Scientology:

To Get Free of 'Negative Memories'

A young man and a middle-aged woman stared silently at each other across a long, narrow table in a room in a tan brick building in Washington, D. C., one day last week. A guide explained that they were engaged in an exercise known as "training rudiment zero" so as to make them "more able to confront another life source."

At the end of the table another young man was busy making little clay models. He, too, was engaged in a spiritual exercise—this one designed to give visual expression to fundamental concepts such as "man is basically good."

All three of the spiritual gymnasts were Scientologists, members of a controversial and burgeoning religious and self-improvement sect that for eight years has been fighting the Government for its survival.

Last week, the Scientologists were back in Federal District Court in the District of Columbia. They were trying to recover two tons of literature and electronic devices that Food and Drug Administration officials, aided by some Baltimore long-shoremen deputized for the occasion, had seized in a raid on their Washington head-quarters in January, 1963.

Scientology is the creation of L. Ron Hubbard, a 60-year-old science-fiction writer, aviator and member of the Explorers Club. He first achieved widespread attention in 1950 when his book, "Dianetics: the Modern Science of Mental Health," became a best-seller. Dianetics has now evolved into the much more elaborate Scientology, and the Nebraskaborn founder now supervises a multimillion-dollar international operation from a 320-foot yacht in the Mediterranean.

Statistics about the movement are imprecise and cloaked in the secrecy that marks much of the sect's operations, but there is little doubt that it is growing Leaders report 19 churches and 90 missions in this country with 300 active clergymen and more than three million members. They claim a worldwide membership of 10 million, mostly in Englishspeaking countries, although some regard this figure as inflated.

The fundamental tenets of Scientology are that man is inherently good, but that to realize his full potential as an immortal spirit ("thetan") he must free himself from the negative memories from the past. The movement asserts belief in a Supreme Being but emphasizes that its techniques are compatible with adherence to any major world religion.

The principal technique is "auditing," a counseling process in which the Scientologists say an individual is led to higher levels of selfawareness through questions that probe into his past. As wart of the process, the counselor makes use of an "E-meter," a battery-operated skin galvanometer that is described as a "space-age confessional aid" and resembles lie detector devices. "It's a barometer of the spirit," said the Rev. Arthur J. Moren, a 29-year-old official of the church. "It allows us to get into areas of stress very quickly."

Scientology asserts that 80 per cent of diseases are psychosomatic, and claims have been made that the auditing process can heal diseases ranging from the common cold to cancer.

Recruits to Scientology log hundreds of hours in counseling and those in Washington attend Sunday afternoon services in the Universal Freedom Chapel. The initial course is only \$15 but it costs \$5,000 in tuition alone to reach the highest current level of Scientology: Operating Thetan, Class VII. Many recruits take low-paying jobs with the "org" (short for organization) to finance their spiritual progress.

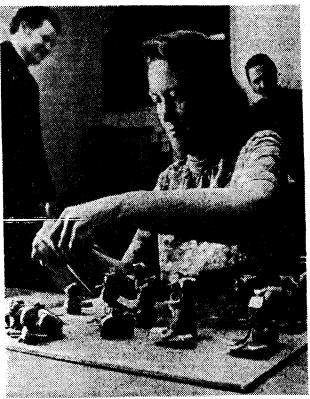
From the beginning, Scientology has been attacked leading psychologists and the psychiatric establishment. They claim that the sect is flirting with tragedy putting relatively trained counselors behind Emeters and encouraging them to delve into the unconscious of idealistic recruits. The Scientologists have fought back by issuing frequent news releases attacking psychia-trists as "mental health trists as "mental health racketeers" and linking mental hopsitals to Communism.

Action Taken in 1963

Apparently because their healing activities involved an electronic "device," the F.D.A. moved against the sect in 1963. The agency charged that it made "false and misleading statements" about its capacity to cure illnesses and that the scope of the operation made it a "substantial public hazard."

The Scientologists maintain that the fact that they make use of technological devices, rather than classical devices like rosaries or bread and wine, is no reason to discriminate against them, and that their auditing process is protected by a constitutional right to freedom of religious expression.

Religion



The New York Times/George Tames

A Scientologist, a member of a controversial religious sect in trouble with the Government, makes clay models as part of a spiritual exercise.

The Government, on the other hand, has argued that the movement, despite a religious "overlay," is engaged in "pseudo-scientific" healing activities that clearly fall into its sphere of enforcement. But it is in the awkward position of citing virtually the entire corpus of literature of a legally incorporated church as an example of "mislabeling" a medical device.

The Court of Appeals overturned an earlier conviction on the ground that the jury had no right to judge the validity of religious texts, and last week Judge Gerhard Gesell pressed Government lawyers to suggest some way of moving against the E-meter without putting the court in a position of ruling on religious doctrine.

The Government, however, refused to limit its evidence to a few selective passages about the E-meter, and clearly had set its sights on putting Scientology out of the counseling business. As one F.D.A. spokesman put it, "It does no good to eliminate a few passages or books. They still have plenty more of that junk to use in its place."

-EDWARD B. FISKE