

What Scientology exposé does not presume to tell

by Mark Burdman

Bare-Faced Messiah: The True Story of L. Ron Hubbard

by Russell Miller

Michael Joseph: London, 1987

£12.95, hardbound, 390 pages.

Whatever Scientology is or is not, Russell Miller's work is not a real exposé, even if it occasionally makes for absorbing reading. It is based on a single construct, that Scientology (and, earlier, Dianetics) founder L. Ron Hubbard was a con man and fraud, who wanted to create a religion to make money. In this, the book's style and composition conform to what is becoming a fashion in so-called "anti-cult" literature. Miller painfully avoids what one must presume to be the more interesting underlying elements of his subject matter.

The book relies heavily on information from ex-members of Hubbard's cult and from archives in the possession of these ex-members. But one gets the distinct impression that the information made available to Miller from such sources is being used selectively by the author, to draw attention away from certain things about Scientology.

Modern-day international cults have almost always been closely related to, or been products of, intelligence agencies—and more often than not, have been created or used by the same intelligence agency milieu who have also created the "anti-cult" counter-operation. But, in the case of this book, author Miller is so busy debunking, point by point, Hubbard/Scientology's own account of Hubbard/Scientology's past, that he never bothers to entertain the hypothesis that Hubbard had intelligence community connections.

Hubbard early moved in science-fiction writing circles.

Hubbard was one of the more widely read science-fiction writers in the 1930s and 1940s. Might not such circles have led him into contact with intelligence services and operatives, who may have been using Scientology for certain purposes?

Hubbard was in the U.S. Navy. It is common knowledge among informed security experts in the United States, that Hubbard had links to the U.S. Office of Naval Intelligence, and may have been, at one time or another, an agent of the ONI.

Miller's avoidance of the issue strains the imagination, especially as he is a regular writer of international reputation for the *Sunday Times* of London, a paper which specializes in exposés and histories of intelligence agency brawls. He is hardly a novice. Ultimately, his exposé has the quality of political science-fiction.

Miller's heavy reliance on ex-members' testimony is a purely reductionist approach, ultimately not much better than gossip. One never knows who the ex-member is, beyond a name attached to a statement. Might such ex-members have special "axes to grind?" Would one or another such ex-member have been involved in intelligence activity, or have been part of an intelligence probe? Perhaps, on investigation, such questions wouldn't lead an investigator very far. But Miller's problem is that he either simply avoids such lines of investigation, or dismisses them as "paranoid."

Yet, he could not be unaware that such questions are everyday matters in the intelligence trade, especially concerning a group, like Scientology, that had enough clout to maintain a private navy, create a corporate nexus that gave Hubbard alone \$40 million in income from various corporations (as we finally learn on almost the last page), infiltrate governments and intelligence services, draw a following from around the world, etc.

The group's entire belief-structure, judging from the evidence of the book and what is otherwise known about Scientology, is at best bizarre, if not a willful irrationalist's assault on science, epistemology, and politics.

This question gets to the heart of the matter: What was Scientology's relation to the satanic movement for a "New Age"/"Age of Aquarius"—an intelligence project spanning the past 100 years?

Miller has a fascinating, if ultimately disappointing, chapter about Hubbard's involvement, c. 1944-45, in a California black-magic group led by one Jack Parsons, a disciple and financial supporter of Aleister Crowley, this century's guru of "sex-magic" Satanism. (On Crowley and Satanism, see *EIR*, Vol. 14, No. 47, Nov. 28, 1987 "Aquarian author admits 'New Age' movement is Nazi.") In this chapter, the author's intention is to debunk the claim of Scientology literature, that Hubbard had joined the Parsons circle to destroy black magic from within. But Miller's only counter to this, is to demonstrate, once again, that Hubbard was engaging in a financial racket, to "rip off" Parsons. Crowley and Parsons are portrayed, in essence, as the victims of Hubbard's wheeling-and-dealing in the satanic drama. To the same effect, Parsons' own strange death in the 1940s is given no explanation.

Later in the book, one ex-member is quoted referring to Hubbard as a modern-day Madame Blavatsky, the 19th-century Russian founder of Theosophy. There are also brief suggestions of Dianetics/Scientology's links to such kook-science movements as phrenology, and to a super-reductionist branch of Freudianism. But these passages are superficial in content.

Then, six pages before the end of the book, Miller suddenly mentions a June 1983 interview given to *Penthouse* magazine by Hubbard's son, "Nibs," who was very hostile to his father. He charged that father L. Ron had been involved in black magic since the age of 16, believed himself to be Satan, smuggled gold and drugs, was a KGB agent, and had used money obtained from the Russians to buy the Maharajah of Jaipur's Saint Hill Manor in Sussex. Said Nibs: "Black magic is the inner core of Scientology. . . . You've got to realize that my father did not worship Satan. He thought he was Satan."

Miller calls this "a little too wild," and lacking "subtlety." Why? Why write a book of almost 400 pages, purporting to be a shocking exposé, and simply dismiss charges that are *substantive*, while embracing only evidence that conforms to the popular "con-man" construct? Miller seems definitely afraid to find out "where the monkey sleeps."

One might almost think the book is written as "damage-control," to protect someone somewhere.

An estate in Sussex

In 1957, according to both Scientology's own and Miller's accounts, Hubbard suddenly bought the estate of the

Maharajah of Jaipur in Sussex, England and set up his headquarters there. Sussex is a center of some of the more interesting of British psychological-warfare and intelligence operations in the postwar period, including those associated with a certain Marie Jahoda, one of the insiders in the Soviet intelligence-linked "Frankfurt School," and later a director of the Sussex Science Policy Research Unit, a nexus of KGB operations into the West.

One knowledgeable source, familiar with the Jahoda/Sussex milieu, has told this reviewer that, in the early days, into the early 1960s, Dianetics/Scientology was looked on favorably in psychological-policy circles in Britain, because of Hubbard's "insights on the primacy of perception." Later, this individual said, relevant circles in the Sussex milieu felt that Hubbard had gone awry, as his group became more of a church and a cult.

Is the "Hubbard project" a Frankenstein that got out of control? Or, perhaps not out of control at all? Author Miller evidently does not wish to know, or have us know.

Books Received

Chennault: A Definitive Biography of the Legendary Leader of the Flying Tigers and the U.S. 14th Air Force in China, by Jack Samson, Introduction by Sen. Barry Goldwater. Doubleday and Co., Inc., Garden City, N.Y., 1987. \$19.95 hardbound, 360 pages.

The Great Depression: A Classic Study of the Worldwide Depression of the 1930s, by John A. Garraty. Doubleday and Co., Inc., Garden City, N.Y., 1987. \$9.95 paperbound, 304 pages.

Traitors: The Anatomy of Treason, by Chapman Pincher. St. Martin's Press, N.Y., 1987. \$19.95 hardbound, 346 pages.

Rebels from West Point, by Gerard A. Patterson. Doubleday and Co., Inc., Garden City, N.Y., 1987. \$16.95 hardbound, 216 pages.

The Political Economy of International Relations, by Robert Gilpin. Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J., 1987. \$45 hardbound, \$9.95 paperbound, 450 pages.

Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period, by Carol Gluck. Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J., 1987. \$60 hardbound, \$12.50 paperbound, 408 pages.

Peter the Great, by Henri Troyat, translated by Joan Pinkham. E.P. Dutton-A William Abrahams Book, N.Y., 1987. \$22.50 hardbound, 432 pages.