

Exhibit 8

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75 Scientologists go on trial today

By Ruth E. Gruber, Times Correspondent

1. If you need to review the more recent activities of Scientology and their Narconon organization, this one should help. It concerns alleged fraud and tax evasion in Italy earlier this year. Note the three names under which they were operating: Scientology, Dianetics, and Narconon.

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'It should be a lively court session'

By RUTH E. GRUBER
Times Correspondent

ROME — Seventy-five members of the Church of Scientology's Italian operation go before a Milan court today to face a long list of charges ranging from fraud, extortion and tax evasion to the illegal practice of medicine and taking advantage of incapacitated people.

"It should be a lively court session," said the Milan daily *Il Giornale*, predicting possible courtroom demonstrations by Scientology sympathizers.

The Scientologists have hired some of Milan's most prominent lawyers to defend them and are expected to base their case on the principles of religious freedom and freedom of association.

Italy is the latest in a series of countries that has taken legal action against the followers of L. Ron Hubbard, the American science fiction writer who became the object of a following in the 1950s.

As long ago as 1963, Britain placed restrictions on foreigners coming to Britain to study Scientology or work for the sect, and in 1979, 11 American Scientology leaders were convicted of theft from government offices.

In a massive investigation started in 1981, Italian investigators accumulated 160,000 pages of documents relating to their case and formulated 43 specific accusations against the defendants, who operated under the names of Scientology, Dianetics and Narconon.

The investigation was sparked by a series of formal complaints by family members of Scientologists who claimed the organization got a financial stranglehold on its members and then forced them to work for the organization.

According to the investigation, the Church of Scientology was receiving donations ranging from 16,000 lire (\$12) to 45-million lire (\$35,000) in exchange for "teaching" and "medical treatment."

The total amounts of money

involved in the organization, according to the investigation, ran into hundreds of millions of dollars, about 30 percent of which was believed to have ended up in the United States at Scientology's international headquarters in Los Angeles or its spiritual headquarters in Clearwater. Tax evasion was estimated around \$50-million.

The investigation said parents of drug addicts, for example, were

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paying heavy monthly fees to Narconon, which advertised itself as a drug rehabilitation and cure center, but getting nothing in return.

The father of one boy, Patrizio C., is cited in the investigation as a typical example. He testified that despite the fact he paid regular sums to Narconon, his son was allowed unrestrained access to the city and in fact continued to buy and use drugs on a daily basis.

In 1986, Italian authorities ordered the closure of 32 Scientology centers in North and Central Italy and arrested a number of leaders in the sect.

Scientology supporters staged hunger strikes, marches and demonstrations in a number of towns to protest the crackdown.

Last year, there was another mass arrest of about 30 Scientologists.

All of those arrested were released on their own recognizance to await trial.