

## **GURU OF BIG OREGON COMMUNE FACING DEPORTATION**

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### **Body**

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When the Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh goes out for an afternoon drive in one of his shiny Rolls-Royces, his followers wonder how much time the Indian **guru** has left here to tool around these scrubby desert hills.

The townspeople of Antelope are wondering about that, too. "If he would just leave, all those people down there on that ranch would eventually just go away," said Mona Reynolds, the former town recorder of Antelope, a community of fewer than 100 people whose government is now controlled by the Bhagwan's people.

The Bhagwan, whose name means "the blessed one" in Hindi, is **facing** a deportation threat. He left his ashram, or community of Hindus, in Poona, India, and came to the United States in 1981 on a tourist visa. According to the Immigration and Naturalization Service in Portland, he is not entitled to the status of a "religious worker" and should be declared deportable, along with his mother, 70-year-old Saraswatabai Jain, who followed him to America.

RAJNEESHPURAM, Ore. - When the Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh goes out for an afternoon drive in one of his shiny Rolls-Royces, his followers wonder how much time the Indian **guru** has left here to tool around these scrubby desert hills. Abandoned **Commune** in Jersey

There has been friction in this desolate countryside since the **guru's** followers abandoned a **commune** in Montclair, N.J., 18 months ago and set themselves up on a ranch that they called Rancho Rajneesh, on barely arable land in central **Oregon**.

Residents of Antelope, 20 miles north of the ranch, said they were at first amused by the **commune** dwellers, who wear crimson-hued clothes, lean toward encounter therapies, indulge in what some call free sex and pride themselves on combining the profit motive with environmental concern. Antelope's attitude changed when the group, which has grown to 800 members, took political control of the town.

Last year, the **guru's** followers won the right to incorporate part of their 64,000-acre ranch as Rajneeshpuram, **Oregon's** newest city. The Bhagwan's disciples, most of whom are educated and affluent young Americans and Europeans, say the immigration agency's position amounts to religious discrimination. Not even a successful **deportation** action, they said, would make them leave the ranch.

'No Intention of Leaving'

"We have invested more than \$35 million here," said Sunshine, a former Californian in her mid-20's who is a spokesman for the group. "We have no intention of leaving."

The Indian mystic sought permanent resident status on the ground that he was a religious leader and had diabetes, serious allergies and other health problems that kept him from returning to India. The immigration service turned

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down his request Dec. 21, saying he was unable to perform as a religious worker and he had made false statements about his health.

After a protest by the Bhagwan's lawyers about not being given evidence against their client, Robert E. Krueger, regional director of the immigration agency in Portland, reopened the case to let them reply. "It was a technical error," he said. "We didn't give them copies" of the evidence. "We discussed it with them and thought that would be enough."

Recently a Federal district judge in Portland gave the guru until March 28 to prepare his reply.

'Nobody Likes a Living Buddha'

The guru, who could be seen driving serenely along a dusty road with a young woman at his side, would not comment on his situation. According to his top aide, Ma Anand Sheela, a woman of Indian extraction, he talks regularly only to her and has not spoken in public in more than two years.

She said the efforts to deport him started because he posed a threat, "because nobody likes a living Buddha or a Christ that is a threat to the social or economic system." The guru's disciples say they have 300,000 followers worldwide. "He is not going to be deported," the Bhagwan's aide said. "We have created a beautiful city for him here. There is no reason for him to leave."

The group has also begun to invest money in Portland, buying a residential hotel, a bakery and a nightclub, which they named Zorba the Buddha.

The Bhagwan earned a reputation abroad as "India's free-love guru." Ma Anand Sheela and other top lieutenants say the Bhagwan's teachings promote a philosophy not of sex carried to extreme but, rather, sex without guilt. About all a casual visitor sees is that people here hug more often than people at, say, a suburban shopping center elsewhere.

Blessed to Be Rich

The Bhagwan also teaches, not unlike America's Reverend Ike, that it is not more blessed to be poor. Thus his followers put their labor toward making the ranch self-sufficient with farming and other enterprises.

Sheela, as she is called, drives a silver-blue Mercedes-Benz with a bumper sticker that says, "Jesus Saves, Moses Invests, Bhagwan Spends."

Disciples say the guru has 27 Rolls-Royces on the ranch, gifts from around the world. A few months ago they released to the press a photograph of the cars lined up. That was essentially done for shock value, Sunshine said, but there was a practical angle.

"The 27 Rolls-Royces make a great investment scam," she said, adding that the commune's investment corporation regularly made a profit reselling the cars the guru had driven.

The red-clad newcomers, who wear pictures of the guru around their necks, have their supporters among the local people. "They've got the same rights as anybody else, that's the way we all feel," said Rick Cantrell, a commissioner of Wasco County, which includes part of Rancho Rajneesh. Last year, Mr. Cantrell, a former county judge, cast a favorable vote in the 2-to-1 decision that let the city of Rajneeshpuram be incorporated.

Mr. Cantrell said his relationship with the group caused him to be charged with conflict of interests after he sold cattle valued at \$17,000 to the group just before the vote. The complaints were dismissed by the State Government Ethics Commission.

Mrs. Reynolds's husband, Loren, and other residents of Antelope said they had been "overwhelmed" by the newcomers' aggressiveness. This year, changes by the commune-dominated government have caused water

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rates to increase to \$40 a month from \$10, Mr. Reynolds said. His "Keep Oregon Green" buttons reveal his feelings against "the Reds."

He also said the rate of assessments for the Fire Department rose from \$1 to \$4. "And they want to improve the streets so they can run big trucks over them," he said. "The roads were just fine before they got here."

Frances Dickson, whose husband, Bill, is the town postmaster, likened the commune to "a working country club for the rich." "These are very affluent people, but they can't cope," she said. "They love it down there because they don't have to make any decisions - not even what color clothes to wear."

## Graphic

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Illustrations: photo of Ma Anand Sheela

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