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Scientologists deserve credit for anti-IRS forum

The recent anti-Internal Revenue Service forum sponsored by the Church of Scientology may turn out to be a boon to the taxpaying public.

While we hold no brief for the Scientologists or their doctrines, we feel it is only fair to spotlight their contributions to the public good.

And, although their motives are questionable (the Scientologists have suffered at the hands of the IRS and have a policy of getting even with attackers), they have certainly done the American public a service by providing an opportunity for the National Council of IRS Whistleblowers to publicize some of the abuses perpetrated by the agency.

The Whistleblowers were the guests of the Scientologists on Monday. The principal speaker was a former U.S. congressman, George Hansen, who is doing his best to alert the country to IRS outrages.

There are many such outrages. As the years pass, an impressive array of IRS horror stories has developed.

They include taxpayer investigations based upon religious and political affiliations; the canceling of taxpayers' rights because of large gifts to churches and other charities; and the persecution by the IRS of its employees who threaten to tell the truth about the agency's tactics.

As the federal government tries to stamp out the non-taxpaying underground economy, the extremist methods of the IRS are likely to grow worse. Uncle Sam needs every penny he can lay his hands on, and the IRS is his principal collection agency.

Wrongdoing by any government agency should be publicized. The Scientologists, who don't think they should pay taxes, have an obviously self-serving reason for wanting to put the spotlight on the less-savory doings of the IRS. But even with that clearcut ax to grind, the local Scientologists should be commended for giving the Coalition a chance to broadcast its message.