

Night & Day

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This man died in 1986. His legacy was a 'religion' called Scientology. Today eight million follow his teachings. They believe he was a prophet. We believe he was a liar and a charlatan

Hollywood celebrities have some pretty weird beliefs. So why should we care if Tom Cruise and company come out from time to time in support of Scientology, the stars' cult of choice? Here's why: a 'religion' once banned and branded evil may soon be granted charitable status in Britain; a religion built upon the lies and fantasies of its guru, L Ron Hubbard

THE TRUE STORY OF A FALSE PROPHET

At Saint Hill, the headquarters of the Church of Scientology, a handsome manor house near East Grinstead, Sussex, there is a shrine to its revered founder, the former science fiction writer L Ron Hubbard. The office he occupied is kept just as it was when he was alive.

No one should underestimate the reverence with which Scientologists view the man they still call 'LRH'. Indeed, true believers do not even accept that he is dead. They will tell you that he simply 'discarded his body' in 1986, after it ceased to be of any further use to him, and that he continues his vital work outside the confines of this universe.

If this is the case, he can hardly be displeased with Scientology's remarkable progress on earth, despite the fervent opposition of those who insist it is more a sinister cult than a religion. The Church of Scientology claims to have eight million members worldwide and 100,000 in Britain. Notable among its supporters are a number of Hollywood stars, including Tom Cruise and John Travolta. When, earlier this year, the government of Chancellor Helmut Kohl tried to curb the expansion of Scientology in Germany, 34 high-profile Hollywood names signed an open letter of protest.

In Britain, Scientology has fared particularly well over recent months. In December, the Home Office announced, in a surprise decision, that henceforth Scientology could be considered a 'bona fide religion' for immigration purposes and that its 'ministers' would be allowed into Britain to 'preach' without a work permit. Thirty years earlier, the Home Office declared Scientology to be 'socially harmful' and banned its members from entering the country. A few days after the Home Office decision, the church was given permission to advertise on British television for the first time.

Now Scientologists hope to be able to cross the last barrier to total respectability and be recognised as a charity. The Charity Commission, which has previously refused

to accept Scientology as a religion, confirms it is currently considering an application from the Church to be given full charitable status.

Before they come to a decision, perhaps the good commissioners should take the opportunity to study the extraordinary life and times of Lafayette Ronald Hubbard. For more than 40 years the Church of Scientology has promoted the image of its founder as a romantic adventurer and philosopher whose early life fortuitously prepared him, in the manner of Jesus Christ, for his declared mission to found Scientology and save the world. But Scientology's dirty little secret, assiduously covered up over the years, is that its founder was a charlatan, an inveterate liar and a confidence trickster who shamelessly re-wrote his own life in order to bolster his credibility after he had decided that the best way to make money was to start a religion.

OFFICIAL BIOGRAPHIES of Hubbard claim that he was descended from a distinguished naval family, that he grew up on his wealthy grandfather's cattle ranch, said to cover a quarter of the state of Montana, where he learned to 'break broncos' and 'hunt coyote'. It is also claimed he became a blood brother of the Blackfoot Indians at the age of six and that his interest in religion and philosophy was stirred by reading 'a goodly number of the world's great classics' before he was 12 years old. None of this is true.

Hubbard was born in 1911, in Tilden,

Nebraska, the son of a struggling white-collar clerk who drifted from job to job and eventually joined the US Navy. Young Ron showed an early propensity to glamorise his achievements, telling friends he was the youngest Eagle Scout in the country, presumably unaware that the Boy Scouts of America kept only an alphabetical record of Eagle scouts, with no reference to their ages.

At the age of 14, Ron was said to be wandering the Orient alone, investigating primitive cultures and learning the secrets of life at the feet of wise men and Lama priests. In actual fact, he was enrolled at a high school in Bremerton, Washington, where his father was disbursing officer at the local naval shipyard. His only visit to the Orient was when, in 1927, his father was posted to the island of Guam in the Pacific.

A Church of Scientology publication asserts that Ron positively dazzled at university in Washington DC. Not only was he 'enrolled in one of the first nuclear physics courses ever taught in an American university' but he 'established himself as an essayist in the literary world' and found time to be the director of the 'Caribbean Motion Picture Expedition of 1931' that provided invaluable data for the Hydrographic Office and the University of Michigan. 'Then, in 1932, the true mark of an exceptional explorer was demonstrated. In that year, L Ron Hubbard, aged 21... made the first complete mineralogical survey of Puerto Rico.'

In reality, Hubbard studied civil engineering at George Washington University and, apart from a few contributions to the university newspaper, he had only one article published in a magazine. The 'Caribbean Motion Picture Expedition' was a summer cruise in a four-masted schooner that went disastrously wrong and ended with the captain declaring the trip to be the worst he had ever made. Neither the Hydrographic Office nor the University of Michigan received any data, invaluable or not. There is no record of anyone carrying out a mineralogical survey in Puerto Rico in 1932.

Between 1933 and 1941 it is maintained that Hubbard led numerous expeditions to exotic foreign parts to study 'barbaric cultures'. Not true. Hubbard never left North America during that period. The only barbaric cultures he might have encountered were in New York and Los Angeles where, by then married with a young baby, he was scratching a living writing lurid stories for blood-and-thunder pulp magazines with titles such as *Secret Agent X*, *Thrilling Adventures* and *Black Mask*.

In 1935, he went to Hollywood, where, predictably, he was a triumph and was apparently instantly hired to work on John Ford's classic, *Stagecoach*, and *The Plainsman* starring Gary Cooper. Curiously, his name was omitted from the credits on both movies, but his biography insists that 'his work in Hollywood is still remembered'. If it is remembered it is certainly unacknowledged: the Screenwriters Guild can only find one credit for L Ron Hubbard, as the writer of *The Secret of Treasure Island*, a 15-part serial made for showing at Saturday morning matinees.

He then turned his hand to science-fiction and moved to New York. His first effort was a diverting little tale about a university professor who works out a philosophical equation enabling him to transport himself to any part of the universe by thought alone. This was followed by a novelette called *Doughface Jack*, about a tramp who, after an operation in which a silver plate is inserted into his head, ►



Scientology's more notable members include actors Tom Cruise (left), Kirstie Alley and John Travolta



THE TRUE STORY OF A FALSE PROPHET

► discovers he has the power to heal, or to kill, with a single glance.

It was during the Second World War, according to the Church of Scientology, that L Ron Hubbard emerged as a true American hero. He first served in the South Pacific with such distinction that the Secretary of the Navy made his private plane available to fly him home when he was wounded – the first US casualty to return from the Far East. In the autumn of 1942, he was back in the thick of the action, fighting German submarines as the captain of a corvette in the North Atlantic. The following year he was made 'Commodore of Corvette Squadrons' and, in 1944, he was with the amphibious forces, working deep behind enemy lines. After serving in all five theatres, winning 21 medals and palms, he was seriously wounded, which left him blind and crippled.

None of this derring-do is confirmed by documents held at the Defense Department in Washington. Unfortunately for Hubbard, his complete war record is available under the Freedom of Information Act, and it tells a very different story indeed. On joining the US Naval Reserve, Lieutenant LR Hubbard was shunted from one desk job to another. Two weeks after Pearl Harbor, he was posted to the Philippines, but got no further than Brisbane, Australia, where, while waiting for a ship to Manila, he so antagonised his senior officers that he was sent home. 'This officer is not satisfactory for independent duty assignment,' the US Naval Attache in Melbourne reported. 'He is garrulous and tries to give impressions of his importance. He also seems to think he has unusual ability in most lines.'

Back at HQ Twelfth Naval District in San Francisco, Hubbard was temporarily assigned to cable censorship. Then, in June 1942, he got his big chance and was given command of a gunboat being converted at a shipyard in Massachusetts, but even before he could put to sea he was again in trouble with his superiors. He was summarily relieved of his command, with a note on his record that he was 'not temperamentally fitted for independent command'.

This notwithstanding, Hubbard was next sent to the Submarine Chaser Training Center in Miami. He arrived wearing dark glasses, explaining to his fellow officers that he had received a severe flash burn while serving as a gunnery officer on a destroyer in the Dutch East Indies.

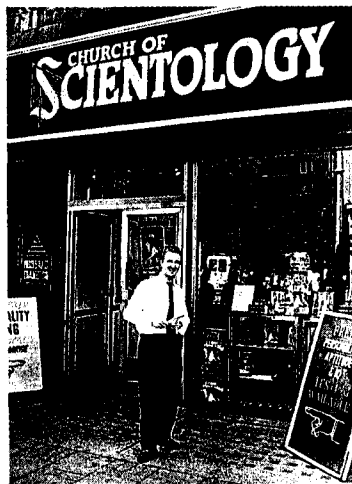
At the end of the course, he was given command of a sub-chaser, the USS PC-815. Only five hours out on her shakedown cruise, Hubbard sent a signal back to base in Seattle with the sensational news that he had encountered at least one, perhaps two, enemy submarines off the coast of Oregon! While PC-815 began making attack runs and dropping depth charges, reinforcements were hastily sent to the scene. Over the next 24 hours, five other ships and two observation blimps arrived in the area, but none of them could find any sign of a submarine. Hubbard, on the bridge of PC-815, insisted that he had seen periscopes and continued charging madly back and forth until all his depth charges were exhausted.

At an official inquiry a few days later, it was concluded that there were no submarines in the area and that the commanding officer of PC-815 had probably mistaken a 'known magnetic deposit' in the area for contact with a submarine.

Hubbard luckily escaped any censure for



The Church of Scientology hopes to have more offices around the world like the one in Florida (top). Its East Grinstead branch (left) and London store (right) help to promote Hubbard's teachings



fighting a ferocious battle with a magnetic deposit, but a month later he nearly caused a diplomatic incident. On patrol out of San Diego, PC-815 got lost and strayed into Mexican territorial waters. Undaunted, Hubbard anchored for the night and then decided it would be a good idea to do a little gunnery practice, ordering the crew to fire on a group of islands just off the coast used by Mexican fishermen to dry their nets. The incident was deemed sufficiently serious for Hubbard to be hauled before a Board of Investigation, where he was admonished and recommended for transfer to a larger ship where he could be properly supervised.

The fitness report covering his brief and inglorious career as a commanding officer rated him 'below average' and concluded: 'Consider this officer lacking in the essential qualities of judgement, leadership and co-operation.' Posted on temporary duty to HQ Eleventh Naval District, Lieutenant Hubbard reported sick with a variety of ailments ranging from malaria to a duodenal ulcer to pains in his back. He was hospitalised for three months and wrote home to inform his family that he had been injured when he picked up an unexploded shell from

the deck of his ship and it had exploded in mid-air as he threw it over the side. In January 1944, Hubbard was assigned to the USS Albatross, an amphibious attack cargo ship. Despite the Mexican debacle, he was made navigating officer. His desire to see action seemed to have waned somewhat: when it was rumoured that the USS Albatross was to be sent to the Pacific, he applied for transfer to a shore-based training school.

Hubbard was hospitalised for three months after the war, although the doctors were undecided as to precisely what was wrong with him. He was certainly neither blind nor crippled, but seemed to be suffering from endless minor aches and pains, all documented by the Veterans' Administration in his strenuous attempts to claim a disability pension. In February 1946, the VA allocated him a pension of \$11.50 a month for a 10 per cent disability caused by an ulcer, but Hubbard did not consider this to be nearly enough and lodged an appeal.

The frequent medical examinations documented in his bulging VA file indicated the doctors were baffled. Despite his miserable litany of complaints, they could find nothing wrong with him. But his determination paid

off and, in February 1948, his disability rating was re-assessed at 40 per cent and his pension was increased to \$55 a month.

What Hubbard did not reveal to the VA was that his desperately poor health did not prevent him enthusiastically participating in black magic rituals with a bizarre group in California, led by a man called Jack Parsons – a respected scientist by day and a dedicated occultist by night – who believed passionately in the power of black magic and the existence of Satan. Hubbard moved into Parsons' house in Pasadena and repaid his hospitality by promptly running off with his young girlfriend, Sara Northrup. Hubbard and Sara subsequently married; Hubbard, typically, did not bother to inform his bride that he had neglected to obtain a divorce from his first wife.

Throughout the time Hubbard was trying to hoodwink the Veterans' Administration, dabbling with black magic and committing bigamy, it is the serious contention of the Church of Scientology that he was completing his research into the 'common denominator of life' and engaged in an 'intensive testing programme' of new therapeutic techniques. What cannot be disputed is that in the spring of 1950, Hubbard's treatise, *Dianetics: An Introduction to a New Science*, was first published. The fact that it made its debut in a magazine called *Astounding Science Fiction*, which featured an ape-like alien with yellow eyes glowering menacingly from the cover, did little to establish its plausibility with the scientific community, but it certainly captured the imagination of science-fiction fans.

Hubbard's theory was that the human brain was like a computer with an infinite memory bank divided into two components, the 'analytical mind' and the 'reactive mind'. Stress and pain was stored in the 'reactive mind' as 'engrams'. Dianetics was a simple technique to gain access to these engrams and re-file them in the analytical mind where their influence could be eradicated. In this way, Dianetics was able to cure all psychological and psychosomatic illnesses.

He expanded his ideas in a book, *Dianetics, The Modern Science of Mental Health*, in which he modestly declared that his new science was 'a milestone for Man comparable to his discovery of fire and superior to his invention of the wheel'. Not everyone agreed. A critic in *Scientific American* asserted that the book contained less evidence per page than any publication since the invention of printing, but to a nation increasingly inclined to unload its problems on to an expensive psychiatrist's couch, the prospect of a simple, do-it-yourself therapy was deeply enticing. *Dianetics* was soon topping bestseller lists and Hubbard was an overnight celebrity, in demand for speaking engagements across the nation.

Within a few years Dianetics gave way to Scientology, described by Hubbard as the science of certainty. By 1954, the first Church of Scientology was established, in keeping, a Scientology publication soberly explains, with 'the religious nature of the tenets from the earliest days of research'. Nowhere in the Scientology literature is there mention of one of Hubbard's favourite aphorisms: 'If a man really wants to make a million dollars, the best way to do it would be to start a religion.'

As Hubbard's fame grew, his behaviour became more erratic, his claims more extravagant and his personal life more chaotic. There were furious legal battles for ►

WHAT IS SCIENTOLOGY?

Scientists believe that we are not merely minds and bodies but spiritual beings, temporary vessels for immortal souls called Thetans and can become 'Operating Thetans' by examining painful memories and exorcising them. This is done through intensive counselling or 'auditing' and mental pain is measured by an electropsychometer, a machine L Ron Hubbard invented for the purpose. The aim is to become 'clear'.



THE TRUE STORY OF A FALSE PROPHECY



Hubbard in 1970 in the grounds of the Sussex manor formerly owned by the Maharajah of Jaipur where the British headquarters of Scientology was established. He said he had won the house in a poker game

► control of the growing organisation and a messy divorce from Sara involving charges that he had kidnapped their child; both the FBI and the CIA opened files on him.

In 1959, he moved to Britain with his third wife, Mary Sue, and established the headquarters of Scientology at Saint Hill, the former home of the Maharajah of Jaipur, which he claimed to have won in a poker game. Happily ensconced as lord of the manor, Hubbard began issuing increasingly bizarre proclamations, including an offer to help President Kennedy narrow the gap in the space race by training astronauts. In 1963, Hubbard revealed that he had twice visited heaven, 43 trillion and 42 trillion years earlier.

As Scientology inexorably spread its tentacles around the world, it was not always welcomed. In 1965, in Australia, a Board of Inquiry into Scientology issued a damning report: 'Scientology is evil; its techniques evil; its practice a serious threat to the community, medically, morally and socially; and its adherents sadly deluded and often mentally ill.' Hubbard's sanity, it concluded, was to be 'gravely doubted'.

Hubbard fought back, claiming the Australian inquiry was nothing more than a 'kangaroo court', but he was clearly shaken and began looking for a country which would provide a 'safe environment' for Scientologists. He chose Rhodesia, first, because he thought he could help to solve the unilateral declaration of independence crisis and, second, because he believed he had been Cecil Rhodes in a previous life.

Sadly, the Rhodesian government turned down his offer to re-write their constitution. In 1967, aged 56, Hubbard embarked on the one true adventure of his life. Despairing of government hostility on shore, he took his whole organisation to sea, donned a dashing uniform of his own design and set off on an extraordinary odyssey. He led a fleet of ships across the oceans for nearly 10 years, variously pursued by the CIA, the FBI, the international media and a miscellany of suspicious government and maritime organisations.

As 'Commodore' of the 'Sea Org', Hubbard allowed his paranoia and eccentricities full rein. In port, anyone who committed an offence, no matter how trivial, was promptly

thrown over the side; at sea, troublemakers were assigned to the Rehabilitation Project Force, forced to wear black overalls, sleep on filthy mattresses in an unventilated hold and eat leftovers. As the years went by, Hubbard became more and more isolated, refusing to speak to anyone except his messengers – teenage girls kitted out in hotpants and halter tops who were trained to relay his orders in exactly his tone of voice.

In 1973, Hubbard dreamed up a wily plan to secure his place in posterity. The Freedom of Information Act had revealed to the Church of Scientology that government agencies in the United States held a daunting amount of information about both Scientology and its founder, much of it less than flattering. Hubbard, who had never been fettered by convention or strict observance of the law, devised a simple, but startling, ambitious plan to improve his own image and that of his church for the benefit of future

grand jury indicted nine Scientologists, including Mary Sue, on 28 counts of conspiring to steal government documents, burglarising government offices and conspiring to obstruct justice. All were found guilty, fined and sent to prison. Mary Sue Hubbard received the maximum – five years.

When Mary Sue began her prison sentence at the Federal Correctional Institute in Kentucky, her husband disappeared for good, never to be seen in public again. Accompanied by a few loyal aides, he holed up in a remote farmhouse in Creston, not far from San Luis Obispo, California. He maintained control of Scientology via a single messenger, who shuttled backwards and forwards between the farmhouse and the Scientology headquarters in Los Angeles.

In May 1984, the Church attempted to sue a disaffected member who had defected with a mass of documents proving that Hubbard had lied about his achievements all

knew as L Ron Hubbard still exists... He has simply moved on to his next step. LRH in fact used this lifetime and the body we knew to accomplish what no man has ever accomplished – he unlocked the mysteries of life and gave us tools so we could free ourselves and our fellow men.'

Ever since Hubbard's death, journalists who have tried to separate fact from fiction about his life have been relentlessly harassed by members of the Church of Scientology, as I know to my cost. When I was researching a book about Hubbard I discovered a team of private detectives was making inquiries about me, trying to dig up some dirt; I was warned I was under continual surveillance and that my telephone was tapped; the police were constantly at my door having received information that I was implicated in any number of crimes ranging from murder to arson; somebody regularly combed through the rubbish left outside my publisher's office in the hope of finding a copy of the manuscript; and wherever the book was published, the Church of Scientology filed a suit to try to prevent publication.

Every journalist who has crossed swords with the church has a similar story to tell. One woman writer in New York nearly had a nervous breakdown after writing a book about Scientology. She found her telephone number written on telephone boxes throughout the city with the message that she could offer callers a good time. Neighbours in her apartment block were told she had a particularly virulent, infectious disease and anyone travelling in the lift with her risked being infected. Her fingerprints were found on a bomb threat posted to an Arab embassy, resulting in the FBI surrounding her building and interrogating her.

When the Charity Commissioners convene to decide whether or not the Church of Scientology deserves charitable status, they might perhaps ponder why an organisation wanting to be recognised as a charity should be so extraordinarily sensitive about its image in the media. Or, indeed, why it has so regularly fallen foul of the law. In a famous judgement in the High Court, Mr Justice Lacey once branded Scientology as 'immoral, socially obnoxious, corrupt, sinister and dangerous'. ■

'The evidence portrays a man who has been a pathological liar'

generations of Scientologists. He decided that Scientologists should infiltrate the agencies concerned in order to launder or destroy any damaging information. The operation was given the code name 'Snow White'.

By the time Hubbard decided to return to America, in great secrecy, in 1975, Operation Snow White was well advanced and Scientologists had infiltrated the offices of the Inland Revenue Service, the US Coast Guard and the Drug Enforcement Agency. But in June 1976, it suddenly all went wrong: two Scientologists were discovered hiding in the US Courthouse Library, where they were intending to steal files. Then the FBI raided the offices of the Church of Scientology in Washington and Los Angeles and carted away thousands of documents which would reveal the astonishing scope of Operation Snow White.

Hubbard immediately went into hiding and left his wife, Mary Sue, to take the rap. In Washington in August 1978, a federal

his life. A procession of witnesses trooped into the courtroom to tell their dismal stories about life in Scientology, at the end of which the judge refused to order the return of the documents and delivered a scathing assessment of the Church's founder: 'The evidence portrays a man who has been virtually a pathological liar when it comes to his history, background and achievements. The writings and documents in evidence additionally reflect his egoism, greed, avarice, lust for power and vindictiveness...'

Hubbard died at his Creston hideaway on January 24, 1986. The news was broken to 1,800 followers hastily gathered in the Hollywood Palladium the following afternoon like this: 'L Ron Hubbard discarded the body he had used in this lifetime for 74 years, 10 months and 11 days. The body he used to facilitate his existence in this universe had ceased to be useful and in fact had become an impediment to the work he must now do outside its confines. The being we

The Road to Heaven's Gate

By CYNTHIA KISSER

We're all trying to puzzle out what led 39 members of the Heaven's Gate cult to take their own lives in Rancho Santa Fe, Calif. Actually the answer is simple; the mind-control techniques used by Heaven's Gate are no different from those employed by other cults. What's hard is figuring out how to prevent such tragedies in the future.

Heaven's Gate had existed in isolation for more than 20 years, occasionally adding new members. These members stripped themselves of their past, changing their names, breaking off with families, dressing in a prescribed manner, working within the organization at its isolated communal residences, which it moved around the country periodically. The members were so alike at the end that for their last dinner at a local restaurant, all 39 ordered the same meal of pot pie, salad and blueberry cheesecake.

'Docking Zone'

The cult experimented with a number of powerful techniques over the years to influence its members, including developing its own internal language. In the jargon of Heaven's Gate, a parking lot would be identified as a "docking zone," and a "decontamination zone" was where members might go to fight "evil spirits," a term for doubts and emotions viewed as negative. At the Rancho Santa Fe commune, a bell reportedly rang every 10 minutes throughout the day, and members paused to rededicate themselves to the group's ideals. "Sometimes they were told to sit and stare at a single object for hours," reported Jerome Clark, author of "The UFO Encyclopedia," who had studied the group in the past.

The cultists joined for a variety of reasons, many during difficult periods in their lives. One person was recovering from a divorce and a death in the family. Another from a failed business and a broken romance. A third had been a "perfect daughter" who did not make friends easily. Still another had recently quit a job. These people's problems were not unlike

problems we've all had at some point in our lives. They were not "nuts" at the time they first encountered Heaven's Gate. They just happened to make contact with a cult at a vulnerable point in their lives. Yes, there was one woman described by a nephew as a "flake." But most were ordinary brothers and sisters,

An effective cult operates much like the 're-education camps' in totalitarian countries, attacking the recruit's sense of self so that he can be manipulated.

sons and daughters, husbands and wives, like those we each know and love.

It was these people's misfortune to meet up, during their most vulnerable moments, with cult leaders Marshall Applewhite and Bonnie Lu Truscade Nettles. These two were either mentally ill and hid it well, or were so selfish and callous that they had no qualms about manipulating followers in unethical fashion. Of course

lots of ordinary people engage in unethical, manipulative behavior. The difference with cult leaders is that they use powerful behavior-modification techniques to reshape recruits' thinking, sense of identity and value systems.

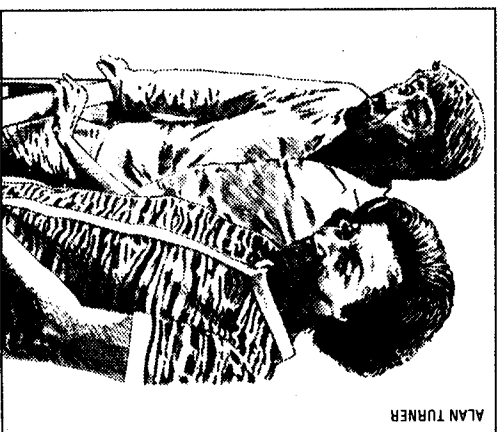
An effective cult operates much like the "re-education camps" in totalitarian countries, attacking the recruit's sense of self so that he can be manipulated for the leader's purposes. The techniques used to control members include isolation, sensory overload or deprivation,

orchestration of intense emotional experiences, role playing, sleep deprivation, strict regimentation, diet manipulation, induction of feelings of guilt or fear, redefinition of certain words or introduction of new words into a recruit's vocabulary, public confession sessions, use of punishment and reward, and the induction of al-

tered states of consciousness or dissociate states, often through hypnosis. Not only is the new recruit bombarded with all these techniques, but older cult members are often especially nice to him, assuring him how wonderful participation in the group will be.

When disguised as spiritual exercises, these techniques will work on almost any-

one who is not forewarned about the dangers. Over time, the result of an effective "thought reform" program is a diminished capacity by the recruit to assimilate and critically analyze information about the leader of the cult, the living conditions and activities of the group, how these affect the recruit's well-being, and the influence the recruit's actions are having on family, friends and more helpless members of the group. The recruits' personal aspirations, view of past experiences and religious and political beliefs can be changed as well.



Marshall Applewhite and Bonnie Lu Truscade Nettles

Many of these same techniques, I hasten to add, are used beneficially in medicine and psychology to help patients manage stress, pain or problematic behavior. But when used ruthlessly and unethically by a cult leader, these behavior-control techniques can induce members to commit suicide without even being aware of the full impact of what they're doing.

How do we stop future Heaven's Gate groups? For starters, mainstream religious organizations must be willing, proudly and publicly, to show how they are different from these destructive cults. Instead, many religious leaders refuse to address the cult issue at all because they are afraid that by admitting that cults exist, their group may be branded as one.

Then, too, government officials and politicians need to stop being afraid of being labeled antireligious when investigating a cult. They must not be intimidated by the economic and financial power some of these cults wield. And they must be willing to hold all religious organizations to the same standards of ethical behavior. Government officials especially need to send a message that the hardball tactics of some cults—for example, attacking the personal reputations of those who investigate them—won't be tolerated.

More Vigilance

Finally, the average American has to realize just how vulnerable he is to influence techniques, and to start insisting that the next generation be taught how to recognize the warning signs of cult methods. Essentially the answer boils down to more vigilance. But we've already let down our guard and hurt many fine, decent people. Let's act now before the next Jonestown, the next Waco, the next Heaven's Gate, takes more lives.

Ms. Kissar has lectured and written frequently about cults. She was formerly executive director of the Cult Awareness Network, which has since gone into bankruptcy and whose trade name has been taken over by Scientology-connected investors.

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THE CHURCH OF SCIENTOLOGY: RECOGNITION AND DISCRIMINATION

An Editorial, "The Scientology Problem," appeared in the March 25th edition of the Wall Street Journal. While much of its content contains an abbreviated Journal view of our history, that same editorial also asked some questions — important questions from our point of view. That's why we are taking the opportunity to respond to them here.

The Journal certainly had it right on one point: Any new religious movement must travel a tough road to acceptability. The toughest part of that road is not overcoming past history, however, but overcoming false perceptions that have been repeated so many times, some people begin to accept them as "facts." This is the problem with the media reporting when their primary source of information is other media. Then, quoting each other, time after time, rumor finally becomes "repeated reports."

Case in point: The Journal said, "There have been repeated reports that Mr. Hubbard told his science fiction colleagues that the way to get rich is to found a religion." The problem is this incident never happened. So, from the Church's perspective it does get tiring responding to it, repeatedly. (For the record, George Orwell is the person who really said that and to our knowledge he never knew or met Mr. Hubbard.)

But this ad is not here to merely point-counterpoint every item mentioned in the Journal. We realize it does not have all the information we have. However, false or inaccurate information, repeated over and over, does become "fact." Then, operating on this false data, some events can seem mysterious. Such is the case with two questions the Journal raised concerning the Church's recognition by the IRS and the State Department's outcry over human rights abuses against us in Germany. And while these two matters may seem unrelated they have everything to do with each other and current controversy.

TAX EXEMPT RECOGNITION

What is factual is that the Church was at odds with the IRS for decades. And while the Journal did recount some earlier court decisions against the Church, there are certainly quite a few, not mentioned, which found in our favor. Indeed, many Churches of Scientology had maintained exemption for decades, despite IRS challenges. But that's not the point. Rather, the Journal's question is, why the IRS' apparent reversal of position?

No court decision ever ruled the Churches of Scientology were inherently non-exempt. What these court cases actually said — each one the Journal mentioned — was that the Church had failed to establish its qualification of exemption. This legal principle — *Failure to Establish* — refers to the requirement for organizations to prove they qualify as tax exempt. That is why the way in which the Churches of Scientology ultimately obtained recognition is so relevant.

For two years the IRS examined the Church. It was nothing less than the most searching, extensive and rigorous examination of any organization in the history of federal tax law. At the end of the investigation, there was absolutely nothing about the Church that the IRS did not know.

Its agents examined the Church's past financial activities and its plans for future expenditures, including all its income and all its expenses. They thoroughly dissected the Church's fundraising program and traced its receipts down to actual deposits. The agents then followed expenditures from these accounts. And they examined the flow of funds both within the Church and among its various trusts and subordinate corporations.

The IRS did not limit its focus to financial matters. It also acted to ensure that the Church's operations fully complied with all applicable legal requirements and general notions of public policy. Its agents also scoured over every allegation of any possible wrongdoing, no matter how frivolous, including those made in every relevant case or investigation in which the Church or its staff was or had been involved.

Nor did the IRS limit its investigation to the Church's religious organizations. It examined the Church's affiliated charitable and social betterment organizations, including those which had been recognized as tax exempt for many years, and its related publishing organizations.

And why did the IRS go into such detail? Precisely because of its past history with the Church.

So, rather than cast aspersions on our recognition by reference to past conflicts with the IRS, the Journal should have recognized it for what it was — recognition by an agency which had every motivation *not* to give us favorable treatment.

Indeed, there is no disparity between the IRS recognition and court decisions. We did exactly what the courts said to do and fully established our qualifications.

In conclusion, the Journal asks the IRS to share in what persuaded it of our qualifications. Actually, they already have. It sits right where it has for the past three years — in the IRS public reading room. There one will find over 12 linear feet of materials that comprise the Church's substantiation for exempt recognition — the largest and most substantial such record in history. The same one already reviewed by numerous experts, all of whom have declared it clearly establishes our qualifications for recognition.

DISCRIMINATION

The Journal called acts of discrimination in Germany "statements protected by U.S. libel law..." It wondered why the State Department is upset over "a German position that was the U.S. position until the current administration." That is simply not true. What is happening in Germany is more than just name calling and while the U.S. may have fought us in the past, it never engaged in such public, politically motivated discrimination.

A fact most Americans don't realize is: Germany has *no* separation of church and state. The state churches (Catholic and Lutheran) are supported by government taxes, equaling billions of dollars per year. That's not all — leading clergy in those churches also hold high positions in government, working alongside and advising top government officials.

Nor is freedom of the press a reality. While subjecting Scientologists to brutal discrimination, the German press won't even allow us paid advertising to tell our side of the story, even when supported with documentation. Then, unable to interest U.S. newspapers in reporting this story, the Church was forced to take out paid advertising in American newspapers. It seems those advertisements are what finally got everybody's attention.

What Germany is engaged in is the systematic stripping away of fundamental human rights.

For example:

- ◆ The Federal Labor Minister, Norbert Blüm, currently responsible for Germany's highest unemployment level since WW II, leads the charge against Scientology and other minority religions. Among other things, he has called for preclusion of Scientologists from civil service. States enacted decrees to implement his wishes, but when worldwide outrage created embarrassment, the actions were defended as being "misunderstood" and would "not be enforced." However, the conciliatory tone only lasted until immediately after the State Department published its annual human rights report. Blüm then enacted a new decree: Now all Scientologists are noted with a computerized "S" on employment computers, to alert potential employers in Germany — a computerized Star of David.

- ◆ Helmut Kohl's political party (the Christian Democratic Union — CDU) excludes membership to any Scientologist. Applicants must attest to only one fact on the registration form: "I am not a member of the Scientology sect." No such exclusion exists for thieves, murderers, neo-Nazis or even ex-members of the Nazi party.

- ◆ To defend against this outrage, Kohl's party claims our exclusion is because they are a Christian party. That is obviously false. Or is he saying Jews aren't allowed?

- ◆ Following Kohl's lead, similar prohibitions were then enacted by *all* political parties in Germany. A Scientologist may not join any political party.

- ◆ The Youth wing of Helmut Kohl's party passes out black condoms with a skull and crossbones on the outer box and a message on the back claiming to be "90% effective" in preventing future generations of Scientologists.

- ◆ They also distribute a booklet depicting Scientology and other minority religions as insects (a play on "sekt" — the German derogatory term for "cult") showing them being exterminated with fly swatters.

- ◆ The atmosphere created by the government has led to numerous bomb threats, death threats and other hate crimes directed at German Scientologists.

- ◆ An ominous threat on Nazi stationery, complete with eagle and swastika, demanded that Scientology "retreat overseas" or suffer the consequences. Official "investigations" turned up nothing.

- ◆ Individuals and businesses are routinely required to sign a declaration — referred to as a "sect filter" — swearing that they are not Scientologists, in order to be hired or maintain a job in a company; join or remain in a trade union, social group, profession, or athletic club; sign a business or service contract; and open a bank account or receive a bank loan.

- ◆ Respected musician and Scientologist Chick Corea is prevented from performing at state-sponsored jazz festivals in Germany, despite his popularity there. Almost all festivals in that country are state sponsored and the reason for his exclusion is solely his religion.

- ◆ And finally, there were the attempted boycotts, albeit dismal failures, of *Mission: Impossible* and *Phenomenon* — again by the Youth wing of Kohl's party. The sole reason for this was that Tom Cruise and John Travolta are Scientologists.

There is also the discrimination against the "little people" which doesn't get as much worldwide attention. Children kicked out of kindergarten, an Olympic fencing coach fired from his job, Scientology businessmen "outed" and losing all their customers as a result, etc. Case after case — all documented.

Everybody can agree this obsession with minority religions has gone too far. Shouldn't Blüm *instead* be handling unemployment? Shouldn't Kohl *instead* be prohibiting membership by neo-Nazis?

INTERNATIONAL CONDEMNATION

The State Department is not alone in holding that the German government has violated the rights of Scientologists. In November, the United Nations Human Rights Committee determined that actions taken to exclude Scientologists from public service employment violated Germany's international human rights obligations. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Religious Intolerance has also reported on these violations and plans to further investigate this matter in Germany this year.

Other independent and objective authorities such as the Helsinki Commission, the Rutherford Institute, the Congressional Arts Caucus, the Congressional Black Caucus, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, the Congressional Human Rights Caucus and concerned human rights groups have cited Germany for its policy of minority religious discrimination.

There should be zero tolerance for religious discrimination in Germany. It is not merely a matter of "libel" — these are acts, not words. And they aren't isolated instances; they are at the behest of leading political figures.

CONCLUSION

The Wall Street Journal stated its hope that we win the respectability we desire. We appreciate that.

Most religions go through growing pains. We have. And we also realize we have a responsibility to inform people of what and who we are. This is why we publish editorials such as this one. It is also why we have released publications such as the encyclopedic reference *What is Scientology?*, the compilation of basic Scientology practices, *The Scientology Handbook*, and numerous biographical publications documenting the life of L. Ron Hubbard.

In the face of controversy, Scientology has grown and continues to grow. This is compelling evidence it has something of value to offer today's world.

We will continue our efforts to clear away mysteries where they exist. And, hopefully, in the not too distant future we'll live up to the full expectations of the Journal.

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