

Books of The Times

Scientology Debunked

By JOHN LEONARD

SCIENTOLOGY: The New Religion. By George Malko. 205 pages. Delacorte Press. \$5.95.

Halfway through this mind-boggling book, in the middle of a discussion of affinity tone scales, black thetans spitting white energy, the planet Helatrobos, Aircraft Door Implants and Gorilla Goals, George Malko pauses to observe, "Of course all this struck me as being insane garbage." Of course. Up to this point, Mr. Malko had been

so stoically groping his way through the mystagogical smog of L. Ron Hubbard's mind that one wanted to scream at him: But it's preposterous! Since screaming at books is about as useful as voting in Presidential elections, the tension grew until Mr. Malko chose to relieve it. One can thereafter endure Scientology's E-meters, Alice



Elizabeth Malko

George Malko

games, Havingness processes, gradient scale drills, capping beams and opposition terminals—not to mention the eight Dynamics, the 24 Logics and the 58 Axioms—with that same incredulous gape one brings to the economic theories of Ezra Pound or Wilhelm Reich's Orgone Energy Accumulator or the Protocols of Zion or the Flying Nun.

Mr. Malko, a freelance writer and film producer, tells us the whole inspiring story of L. Ron Hubbard, who rose from the lowly estate of a science-fiction novelist to become our first operating thetan. Mr. Hubbard operates these days from a fleet of ships somewhere in the Mediterranean, seeking his previous incarnations with the help of the \$140,000 a week he receives as his 10 per cent cut of Scientology's gross income. His "thetan" (beingness) has been liberated because he got rid of the one basic "engram" (the sound impression a psychic trauma makes on our protoplasm), which "was received by the human race many, many centuries ago, and probably was a supersonic shot in the forehead, chest and stomach, incapacitating, and reducing, the size and function of the pineal gland." Not to slight the "To Forget" goal planted on him at the Helatrobos station "some 38 trillion to 43 trillion years ago". . .

Subscribers to Fantasy

I can't go on. Fortunately, Mr. Malko managed to do so, because 15 million people subscribe to Hubbard's fantasy. It's a church with a tax exemption, inside which the parishioners play games to free their theta bodies from their MEST (Matter-Energy-Space-Time) bodies. It offers a little bit of everything: Orientalia (reincarnation); psychoanalysis (talking out one's

aberrations); scientific authority (E-meters to measure one's anxiety, tone scales to chart one's progress); fantasies of omnipotence (a theta body will be capable of telepathy, psychokinesis, etc.); sci-fi romance (all that galactic gallivanting, those goal-implanting stations on other planets); utopia ("total freedom"); and Descartes (the pineal gland makes a comeback!).

Does it do any harm? Mr. Malko is unable to substantiate rumors of kidnapping and other forms of huggermugger. He does paint a frightening picture of the "Ethics Gestapo," a paramilitary corps of commissars who policed the laity's thinking during the Great Amprinistics Heresy. There were loyalty oaths, security checks, even a Criminals Prosecution Bureau. Those deviating from the Hubbard line were to be investigated for any crimes in their past; if crimes were found, they were reported to the police. Since each Scientology convert goes through "auditing" and E-meter sessions, which open up a lot of leads for such an investigation, it was as though a Freudian analyst turned over his private files to the police when a patient decided to switch to Adler or Jung.

Remember That Gorilla?

However ugly these proceedings, and however suspect the disordered ravings of Hubbard against his real and fancied enemies, no one appears to have been permanently hurt. And when a Scientologist tells you that, while thinking about the reasons why he had a toothache, he suddenly saw a gorilla—gorilla goals having been implanted in his theta 83 trillion trillion years ago—and the pain disappeared, what can you say? If he thinks it works, maybe it works, like New Criticism, glue-sniffing, astrology, yarrow stalks and bubblegum.

Mr. Malko runs it all through the sausage machine—Hubbard's unacknowledged debt to Dr. A. Nordenholz and R. Buckminster Fuller; Scientology's legal troubles in Australia and Britain; those beautiful girls with their miniskirts, wide-eyed stares and incessant "thank-you's" at the 32d Street church; the costly tomes and courses; the McCarthyistic "suppressive" and "disconnect" policies; the improvisational dogma and the splinter groups—and finds the ultimate grind unappetizing. He wonders whether Hubbard hasn't written another science-fiction novel.

He also quotes from Dr. Rollo May's analysis of an earlier Hubbard excrescence, *Dianetics*: Yes, it's nice to encourage a patient "to experience his own feelings"—see Freud on abreaction—but "the difficulty is that the event about which the patient works out his feelings usually has no demonstrable relation to present reality." And none at all to Hubbard's surreality. . . I wonder which is sadder: millions of people buying a fantasy (it's magic!) and pretending it's science; or a culture of desperation that encourages such fantasies as a corpse encourages maggots?