

Scientology Group Starts Media Attack On Time Magazine

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Full-Page Ads in USA Today
Are Intended to Refute
Unflattering Cover Story

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The Church of Scientology has launched an unusually large-scale media attack against Time magazine in retribution for an unflattering cover story on the worldwide organization earlier this month.

The church, founded by the late L. Ron Hubbard, took out a four-color, full-page ad yesterday in Gannett Co.'s USA Today with the headline "What magazine gets it wrong in 1991...the same one that was wrong in 1936. Time magazine." The ad, using quotes from W.A. Swanberg's "Luce and His Empire," says Time openly supported Adolf Hitler and his Nazi regime in its pages throughout the 1930s.

Rebuttals through advertising aren't unusual, but they rarely run longer than one day. However, the Church of Scientology said it plans a long series of high-priced ads meant to embarrass the respected newsweekly.

The well-funded church, which is sometimes referred to as a cult, was irked by the Time cover of May 6 that read "Scientology: The Cult of Greed." The story delineated how Scientology had supposedly duped people out of their life savings, committed federal crimes, and was aiming to attract mainstream Americans. The story also described the group's attempts to harass its critics.

The editors at Time should brace for more. Rev. Heber C. Jentzsch, president of the Church of Scientology International, said similar full-page ads will run every day in USA Today for several weeks followed by a special supplement to run on June 14, also aimed at discrediting Time magazine. A full page in USA Today costs \$74,757.

The group is currently mailing an 80-page booklet to business, media, and political leaders entitled "Fact vs. Fiction," which the group says is "a correction of falsehoods" in the Time article. The Rev. Jentzsch also hinted at a wider attack using other media. "Just keep your eyes peeled," he said, without providing any details.

A Time spokesman said the magazine's editors stand behind the article and that a counteroffensive isn't planned.

A spokesman for USA Today said the ads were being checked by the paper's legal department. "They have a right to buy the space as long as it isn't libelous," the spokesman said. "We take them like we do anyone else's ads."