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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 1, 1984

Willie

Agree - good

MEMORANDUM FOR FRED F. FIELDING

FROM: WENDELL L. WILLKIE *WLL*

SUBJECT: Chester Kongsli's Correspondence
Concerning Photograph of the President
Appearing in Rajneesh Times

Chester Kongsli, an Oregon resident, has written the White House on several occasions concerning various issues, including his concern that the Oregon city of Rajneeshpuram, founded by followers of the Indian "free sex" guru, Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, violates the Constitutional separation of church and state. Kongsli recently ordered a subscription to the Rajneesh Times for the President, in order to keep the White House informed of the cult's activities. Kongsli's initiative resulted in the attached picture of the President appearing in the April 1 issue of that paper.

The Rajneeshese, according to news accounts, own the 64,000 acre Big Muddy Ranch where John Wayne once made movies. They are now establishing a colony there, governed by the Bhagwan (who drives 30 Rolls Royces and never speaks). The Rajneeshese have been embroiled in substantial litigation with the State of Oregon as to the legality of the municipal incorporation of Rajneeshpuram as well as other matters.

Their reconstructed photograph of the President, which shows him reading the Rajneesh Times and holding a chimpanzee, may have been taken from Bedtime for Bonzo. In any event, the photograph was obviously taken long ago; there could be little doubt in the mind of any observer that the picture is a hoax. This is especially true as it appears in an April Fool's Day issue along with other stories which are clear hoaxes, including one reporting the "panic-stricken flight" from Oregon of the State's "bigots", including Governor Vic Atiyeh, Senator Mark Hatfield and Federal immigration authorities.

It seems clear that no purpose would be served by any correspondence requesting the Rajneeshese to discontinue (if indeed they have continued) use of the President's likeness in any manner suggesting endorsement of their newspaper. Given the radical, unorthodox and rather outlandish nature of this group, any such

request would probably be treated in a frivolous manner and might in fact prompt further use of the photograph. Accordingly, I would recommend that we simply file this matter without further action.

Nor would I respond to Kongsle. It appears he already mistakenly presumes a special relationship with the White House based on previous correspondence. He shouldn't be further encouraged to believe he is a White House agent operating in the Oregon desert.

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WHITE HOUSE
CORRESPONDENCE TRACKING WORKSHEET

G1002
WW - adv to me, ps

- O - OUTGOING
- H - INTERNAL
- I - INCOMING

Date Correspondence Received (YY/MM/DD) 84 10 14

Name of Correspondent: Mr. Mrs. Miss Chester Kongslic → 4/18

MI Mail Report User Codes: (A) _____ (B) _____ (C) _____

Subject: Forwards Copies of the Rajneesh Times. Indicates that he has taken out a subscription to the newspaper for the President.

ROUTE TO:	ACTION	DISPOSITION
Office/Agency (Staff Name)	Action Code Tracking Date YY/MM/DD	Type of Response Code Completion Date YY/MM/DD
CoKell	ORIGINATOR 84 10 6 15	84 10 1
Cu Fiel	Referral Note: A 84 10 6 18	84 10 1
WAT 19	Referral Note: C/D 84 10 6 20	S 84 10 6 30
	Referral Note: 1 1	1 1
	Referral Note: 1 1	1 1

- ACTION CODES:**
- A - Appropriate Action
 - C - Comment/Recommendation
 - D - Draft Response
 - F - Furnish Fact Sheet to be used as Enclosure

- I - Info Copy Only/No Action Necessary
- R - Direct Reply w/Copy
- S - For Signature
- X - Interim Reply

- DISPOSITION CODES:**
- A - Answered
 - B - Non-Special Referral
 - C - Completed
 - S - Suspended

FOR OUTGOING CORRESPONDENCE:
 Type of Response = Initials of Signer
 Code = "A"
 Completion Date = Date of Outgoing

Comments: _____

Keep this worksheet attached to the original incoming letter.
 Send all routing updates to Central Reference (Room 75, OEOB).
 Always return completed correspondence record to Central Files.
 Refer questions about the correspondence tracking system to Central Reference, ext. 2590.

We never go anywhere without

Rajneesh Times



Rajneesh Times sent to President Reagan

Mr. Chester Kongsli, a resident of Madras, has taken out a subscription to The Rajneesh Times for President Ronald Reagan, who will now receive a copy of the newspaper directly each week.

Mr. Kongsli said Monday

that he has been keeping people in Washington regularly informed about developments in Central Oregon since the Rajneesh commune was established, and has been sending clippings from The Rajneesh Times to the White House for several months. 6/17 - 1983

"I think that since you people are projecting a comparison with the national administration they should be kept informed," he explained.

ONE YEAR LATER (6-9-84)

a telephone conversation with their circulation department indicates that the mailing of Rajneesh Times is extended - by compliments of their production staff. This courtesy probably came in result of an earlier discussion with Javanal, when I suggested it would be in good interest to the commune, that views should be forwarded - firsthand.

(page 2) cites the nature of humorous production for the day.... April 1, 1984.

This interesting recopy Sincerely,

Chester Kongsli
CHESTER KONGSLIE

237167

OPEN

More....

This vain attempt to do an ALL FOOLS report may find me to be the greatest 'silly' of all. All things, official or not, are considered as a joke in Rajneesheland - I hope they understand! (illustrated photocopy enclosed)

I stopped at our state capitol, governor & attorney general offices recently, to find that they are using the Reynolds & Pacific Legal agencies for referral and am satisfied that this past mischief has been worthwhile. I am banished from premises of SECTually controlled area, this gives good reason to DROP OUT.

The legal process will whatever is right in the long run, to see that institution, as amended, will prevail.

Several relatives are probably...



Exploring mudgym is not an END, C.K.

Send us pictures showing famous landmarks and funny situations.



The Rajneesh Time

PAINTER INTERNATIONAL
MIDWESTERN UNIVERSITY

Smiling faces tell adoption story of 10 U.S. D.

U.S. immigrant rally
Swampy lands

LUBA COME TO ANNA

We never go anyw...

Rajneesh

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Several related newsarticles are attached, though they are probably on file already. This collection could give earlier items some added meaning - perhaps to forward to the Justice Department.

ck
hut ko

INTERNATIONAL
UNIVERSITY

The Rajneesh Times

Smiling faces tell adoption story at

Send us
land



Glove Boutique
opens its doors

See page A3



Paradise?

1125-83

CHESTER KONGSLIE
P O BOX 270
MADRAS, OR 97741

Don't miss this weeks HoroscopeA5
Attorney General tries againB1
Japanese film crew
visits Rajneeshpuram.....B3
Bhagwan speaks on HumorC1
Sheela in EuropeD2 and D3
The European success storyD4

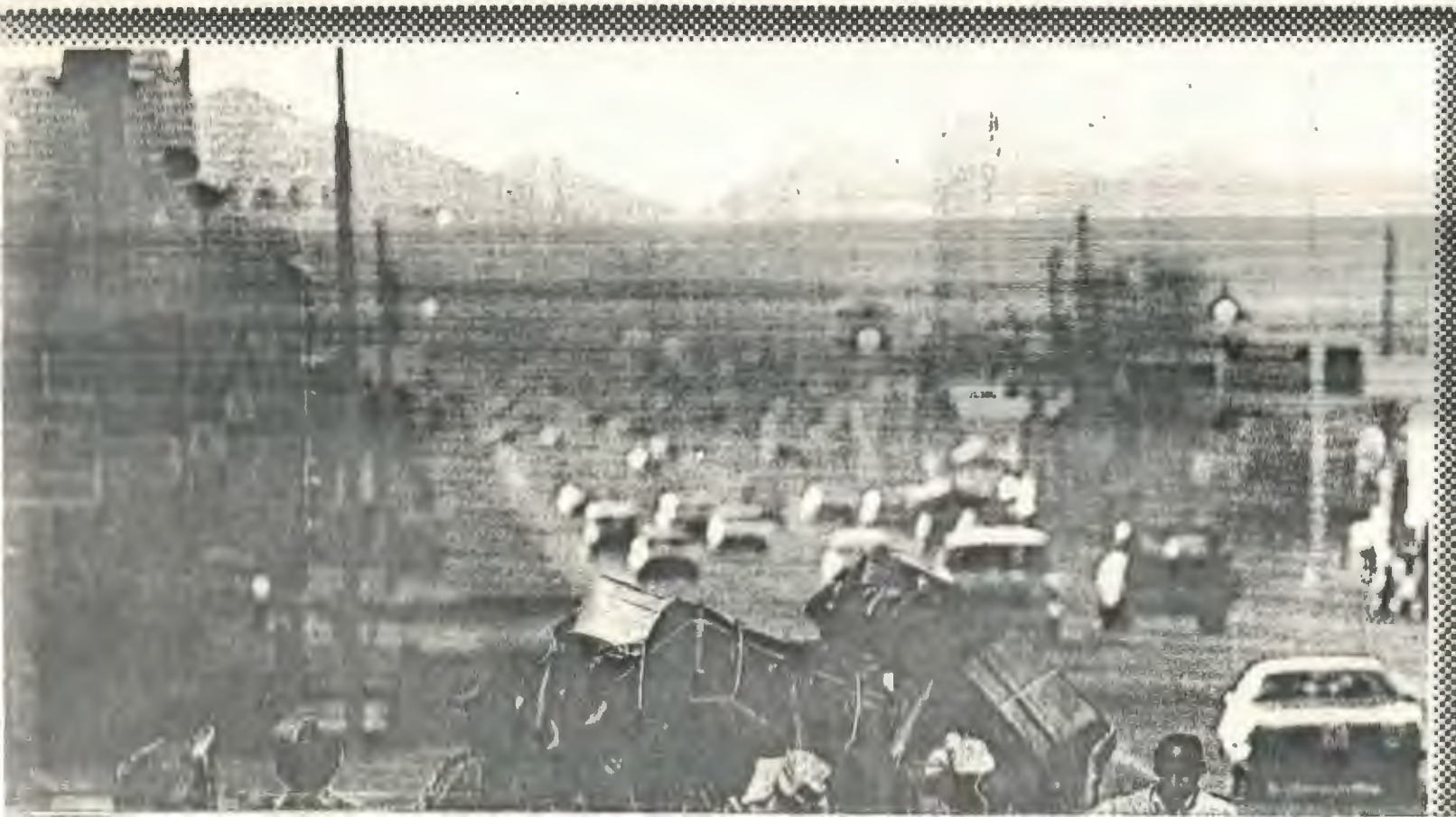
The Rajneesh Times

11, 1984

The world's best newspaper in the world's best city

Positive journalism direct from the source

Weekly 25' (50' out of Oregon)



World's first nude marathon from The Dalles to Madras

They're off!

But, before they go, the 3,000 marathon participants on the gruelling 75-mile course from The Dalles to Madras, will have to take it all off, down to shoes and sun-visors. At exactly 6 a.m. on Sunday, April 8, they'll set off on the First Annual World Nude Marathon, sponsored by the Rajneeshpuram Neo-Athletic Club.

Swami Anand Sequitur, co-coordinator of the club, said at least 100,000 people would be lining up along the course and a lot more would be thinking about it. Participants, from ages 10 to 80, are coming in from all over the west coast and parts of Kansas City.

Granny Rubenstein, from Hood River, said she had been running in the all-together, in the snow and rain, ever since she was little, but mostly at night.

General Dave Frohnmayer declared that "I have always been an athletic supporter, in any shape or form."

Governor Vic Atiyeh reluctantly admitted that the event would probably bring in millions of dollars to the ailing Oregon economy.

Of course, there was some criticism. One Central Oregon rancher who asked to remain nameless said it was a slap in the face for the way "things have always been done in these parts". Another rancher said, "I don't care what they do, as long as they don't scare the horses."

Local gossip groups have been speculating freely on what's going to happen when people get too friendly jockeying for position. Others wondered if perhaps the hardships and distractions along the way would be insurmountable.



The last stragglers of the Great Bigot Exodus of '84 are seen hurrying towards the border, just south of Klamath Falls

Panic and confusion reign as bigots flee Oregon

KLAMATH FALLS — a scene rivaling the epic movies of Cecil B. Mille, vast numbers Oregon bigots were seen rushing south along Highway 97 the yesterday headed for the California border.

The panic-stricken flight led by Governor Vic Ah, Senator Mark O. Field and U.S. Immigration

were instantly swept aside by a tidal wave of shouting people and racing vehicles.

Reporters, rushing to the scene to find out why the bigots were fleeing the state, could get no coherent response from anyone.

Cries of "String 'em up!" "You bet!" "Here they come!" and "Let's git out of here!" filled the air, but no one seemed willing or able to stop and talk.

Gov. Atiyeh, wearing a desperate smile beneath terror-filled eyes, lashed frantically at a team of mules drawing a wagon filled with second-hand

ominously overhead.

Grown men screamed aloud as lightning flashed and several reporters believed they saw demon-like figures dancing in the curtains of rain that descended on the throng.

Robert Krueger was seen bicycling furiously south, disguised as an old woman.

It took more than six hours for the whole cavalcade to pass through Klamath Falls. Right at the rear came the familiar figures of Wasco County Judge Bill Hulse, his attorney Wil Carey, and leaders of a well known land use watchdog

to make sure every bigot gets out of here before it's too late!

Carey, jumping up and down in the back of a pickup, kept repeating: "Your honor, I object!"

Afterwards a profound silence descended on the whole of Oregon. Sunlight broke through the clouds and distant singing could later be heard from the direction of Rajneeshpuram.

Ma Prem Sunshine, a spokesperson for the Rajneesh-ee community, later confirmed a rumor that a group of Rajneeshes had been experi-

percent of the respondents frankly admitted that they preferred to "do it in the nude".

In an unexpected show of friendliness, State Attorney

stastic and convivial. One Australian was in a bit of a quandary. "If it's a close finish, it will be rather a tricky business to describe what they won by," he said.

State Attorney General withdraws his case again

SALEM — In what must rank as the most unusual press conference in Oregon's political history, state Attorney General Dave Frohnmayer told reporters Wednesday that the City of Rajneeshpuram is the most legal city in the state.

Frohnmayer then proceeded to eat his former opinion, issued last fall, in which he had declared the city illegal. Generous helpings of tomato ketchup and mustard were needed as the Attorney General chewed up his own words.

"It doesn't taste very good but it's the only way I can show how sorry I am," he told the press between mouthfuls of soggy paper.

After the plate had been cleared, Frohnmayer, looking a little pale but smiling bravely for the TV cameras, admitted he had been having nightmares about his attack on the City of Rajneeshpuram.

"I realize that it was an idiotic, neurotic and opportunistic thing to do and I'm thoroughly ashamed of myself," he said.

"The truth is that no city in Oregon has been asked to fulfill so many conditions as Rajneeshpuram in order to be recognized by the state," he explained.

"Why, if we looked as closely at the incorporation of

other cities there probably wouldn't be a single city in this state today," Frohnmayer confessed. "Nor would the state of Oregon itself exist."

"Let's face it, Rajneeshpuram has proved itself to be the most legal city in Oregon," he added.

There was a brief interruption as Frohnmayer excused himself and walked hurriedly to a nearby rest room. Reporters waited patiently for his return, wondering among themselves at the Attorney General's dramatic change of stance.

"It's simply a question of being able to sleep at night," Frohnmayer explained when the conference resumed. Big tears were clearly visible on his face.

"Those crocodile tears are really fake," said one skeptical reporter, as Marla Rae solicitously offered a box of Kleenex to her boss.

"I heard Frohnmayer giggling in the rest room that this is his new strategy to screw the Rajneeshes and beat Norma Paulus for governor two years from now," the journalist added.

"Doesn't he know that unnatural acts are prohibited in public?" said another reporter. "He should be arrested, not elected."

Bid to outlaw blue



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Ma Prem Sunshine

Dr. John Smace, a professor of comparative anatomy at UCLA said, when surveyed, 98 percent of the respondents frankly admitted that they preferred to "do it in the nude".

In an unexpected show of friendliness, State Attorney

Journalists, flying in from all over the world to cover the event, were generally enthusiastic and convivial. One Australian was in a bit of a quandary. "If it's a close finish, it will be rather a tricky business to describe what they won by," he said.

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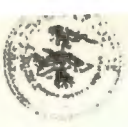
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A

Office of the Assistant Attorney General

Washington, D.C. 20530

MAR 27 1984

Mr. Chester Kongsle
P. O. Box 270
Madras, Oregon 97741

Dear Mr. Kongsle:

Your letter of January 6, 1984, to President Reagan has been referred to the Department of Justice. In your correspondence you describe problems related to Rancho Rajneesh in Oregon.

We have carefully reviewed your letter and its attachments and are unable to determine whether any violations of federal civil rights statutes exist. If you wish to furnish the Department with additional information, we will be happy to review the matter further.

Thank you for writing to express your concerns.

Sincerely,

Wm. Bradford Reynolds
Assistant Attorney General
Civil Rights Division



U.S. Department of Justice
APPELLATE SECTION, CRT, RM. 5740
9TH & PENNSYLVANIA AVE., N.W.
Washington, DC 20530

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use \$300

Mr. Chester Kongsle
P. O. Box 270
Madras, Oregon 97741



Madras, Oregon - 97741
Friday, April 6, 1984

Mr. William Bradford Reynolds,
Assistant Attorney General,
U.S. Department of Justice,
Washington, D.C. - 20530

Dear Mr. Reynolds:

Your message of March 27, 1984 lends encouragement. An awareness in Washington is further enhanced.

The civil right of parties to a controversy is entitled to equal consideration and my brief description was offered, mostly from an observer standpoint.

Further information should come from those who are legally involved, hence I have contacted with agencies and concerned citizens where respective counsel may want to communicate facts to your office and others by benefit of your assistance.

The Oregon State Attorney General, Wasco County Court, Citizens under duress, Congressman Bob Smith, Pacific Legal Foundation, Oregon Magazine, Portland INS and possibly one or two others will have copy of your 3-27 letter and should make reference to it with any response. The Jefferson County Court will keep low profile for the moment.

The Followers of Bhagwan Shree will do their thing by way of the Rajneesh Times, as sent each week to the Whitehouse, (my nickel) - but to be extended in self interest after a mid-June expiration, according to my suggestion, by telephone - some moments ago. In all likelihood, spiritual intuition (psyche) may find them in access to the above !!!!

I am grateful to Sally Kelley, Jim Stearns and others for making this introduction to your office possible. My continued communication will be in form of articles and news clipping - or, if you want we can continue a correspondence.

Your kind response came as a pleasant surprise. It tells that the National Administration does keep touch.

Respectfully,

CHESTER KONGSLIE

P.O. Box 270, Madras, Oregon - 97741....Phone: (503) 475-2941

1ST STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Proprietary to the United Press International 1984

July 17, 1984, Tuesday, BC cycle

SECTION: Regional News

DISTRIBUTION: Oregon

LENGTH: 533 words

HEADLINE: Judge: Rajneesh case stays in federal court

BYLINE: By LINDA KILLIAN

DATELINE: PORTLAND, Ore.

KEYWORD: Guru

BODY:

U.S. District Judge Helen Frye on Tuesday turned down Oregon Attorney General Dave Frohnmayer's request to send his lawsuit challenging the incorporation of Rajneeshpuram back to state court.

It was the second time Judge Frye has ruled that the case belongs in federal and not state court.

Frohnmayer's suit contends the central Oregon city founded by followers of Indian guru Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh violates the constitutional separation of church and state.

The state suit claims that because the city of Rajneeshpuram is owned by a religious organization, it is not entitled to the state and federal funding that other cities receive.

The lawsuit initially was filed in state court, but guru attorneys succeeded in having the case moved to federal court and Judge Frye turned down Frohnmayer's first attempt to move it back to state court.

After that ruling was made, the state dropped its original case and refiled a differently worded complaint naming not only Rajneeshpuram but Wasco County and Wasco County Sheriff Robert Brown as defendants.

The new complaint said the county gave Rajneeshpuram municipal status and has been acting as if it is legally incorporated by not providing police and other services.

Guru attorneys argued the county and sheriff were included as defendants only because they would oppose moving the case to federal court. Cases cannot be moved to federal court unless all defendants agree.

Judge Frye turned down the state's second request to send the matter to state court, ruling Tuesday that Wasco County and its sheriff "must be aligned with the state as plaintiffs" because they have the same interests in the case as the state.

Proprietary to the United Press International, July 17, 1984

Judge Frye said the state's case deals with issues of federal law and should be heard by a federal court.

Marla Rae, a spokesman for the Attorney General's Office, said the state had not yet seen the judge's ruling but added, "our objective continues to be to have this matter tried as quickly as possible by the appropriate court."

"We lost on this motion. We don't know now what our alternatives are. It was our position that a federal court could not grant the appropriate relief and that means a federal court does not have the jurisdiction to order a state to pay or not pay money," Ms. Rae said.

Ms. Rae said the state may consider an appeal to the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco.

Ma Prem Sangeet, city attorney for Rajneeshpuram, said she was pleased but not surprised by the judge's ruling.

She said because the case involves federal issues it is more appropriately heard in federal court.

"It's time the attorney general stopped fooling around and got on with the merits of the case," Sangeet said.

During a hearing on the matter last week, Sangeet told Judge Frye the federal court has more expertise in the constitutional issues that are part of the case and has greater resources that are necessary because of the case's complexity.

She also maintained that because state judges are elected, a federal judge would be more impartial because they do not have to face re-election and would not be concerned by the unpopularity of a decision in favor of the Rajneeshees.

3RD STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Proprietary to the United Press International 1984

June 30, 1984, Saturday, BC cycle

SECTION: Regional News

DISTRIBUTION: Washington

LENGTH: 559 words

HEADLINE: Rajneesh changes: imported china, poker and a margarita

DATELINE: RAJNEESHPURAM, Ore.

KEYWORD: Guru

BODY:

Thunderous applause from some 15,000 disciples greeted Indian guru Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh as he appeared for the first meditation session Saturday at the group's third annual world celebration.

Music and readings from the guru's teachings -- by others, for Rajneesh remained silent -- were much the same as in the previous years' festivals, in which followers from around the world gather at the guru's city on a ranch in the central Oregon desert.

But signs of progress could easily be found, such as the bone china imported from France, replacing the paper plates used last year. Two new automatic dishwashing machines, Rajneesh officials proudly proclaimed, can each clean 6,500 dishes an hour.

'Everything is going great -- very peaceful,' said Rajneeshpuram Police Chief Ma Deva Barkha. 'There is a tremendous amount of pedestrians, and there has been a little problem keeping them on the side of the road.'

The visitors made good use of the city's social gambling ordinance, crowding into the new Omar Khayyam Rajneesh Lounge and Cardroom to sip a margarita or pina colada and play a round of poker or blackjack. Others cheered on those with a lucky hand.

Sunny and warm weather greeted the celebration's first day Saturday as disciples began two weeks of meditation and celebration in a city that has been unable to escape the strife -- or the scorn -- of the outside world in its two years of formal existence.

Just last week, the land-use group 1000 Friends of Oregon won a major round in its fight to dismantle Rajneeshpuram when the Oregon Court of Appeals reversed its own earlier decision upholding the city's incorporation.

That means the Rajneeshees must return to Wasco County officials and follow a difficult exceptions process in their quest for a legal city on land zoned for farm use.

Despite lingering battles over its fate, Rajneeshpuram throbbed with life Saturday as thousands of disciples, garbed in the religion's distinctive red

Proprietary to the United Press International, June 30, 1984

clothing, sampled the wares of such places as the Zorba the Buddha Rajneesh Buffet, the Zarathustra Disco and the city's new \$120-a-day Hotel Rajneesh.

A highlight of each day is the morning meditation session, known as Satsang. Applause and cheers erupted from thousands of followers sitting on the floor of the huge Rajneesh Mandir Meditation Hall as Rajneesh took the stage in a black robe and cap with gold trim, his hands poised in a prayerful gesture.

Members of the Rajneesh Peace force -- armed with carbine rifles - stood guard over Rajneesh in the corners of the stage during the hour-long session, which included readings from the guru's teachings.

As the last segment of music played faster and faster, smiling disciples clapped along in time to the beat, standing and applauding at its conclusion as their master got up to leave.

'I loved it -- Bhagwan was so beautiful and there were so many positive people,' said Swami Deva Atra, 26, who traveled to Oregon from Copenhagen. 'I lost something -- a bit of myself.'

Other daily events at the festival include dynamic meditation, live music and the initiation of new followers, known as sannyasin, who are given new, Rajneesh names.

A video facility was set up at Devateerth Mall for showings of Rajneesh discourses and the darshan, a concluding celebration with the guru that occurs July 6 at this year's event.

5TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

The Associated Press

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June 27, 1984, Wednesday, PM cycle

SECTION: Domestic News

LENGTH: 400 words

HEADLINE: Court Reverses Itself On Incorporation Of Town

DATELINE: SALEM, Ore.

KEYWORD: Rajneeshpuram Ruling

BODY:

The Oregon Court of Appeals has reversed itself, saying it was wrong when it upheld the incorporation of Rajneeshpuram, the town founded by followers of an Indian guru.

The new opinion, obtained Tuesday by The Oregonian in advance of its release today, means that followers of the Indian guru Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh must go back to Wasco County in their quest for a city named Rajneeshpuram on land zoned for farm use.

"This means there is no city unless the Rajneeshees can show Wasco County why it is needed there," said Henry Richmond, director of the land-use watchdog group 1000 Friends of Oregon.

An attorney representing the Rajneeshees called the court's reversal "a tragedy." Al Johnson of Eugene said he would "definitely" appeal the reversal to the Oregon Supreme Court.

The court, split 6-4, said it was reversing its ruling issued March 31 in order to give the "appropriate degree of judicial respect" to a Land Use Conservation and Development Commission ruling last year invalidating the city.

The commission acted after the Land Use Board of Appeals in September 1983 held that incorporation of Rajneeshpuram on land zoned for farming violated state land-use laws because incorporators failed to go through a zoning exceptions process.

The Appeals Court decision came on a petition for review of its earlier ruling, filed by several plaintiffs, including 1000 Friends.

Prem Sangeet, attorney for Rajneeshpuram, said she hadn't seen the opinion yet but said she was "very concerned" that the reversal was setting a precedent.

"I think it should raise questions in a lot of people's minds about this kind of precedent," she said. "In my opinion, there is no legal basis for the reversal."

The Associated Press, June 27, 1984

Jim Ross, land use commission director, said he was pleased with the ruling.

Eldon Hout, deputy director of the Department of Land Conservation and Development, said that if the city fails to get an exception from Wasco County, it would not necessarily mean the city would have to be dismantled.

He said Rajneeshees could petition for a plan amendment to the Wasco County comprehensive plan that would validate existing structures.

The reversal, written by Judge Michael Gillette, said the court earlier had improperly substituted its own judgment for that of the land use commission "by making what was, in our view, a more logical interpretation of the goal defining urban land."

7TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

The Associated Press

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June 14, 1984, Thursday, PM cycle

SECTION: International News

LENGTH: 755 words

HEADLINE: TOPIC: German Followers of Indian Guru Open Nightclubs, Restaurants

BYLINE: By DAVID MINTHORN, Associated Press Writer

DATELINE: WIESBADEN, West Germany

KEYWORD: Topic-Guru Discos

BODY:

The Rajneeshees were having a ball at the "Zorba the Buddha" disco.

Orange-clad followers of the Indian guru gyrated to rock music piped from a disc jockey's booth, while waiters in red shirts and wooden beads served drinks to patrons lounging beside the dance floor.

White walls emphasized the airy, gym-like atmosphere in the second-floor club on Schwalbacherstrasse. The disco's atmosphere was a stark contrast to the dingy bars and sex cinemas in the same section of this Rhine River spa.

"Zorba" is one of a dozen discos opened in West Germany over the last year by followers of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, a bearded guru whose movement claims a worldwide membership of 350,000.

West German church and government officials are particularly worried that the sect, which advocates meditation and sexual freedom, will use the "dance temples" to sign up members. One Lutheran pastor in Munich described the Rajneeshee disco boom as "most threatening."

An Associated Press reporter, during a 90-minute visit to the "Buddha" disco, saw no obvious efforts by Rajneeshees to recruit new members. About half of the 100 patrons were wearing the sect's garb of red, orange or purple garments.

"We've been open for six months, and business is good," said a German woman in her mid-20s, collecting a \$1.85 admission fee at the front door. Inside, prices for drinks were comparable to most West German discos. Tap beer cost nearly a dollar, and a bottle of French champagne cost \$37.

In addition to a chain of discos in cities like Cologne, Frankfurt, Hanover, Freiburg and Wiesbaden, the Rajneeshees operate vegetarian restaurants, boutiques and home renovation businesses, and peddle products like organic fertilizer and shampoo.

The Associated Press, June 14, 1984

The Cologne area, with an estimated 3,000 members, is the center of the West German movement, which claims to have 50,000 adherents. It boasts the sect's largest disco with an annual turnover estimated at \$1.1 million.

Founded by Rajneesh 31 years ago in Poona, India, the movement relocated its world headquarters in 1981 to Oregon, where the Rajneeshees bought a ranch and later incorporated more than 2,000 acres as the 1,000-resident city of Rajneeshpuram.

Although sect members cultivate an image of peace, their relations with West German authorities have been strained.

Wiesbaden city officials petitioned a local court last fall to block the opening of the Rajneeshee disco, but an appeals court overturned the order, ruling there was no evidence they would use the disco wrongfully.

Bruno Reimuth, a spokesman for the city, said Wiesbaden has no current problems with the disco. "Everything seems normal," he said.

When the city of Augsburg refused a license to the sect's disco in April, dozens of Rajneeshees danced in the streets to protest the action and demanded "freedom of religion."

In Essen, irate citizens collected a petition with 3,500 names to protest the sect's "meditation room" in a former retail shop. Rajneeshees sued when local politicians branded them a "criminal association" importing drug abuse and prostitution to the Ruhr district city. The case is pending.

Sources at the Ministry of Health and Youth in Bonn said the West German government is monitoring the sect's activities and remains concerned about its efforts to win new members.

Last month, the European Parliament in Strasbourg urged Common Market countries to tighten their control on financial dealings of groups like the Rajneeshees.

It proposed a voluntary code of conduct for the groups, such as banning the induction of minors and allowing members unrestricted communication with their families. Member governments, it said, should tighten laws that give the sects charity status and tax exemption and should subject the sects to labor and social security laws.

German authorities fear that sect members may be exploited by working in the discos for only pocket money. But sect members disagree.

"We don't work here. We meditate. Cleaning toilets, washing glasses. It's all worshipping," explained Ma Anand Subath, a young German woman who works at the sect's disco in Hanover.

Sect members say much of the money earned from the discos, boutiques and other businesses goes to finance their communes and to help pay air fares for annual trips to the guru's headquarters in Oregon.

The German-language edition of The Rajneesh Times, the sect's weekly, carries numerous ads from German travel agencies offering cut-rate fares to

The Associated Press, June 14, 1984

the "Third Annual World Celebration" June 30-July 6 in Oregon.

10TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Proprietary to the United Press International 1984

June 8, 1984, Friday, BC cycle

SECTION: Regional News

DISTRIBUTION: Oregon

LENGTH: 542 words

BYLINE: By TOM TOWSLEE

DATELINE: SALEM, Ore.

KEYWORD: Rajneesh

BODY:

~~The state ethics commission will decide Monday whether to drop its investigation into allegations of illegal conduct by followers of Indian guru Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh who serve as officials of the cities of Antelope and Rajneeshpuram.~~

Commission Director Betty Reynolds said Friday that she will recommend to the commission that the investigation be dropped because her office doesn't have enough money to pursue the complaint.

She is also recommending that the information that her office has collected so far be turned over to the courts, the Land Conservation and Development Commission, the Land Use Board of Appeals, the FBI, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the Department of Justice and officials of Wasco and Jefferson counties.

The recommendation, she said, was prompted by the legislative emergency board last month turning down a request for \$29,000 the commission said it needed to complete the investigation of the Rajneeshees and several other pending complaints into unrelated allegations.

The complaints filed last year by former Antelope City Councilman Donald Smith allege that followers of the religious leader used their positions with the two cities to make money for themselves and several Rajneesh-owned business interests.

Rajneeshee spokeswoman Ma Prem Isabel said the officials have declared conflicts of interest on votes involving Rajneeshee-owned business and called the investigation 'a waste of time.'

Ma Prem Sangeet, attorney for the two cities, said she has advised the officials that if they are members of the commune there is no need to declare a conflict of interest because they have no financial interest.

If the official is an officer of one of the group's businesses 'I have advised them to declare. If they are not a officer they don't have to declare' a conflict, Sangeet said.

Proprietary to the United Press International, June 8, 1984

"If there's no private financial involvement there is no conflict of interest," she said.

The commission's investigation so far has shown that 27 officials of the two cities who are followers of the Bhagwan are also officers in several of the religious movement's organizations, including the Rajneesh Foundation International, the Rajneesh Investment Corp. and the Rajneesh Neo-Sannyas International Commune.

The commission's findings show that the city of Rajneeshpuram lies within the boundaries of Rancho Rajneesh, which is owned by the investment corporation and leased to the international commune.

Smith charged that "this relationship represents, by its very nature, a violation of ethic statutes," claiming the types of businesses proposed by the commune and the corporation "would be impossible at this location without the legal efforts of the public officials of Rajneeshpuram."

He made the same allegations about the Rajneeshees who control the Antelope City Council.

"There are some questions that are unanswered that we would have pursued if we had the money," Reynolds said.

Those questions include the appropriateness of contracts awarded by the cities to Rajneesh-owned corporations and what positions the Rajneeshee councilmembers hold in the various businesses.

There were also questions, she said, about whether state ethics laws apply to non-profit organizations.

11TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Proprietary to the United Press International 1984

May 24, 1984, Thursday, BC cycle

SECTION: Regional News

DISTRIBUTION: Oregon

LENGTH: 173 words

DATELINE: SALEM, Ore.

KEYWORD: Rajneesh

BODY:

The issue of whether the followers of Indian guru Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh acted properly in incorporating the city of Rajneeshpuram will have to be decided by the Oregon Supreme Court.

The Land Conservation and Development Commission voted 7-0 Thursday not to change its requirements regarding creation of new cities and to continue its appeal of a state court of appeals decision that the rule is unconstitutional.

The commission rejected a plea from the followers of the Bhagwan that the appellate court ruling be allowed to stand and incorporation of the Wasco County city be permitted.

'Repeal of the rule would be contradicting the briefs filed with the supreme court,' LCDC Deputy Director Eldon Hout said following the vote which was taken by conference call.

Hout said the law is 'muddled' and needs to be clarified by the court.

The court of appeals had ruled that it was not proper to require the city to take an exception of a state land use goal relating to preservation of agricultural land in order to incorporate.

12TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Proprietary to the United Press International 1984

April 12, 1984, Thursday, BC cycle

SECTION: Regional News

DISTRIBUTION: Oregon

LENGTH: 254 words

DATELINE: SALEM, Ore.

KEYWORD: Rajneesh

BODY:

The City of Rajneeshpuram acted properly in annexing 119 acres of farm land last year, an attorney for the central Oregon religious community told the Oregon Court of Appeals Wednesday.

The city, founded by the followers of Indian guru Bhagwan Shree Rajnessh, is under court order to stop construction of a hotel and other commercial buildings on the land and Wasco County has issued 38 citations alleging zoning violations.

The attorney, Ma Prem Sangeet, said the city followed the proper procedures in annexing and rezoning the land, which was inside the city's proposed urban growth boundaries. Prior to annexation, the land had been zoned for exclusive farm use.

Objections to the annexation have been raised by 1,000 Friends of Oregon, a land use watchdog group, and Wasco County.

Mark Greenfield, an attorney for 1,000 Friends, told the court that Rajneeshpuram's status as a city is in question and, consequently, so is the annexation. He said an urban growth boundary must be acknowledged before urban-type activities can take place.

'The land was and is agricultural land,' Greenfield said, claiming that without a state-approved land use plan the city should have gone through an exceptions process.

The arguments were the latest skirmish between the followers of the Bhagwan and land use advocates. The Land Use Board of Appeals has already determined that the annexation was illegal.

The court of appeals ruled in February that a LUBA decision invalidating the city's incorporation was flawed.

17TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Proprietary to the United Press International 1984

March 20, 1984, Tuesday, AM cycle

SECTION: Regional News

DISTRIBUTION: Oregon

LENGTH: 615 words

HEADLINE: Favorable court opinion Rajneeshpuram faces appeal

BYLINE: By CLYDE JABIN

DATELINE: SALEM, Ore.

KEYWORD: Rajneesh

BODY:

A state agency and a watchdog land-use organization plan to ask the Oregon Supreme Court to overturn Tuesday's Court of Appeals order that the incorporation of Rajneeshpuram did not violate statewide planning goals.

The Land Conservation and Development Commission and 1000 Friends of Oregon announced they would appeal the court ruling, which they said would adversely affect the orderly transition of rural land to urban around the state.

The Land Use Board of Appeals last September held that Wasco County violated LCDC land-use planning goals in approving the incorporation of Rajneeshpuram, the city set up by followers of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh. The city contended that the rule used in holding the incorporation was invalid was not in place when the county acted in 1981, and that it could not be applied retroactively.

The appeals court agreed with that assessment.

'We're very happy to see that temporary rule was shown for what it is,' said Mayor Swami Krishna Deva, 'which is that it was basically made two years after the fact.'

The mayor said the city would now ask the Circuit Court to lift an injunction issued last year that prohibited work on 119 acres of former farmland that Rajneeshpuram annexed last August. He said the injunction issued Oct. 24 prevented Rajneeshes from proceeding with work on a hotel, factory, warehouses, reception center, theater, cafeteria and production shops.

'It definitely created a hardship on the community since buildings planned had to be shelved since there were no permits for them,' said Deva, who is mayor of a city of 1,500 people.

John Mills, director of publications for 1000 Friends, said that the Appeals Court ruling would, if left stand, nullify efforts to keep rural lands from being overrun with urban sprawl.

Proprietary to the United Press International, March 20, 1984

'The effects of the court's decision is to allow 150 people (the number originally listed for Rajneeshpuram) to incorporate and then proceed with massive urban development anywhere in the state,' he said. 'This overturns long-standing policies that protect the state's farm and forestlands from exactly this type of development.'

Mills said, however, that the ruling would not affect the status quo at Rajneeshpuram, which is that the city cannot issue any further building permits.

Deputy Director Eldon Hout of the Land Conservation and Development Department said the LCDC in setting its goals was acting on 'one of the fundamental concerns of the Legislature in establishing the land-use program.' He said that was that the 'conversion of rural and resource land to urban usage follow a reasonable and rationale process.'

He said the LCDC interpreted those goals and wrote an administrative rule explaining how goals apply to planning of a new city. He said the court was now saying the LCDC wrongly interpreted the rules LCDC wrote.

'We know what we think,' said Hout.

Hout said that the agency's view was that the incorporation of Rajneeshpuram should not have been allowed to proceed without a request being made under the exemption process to the state land-use goals.

John Bagg of LUBA said he did not expect the issue to be resolved for some time. He said that that if it does come back to LUBA he expected the board members would have some additional data from the parties involved about what the court action meant and how to deal with it.

'It is pretty early for LUBA to say much about what is going on,' he said.

The attorney general's office also was waiting on the sidelines to see if it will have to proceed in its representation of the State Building Codes Division, which would have certain regulatory authority on construction in an unincorporated area.

GURU'S CITY FOUND UNCONSTITUTIONAL

Oregon Attorney General Says It Is Violating Separation of Church and State

SALEM, Ore., Oct. 6 (UPI) — The incorporation of Rajneeshpuram, a city founded by an Indian guru's followers, violated state and Federal constitutional guarantees of separation of church and state, the Oregon Attorney General ruled today.

The opinion had been requested by State Representative Mike McCracken, who questioned the legality of the city's receiving state revenue-sharing funds.

"After nine months of study, we have come to the inevitable conclusion that on the facts presented to us, Rajneeshpuram cannot be a city," Attorney General Dave Frohnmayer said. "The constitutional prohibition against intermingling of church and state is so basic to our system of government that we feel a responsibility now to determine whether the facts are as we believe, and if so, to take appropriate legal action."

He Arrived in 1981

The Indian guru Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, 51 years old, moved to central Oregon in 1981 from India with several hundred followers and founded a commune on a 64,000-acre ranch that was the setting for a John Wayne movie.

The red-clad followers took political control of the small town of Antelope, 20 miles away, embittering long-time residents. They founded Rajneeshpuram on the ranch, where the guru lives with 1,200 followers. Most of them are affluent and educated young Americans and Europeans.

The guru has taken a vow of silence but makes daily drives in one of his 30 Rolls-Royces, to the delight of followers who line the roads in adulation.

The group has started several businesses and has considered purchasing property in other parts of the state, arousing fears of some residents who are suspicious of the sect's religious practices. The followers lean toward encounter therapies, indulge in what some call "free sex" and pride themselves on combining the profit motive with environmental concerns.

The Bhagwan, whose name means "the blessed one" in Hindi, is facing a deportation threat, however. He came to the United States on a tourist visa and according to the Immigration and Naturalization Service he is not entitled to the status of a "religious worker." However, immigration officials are reconsidering an earlier decision to deny him residency.

Oregon Guru May Lose City in Mixing of State, Religion

By RUSSELL CHANDLER, *Times Religion Writer*

The attorney general of Oregon said Thursday that he is prepared to take legal action to dismantle the city of Rajneeshpuram, incorporated last year by followers of controversial Indian guru Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, in light of his opinion that the city is unconstitutional because it violates the doctrine of separation of church and state.

"After nine months of study, we have come to the inevitable conclusion that on the facts presented to us, Rajneeshpuram cannot be a city," Atty. Gen. Dave Frohnmayer said in a legal opinion released at a press conference in Salem, Ore.

"The constitutional prohibition against intermingling of church and state is so basic to our system of government that we feel a responsibility now to determine whether the facts are as we believe, and if so, to take appropriate legal action."

Frohnmayer's opinion, combined with an order issued against the city last week by the state Land Use Board of Appeal, casts doubt on the future of the already beleaguered central Oregon religious commune of 1,200 residents.

The land-use board, in its order Sept. 30, said incorporation of the \$60-million city in May, 1982, violated statewide land-use goals that prohibit urban development on rural land without compelling justification. Although the order has been appealed, it has the immediate effect of stopping further expansion of the municipality.

Rajneeshpuram's mayor, Swami Krishna Deva, said Thursday that the city will fight any move to dismantle it. Opposition to the city is a thinly veiled ploy by "guru haters" who want Rajneesh and his disciples out of Oregon, the mayor said.

"There's no way that we would allow bigoted opinions . . . the misuse of a play of politics . . . a bunch of hogwash, to get in the way of a model community and beautiful experiment," Deva said in a telephone interview.

Frohnmayer's opinion, which does not have the force of law, said the city is the "functional equivalent of a religious commune" because its property is owned by a corporation that is wholly owned by a religious foundation.

"The intrusion of religion into city government affairs is pervasive and unavoidable," Frohnmayer said. "There is in effect a total fusion of government and religious functions. In short, as presently constituted, this city is fundamentally incapable of behaving as a city."

State Rep. Mike McCracken of Albany, Ore., who requested the opinion, had asked Frohnmayer a series of questions about Rajneeshpuram, including whether the state legally could give revenue-sharing money to the city. Under state law, cities receive shares of state gasoline and cigarette taxes and liquor revenues.

Frohnmayer said Rajneeshpuram could not receive such funds because, under the state constitution, public money cannot be used to aid religion. Ma Prem Isabel, who heads press relations for the guru, said that Rajneeshpuram "wasn't using tax money anyway" and that Frohnmayer's opinion is "based on false assumptions."

Allegations Termed 'Untrue'

She added it is "untrue" that the Rajneesh corporation that ultimately controls the city and the surrounding 64,000 acres bought by the guru's closest followers in the summer of 1981 permits only disciples of the mystic to live there.

"People who are not disciples or members of the (Rajneesh) religion are living in the city now," Isabel said.

Mayor Deva, pressed about how many non-Rajneeshes dwell in the city, said it is a "handful" that includes contractors from the outside who are working on jobs in the city.

Since the city charter was obtained, 250,000 square feet of permanent buildings have been constructed, including a five-wing "university" where a blend of Rajneesh-style Eastern mysticism and West Coast sensory therapy is taught, 38 residential fourplexes that are scheduled for expansion into a two-story hotel complex, a furniture plant, an airport and a large shopping mall.

Opinion Welcomed

Mark J. Greenfield, staff attorney for 1,000 Friends of Oregon, a land-use watchdog group concerned about the effect of Rajneeshpuram's urban development on neighboring ranching operations, hailed the attorney general's opinion but noted that it was on an issue different from the interests of his group.

"We have been challenging the incorporation of Rajneeshpuram on the basis that it is a violation of Oregon's land-use laws," he said. "The basis of the Land Use Board of Appeals ruling was the failure of the persons seeking to incorporate and of the county to justify an exception to the goals that prohibit urban development on rural land."

The land-use board's order has been appealed, but the Wasco County Circuit Court, which has jurisdiction over Rajneeshpuram, meanwhile has issued a temporary restraining order that requires persons seeking building permits to be warned of the agency's action. In addition, the order bans subdivisions and annexations to the city and prohibits any developments that would leave "permanent scars on the land, including dams," according to Greenfield.

The commune already has built a \$1.5-million earthen dam and a 45-acre reservoir that holds 350 million gallons of water.

Problems in India

Leaders of the Rajneesh community claim as many as 15,000 followers throughout the United States. Rajneesh, 51, left his commune in Poona, India, in 1981 after encountering tax and other problems with the Indian government. He and his followers settled on the sprawling former "Big Muddy" cattle ranch that once was the setting for a John Wayne movie.

The Rajneeshnees, who dress in orange or red clothing and wear necklaces bearing a picture of their guru, immediately ran into conflict with longtime residents of the nearest town, Antelope, which had a population of 40 at the time. The Rajneeshes took political control of Antelope,

stepping up the controversy with municipal and state governments.

Rajneesh also is battling with Immigration and Naturalization Service authorities, who have refused to grant him resident status as a religious leader and teacher. Last week, lawyers for Rajneesh filed a new petition, backed by thousands of letters, photographs and documents, asserting that the guru is entitled to permanent residence in the United States under an INS category reserved for persons of "exceptional ability and international acclaim."

Culture Clash in Oregon

After 27th Rolls Royce, Town's Curiosity About Guru's Disciples Turned Into Shock

By Laura Parker
Special to The Washington Post

ANTELOPE, Ore.—For 60 years this was a one gas-pump town, the kind where the town dog sleeps in the middle of the main road and the City Council puts on a bake sale whenever it needs more revenue.

That's what the newcomers found when they came into town two years ago, and since then a clash of cultures has broken out.

The newcomers are followers of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, the Indian guru who bought the Big Muddy Ranch, where John Wayne once made movies, 19 miles up the road.

At first, Antelope's 40 residents were curious about the young disciples who dressed only in red, purple and orange—the colors of the sunrise—and showered lavish gifts of cars on their master, whose name means "The Enlightened One."

It was something of a novelty in Antelope when the first Rolls Royce for Rajneesh was delivered. By the time the 27th one arrived, curiosity had turned to shock.

When some of the Rajneeshes, as they call themselves, bought property in Antelope, the clash of cultures began.

"They are trying to take over our town," said Margaret Hill, Antelope's former mayor and one of the 13 original residents who remain.

Rajneesh, who mixes eastern meditation with western encounter therapy, arrived in Oregon with the label, the "free sex guru," a tag acquired at his previous religious headquarters in Poona, India. There, many of his followers participated in encounter groups without restrictions on sex or aggression.

The people of Antelope, on the other hand, were retired Protestants who wanted to live out their senior years in peace.

Soon, there were more Rajneeshes than anyone else living in Antelope. Then they registered to vote. Now one of them is mayor, five sit on the six-man City Council and last month a Rajneesh was elected to the Antelope School Board.

The town's new politicians brought a number of historic changes to Antelope, among them the first city property taxes and a nudist park.

The Rajneeshes say they originally had intended to stay out of Antelope. After all, they had just paid \$6 million for a piece of land more than twice the size of San Francisco. Then they discovered that Oregon law forbade them from conducting business outside an incorporated city. They came into town to establish their corporate headquarters, the Rajneesh Foundation International, a tax-exempt religious corporation that markets Rajneesh's books, video tapes, tape recordings and photographs.

The Rajneeshes also bought the old Antelope Cafe, which is now the Zarba the Buddha Restaurant, a vegetarian cafe and general store.

The Rajneeshes say they got nothing but resistance from town and county officials when they applied for building permits on the ranch. They had no alternative, they argue, but to change the attitude on

Ma Prem Karuna, who holds a doctorate degree in adult education from Boston University, became a write-in candidate for mayor and was elected in a landslide. The only council member who isn't a Rajneesh is John (Silver Tooth) Stewart, whose grandfather ran the Silver Tooth Saloon here in 1910.

After the council was sworn in, it hired a Rajneesh as city attorney for \$100 an hour and "sanctioned" the gun-packing Rajneeshes "peace force" to provide police protection.

The new council is suing members of the old council to recover a city-owned church that former council members gave away last November in a last-ditch effort to keep it out of the Rajneesh council members' hands.

There is a certain smugness among the Rajneeshes about their success so far.

"We're not Christians. We don't turn the other cheek," said Ma Mary Catherine, a former Reed College political science instructor who lives at the commune at Big Muddy Ranch.

While the turmoil around it spreads, the commune continues to grow.

Last year, the Rajneeshes voted to incorporate 2,000 acres of the "Rancho Rajneesh," as the Big Muddy is now called, into the city of Rajneeshpuram, making it eligible to receive state tax money and federal revenue sharing.

That prompted three neighboring ranchers to file suit against the Rajneeshes charging that the creation of a city in the arid, barren buttes of central Oregon violates the state's strict land use laws.

"Cities do not coexist with farms," said Rosemary McGreer, one of the ranchers opposing the Rajneeshes in court. "We're afraid there isn't enough water to go around."

Mark Greenfield, an attorney for 1000 Friends of Oregon, a leading environmental group also opposing the Rajneeshes, said he expects the Rajneeshes to transform their commune of 1,000 into a booming city of 100,000 to accommodate the Rajneesh's 300,000 worldwide followers.

That number, which would make Rajneeshpuram the second largest city in Oregon, is a little high, the Rajneeshes say with a smile, but they are vague about their plans other than to say that they want to build a university community, where Rajneesh's form of meditation can be taught.

Now an Albany, Ore., woman is waging a petition drive in an attempt to put a measure on the state ballot asking officials to force the Rajneeshes from Oregon.

[In Portland yesterday, three explosions rocked a downtown hotel owned by the Rajneeshes, seriously wounding a man who reportedly had stayed at the sect's ranch Wednesday night, United Press International reported. It was the first major act of violence involving the sect. Damage was estimated at more than \$100,000.]

[The explosions occurred in the room of Stephen P. Paster, 34, of Los Angeles, who was charged with three counts of first-degree arson, police said.]

Much of the Rajneesh's wealth comes from large donations. Many disciples turn over their personal assets when they join the sect.



Debris is sifted after explosions in hotel owned by the Rajneeshes in Portland, Ore.

They live communally in houses and modular mobile homes and are given clothing and meals.

Many of the disciples work from sunrise to sunset scratching their version of utopia out of the sagebrush and cheatgrass. They receive no pay.

Almost 2,000 acres of organically grown vegetables, alfalfa and wheat have been planted, cattle are raised for market—the Rajneeshes are vegetarians—and a small herd of dairy cows is kept to make milk, yogurt and cheese.

Tours of the ranch carefully note the solar panels in the cafeteria, used to heat the building's water; the sewage treatment plant, the waste recycling center.

The small shopping center that they built last winter contains a boutique, beauty parlor and Post Office. In tribute to the Rajneesh master, the streets through the center of it are paved with red volcanic ash.

Rajneesh, who took a vow of silence two years ago, lives in seclusion in one of the canyons. He speaks only to Sheela Silverman, his personal secretary and "mother" of the ranch; on one occasion he spoke with immigration officials in Portland who have tried to deport him.

The only time his disciples see him is when he drives one of his Rolls Royces through town in the afternoon at 2. Then they line the

streets, hands clasped prayerlike until he passes by. After the Rolls is gone, the Rajneeshes laugh and embrace. Some are moved to tears.

Those who do not understand the peculiarities of this religion cannot comprehend how so many people could leave homes, families and jobs to follow a mysterious gray-bearded man who does not speak.

"It takes total surrender to be there," said Sky, a disciple who has opted to live in the San Juan island in Washington State instead of at the ranch. At the Rajneesh summer festival held last week, Sky joined 15,000 disciples from around the world who made the pilgrimage to Rancho Rajneesh.

The presence of another resident at the ranch has served to fuel the notion in Antelope that these educated, once-successful people are somehow mesmerized by their Indian guru.

Shannon Jo Ryan, daughter of U.S. Rep. Len Rynn (D-Calif.), who was killed in 1978 in Guyana when he was investigating the Rev. Jim Jones' Peoples Temple, moved here not long after the commune was organized.

Rynn, who now calls herself Ma Prem Shannon, no longer gives interviews, Rajneesh spokesmen say, because too many parallels have been drawn between Rancho Rajneesh and Jonestown.

Guru's Followers Build Beehive of Paradox

Flourishing Cult Startles Rural Oregon

By RUSSELL CHANDLER, *Times Religion Writer*

RAJNEESH PURAM, Ore.—Two years ago, when Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh packed up his religious commune in Poona, India, and bought 64,000 acres of rolling range land in a remote section of central Oregon, hardly anyone in the state had ever heard of the controversial guru. And even his closest disciples were insisting that the only reason they had bought a "small farm" in Oregon was "to plant a few acres of sunflowers."

But today, almost 15,000 people from nearly every country of the world are assembled here in an amazing newly incorporated city that has sprung up among previously barren hills 120 miles southeast of Portland and about 20 miles from the nearest paved road.

Dressed in orange or red garments and wearing beaded necklaces with a locket containing Rajneesh's picture—symbolic of their discipleship to the 51-year-old mystic—the pilgrims have come by

plane, car and bus to participate in Rajneesh's second annual "World Celebration."

The seven-day festival is an extravaganza of meditation and spiritual discourses, wild dancing and "transcendental" therapy, recreation and nude sunbathing at one of two lakes created at the 100-square-mile spread.

The opening highlight of the festival, for which the faithful each paid \$500 for tent accommodations, was an early morning meeting, or satsang, conducted Saturday in the two-acre open-sided Buddha Hall that adjoins Jesus Grove near the crossroads of "downtown" Rajneeshpuram. Streaming into the white linoleum-carpeted hall from a fleet of 85 yellow school buses the city of Rajneeshpuram now owns (making it the fourth largest transportation system in Oregon) the Rajneeshes shed their shoes at dozens of efficiently run check stands, and waited quietly. Some swayed to the music of sitars and flutes.

The excitement became electric when the appointed moment came: the Bhagwan himself (the name in Hindi means "Sir God") drove slowly around the Buddha Hall in a white Rolls Royce and emerged to sit in total silence for more than an

hour in a high-backed upholstered chair placed on a platform. As the devotees knelt and bowed low, several of Rajneesh's lectures (taped in 1976) were played over the sound system.

The religion of Rajneesh, as well as his vast \$60-million empire centered here and spreading throughout a network of 500 centers to an estimated 200,000 followers worldwide, is full of paradoxes, contrasts and conflicts.

Ever since the Bhagwan's leaders quietly bought the ranch, formerly known as "the Big Muddy," for \$6 million (\$1.5 million of it in cash) in July of 1981, longtime local residents—mostly ranchers and retirees who moved away from larger cities—have been suspicious of the guru's reputation for advocating free sex, and they have been afraid that the Rajneeshes would take over their towns.

Those apprehensions have not been unfounded.

'Destroyed Antelope'

"They have destroyed Antelope, of course," lamented Margaret Hill, the former mayor of the hamlet that is the nearest incorporated city to Rajneeshpuram.

"There's no way we can live compatibly with them," added Frances Dickson, the wife of Antelope's postmaster, during a meeting the other day at the Hills' residence to discuss with a reporter what had happened since Rajneesh moved in two years ago. Only 16 of the town's former population of 45 people remain, but about 70 Rajneeshes have moved into town.

The sannyasin—as the Bhagwan's disciples are called—assumed political control of Antelope by winning the mayoralty race and five of six City Council seats last November, plus three other city posts. Since then, Antelope's taxes have tripled, and the old Antelope cafe and general store has been turned into a vegetarian restaurant run by Rajneeshes.

Particularly galling to Margaret Hill is the fact that the restaurant's sign, "Zorba the Buddha," is visible from her front window. Noting that Ma Anand Sheela, the 33-year-old Indian woman who is Rajneesh's chief administrator, had promised that the sannyasin would not attempt to control the town, Mrs. Hill added with bitterness in her voice:

"We could have really leaned on our county commission (to stop the takeover) if we had known what wimps they were. You can quote that."

Old-time Antelope residents are also incensed that the present City Council recently passed an ordinance setting aside an area within the hamlet's undeveloped city park where nudity is allowed—making Antelope the first Oregon city to adopt such a measure.

Michael Sullivan, the district attorney of Jefferson County, in which some of the Rajneesh property lies, believes tension between the Rajneeshes and other Oregonians is mounting.

"A year or two ago, the sympathies tended to be with the newcomers," he said. "Americans love an underdog. But now they are viewed as bullying the local community. They have a platoon of attorneys out there and they sue: It's beginning to backfire."

Sullivan and others say they believe that one of the nation's largest cultural conflicts in this decade will occur over Rajneeshpuram.

"It's a question of separation of church and state," Sullivan explained. "Can a religious group take advantage of forming a municipality to obtain revenue sharing, and (state) liquor, gasoline and cigarette tax money? Someone has to make that decision, and it will be challenged in court."

Antelope's new mayor, Ma Prem Karuna, defended the city's policies and taxes as being in line with a goal of improving and expanding its services. And Ma Sheela, her brown eyes flashing, said that tension between the Rajneesh commune and surrounding communities is "bound to happen because of the rigidity of the outsiders."

"We'll deal with it laughingly in the most flexible manner possible," she said during an interview in the large double-wide mobile home that she and her husband, Swam Jayananda (also called John Sheller) live in at Rajneeshpuram. "But we are saying in a very firm way 'We're not going to let you persecute us.' That's why roses have thorns. Outside opinion, pressure and bigotry do not concern us."

Outside opinion has not always sided with the followers of Bhagwan Rajneesh and that has concerned them.

The Portland office of the Immigration and Naturalization Service has refused to grant Rajneesh resident status as a religious leader. The Bhagwan's lawyers have until July 15 to file rebuttal papers and the outcome is uncertain.

And last week, the Oregon Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal by Rajneesh attorneys challenging a ruling that Rajneeshpuram's incorporation must satisfy statewide land-use planning goals. The decision means that the legal standing of the city, which now has a permanent population of about 800—all followers of Rajneesh—is under a cloud.

A land-use watchdog group, 1,000 Friends of Oregon, which has made it clear that it has no love for the "redshirts," as the sannyasin are sometimes derisively called, has led the attack against the incorporation of Rajneeshpuram.

'Used a Loophole'

"Our position is that you don't create a city for rural uses . . . and unless there's urban development," Mark Greenfield, an attorney for 1,000 Friends of Oregon, told *The Times*. "Basically, they tried to use a loophole" to create their city in an agricultural zone, he said.

But Swami Prem Niren, a commune attorney who has been lobbying Oregon legislative and U.S. congressional aides lately about Rajneesh immigration and constitutional issues, said he doubts 1,000 Friends of Oregon can succeed in "having Rajneeshpuram demolished."

"There is a city here and I am confident that eventually the administration and legal processes will run their courses and this rather bold adventure in agricultural and social models will flourish," Niren said.

Under the leadership of the Bhagwan and Ma Sheela, the commune indeed has flourished—largely through long hours of essentially

free labor by hundreds of devotees and what an outsider called "the liberal application of megabucks raised by one of the world's richest and shrewdest gurus."

The commune has cleared and planted more than 3,000 acres for grain, vegetable and fruit crops. There is now a \$1.5 million earthen dam and 45-acre reservoir that holds 350 million gallons of water. A series of 150 smaller check dams has been built to stop erosion, and the ecology-conscious sannyasin have installed sophisticated sewage treatment and waste recycling operations.

Since the Rajneeshpuram city charter was obtained in May of 1982, 250,000 square feet of permanent buildings have been constructed, including a five-wing "university" where a mix of Rajneesh-style Eastern mysticism and West Coast sensory therapy is taught; 38 residential quadrangles which will be expanded into a two-story hotel complex, and a large shopping mall housing a variety of restaurants, stores and offices.

Hard Workers

The city has a police force and fire department, a modern medical clinic and an airport from which five planes, including three DC-3 "Air Rajneesh" transports, ferry guests and VIPs in and out of Portland's airport.

"We've spent \$60 million here so far," says Ma Prem Savita, the finance officer for Rajneesh. "The ranch itself is now worth \$20 million in work and businesses."

The Bhagwan's resident disciples willingly spend 10 to 12 hours a day, seven days a week, working in various jobs in a kibbutz-style cooperative life. While the sannyasin are provided clothes, a place to sleep, vegetarian meals and medical and dental care as needed, they do not receive any pay and no benefits go with them if they leave.

"My work is my worship, my meditation," said Anrita Pritam, 31, the daughter of the late Rep. Leo Ryan (D-Calif.), whose slaying touched off the Jonestown mass suicide of religious cult members in Guyana in 1978. "I don't think in terms of what I would be doing five to 10 years from now, but I wouldn't want to leave," she said.

Adding that she thinks she would have "ended up here" (Rajneeshpuram) regardless of her father's death at the hands of a crazed cult member, Pritam said the experience with the Bhagwan is "totally dissimilar" to that experienced by followers of Jim Jones.

"Brainwashing imposed by our society—the conditioning we have learned—is washed away here," she said during an interview. "We're more authentic here."

Adulation that the brightly dressed followers of the Bhagwan feel for their "Enlightened Master" is plainly evident each day when they line the dirt roadway leading from his secluded quarters to await his 2 p.m. "drive-by." The single-file line of devotees, hands clasped reverently under their chins, has grown to more than a mile long as the population of this theocratic city has swelled during the festival. Many seem to be in a trance-like state of ecstasy, and others weep, as he passes slowly by during the daily ritual.

The sannyasin tend to be young—the average age is early-to-mid-30s—single and well-edu-

cated. Many are from well-to-do families and more than a few achieved success in the "outside world" before joining the commune. Those attending the festival this week are predominantly from the United States and Western Europe—about 20% are from West Germany—although Asian countries are also well represented.

Rajneeshes greet one other with long, affectionate hugs and caresses. Open displays of sexual fondling seem to be taken for granted. Same-sex embraces are common; homosexuality is considered acceptable by the Bhagwan.

Adoration for the Bhagwan was also apparent during a night-time darshan, or singing and dancing celebration, held in the Buddha Hall Friday night.

After initiating about 30 new sanvassin, Swami Anand Teertha,

50, a spiritual second-in-command under Rajneesh, urged the large gathering to "make yourself available for Bhagwan. . . . Feel the ecstatic energy of Bhagwan. He is all around; he's filling the space with himself."

As some disciples began to dance wildly to the strains of Indian music, others prostrated themselves on the floor facing the direction of Rajneesh's house. (He was not present at the meeting and since the spring of 1981 has not spoken in public.)

The next morning, while Rajneesh sat motionless on the platform in the Buddha Hall, his disciples listened intently to his words, recorded on tape by a professional reader:

"When you look into the nature of desire you will understand that it is like a horizon. It appears far away.

Go, move—it moves with you. . . . You have \$10,000. The mind asks for \$20,000. . . . you have become more addicted to comforts. Now the old house looks small, the old car looks an insult; it has to be dropped. A new car is needed. Now the mind asks for \$40,000."

The discourse concluded on the note that if a person drops all desires—"the whole nonsense of achievement—then suddenly God comes to you."

Within moments, after raising his arms in benediction and nodding stiffly to the assembled throng, the Bhagwan retired to the chauffeured \$120,000 white Rolls Royce—one of about 30 in his fleet—and slowly circled the Buddha Hall before disappearing up the Juniper-lined driveway leading to his residence in Lao Tzu Grove.

Red-Clad Disciples of an Indian Guru Build a Farm Community in Oregon

By WAYNE KING

Special to The New York Times

ANTELOPE, Ore., Sept. 24 — It seems an unlikely spot for a wispy, all-Indian guru's dream of a "city of god" to take earthly form, but the physical evidence of that city is growing dramatically in the barren, lion-colored hills 20 miles southwest of here — and with it the fears of many residents of this tiny town that they will be inundated by the guru's red-clad disciples.

Last July 10, little more than a week after he abandoned his once-thriving ashram at Poona, India, for one in Montclair, N.J., the dedicated followers of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, some of whom regard him as a god, bought 64,228 acres of rugged, rocky ranchland straddling Wasco and Jefferson Counties here in central Oregon.

The buyers, sannyasin, or disciples, from the guru's Chidvilas Rajneesh Meditation Center at Montclair, paid \$6 million for the land, a quarter of it in cash, and leased 17,000 acres from the United States Bureau of Land Management.

Transforming Fallow Land

The disciples here, a handful at first and now about 130, immediately began transforming the Big Muddy Ranch, fallow for two decades, into the foundation of an agricultural and spiritual commune, called Rajneeshpuram, or "City of Rajneesh."

Two weeks ago, the 49-year-old Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh took up residence in a complex of double-wide mobile housing units here. It was set up in only five days by his energetic disciples, each uniformly clad in vermillion and wearing a 108-bead necklace with his picture.

The disciples here maintain that their purpose is purely agricultural, as the development so far suggests: an extensive irrigation system being laid, 2,500 acres cleared for planting and 150 acres already verdant with sunflowers.

However, some area residents and observers of the sect are not convinced and hear echoes of Jim Jones's Jonestown rather than the whisper of wind through fields of wheat. Ironically, Shannon Jo Ryan, daughter of Representative Leo J. Ryan of California, who was slain in 1978 while investigating Jonestown, became a disciple in Poona and lives at Rajneeshpuram.

The local peoples' fears are fueled by the publicly stated aim of the leader, whose followers are said to number from 100,000 to 250,000 in 400 centers worldwide, to create a spiritual community "isolated from the outside world" and unfettered by traditional values.

Compounding the suspicions are the guru's reputation as India's "free-sex guru" and accounts of violent "encounter" sessions at the Poona ashram in which participants were beaten severely and encouraged to act out their most violent fantasies, including rape, to cleanse themselves of aggression. Violence in such sessions is no longer practiced, followers say.

Charges of Mind Control

Some former disciples maintain that the guru's advocacy of unbridled freedom masks what is in fact mind control. One of these disaffected followers is a German filmmaker, Wolfgang Dobrowolny, whose documentary film



Libra Films

The Indian religious leader as he appears in the movie "Ashram."

"Ashram" depicts violence and nude group sessions at the Poona ashram.

Thirty-three-year-old Sheela Silverman, known as Ma Anand Sheela, who founded the New Jersey center 10 years ago with her late husband, Marc Silverman, and now directs the Oregon enterprise, denies the charges of mind control.

"You can live anywhere, do anything you want to do," she said in an interview in her trailer office here, "as long as you have a consciousness of being," said to be the fundamental precept of the guru's teaching.

Mrs. Silverman said that the group had settled in Oregon because "it is a perfect situation for farming" and because the dry climate was desirable on account of the guru's allergies and respiratory problems. He had to leave India "for health reasons," she said.

Conflicts in India

Others suggest the guru's departure from Poona might have had more to do

with conflicts with fellow Indians, shocked by his admonitions to discard stern sexual mores.

"He attacked all Indian religions, many politicians and even the Nobel Prize winner, Mother Teresa," wrote Mr. Dobrowolny, the filmmaker, in his notes on the making of "Ashram." The film had its American premiere in San Francisco earlier this month.

The guru's lectures at Poona, collected in 250 volumes and captured on sound and videotapes, are marketed worldwide. The materials, in English, are now mailed from Antelope and marketed through a national advertising campaign. A recent advertisement in Time magazine and other publications, part of a series that covered subjects other than sex, raised the sexual theme and added to concern both here and in Montclair. Although no training sessions are conducted here or in Montclair, other centers continue to offer a potpourri of Eastern mysticism and "new age" therapies.

Spiritual Smorgasbord

The brochure for the Geetam Rajneesh Sannyas Ashram at Lucerne Valley, Calif., offers "Gestalt and primal therapies, psychosynthesis, bioenergetics, psychodrama, rebirthing and psychic phenomenon; Freudian and Jungian therapists, sex therapist encounters, Reichian and neo-Reichian therapists, Roling, postural integration, Alexander work, Traeger work and massage; Shlatsu, acupuncture, Zen Buddhism, Taoism and Sufism."

"I call it a smorgasbord," said Josh Baran, a 30-year-old former Zen Buddhist monk, who now directs a Berkeley counseling service called "Sorting It Out" to help former members of religious groups — he avoids the word "cult" — to readjust.

"The issue is not free sex, the issue is about giving your life over to others and excesses that come up in the sexual groups and encounters," Mr. Baran said. "When a person becomes a sannyasin, or joins any religious group, they stop being themselves."

Mrs. Silverman, or Ma Anand Sheela, invites critics and journalists to take a guided tour of the town, a beehive of activity. A hundred-odd red-suited disciples and a score of blue-jeaned outside workers are using heavy equipment to carve a modern farm community out of the rugged hills.

At one spot, concrete is laid for a 200-seat vegetarian dining hall; at another, a small school is planned, and at another, a medical clinic is to rise, all to be staffed by disciples, many well-educated professionals. All of the activity takes place amid a steady murmur of laughter.

The disciples appear for the most part to be in their 20's and 30's. The guide is a tawny, handsome woman of 27, of Brazilian and French extraction. A disciple for two years, she wears her necklace with its picture and a diamond ring on her left ring finger, a gift from the guru, she said.

He no longer lectures and in fact does not speak publicly at all. Neither does he speak to reporters. He ventures out, she said, only for morning and evening rides in one of the two Rolls-Royces kept for him at the ranch. "Bhagwan says," she related, "that you should have riches both inside yourself and outside yourself."



The New York Times / Sept. 26, 1981

Disciples of Rajneesh are developing property in central Oregon.

DATELINE: ANTELOPE, ORE.

The natives are restless

Not one of the 40 people who lived in Antelope, Ore., minded that most road maps listed their village as a ghost town. Indeed, the residents enjoyed the desolate canyons and barren scrubland which secluded them and their gentle, if predictable, lives from the strains of mainstream America. Ninety kilometres southeast of Portland, Antelope attracted retired people who liked to pass the time walking in the countryside that served John Wayne in the film *Rooster Cogburn* or talking to local ranchers in the Antelope Café. But two years ago, eight followers of an Indian mystic, the 52-year-old Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, paid \$6 million for the 64,229-acre Big Muddy Ranch, 30 km south of Antelope. And the townsfolk soon wished that the Duke had been there to head the newcomers off at the pass.

The Rajneeshees' beliefs incorporate an eclectic blend of Eastern mysticism, Western pop psychology and modern-day materialism, but the reputation that most notably preceded them in Oregon was for practising free and some-

times violent love. The Bhagwan, who established the sect in Poona, India, in 1974, soon attracted thousands of wealthy young Europeans and North Americans—and the imagination of the world press. Nonetheless, when the Rajneeshees announced their intention to take up farming in the West, local Oregon residents were more curious than alarmed. Said Margaret Hill, former mayor of Antelope: "I thought it sounded neat and wondered what they could do with the old place. It had been neglected for years."

What they did do was startling. The Rajneeshees have poured \$62 million into the former wasteland and created the thriving "Rancho Rajneesh." There are 75 km of roads where none existed before, a sewage treatment plant, a 45-acre reservoir, a landing field, a garage for the now resident Bhagwan's 30 Rolls-Royces and housing for the commune's rapidly growing population of 1,000. Meanwhile, in Antelope scores of young people dressed in varying hues of vermilion outnumber the 15 remaining original residents. The Antelope Café

has become a vegetarian restaurant called Zorba the Buddha. And last year Mayor Hill lost her seat to Ma Prem Karuna, 44, who holds a PhD in education from Boston University. The anger of the townspeople is evident. Some have taken to wearing necklaces made of shell casings. Others wear six-guns.

Animosity against the Rajneeshees has spread throughout the state. At issue are the cult's plans for expansion: the Rajneesh Investment Corp., a wholly owned taxpaying subsidiary of the tax-exempt religious organization called the Rajneesh Foundation International, has started to develop a 2,100-acre city within the boundaries of the ranch. A 120-room hotel, along with the already built shopping centre, will accommodate many more of the tourists that Rancho Rajneesh has already begun to attract. By the end of the century the city is expected to house 4,000 people and to become a teaching centre for the Rajneesh philosophy.

Those plans, however, fly in the face of Oregon's land-use laws, which are among the most stringent in the United States. In Oregon, farmland can only be used for rural purposes, a hurdle the Rajneeshees faced early on as their numbers swelled. Complained Ma Prem Sangeet, the Rajneesh city attorney: "If you are going to have a big farming co-operative it is difficult to get housing



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Sectarians in state of bliss: John Wayne might have headed them off at the pass

permits for it." The solution was to incorporate as the city of Rajneeshpuram, to remove ranchland from its rural designation and to give it an urban one.

That plan has met with strong opposition. Said Mark Greenfield, lawyer for 1,000 Friends of Oregon, a group of environmentalists who are leading the op-

position to the Rajneeshees: "A city is a licence to grow, and the Oregon land-use program is stingy when it comes to allowing urban development to occur on rural land." The 1,000 Friends challenged the Rajneeshees in court, and the matter now rests with Oregon's Land Use Board of Appeals, which will in effect decide whether the sect will

continue to build its dream city or be forced to tear down the existing buildings.

Should the Rajneeshees fail in their bid for Rajneeshpuram on their own property, they could conceivably move it to Antelope, since Antelope is a pre-existing urban area. Rajneeshees in Salem, the Oregon state capital, recently lobbied state legislators to draft a bill that would declare Rajneeshpuram legal. If the bill passed, they told legislators, they would move out of Antelope. But Republican Senator Kenneth Jernstedt retorted, "We don't legislate by blackmail."

The future holds more court battles if the board of appeals finally confirms the incorporation of Rancho Rajneesh into a city. The 1,000 Friends have promised to go to court to have the city of Rajneeshpuram declared illegal. That, in turn, will lead to endless appeals. Sangeet says that she will take her case to the U.S. Supreme Court to defend her constitutional right of religious freedom. "People of a religious persuasion," she says, "are entitled to live together and gather together in a community." And furthermore, added Rajneeshee representative Ma Prem Sunshine, "there is no way we are going to walk away from a \$60-million investment."

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TO KEEP A CULT FROM TAKING OVER, AN OREGON TOWN WANTS TO GO OUT OF BUSINESS

LOSERS



The people of Antelope, Oreg. and neighboring ranches are united in their fear of a takeover of the town by the followers of Indian guru Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh (above). This week the town will vote on whether or not to disincorporate.

The Big Muddy Ranch, near the hamlet of Antelope in central Oregon, has seen some intriguing sights in its day. Back in 1975 John Wayne and Katharine Hepburn filmed *Rooster Cogburn* near there. But the 64,229 acres of rock, sagebrush and stunted juniper is now the setting of a showdown stranger than any the Duke envisioned. On one side are the red-garbed disciples of an eccentric spiritual community that has arrived in force. On the other are Antelope's 40 citizens, who have decided to save their town from the newcomers with an unorthodox tactic: They want to abolish it.

The trouble began quietly enough last summer when a Texas landholding company unloaded the large ranch for \$6 million. The new owners turned out to be the Rajneesh Foundation International, an India-based cult led by a 50-year-old guru, Bhagwan Shree Raj-

neesh. Soon 200 Rajneeshies arrived and began clearing land and erecting buildings. As rumors buzzed around town about the group (its members come from 17 countries and include the daughter of Congressman Leo J. Ryan, who was killed at Jonestown), curious Antelope residents attended a get-acquainted party. They were given assurances that the Rajneeshies had little more in mind than to transform the overgrazed spread into an oasis of wheat and barley. "We thought they were a friendly bunch," Mayor Margaret Hill recalls. "Lots of food, lots of free booze—it was a great party."

The good feelings faded fast. Antelope residents discovered that many of the new arrivals had come from an ashram in Poona, India that was reputed to have had nude encounter sessions and outbreaks of herpes and

"No one here has attacked their religion," asserts Mayor Margaret Hill. "But they've been devious and pushy."



CHRIS BESSMEYER (2)

LOSERS

gonorrhoea among its 5,000 members. When the Bhagwan himself took up residence in September, the anxiety level increased. His followers appeared at Chamber of Commerce and Kiwanis Club lunches to reassure locals that they had left the wild life of Poona behind them and that the master himself was in seclusion, having taken a vow of silence.

The following month the communards attempted to incorporate the ranch as a private city, only to be blocked by local environmentalists. The Rajneeshies then shifted their attention to Antelope itself. At stake is control of the five seats on the town council and the mayor's office, all unsalaried positions. Cult members could win all the posts in the next election and grant themselves building and zoning permits for commercial enterprises. But in a unique solution to the dilemma, the town council recently passed a resolution to dissolve its 1901 charter and disincorporate. If enough voters agree in an election on April 15, the county, which has a population of about 21,000, will take over Antelope. The Rajneeshies would then be outnumbered in local elections and their expansion plans thwarted.

Victory for either side is not assured. Under Oregon law, any U.S. citizen and resident of the state for more than



"The gurus are anti-Christ," says Viola Wilson (left, with her sister, Roberta Lucas) as she packs to leave her house.

one day may register on Election Day itself. To date 27 Rajneeshies are on the rolls, but there may be as many as 125 more who qualify living at the ranch. Margaret Hill thinks she can muster as many as 40 townsfolk for the vote.

The cult has bought one-fifth of the town's property, including the general store and café, reopening it as a vegetarian restaurant named Zorba the Buddha. "I don't owe Antelope anything and Antelope don't owe me anything," says Viola Wilson, 72, one of several residents who have sold out so far. "The redcoats wanted my house before the election, and they're the

only ones who had the money. God and I are neutral in this. I figure God has put these people here as a test, just to see what we Christians will do."

The residents say their reasons for disbanding are practical. Water rights are critical in Oregon's dry central plateau. Local women held bake sales for three years to raise the \$20,000 necessary to drill two wells to provide adequate water for 32 households—and one of them came in dry. The cult's proposed printing plant would require, under state health codes, 222 gallons of water per minute. "The problem of

CONTINU:

water for the building is insurmountable," insists Mayor Hill. "We hardly have enough now for the town at 45 gallons per minute." The Rajneesh followers counter that their opponents are fired by sheer prejudice. Says devotee Dave Knapp, a/k/a Swami Krishna Deva: "It's like a Southern town in the 1960s disincorporating because the blacks are moving in."

The Bhagwan cult is apparently stronger on finance than theology. Its members include Christians and Jews who practice the rituals of their own faiths while also espousing the master's philosophy of free will, free sex and unconditional love. The *sannyasins*—as cult members are called—have invested \$19 million in the property, which they have renamed Rajneeshpuram ("Expression of Rajneesh" in Hindi). They put up 50 houses, a 300-seat cafeteria, two huge barns and five greenhouses (where they grow their own vegetables). They have purchased an enormous fleet of house trailers, cars, trucks and earth-moving equipment for their endeavors. "We're overwhelmed by the apparent-

ly bottomless amount of money they have and by their sheer numbers," town council member Frances Dickinson admits.

At the center of this wealth is the Bhagwan himself, a former journalist and philosophy professor from India. He has written 360 books, which, along with donations, are the group's main source of income. He keeps three Rolls-Royces for his personal use, as well as two private planes. Although his recent vow of silence keeps him from talking to his followers, they line the road on the ranch every afternoon when he goes for a spin in a Rolls—52 miles up the road to the nearest town, where he habitually turns around in a supermarket parking lot and heads back. "When he first got here," Postmaster Bill Dickson recalls, "his driving was so erratic that everyone was scared to death of him. He wrecked one Rolls in a creek. Then he hit a concrete truck. But they gave him a crash course—and today his driving is fine." Perhaps to console their leader for the loss of the car, his followers suspended work on their dining hall

last winter to build him a heated indoor swimming pool.

Whatever the outcome of the election, one thing is certain: The feeling of fellowship between the people and Rajneeshpuram has likely been destroyed. "People tell us we're not loving sometimes," says the cult's public relations director, Ma Prem Isabel. "But to be loving does not mean to be stupid or not to have a business sense. People are violating our human rights we are not going to allow it." All dialogue between the adversaries has stopped. A minor skirmish over a building permit has escalated into a silent war. But, whether or not the town's bid to destroy itself is successful, Antelope residents have reaped one perhaps lasting benefit. "There was always a lot of scrapping going on here," says the postmaster. "It was like one big family fighting. But this thing brought Antelope together. We can cooperate on the important things."

CHERYL MCCAL

Followers of the Bhagwan gather for a glimpse of the reclusive master as he begins his daily ride in his Rolls-Royce.

