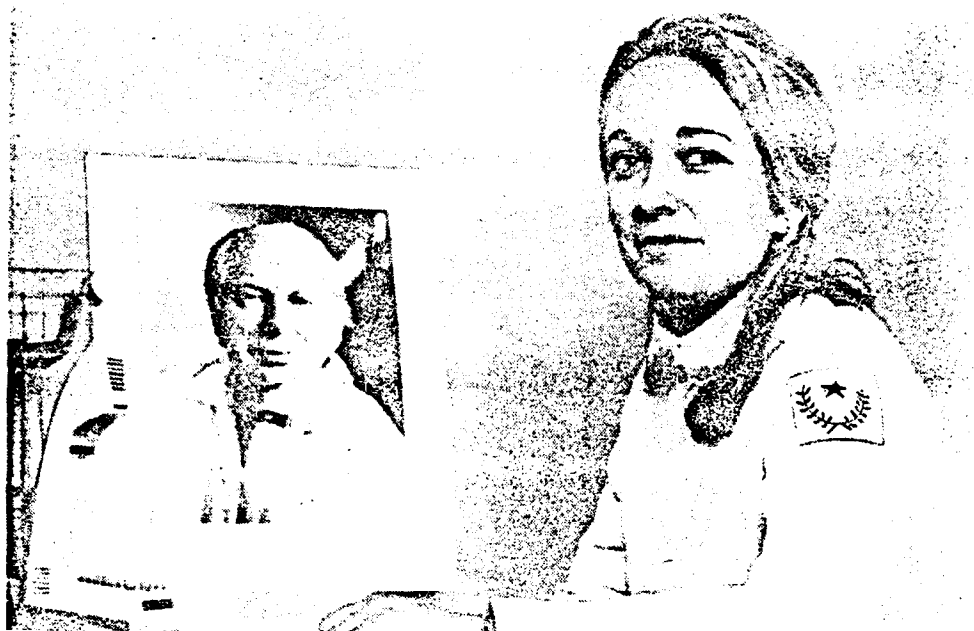


I VISIT THE SCOTS SCIENTOLOGY H.Q.



MADELEINE LITCHFIELD, of the Edinburgh scientology H.Q. Behind her is a portrait of the cult's founder, Ron Hubbard.

LAST night I visited the Hubbard College of Personal Independence in South Bridge, Edinburgh.

It's the Scottish headquarters of Scientology—the organisation Health Minister Kenneth Robinson claimed is "socially harmful."

He also said the Government has found it "so objectionable that it would be right to take all steps within their power to curb its growth."

The first thing I was told by Madeline Litchfield (21) was: "Scots are particularly suited to Scientology."

"Their desire for personal independence is what Scientology is all about," said Madeline, who has the rank of 'Communicator,' and wore the Scientology uniform—a white polo neck sweater with star and laurel leaf badge in gold on her right sleeve.

The centre in South Bridge is for advanced students.

When I arrived, public relations officer Laurel Watson (19), an attractive blonde from Vancouver, Canada, was on the phone.

Officials

"Send round the biggest and best flowers you've got," she said. "We've a graduation tonight."

The college was divided into different rooms, each one plush and carpeted inside.

At first it wasn't clear what was going on. Everyone just seemed to be talking.

One woman wearing headphones sat at a desk. In another room people were crowded together chatting, and a young man played a guitar.

Madeline Litchfield—who was born in London but has lived 10 years in Canada—was introduced to Scientology when she was 18. She's now one of the top officials in the Scottish office.

She said: "We can't understand why Kenneth Robinson criticised us. Maybe he thinks we're going to take over the Government."

"Hitler did the same thing to

By SUNDAY MAIL REPORTER

minority groups when he persecuted the Jews.

"WE WANT A WORLD WITH COMPLETE PEACE, AND NO WAR.

"Basically what we teach people is how to communicate.

"We don't believe in drugs, for it means people lose control of their minds.

"We do accept people who have used drugs, but they must promise to give them up.

"After a while we give them a test to see if they've been keeping off drugs.

"For this we have a machine something like a lie detector.

"We've been told our teachings are a danger to mental health. We've had people come to us from mental institutions after electric shock treatment.

"In most cases we can help them, but sometimes they are so sick they crack up again.

"These are the only people whose minds we have been charged with damaging.

"We are here to make able people more able. We don't even teach our cult to our own children—they can choose to take it up if they want.

Criticised

"People are taught to find out their own potentials. A salesman who takes up Scientology will find his sales increase a hundred times after we've taught him how to communicate.

"If a man has been unhappy with his wife for ten years, and he feels he should leave her, he should do so.

"We don't advise him to do this—but we do teach him to make the right decisions.

"We've been criticised so much in England because people there want things to stay the same. The Englishman doesn't want his freedom but the Scot does.

"In America Scientology is sponsored financially by many states.

"The Swedes have also taken it up

in a big way and so has South Africa.

Some reports say a Scientology course costs up to £1000. I asked Miss Litchfield about this.

"We charge people who want to learn Scientology but it is a science and equivalent to a university education," she said.

"We reckon somebody who wants to learn Scientology will find a way to get the money he needs.

"Once he starts his studies he'll find that what he's learnt at the course will help him to make more money at his job, and this solves any financial problem.

"When Ron Hubbard, our founder, started teaching Scientology 18 years ago he taught it free... nobody was interested in learning the science.

"It was only after he put a price on it and people learned its values that they came to him.

Calmer

"At first everybody wanted to add their own thoughts to the teachings. This caused breakaway groups but they faded away.

"RON DECIDED ONLY HIS TEACHINGS SHOULD BE USED.

"The white polo neck uniform we wear signifies the future and purity. Anyone who read science fiction will know this.

"We're preparing a room at the centre in Edinburgh for Ron in case he drops in.

"We hold our own marriages which are not considered legal in England.

"We haven't had any weddings in Scotland but we've got two christenings in October.

"It's a strange thing but in a ward of newly-born children the baby who has Scientology parents looks calmer than the rest.

"We also crew our own ships. One, a 350-berth liner was bought in Scotland. We believe in physical exercise in the same way as mental exercise."

● Scientology leaders were seeking legal advice yesterday over the last week's slating of their movement by health minister Kenneth Robinson.

Said a senior official: "Our legal advisers are being consulted over the week-end on this matter."