; and Los Angeles, where the cult owns an entire several city block square area, suspected of being a center for drug dealing.

As usual, in response to this new exposé, the Hare Krishna have denied any and all charges against themselves. The cult officer who was caught using a stolen credit card has disappeared from the New Mount Kailasa ranch and a new director, Tapanacarya Das (teacher of austerity), has been brought in to carry out the cover-up. In an interview with a *New York Times* reporter several days ago, Das stated: "Well yes, we do have some guns. But the armament isn't for ourselves. I want to protect the deity, Lord Krishna. I want to protect my God-brothers. Any bona fide religion can be persecuted. We're here to protect our God." ... People think there's another Guyana going on, because this guy Jimmy Jones is from around here."