

July 20, 1983

The Immigration Department  
United States of America

To Whom It May Concern:

There is considerable debate over the immigration status of Baghwen Shree Rajneesh. The question to be answered is whether or not Rajneesh is a religious leader, even though he does not speak. The Berkeley Area Interfaith Council (BAIC) considers one of our members the Deepta Rajneesh community which is located at 3024 Ashby, Berkeley, CA 94705, to be a "religious" organization.

The Rajneesh community gives assent to BAIC's purpose which identifies it as a religious community. "The purpose of the Council is to bear witness to the spiritual unity of humankind and its divine source." Since the Rajneesh in our eyes is a religious community, because of their assent to the purpose of the Council, then it follows that their leader would be a "religious" leader, regardless of his capacity or willingness to speak.

As the President of BAIC, I speak for the Council in supporting the Rajneesh community in their claim that Baghwen Shree Rajneesh is their religious leader. The Council and I know of him through the members of this community participating in the Council and of course through the media. I sincerely hope the qualification that a religious leader is one who must speak in order to be a "qualified" religious leader is dropped by your department. This seems to be an unfair and superimposed qualification for a religious leader and is being used to discriminate against a new religious movement.

Sincerely yours,

*Carol Voisin*

Carol Voisin  
President

Berkeley Area Interfaith Council