

Judge raps 'slave' cult

THE Church of Scientology was branded corrupt, sinister and dangerous by a High Court judge yesterday.

Mr Justice Latey roundly condemned the sect, its American leader L. Ron Hubbard and other members of the hierarchy.

He said: "Scientology is both immoral and socially obnoxious"—and he slammed Hubbard for a series of false claims.

In a Family Division judgment which denied custody of two children to a church member he called Scientology "training for slavery."

He said it was already beginning to have an effect on the 10-year-old boy and his eight-year-old sister — and awarded custody to their

mother who has broken away from the sect.

Mr Justice Latey said of Scientology: "It is corrupt because it is based on lies and deceit and has as its real objective money and power for its founder, his wife, and those close to him at the top."

"It is sinister because it indulges in infamous practices both to its adherents

who do not toe the line unquestioningly and to those outside who criticise or oppose it.

"It is dangerous because it is out to capture people, especially children and impressionable young people, and indoctrinate and brain-wash them so that they become the unquestioning captives and tools of the cult, withdrawn from ordinary thought, living, and relationships with others."

The judge, who studied some of Scientology's own

'It is immoral, corrupt, sinister and dangerous'

—MR JUSTICE LATEY

unchallenged documents during the three week case, said their methods of haranguing members were "grimly reminiscent of the ranting and bullying of Hitler and his henchmen."

If the children — identified only as G and B — were to remain with their father and stepmother they would be gravely at risk from the cult's "baleful" influence.

They had lived with the father since the family split



Hubbard: Missing

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'SLAVE' CULT

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up in 1978 and, but for Scientology, the judge said he would have left them in their warm family circle.

The judge said the movement's founder, L. Ron Hubbard, had made these false claims to promote himself and his cult:—

- That he was a much decorated war hero who was wounded in action. He was not.

- That he was crippled and blinded and cured himself with techniques practised by the cult. He was not crippled, nor blinded.

- That he was sent by U.S. Naval Intelligence to break up a black magic ring in California. He was not. He was himself a member of the occult group and practised ritual sexual magic.

- That he was a graduate of George Washington University and an atomic physicist. He was neither.

Charlatan

The judge said: "Mr Hubbard is a charlatan and worse—as are his wife, Mary Sue Hubbard, and the clique at the top privy to the cult's activities."

His wife Mary Sue has served a jail term for offences connected with Scientology.

The judge condemned the Church's recruiting methods and its "auditing" techniques—"in blunt language, auditing is a process of conditioning brainwashing and indoctrination," said the judge.

Hubbard had now disappeared and was being sought by police in the U.S. He is believed to be flitting around Southern California.

Last month an American Superior court judge was told that he had creamed off £80 million from the church.



Mr Justice Lately

During the High Court hearing Mr Justice Lately praised the 28-year-old mother and her new art dealer husband for their great courage in escaping from Scientology.

She said she had suffered "terrible interference" from the sect which had sent people round demanding she drop the custody claim. She now lives abroad.

The judge has warned the sect that any harassment or intimidation would be dealt with with the "utmost severity."

Custody

Ironically the mother would have won custody of the children five years ago if she had applied to the court when her marriage broke up.

But Scientologists are forbidden from taking action without permission.

Instead she and her husband took their dispute to the church's own Chaplain's

Court. It was decided the children should stay with their father and the mother was pressed into agreeing.

But it was plain all along she wanted the children, said the judge.

Scientology later hit back at the "extreme judgment" of Mr Justice Lately.

The church's public affairs officer Mark Garside pointed out that the church was not a party to the custody case and was not given the opportunity to answer allegations.

Frame

"It is very easy to pull out quotes from a broad selection of documents to make a point," he said.

He claimed documents before the court were out of date, and went back at least five years when there was "a more combative frame of mind" among some members.

There had been "an extensive house cleaning" two years ago and the church now operated an open door policy.

Appeal

Mr Garside said the Home Office had been satisfied with the church when it lifted the ban on overseas students of Scientology in 1980.

The disappointed father refused to comment but his solicitor said they were considering an appeal.

- Labour's Frank Dobson, MP for Holborn and St Pancras, last night called for a Government inquiry into Scientology.

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