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## Scientology...

### Land-Lease Racket

NEW YORK — A new, and quite apparently phony "religion" called Scientology is beginning to emerge from the lower depths.

For many weeks it has been a frontpage story in Great Britain where the government has been moved to act against the new cult.

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."

However, a WWD report by Denis Sheahan indicates there is nothing "totally free" about Scientology. His WWD report follows:

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

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

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WELL ORGANIZED: Church of Scientology's founder L. Ron Hubbard, center, controls a cult that is attracting increasing numbers from its base of organization chart, left. Attractive Hermann Nichols is behind stacks of books and pamphlets on sale at cult's headquarters in New York City's Hotel Martinique.

# Scientology—Racket Spreads To U.S. From British Isles

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founder, L. Ron Hubbard, a sort of Western guru with an unholy smile.

It is a cult of smooth-talking "ministers" who don't know the difference between a Ph.D. and a Doctor of Divinity.

ITS SERVICES are conducted Sundays at 2 p.m. in Central 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 for itself, pure and simple.

For the last few weeks Scientology has dominated the pages of British newspapers, including the *Times* of London, citing the Home Secretary, and the Minister of Health's declarations that the cult is "socially harmful."

Debates have raged in the House of Commons over whether the British government bans on entry of persons connected with Scientology are really attacks on freedom of religion.

The debates boil down to the

issue of whether Scientology is, or is not, a religion. It isn't.

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 5-1 Street, headquarters of one of its thriving branches, followers of founder Hubbard include mini-skirted girls, bearded youths, part-time students and "ministers." There are also the curiosity seekers pondering whether to take the initial step called "processing" . . . at a cost of \$15.

One "convert" who was processed told WWD that "one thing led to another, and before I knew what happened, I spent \$1,000."

ANOTHER UPSTATE New York youth said money for the courses presented no problem because the cult schools you can now to obtain the fees for the curriculum.

"If money is a barrier," the youth said, "Scientology teaches you how to overcome it."

According to Eric Barnes, one of its so-called seminarian ministers, the cult has a "policy" of almost

all races and creeds except Negroes.

"We only have a few blacks," Barnes said.

THE RECEPTION room of the Hotel Martinique is filled with only a smattering of founder Hubbard's writings which include pocket books, paperbacks technical manuals, major texts and reference works. The prices range from 50 cents to \$7. A life-size poster of Hubbard sells for \$5.

According to Barnes, teaching is done on three floors of the premises. And it is through Hubbard's books that the "thetans," or converts, are taught. And taught they are.

It's almost a bargain basement sale, one follower said.

No one under 13 years of age is admitted simply because they don't have money.

Adults are permitted to work part-time to pay for the processing and training.

Discounts are also provided. And if a "thetan" doesn't like a course, he can get his money back. So far, no one has asked for it.

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