

# THE TIMES

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## Scientologists issue writs for libel

The Church of Scientology of California has issued writs claiming damages for libel against four newspapers. The writs also seek injunctions restraining publication of the "said or any similar libels".

The newspapers concerned are the News of the World, the Sunday Express, the Sunday Mirror, and the Daily Express.

The church, stated in the writs to be a non-profit-making corporation incorporated under the laws of California and with a registered office at Fitzroy Street, W., is suing the publishers—the News of the World Ltd., Beaverbrook Newspapers Ltd., and Daily Mirror Newspapers Ltd.

Coplaaintiff in two of the actions is Mrs. Jane Kember, an official of the church, of Challow, Courtlands, Sharpthorne, near East Grinstead, Sussex. The writs allege libel in articles in the News of the World, Sunday Express and Sunday Mirror last Sunday and in the Daily Express on July 26.

After a hearing before Mr. Justice Fisher, the vacation judge, in the High Court yesterday, solicitors for the Church of Scientology issued a statement which said: "The Church of Scientology has been advised that injunctions in libel actions to restrain further publication of any similar libel are rarely granted in the English courts. Notwithstanding this, the church intend to pur-

sue every appropriate remedy".

The statement continued: "Following recent Government statements as to its present and future intentions, an application is being prepared on behalf of the church for submission to the European Commission of Human Rights, and such application will be lodged forthwith.

"Individual applications to the European Commission of Human Rights in respect of individual members of the church will be prepared and lodged if such action becomes necessary in the light of Government action."

Later, solicitors acting for the church stated that at yesterday's hearing the judge gave leave for short notice of motion for injunctions to be served. The further hearing will be next Tuesday, when the defendants will have the opportunity of being represented.

Our Legal Correspondent writes:—

A defendant to a writ for libel may continue to publish matter concerning the plaintiff while the action is pending unless and until an injunction is granted to prevent him from so doing.

An interlocutory injunction is not generally granted unless there is strong evidence that the statement complained of is untrue and that immediate injury will result to the plaintiff if the publication is allowed to continue.