

Volume 742
No. 157



Monday
6th March 1967

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that we could fulfil the rôle he is talking about with a much smaller Army, but he did not say tonight how many extra men he wants us to have in the Army, how many more tanks at £5 million a Regiment, how many more 175 mm. and 155 mm. Abbot guns, and how much they are all going to cost; how many more bomber aircraft he wants in that Army to carry the conventional bombs, and how many more fighters he wants to protect us against conventional bombers in that Army.

Nor has he told us how much it will cost to provide the extra ammunition, food and fuel that would be required if one was contemplating having a conventional war of that kind on the Continent.

One other thing he has not told us today. His hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Winchester (Rear-Admiral Sir Morgan Giles) urged during the Defence debate that we should send British troops to Vietnam; he was speaking from the back benches then. A day or two later the hon. and gallant Member said from the Front Bench that we should use the Royal Navy to assist in the shelling of Vietnam. I am still waiting—and I have not heard yet—to see whether the statement made from the Front Bench by the hon. and gallant Member represents the policy of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton, South-West, who speaks on defence for the Opposition.

It is significant that today the right hon. Gentleman concentrated all his attention on the building up of our forces in Europe and said nothing about troops for Vietnam. I can only assume that he is disowning the remarks of his hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Winchester on Monday and Wednesday of last week. The hon. and gallant Member for Winchester should remember that it is one thing to speak from the back benches and put forward one's own personal ideas, but that it is quite a different thing to speak from the Front Bench for one's party. But we have had no withdrawal of what he said—

Rear-Admiral Sir Morgan Giles: If the hon. Gentleman will read HANSARD, he will find that I said no such thing as he has just attributed to me.

Mr. Reynolds: I think that what I have said is a fair portrayal of what

the hon. and gallant Gentleman said. The speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton, South-East presumably means that he and the Tory Party disown the hon. and gallant Gentleman, and I am very glad of that.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That a number of Land Forces, not exceeding 237,000, all ranks, be maintained for the safety of the United Kingdom and the defence of the possessions of Her Majesty's Crown, during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1968.

SCIENTOLOGY

Motion made, and Question proposed,
That this House do now adjourn.—[*Mr. Armstrong.*]

11.30 p.m.

Mr. Peter Hordern (Horsham): It is my duty to bring to the attention of the House the case of a constituent of mine, Miss Henslow, and an organisation known as Scientology. The public have been hampered in its knowledge of scientology by the fact that so far as I can establish, on every occasion that the organisation has been named by a newspaper, that newspaper has been served with a writ of libel.

Fortunately, my remarks and those of the Minister, who I am very glad to see in his place, are made under Parliamentary privilege, so that I hope that our words will be widely reported to allow the nature of this organisation to be understood for what it is. The effect of this organisation is that money is extracted from the weak, the credulous and the mentally ill, and the techniques used are potentially, and in many cases, positively, harmful to the mental health of the community.

The Minister will recall that I asked him on 5th December last if he would hold an inquiry into the practice known as scientology. The purpose of such an inquiry was to draw the attention of the public to the activities of that organisation, and if found to be harmful to pass legislation to ban it. The Minister replied that he had no doubt that scientology was totally valueless in promoting health, and that people seeking help with problems of mental health could gain



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[MR. HORDERN.]
nothing from the attentions of this organisation.

That reply was quite unsatisfactory, for it completely ignored the considerable body of evidence that had been laid before him by myself and others, and the great weight of evidence produced by the State of Victoria Commission, upon the evil nature of this organisation. It is my purpose to bring this evidence to light and to challenge the Minister to say that it does not constitute a sufficient cause to hold an inquiry.

It may be argued that to draw attention to scientology may be to attract sympathy, and that it might even draw more deluded people to it. That is arguable, but what would be quite inexcusable would be to allow great harm to come to some who are mentally ill, who would not have attended this organisation, had they been aware of its real nature. That would be a responsibility which the Minister could not have shed as long as he lived.

It is, therefore, necessary for me to state the facts of the case of Miss Henslow, my constituent, and I do so with the express permission of her mother, for she recognises that the harm that scientology can do to others far outweighs the pain she is forced to endure by a recital of the facts. Miss Henslow had for some years suffered from a manic depressive illness, which necessitated periods in Graylingwell Hospital. She made a considerable recovery, and was able to leave hospital on 26th July, 1962, and continued to receive treatment as an out-patient.

In December, 1965, she met a man called Murray Youdell, a student scientologist at Saint Hill Manor, East Grinstead. He persuaded her to apply for a job at that establishment, but she was not accepted until April or May, 1966, when she was accepted as a fee-paying student, during the evenings, and took lodgings in East Grinstead.

Towards the end of June, Mrs. Henslow received a letter from her daughter which said that she found her mother

"... suppressive to her, evaluates for her, invalidated her and was destroying her, that she did not wish to see her again and that from then onwards she did not exist for her".

Mrs. Henslow was able to derive no comfort from the fact that another letter arrived by the same post in which her daughter said that the first letter was an error, and that she was the last person she wished to "disconnect" from.

Miss Henslow visited her mother at her invitation in July, 1966, and Mrs. Henslow was horrified at her daughter's condition. There was worse to come. On 29th July, just before midnight, Mr. Youdell and another scientologist brought Miss Henslow to her mother's home, dressed only in a nightgown and coat, and in a completely deranged condition. As soon as Mr. Youdell and his companion had left, Miss Henslow flew out of the house and dashed down the road, shouting at the top of her voice. Fortunately, she turned into the police station. The Chief Constable of West Sussex has since been good enough to give me a report of the incident, and tells me that Miss Henslow remained in a hysterical condition until 3 a.m. at which time she was given a sedative.

Such a serious view was taken of Miss Henslow's condition that she was put under a supervision order for one year. I am happy to say that Miss Henslow has made some progress, but she is still far from being well. I hope that I have said enough to show incontrovertibly that Miss Henslow's present condition has been caused by her attendance at Saint Hill Manor. The Minister will be aware of another case, the details of which I have sent him, and which points to the same conclusion.

But, above all, the Minister cannot ignore the evidence and the findings of the Anderson Commission on Scientology in the State of Victoria, which appeared in 1965 and which ran to about 200 pages. This report shows that scientology, or dianetics, is not just an organisation of cranks, or of people pretending to be cranks, trying to make money out of those who come under their spell. As the report says:

"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."

There can scarcely be anything more horrifying than the section in the report dealing with a demonstration session specially provided for the board making



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the report. Nine days after the demonstration the subject of the session was admitted as a patient to the care of the mental health authority, and, in the words of the report, the board had "witnessed this unfortunate woman being processed into insanity".

The founder of the organisation known as scientology is a Mr. Ron Hubbard, now aged 56. From 1930 to 1932, Hubbard was a student at the George Washington University, and claims to have been a graduate of that university in civil engineering, using the letters "B.S." and "C.E." after his name. In fact, he has no such qualification. He also claims to be a doctor of philosophy at the Sequoia University, southern California, but that institution is not registered with the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, which is the relevant accrediting body.

Hubbard was—and is—a prolific writer of books of fiction, travel, science fiction and fantasy between 1932 and 1941. In 1950, he wrote his first major book on dianetics, entitled "Dianetics: the Modern Science of Mental Health". Forthright claims have been made for dianetics, including one that they cure with certainty 70 per cent. of man's psychomatic illnesses. These have never been denied, and indeed, in a booklet entitled "Dianetics: the Evolution of a Science" the statement is made that information and advice on training and treatment may be obtained from the registrar. I must ask the Minister whether such a claim is not a direct contravention of the law. Certainly, Hubbard himself writing in April, 1960, said that dianetics contained a perfectly workable therapy and acted as a bridge between the uninformed and the informed public on the subject of scientology.

The Anderson Commission reported that Hubbard's writings were the products of an unsound mind, and certainly his claims to have visited Venus and Heaven lend support to this view. Hubbard wrote a book called a "History of Man", published in 1952, and in it referred to the Piltdown Man in support of his theories. The fact that the Piltdown Man has since been exposed as a hoax has done nothing to alter these theories.

Hubbard's theories may be considered harmless in themselves. The fact that his organisation has changed its name

from dianetics to scientology, to the College of Scientology, and even to the Church of Scientology, should delude nobody into thinking that the practices are in any way different or any less harmful.

The Anderson Commission reported the unsavoury, and indeed disgraceful methods by which people were induced to embark on a course of scientology: how, once they had embarked, it was impossible to break away, and the resulting financial consequences and damage to health; how harmful hypnotic procedures were used, and a great store of personal information filed away which would do great damage if it were ever released; how family discords were provoked; how inquiry agents were set on the trail of those who opposed scientology, including even the member of the Victoria Legislative Council who raised the subject in that assembly.

There is good reason to suppose that these harmful practices are being carried on in this country.

I ask, therefore, that a full inquiry be held into the nature of this organisation and its practices. If scientology has nothing to hide, then it should welcome such an investigation. But I hope that the information which I have given, the tragic case of my constituent, Miss Henslow, and the fact that scientology has been ejected from both Victoria, and, I believe, Rhodesia, will persuade the Minister to hold an inquiry at the earliest possible date.

I have one further point to make. Englishmen have another form of protection besides that of Parliament and the law. It is the Press. But the Minister must know that in this case the public will not have the protection of the Press once this debate is over, because they are likely to be sued for libel if they publish anything about scientology. Thus, if he decides not to hold an inquiry he will have the sole responsibility of allowing what the Anderson Committee described as "an evil organisation" to grow and flourish. That is a responsibility from which he will never be released.

11.41 p.m.

Mr. Geoffrey Johnson Smith (East Grinstead): I realise the difficulty which faces the right hon. Gentleman. He is Minister of Health and the organisation



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[MR. JOHNSON SMITH.]
which we are discussing now calls itself a church. I am sure that all of us agree that we should tolerate any and all religious beliefs in our democratic society, but to what extent we can tolerate the practices of self-styled religious organisations is quite a different matter. Unfortunately, for reasons of time I cannot pursue that now.

I can say to the right hon. Gentleman that many open-minded people in the town of East Grinstead, whose judgment on matters of this kind one can trust, are seriously disturbed by the activities and objectives of this organisation known as Scientology. I have received information which would indicate that the case which we heard from my hon. Friend the Member for Horsham (Mr. Hordern) is not an isolated example, information which would add substance to the arguments which have been put forward.

But we have to be scrupulously fair. Is this organisation, as it exists in England today, as fundamentally evil as the Victoria Report found it to be in Australia? It is still run by the same man from the same place and it still appears to make a lot of money. I do not believe that anyone can read that report, particularly the part dealing with brainwashing, without feeling shocked and deeply perturbed about this organisation. In the past, those who have dared to question its activities have been subjected to a campaign of vilification. I shall be interested to see whether my hon. Friend and I share the same fate.

Neither my hon. Friend nor myself—and I am sure that I speak for the right hon. Gentleman, although I am anticipating—wishes to see a Government persecuting or harrying unconventional groups, but I should have been failing in my duty to my constituents had I not welcomed, as I now do, this short debate.

11.43 p.m.

The Minister of Health (Mr. Kenneth Robinson): I am glad that the House has had an opportunity this evening of considering the activities of scientologists in this country. The hon. Member for Horsham (Mr. Hordern) has described the effect of these activities in an individual case, that of Miss Karen Henslow. I have had correspondence

with Mrs. Henslow about her daughter's distressing experiences and I accept what the hon. Member says about them. They graphically underline the general implications of scientology to which I should like to direct the attention of the House.

Since I answered a Question on this matter on 7th February, 1966, I have received letters from a large number of persons and organisations drawing my attention to what the writers feel are the damaging effects of scientology particularly on health and above all on mental health. Many of those who have written to me or to their Members of Parliament have themselves at some time taken courses in scientology or have relatives or friends who have done so. In many cases the courses are said to have brought about not the enhancement of personality promised to them but a deterioration in mental stability and an estrangement between the person concerned and his family and friends.

Several hon. Members have expressed anxiety over the possible damage done by scientology to the mental health of its clients and over what they see as a harmful influence in an even wider context. The East Grinstead Urban District Council have conveyed to me the terms of a resolution passed last December expressing grave concern

"at the effects the activities of scientology may be having upon the town and its people."

There have been, as the hon. Member said, a number of Press articles describing the harmful practices of scientology and of its splinter groups.

To attempt a definition of scientology is a sterile exercise, because it appears to mean nothing more at any given time than its inventor, Mr. Lafayette Ronald Hubbard, chooses to say that it means, and at no time has he chosen to give it any meaningful definition.

The headquarters have for some years been at Saint Hill Manor, East Grinstead, where Mr. Hubbard and his wife, Mary Sue Hubbard, secretary of the organisation, live and where policies are decided and disseminated.

The harm which scientology might cause to health gave rise in the early 1960s to growing uneasiness in the state of Victoria, Australia, and it led to the board of inquiry, mentioned by both hon. Members, appointed there by order in



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council in November, 1963. This inquiry, by Mr. Kevin Anderson, Q.C., resulted in a report, submitted in September, 1965, from which had I the time, I should like to have quoted *in extenso*. The report sums up in these terms:

"The Hubbard Association of Scientologists claims to be 'the world's largest mental health organisation'. What it really is, however, is the world's largest organisation of unqualified persons engaged in the practice of dangerous techniques which masquerade as mental therapy."

I am told that Mr. Hubbard has threatened with an action for libel anyone in this country who quotes from the Anderson Report. His attitude is understandable, because it is difficult to believe that anyone acquainted with Mr. Anderson's findings would willingly submit to the teachings of an organisation so comprehensively condemned.

Following the Anderson Report, the Victorian Parliament passed the Psychological Practices Act, which effectively prohibits the practice of scientology. The records of the scientologists in Victoria were seized under powers conferred by the Act and their activities thereupon came to an end.

Hon. Members may reasonably ask whether the scientologists in England carry out the same practices as did their counterparts in Australia and, if so, whether we should take the same view of them as did the state of Victoria. The answer to the first question is, I think, clear. The Association, as its name suggests, is an international organisation. Its founder and leading members are all at Saint Hill Manor, East Grinstead. The Hubbard communications office, through which Mr. Hubbard keeps in touch with scientologists throughout the world and through which he issues a constant stream of advice, directives, exhortations and policy statements, is also there. Copies of every report made on every "auditing" session in all centres throughout the world are sent as a routine to headquarters and placed on file there.

This leads to the crucial question: to what can we reasonably take objection in scientology? For a Minister of Health, the overriding consideration must be the effect of these practices on mental health. Here, one must distinguish between what the leaders of the cult currently claim and what they have until recently professed and, in my judgment, still perform.

Mr. Hubbard wrote to me in February last year and said that

"we do not treat or cure anyone and are not a healing science."

In an advertisement in the personal column of *The Times* last March, he publicly and elaborately dissociated himself from doctors and renounced his dubious doctorate of philosophy.

But most of the voluminous scientology tracts tell a very different story. I quote from a handbook printed in London in 1962:

"There are scores of people alive today who would not be alive except for this new science. There are children and old people who would not be walking except for this new science. Polio ravages, arthritis and scores of other ills are handled daily by this new science with success."

The Melbourne organisation claimed even more fatuously that

"scientology is the only specific cure for atomic bomb radiation flash burns."

I do not want to give the impression that there is anything illegal in the offering by unskilled people of processes intended in part to relieve or remove mental disturbance. The law places no barrier against this, provided that no claim is made against qualified medical skill, and the scientologists do not claim this. What they do, however, is to direct themselves deliberately towards the weak, the unbalanced, the immature, the rootless and the mentally or emotionally unstable; to promise them to be remoulded, mature personalities and to set about fulfilling the promise by means of untrained staff, ignorantly practising quasi-psychological techniques, including hypnosis. It is true that the scientologists claim to be accepted as clients people known to be mentally sick, but the evidence strongly suggests that they do.

It is clear that Mr. Hubbard and the other leaders of the cult have long realised that they are most vulnerable, in the eyes of the public, by reason of their pretensions to healing. In their last years in Victoria they laid claim to the status of a religion, and for a while one of their leaders, Frank Turnbull, assumed the title of "Bishop". Recently, in England, they have conjured up a "Church of Scientology", have dubbed at least two of their staff "Chaplain" and, I am told, have issued many of their staff with a full clerical outfit.



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[MR. ROBINSON.]

As the scientologists draw their adherents into the fold, so they instil into them a distrust, even hatred, of other influences—including that of orthodox medicine—which might draw them away again. Squalid and even sinister motives are imputed to relatives or friends who advise against an attachment to scientology. A similar harshness is visited upon the unfortunate “pre-clear” who thinks to break away or to question accepted doctrines. A further intensive course of “auditing”—for which charges are, of course, made—is usually prescribed before forgiveness is granted.

I have touched as fully as the compass of this short debate will allow on what seems to me the undesirable degree of influence which scientologists have over the “pre-clears” in their charge, and on the pressure exerted on them to separate themselves from their families and friends. A related aspect of the relationship between the scientologists at Saint Hill Manor and their clients, which I find disturbing, is the case material derived from “auditing” sessions which is accumulated and filed there. It contains confessions and statements of an intensely personal nature and might, in some cases, be such as to lay the subjects open to coercion or blackmail, though there is no evidence, either here or in Victoria, that this material has been used for purposes of blackmail.

What I have said will have made clear my belief that scientology is not merely ludicrous, which would not matter, but is potentially harmful to its adherents. My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has also taken a close interest in the activities of scientologists in this country and shares my views on them. We have considered very carefully the proposal often made that a public inquiry should be set up, and the alternative proposal that action should be taken to terminate their activities here.

On the question of an inquiry, my view remains that which I gave in answer to Questions from the hon. Member for East Grinstead (Mr. G. Johnson Smith) and the hon. Member for Horsham on 5th December, 1966; that a further inquiry is unnecessary to establish that the activities of this organisation are poten-

tially harmful. The Anderson Report in Victoria and the evidence put before me in this country make this quite clear.

There remains the question whether the practice of scientology should be prohibited. My present view is that this would not be the right course to take, and I say this for several reasons. Legislation would certainly be necessary to achieve prohibition because, as I have said, medically unqualified people are within the law in offering or providing treatment, with certain very limited exceptions. We would all, I believe, be reluctant to contemplate legislation—which would, on the Victoria pattern, almost inevitably have to range considerably beyond its immediate object if it were to be effective—unless the case for it were overwhelming. We are not in that position—at any rate, not yet.

I am satisfied that the condition of mentally disturbed people who have taken scientology courses has, to say the least, not generally improved thereby. Indeed, the history of Miss Henslow, as described by the hon. Gentleman illustrates this very clearly.

I have not had evidence that scientology has been directly and exclusively responsible for mental breakdown or physical deterioration in its adherents in this country. I nevertheless intend to go on watching the position.

My present decision on legislation may disappoint the hon. Members, but I would like to remind them that the harsh light of publicity can sometimes work almost as effectively. Scientology thrives on a climate of ignorance and indifference.

Mr. Hordern: Does the Minister not appreciate that this is the difficulty with publicity, that his remarks will not be repeated after tonight's debate? Will he therefore send a copy of his speech to every general practitioner throughout the country?

Mr. Robinson: I certainly consider that steps can be taken to publicise what I have said. I shall be very surprised if the Press are as poltroonish as the hon. Gentleman fears they may be. They have been quite forthright in the past on other subjects.



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Mr. Hubbard himself has said:

"Incredulity of our data and validity. This is our finest asset and gives us more protection than any other single asset. If certain parties thought we were real, we would have infinitely more trouble."

What I have tried to do in this debate is to alert the public to the facts about scientology, to the potential dangers in which anyone considering taking it up may find himself, and to the utter

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hollowness of the claims made for the cult.

I hope that the debate will be widely reported, so that the views of the House on the activities of scientologists may be known to all.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at Four minutes to Twelve o'clock.