

THE TIMES

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OVERSEAS NEWS 7

Greeks expel scientology group

From Our Correspondent

Athens, March 18

The Greek regime has ordered the expulsion of a group of about 200 scientologists who, with their American leader, Mr. L. R. Hubbard, have been living on board two ships docked in Corfu harbour since last August.

The expulsion order, issued by the Ministry of the Interior, gave the group 24 hours to leave Greek waters in their ships Apollo (formerly the 3,300-ton Royal Scotsman) and the trawler Athena (Avon River). The ultimatum, served on the scientologists by the civilian governor of Corfu, was to expire at 8 p.m. tonight, but it was later extended by 24 hours after Mr. Hubbard reported engine trouble.

Greek officials refused to state the reasons for the sudden decision, except that the scientologists had been declared "undesirables". It is understood that the Greek Orthodox Church in Corfu took exception to the presence there of a group which is registered as a church in the United States.

Wellington, March 18.—A commission of inquiry opened here today to hear claims that the scientology movement has caused estrangement of families and exerted pressure on former members. The commission comprises Sir Guy Poles, the New Zealand Ombudsman, and Mr. Eric Dumbleton, a former editor of the Auckland Star.—Reuter.

The Detroit News

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Greece orders cult's founder, followers away

CORFU, Greece—(Reuters)—Lafayette Ron Hubbard, American founder of the Scientology cult, and 200 of his followers aboard a ship docked off this Ionian island received Greek government orders last night to leave the island.

Hubbard, who started the movement which is considered psychotherapy with religious overtones, claimed his ship is unseaworthy. A Corfu spokesman said "the ship requires some minor repairs which can be done within a few hours."

The controversial movement has been banned in several countries. Most of those on the ship are U.S. citizens but the group includes Britons, Australians and New Zealanders.

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Religion

church spokesman countered:

"It's hanky-panky, leftist and destructive, a toxic thought pumped into the arteries of the church by kids just out of college with big ideas."

While the theological debate rages, the ordinary people who make up the congregations in churches across the country are confused by both sides. A common result is that they lose their faith entirely, and turn their backs on the church — both versions of it.

"I am alarmed at what is happening in the church today," said Dr. George R. Davis, pastor of the First National City Christian Church in Washington, where President Johnson used to attend services.

"I think we have taken a turn toward gimmickry. I believe that the church must look to its membership for support and stability.

"When the membership sees a minority closing divinity schools, using churches as centers for marches and demonstrations, I believe we are in trouble."

Dr. Kenneth F. McKinley, professor of Bible at LeTourneau College at Longview, Tex., added:

"People want the churches to set a standard, to have something solid to cling to when all the world is in revolution.

"We mustn't lower our standards by having jazz bands in church, condoning homosexuality and letting ministers lead draft-card burnings.

"We have to give people something to look up to."

Said a disgusted Philadelphia parishioner:

"I've got nothing against a minister

worrying about his fellow man, but he ought to do the job he's being paid to do, too. Today if a man wants to talk to his minister, he's got to go down to jail to find him."

Both sides in the theological dispute blame each other for alienating people from the church. But both agree that the influence of the established church appears to be declining.

Conscientious and dedicated ministers, torn by inner conflict, are quitting the church completely by the thousands and going into other lines of work.

According to a spokesman for Bearings for Re-Establishment, Inc., a multi-faith organization that helps people leaving the ministry to adjust to their new lives, about 320 ministers, priests and



PRIEST holds his collar which was ripped off when cops took him into custody during an anti-war demonstration.

nuns desert their religious duties every month.

"Everytime the Pope makes an announcement, we have a wave of inquiries from the ministry," said Patricia Roy, national director of the organization.

"Up until the fall of 1967, we had only a trickle of people applying for our services, but that turned into a flood.

"We had a lot when the Pope confirmed his stand on the birth control pill and another when he made his recent announcement that priests still couldn't marry."

Indeed, the Roman Catholic priest who marries is no longer an oddity. For every priest whose wedding makes the newspapers, there are a dozen more that go unreported.

So many priests are leaving the Catholic church for so many reasons that some church leaders fear a shortage of priests may affect the whole future of

whose churches permit them to drink.

But, if ministers themselves are emotionally troubled by the upheaval in the church, millions of ordinary churchgoers are even more disturbed.

Vast numbers are turning to cults in search of a religion with meaning.

The "religion" of Scientology, with 11 churches in the U.S. and Canada, and an estimated 20,000 members in California alone, is one of the largest and fastest-growing of the new "substitute" religions.

Established by a onetime science-fiction writer named L. Ron Hubbard, Scientology is a crazy-quilt combination of philosophies ranging from Buddhism to Freud.

Anton Szandor LaVey, San Francisco's self-appointed "high priest of the devil" uses a sword and a nude "witch" atop his altar to chant demonic incantations at his "First Satonic Church."

Similar colonies of devil-worshippers also flourish in New York City's Greenwich Village.

And Timothy Leary, former psychologist at Harvard, has founded what he calls the "League for Spiritual Discovery," based on "visions" of God derived through the use of LSD and other "mind-expanding drugs."

Many practical church leaders are seriously concerned about the future.

Dr. W.A. Criswell, pastor of the world's largest Baptist congregation, the First Baptist Church of Dallas, predicts that Christianity may be virtually extinct by the year 2000.

Dr. Harold Lindsell, editor of the magazine "Christianity Today," says the church is at bay, besieged by enemies on all sides.

"The church's crisis today," he said "is due to the knowledge explosion in physical and social sciences. Some scientists have not hesitated to weigh the Bible on the scales of science, and they

have found it wanting.

If the church is to survive much beyond the "Sick Sixties" that have done so much to undermine it, it must find a compromise between the "immovable object" of the fundamentalists and the "irresistible force" of those who demand a brand-new God.

As Frank Morriss, an executive of the Catholic Laymen of America, summed up the present threat to the Christian faith: "It's like a man who invites everybody to go for a ride, but when you get in the car, you find out he's a madman and the car has no brakes."

For the church, it's not so much "where do we go from here," but "how do we stop when we get there?"

— BILL SLOAN

Today if a man wants to talk to his minister, he's got to go down to jail to find him.

the church. According to John Cardinal Krol, archbishop of Philadelphia, the number of priests and nuns in his archdiocese dropped from 803 in 1964 to 432 in 1967.

"We are now faced with the impossibility of adequate staffing of our parishes," he said.

Many of the pastors who quit Protestant churches do so because of low salaries, according to Miss Roy, but the increasing instability of the church is another important factor.

"A lot of Protestant ministers are leaving their posts to save their marriages," she said, citing the frustrations that pile up on preachers.

The number of alcoholics has increased drastically among ministers