

# Spain Seizes Scientology Leaders

*Chronicle Wire Services*

Madrid

Police arrested 69 people in a raid on a hotel and accused 45 of them of fraud, illegal association and forgery for being members of the Church of Scientology.

Among those held was Heber Jentzsch, a 53-year-old Utah man and an alleged "commander" in the organization, and two unidentified Americans, judicial sources said.

In 1986 and again last June, Spain's Justice Ministry rejected a petition by the Church of Scientology for accreditation as a legitimate religious institution on the grounds that the group's activities "negatively affect public health."

A court spokesman said 24 of the original 69 people arrested were released when it was learned during questioning that they were not leaders of the group.

Judge Jose Maria Vasquez Honrubia said that besides the Americans, those under arrest include Scientology leaders from Britain, Portugal, Denmark, Venezuela, Switzerland, Italy and Spain.

The raid was conducted on the headquarters of Narconon, a drug rehabilitation program, Dianetics and the Civil Association of Applied Philosophy, all associated with the Church of Scientology.

The raid at a Madrid hotel was carried out after a nine-month police investigation during which 30 telephone wiretaps indicated the group was planning an international meeting in the city, the judge said.

Vasquez Honrubia said those under arrest are to be charged with fraud, illegal association, coercion, forgery of public documents, tax evasion and failure to meet social security payments.

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*See Page A17*

He did not specify what type of forgery and fraud the organizers had engaged in, but news reports said at least one fraud charge stemmed from Narconon's attempts to persuade its drug-addicted clients to join the Church of Scientology as part of their treatment.

The Church of Scientology was founded in 1950 by science fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard. Its activities in Spain center on the drug rehabilitation program known as Narconon and a spiritual group called the Civil Dianetic Association.

In Washington, the Rev. Brian Anderson, vice president of the Church of Scientology International, released a statement that condemned the raid as "an outrageous act of injustice." He said the group's drug rehabilitation programs are the most effective in Spain.

In 1984, the U.S. government began an investigation of Scientology founder Hubbard's tax returns after the Internal Revenue Service said it suspected millions of dollars in church funds had been transferred to Hubbard to protect the church's tax-exempt status and to avoid paying taxes.

Scientists said the FBI, the CIA, the IRS and other government agencies took part in a conspiracy to harass the organization in violation of its religious freedom.

The U.S. Supreme Court is considering the case. A ruling is likely to be handed down by July.