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## SCIENTOLOGY 'A HIGH PRICE RACKET'

By ALEX FAULKNER

NEW YORK, Wednesday.

A DEVASTATINGLY critical account of Scientology appears today in the New York publication *Women's Wear Daily*, which is devoted essentially to fashions, but often explores matters far afield from them.

"A new and quite apparently phoney 'religion' called Scientology is beginning to emerge from the lower depths," it says. "In the United States it is still basically unknown except to cultists and a few curiosity seekers. But in recent days, Subway posters have appeared in New York urging everyone: 'Step into the world of the totally free.'"

"Its bible is a compilation of mawkish platitudes offering instant happiness for \$5 a course or a six-months' course in understanding for \$1,500 [£624]."

### 'Total freedom'

"Scientology is a racket with offices in key cities throughout the United States and England. Its main teaching is "total freedom" and it worships no god but its founder, L. Ron Hubbard, a sort of Western guru with an unholy smile.

"Its services are conducted on Sundays at 2 p.m. in Centrad Park behind the Metropolitan Museum of Art with Flower Children, Hippies, high school dropouts and disillusioned adults.

"And one of the principal 'dynamics' or commandments for the cult's worshippers is the sex act itself, pure and simple."

The debates which have raged in the House of Commons, says this publication, really boil down to the question of whether scientology is, or is not, a religion.

### 'Confidence game'

"It isn't," it asserts. "It's a high-priced confidence game. However, as a movement, scientology continues to grow at an astounding rate here in the United States and abroad. In New York city its membership reportedly has increased more than 500 per cent. in two years.

"At the Martinique Hotel on 32nd Street, headquarters of one of its thriving branches, followers of founder Hubbard include mini-skirted girls, bearded youth, part-time advisers and 'ministers.' There are also the curiosity seekers pondering whether to take the initial step called 'processing' at a cost of \$15 [£6]."

### Press excluded

Members of the local Press were barred from a scientology lecture in Altrincham, Cheshire, last night because a "doorman" said members of the Press would not be allowed to Scientology meetings "until the present witch hunt had ended."