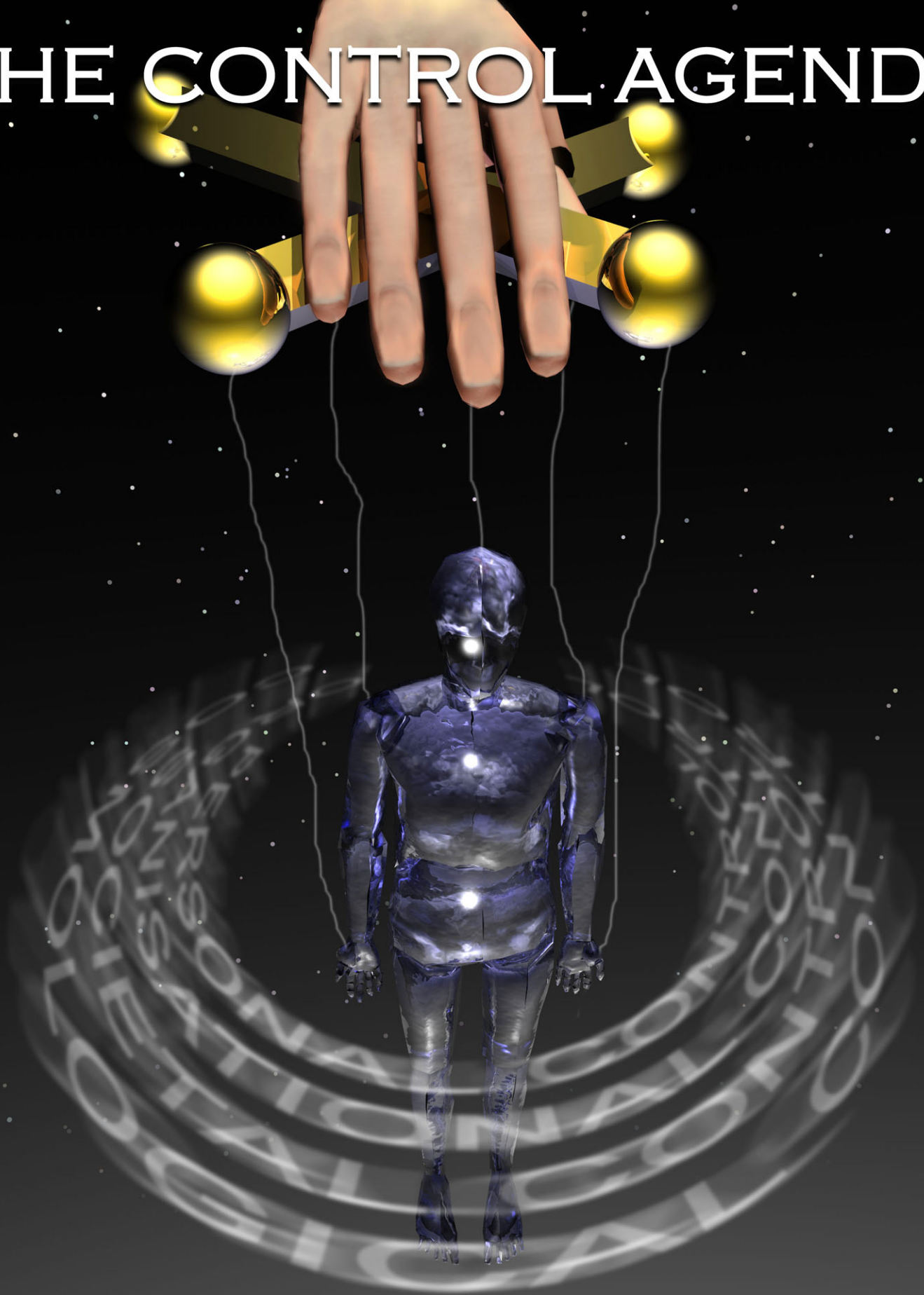


# THE CONTROL AGENDA



CONTROL, RESPONSIBILITY AND FREEDOM  
IN THE CHURCH OF SCIENTOLOGY  
BY CHRIS OWEN

# LMT LITERATI 2000 CONTEST FIRST PLACE

*First Place goes to Chris Owen for his well documented essay entitled "The Control Agenda: Control, Responsibility and Freedom in the Church of Scientology." Chris was able to describe the four spheres of Scientology's control -- Personal, Organizational, Societal and Cosmological -- in terms that can be understood even by someone who is completely unfamiliar with Scientology's totalitarian political agenda. Congratulations to Chris for his prize of USD 7,000.00.*

# **The Control Agenda: Control, Responsibility and Freedom in the Church of Scientology**

by Chris Owen

**An endless freedom from is a perfect trap, a fear of all things ... Fixed on too many barriers, man yearns to be free. But launched into total freedom he is purposeless and miserable.**

*(Hubbard, "The Reason Why", Professional Auditor's Bulletin no. 84, 15 May 1956, reprinted in Technical Volumes of Dianetics & Scientology vol. 1 p. 418)*

**The only way you can control people is to lie to them.**

*(Hubbard, "Off the Time Track", lecture of June 1952 excerpted in Journal of Scientology issue 18-G, reprinted in Technical Volumes of Dianetics & Scientology vol. 1 p. 418)*

# Introduction

For the non-Scientologist, the fact that "the road to total freedom" should be administered by such a prescriptive (and restrictive) organisation is surely one of the strangest paradoxes about Scientology. Freedom and control are fundamental issues for Scientology's philosophical outlook, intertwined in a complex relationship where the promotion of individual freedom and rigid authoritarianism co-exist in a bizarrely paradoxical fashion. One is reminded of the crowd in Monty Python's *Life of Brian* insisting in perfect uniformity that "We are all individuals". Yet to the Scientologist, there is no paradox. What does Scientology's behaviour tell us about its approach to issues of freedom, control and responsibility?

At the heart of Scientology lies what one might call the "control agenda" of its founder, L. Ron Hubbard. Over his 34-year career as leader of Scientology, Hubbard's preoccupation with control and individual freedom led him to pursue four distinct tracks concerning issues of control in successively wider spheres of interest: personal, organisational, societal and cosmological. Although Hubbard would not have described it as such, his approach was a fractal one - each sphere was essentially a scaled up analogue of the previous sphere. The four spheres can be described as:

**personal control** - concerning an individual's degree of personal control; whether an individual was in control of his own actions;

**organisational control** - concerning Scientology's degree of control over its members; whether individual Scientologists worked for or against Scientology's interests, which Hubbard equated with his own and those of mankind as a whole;

**societal control** - concerning the degree of self-control possessed by the world as a whole; whether wider society was controlled by irrational "anti-survival" forces or sane "pro-survival" forces; and

**cosmological control** - concerning the degree of ultimate control over the universe itself; whether the universe was controlled by the forces of "theta" or "entheta" (roughly analogous to good and evil).

Although the interlinked, fractal nature of the "control agenda" can fairly readily be seen in today's Scientology, it has in fact developed in a very piecemeal fashion over about 30 years. It did not develop to any pre-determined plan and, due to Hubbard's insistence that nobody but he was allowed to amend Scientology doctrine, it has never been revised to resolve the numerous inconsistencies which crept in over the years. This is the root cause of the many contradictions which commentators have noted over the years. To make sense of those contradictions, it is necessary to examine how each thread of the control agenda developed and ultimately merged.

# 1. Personal Control

Personal control is the oldest element of the control agenda and remains absolutely crucial to Scientology's programme of self-improvement. It also forms the philosophical basis for the rest of the control agenda, as the principles applied to the other spheres of interest are essentially the same but scaled up. Hubbard's ubiquitous slogan of "Total Freedom" is based fundamentally on the principle of personal control, though it has to be said that one would be hard pressed to find a definition of the term in his writings. It is mentioned only in passing - and not defined - in the otherwise comprehensive *Technical Dictionary of Dianetics and Scientology* and *Modern Management Technology Defined* (aka "the admin dictionary"). The slogan itself does not appear to have been adopted until about the mid-1960s, probably as a reaction to the various legislative attacks and restrictions on Scientology at the time. Perhaps its formal definition has been neglected because "Total Freedom" is used so frequently that, to the Scientologist, it needs no further explanation. In fact, the slogan effectively means "total control" - of self and of the world around oneself:

Scientology addresses the thetan. Scientology is used to increase spiritual freedom, intelligence, ability, and to produce immortality ... [Scientology is] knowledge and its application in the conquest of the material universe. (*Hubbard, Technical Dictionary of Dianetics and Scientology* p. 369, 1975 ed.)

The quest for self-improvement underpinned Hubbard's philosophy from the start. As he put it in *Scientology 0-8*:

Dianetics is the route from aberrated (or aberrated and ill) human to a well, happy, high-I.Q. human being. This breakthrough had never before been achieved in Man's history. Scientology is the route from there to total freedom and ability as a spiritual being. (*Hubbard, Scientology 0-8*, p. 12, 1970 ed.)

The fundamental principle of both Dianetics and Scientology is that through certain drills one can overcome mental blocks, previously completely hidden to the individual, which prevent one from achieving full potential. Hubbard's initial goal was, by later standards, relatively modest: Dianetics was presented as uncovering "the hidden source of all psychosomatic ills and human aberration" and developing "their invariable cure." The end result of Dianetics was supposed to be a person free of most physical ailments, without neuroses, with greatly improved IQ and a perfect memory. People were hitherto unable to reach this desirable state because of the memories of painful past experiences, dubbed "engrams" by Hubbard (adopting a long-used word originally coined for a "lasting mark or trace"). Worse still, the "reactive mind's" store of engrams was capable of overriding a person's self-control:

In a drugged state, when anaesthetized as in an operation, when rendered "unconscious" by injury or illness, the individual yet has his reactive mind in full operation. He may not be "aware" of what has taken place, but, as dianetics has discovered and can prove, everything which happened to him in the interval of "unconsciousness" was fully and completely recorded. This information is unappraised by his conscious mind, neither evaluated nor reasoned. It can, at any future date, become reactivated by similar circumstances observed by the awake and conscious individual. When any such recording, an engram, becomes reactivated, it has command power. It shuts down the conscious mind to greater or lesser degree, takes over the motor controls of the body and causes behavior and action to which the conscious mind, the individual himself, would never

consent. He is, nevertheless, handled like a marionette by his engrams. (*Hubbard, Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health*, p. xiii, 1988 ed.)

The malign influence of engrams produced "aberrations" in the individual, causing behaviour effectively to be pre-programmed by the individual's stock of engrams:

Man is intended to be a self-determined organism. That is to say that as long as he can make evaluations of his data without artificial compulsions or repressions ... he can operate to maximum efficiency. When man becomes exteriorly-determined, which is to say compelled to do or repressed from doing without his own rational consent, he becomes a push-button animal. (*Hubbard, Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health*, p. 278, 1988 ed.)

By erasing a person's engrams the individual gained a progressively greater degree of "self-determination." In effect, the message of Dianetics is that self-control is necessary for individual freedom.

Hubbard developed this concept several steps further in Scientology. He placed the issue of self-control at the very centre of his new "science of the mind" with the Communication Course, one of the first courses given to new Scientology students. The drills which Hubbard devised for this course are intended to "flatten [the student's] buttons", or to put it another way, to reduce their emotional responsiveness. The best example is the "Bullbaiting" drill, which involves a Scientologist talking abusively to the student, trying to provoke an emotional response. The drill is "flunked" if such a response is elicited. Eventually the "end phenomenon" is reached, whereupon the student can respond to any insult with calm unconcern. Many non-Scientologists have remarked upon this glassy calmness, which some characterise as the "Scientology stare". This is a good example of how Scientology seeks to instill a high degree of self-control into its members.

Much of the Communication Course covers similar ground to Dianetics, in that it seeks to break down the mental blockages imposed by the reactive mind and thus put the individual in full control of his own actions. The same principle applies throughout Scientology's numerous levels. The only real differences are the drills, the name of the blockages, the fees charged and the ever more obtuse descriptions, as in this example from a promotional leaflet for three high-level Scientology courses:

The most severe aberration on your whole track is made up of an accumulation of efforts to stop ... This basic motivation is so deeply hidden that it can only be discovered by the powerful processes of L11...

LRH [Hubbard] found that a person's spiritual progress could be blocked if he is pinned down by an earlier lifetime that was evil... L10 [can] handle such deep-seated aberrations that would be unapproachable with other processes ...

The thetan is surrounded by electronic fields, filled with aberration - which is what constitutes your case. Ron's incredible discoveries on L12 dismantle big chunks of case that actually wrap a being up like a mummy. (*Leaflet, "The Flag Only L Rundowns", Church of Scientology International, 1996*)

The pitch is simple: "Welcome to level 1. You lack true self-control because of factor A. Do course X. Advance to level 2. Now we can tell you that you lack true self-control because of factor B. Do course Y. Advance to level 3. Now..." and so on. The cynic might conclude from this that Hubbard was not actually promoting a bridge with a clear start and finish, but an endless treadmill

of problem-solution-new problem-new-solution, each fresh iteration being charged at substantially higher rates. Indeed, the process is still continuing: the supposedly final OT8 course has now been "revealed" to be only a precursor to the posthumously released OT9, the first of the "true" OT levels. (Of course, OT1 to 8 had previously been publicised as being the "true" OT levels.) Judging from the accounts of disillusioned ex-Scientologists, many have indeed concluded that they were being taken for a never-ending ride.

One aspect introduced even at the early stages of Scientology training is, however, markedly different from anything encountered in Dianetics. This difference marks out a key premise of Scientology.

Training Routines 6 to 9 (developed by Hubbard between 1953 and 1957 and now comprising the "Upper Indoc[trination] TRs") are involved not simply with controlling oneself but with controlling other individuals and material objects. Their aim is to "bring about in the student the willingness and ability to handle and control other people's bodies, and to cheerfully confront another person while giving that person commands". TRs 6 and 7 involve the student "steer[ing] the coach's body around the room" with varying degrees of resistance from the coach. TRs 8 and 9 introduce the concept of "Tone 40" - most usefully defined as an order that cannot be refused (or "intention without reservation or limit" as Hubbard puts it, somewhat more obscurely). It is initially applied to a "preferably heavy, coloured glass ashtray" sitting in a chair, to which the coach requires that the student address some surreal commands:

Now get the ashtray thinking that it is an ashtray.

Good.

Get the ashtray intending to go on being an ashtray.

Good.

Get the ashtray intending to remain where it is.

Good.

Have the ashtray end that cycle.

Good.

Put in the ashtray the intention to remain where it is.

Good.

*(Hubbard, "Upper Indoc TRs", HCO Bulletin of 7 May 1968)*

The student also commands "as loudly as possible" that the ashtray "Stand up" and "Sit down on that chair." As ashtrays normally are fairly immobile objects, the student has to assist it by lifting it into the air before thanking it. To the non-Scientologist, this may seem bizarre. Nonetheless there is a serious point to it in terms of Scientology's philosophical approach. Whereas Dianetics confines its attentions mostly to the human mind, Scientology is very much more ambitious: it seeks not only individual self-mastery but control over the world at large - as Hubbard puts it in one of his formal definitions of Scientology, "conquest of the material universe".

This wider scope had been a logical development - in Hubbard's eyes at least - from the more psychological approach taken by Dianetics. It had its origins in the "past lives" experienced under Dianetics auditing which were reported by a significant faction of the Dianetics movement, not least by Hubbard himself. A more scientifically-minded faction, of whom Hubbard's medical adviser Dr. Joseph Winter was a typical representative, was sceptical. Nonetheless they found "past lives" difficult to repudiate: if subjectively real "past life" memories could be recovered through auditing, why should they not be as objectively real as recovered "present life" memories were held to be?

Hubbard thus came to the conclusion that a person's history was far more complex than merely a series of "present life" traumas. With past life memories extending back far beyond the dawn of man, and indeed beyond the origins of the universe itself, it was obvious that some sort of non-human entity was involved. Hubbard dubbed it a "theta being" - later shortened to "thetan" - signifying an immaterial entity of pure thought, currently housed in a "meat body" (i.e. a human being) but in previous eras in robot bodies, inanimate "doll bodies" and even completely independent of any material body. A thetan with its full potential was dubbed an "operating thetan", or OT.

OTs, according to Hubbard, had extraordinary powers. An OT was an immortal super-being, capable of the most improbable feats. While the unschooled Scientologist undergoing TR 8 might have to levitate the ashtray by hand, the OT could do it for real simply by the power of thought; even the very existence of the ashtray was at the discretion of the OT. The universe itself existed only because OTs had willed it into existence, trillions of years ago. The "Super Power Rundown," described by Hubbard as a "super fantastic, but confidential" procedure, "puts the person into fantastic shape unleashing the super power of a thetan," producing "a being who has regained the super powers of infinity." The drills performed in this course give some idea of the way that Hubbard viewed an Operating Thetan:

1. Get the idea that you have infinite power.
2. Get the idea that another has infinite power.
3. Get the idea that others have infinite power.
4. Get the idea that you can cause yourself to have infinite power ...

*(Hubbard, "1978 - The Year Of Lightning Fast New Tech", Ron's Journal 30, 17 Dec 1978)*

The acquisition/regaining of "infinite power" had been the objective of Hubbard almost from the start of Scientology. As long ago as 1952, long before he claimed to have liberated a single thetan from its physical confines, the anticipated power of the OT warranted an earnest appeal to his followers:

[D]on't get spectacular until a few of the boys make it ... let's not go upsetting governments and putting on a show to "prove" anything to homo sapiens for a while; it's a horrible temptation to knock off hats at fifty yards and read books a couple of countries away and get into the rotogravure section and the Hearst Weeklies - but you'll just make it tough on somebody else who is trying to get across this bridge. *(Hubbard, A History of Man, chapter 5, 1968 ed.)*

It is possible that Hubbard's belief in "OT powers" was a carryover from his career as a pulp science fiction/fantasy writer in the 1930s. A popular plot device of the time was that the central character was the unknowing owner of amazing powers which he discovered through some kind of deus ex machina. Several of Hubbard's own stories used this theme and it was one of which Hubbard's friend and editor, John W. Campbell, was fervently supportive outside of the world of fiction; the prospect of hidden powers being tapped was a key reason why Dianetics was initially so popular with science fiction fans. Hubbard's own philosophical yearnings pushed him during the 1940s towards organisations which claimed to be able to tap hidden powers, such as the Rosicrucians (which he joined briefly in 1940) and Aleister Crowley's Ordo Templi Orientalis (of which he was a practicing member in 1945-46). Seen in this light, the "discovery" of OT powers is a natural development.

This perhaps helps to explain why Hubbard felt compelled to predict the extent of OT powers at such an early stage, well before he had felt able to announce the first Scientology Clear, let alone the first OT. Nonetheless it raised an important philosophical question. If thetans were so powerful,



why were they stuck in mere "meat bodies"? Why did they not even know that they were thetans in the first place?

Here we come to a critical difference between Dianetics and Scientology, and indeed a fundamental principle which underlies much of Scientology's doctrine and attitude towards the world. Dianetics is essentially neutral about the cause of engrams; in the examples Hubbard gives in *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health*, engrams are generally caused accidentally. Dianetics has relatively little to say about the nature of the world, other than that it is distorted by the aberrant behaviour caused by the workings of the reactive mind. To the Dianetician, the focus of attention is the space between cranium and occiput, rather than the world at large.

Scientology takes a much darker view of the world, viewing it as being dominated and deliberately manipulated by malevolent hidden forces for billions of years. A Scientology pamphlet answers the key question of the origins of engrams:

We were OT once, a long, long time ago. Why didn't we stay that way? The straight facts are that we ran into well-set traps, with no hatting [training] to avoid them. And so here we are, eons later, on a prison planet trapped in a one-life meat body dramatization of all the traps we ran into so long ago. (*"Flag Service Organization FSM Newsletter", circa mid-1997*)

This is one of Scientology's key themes, and is of fundamental importance in understanding the psychology of Scientologists. To a Dianetician, it is enough to audit one's engrams and so improve oneself. A Scientologist takes a much wider view: while he himself is initially held back by engrams and related mental blockages, so is wider society and indeed the entire universe. To achieve the goals of Scientology, therefore, it is necessary not only to achieve self-improvement but to tackle the aberrations of the world at large. The road to this noble goal is, however, guarded by ruthless and determined opponents with a base interest in keeping the general population cowed and ignorant. It is this combination of beliefs - the desire for general betterment with the animosity towards a hidden cabal of malign forces - which is at the core of Scientology's worldview. These forces sought to keep the thetan in the dark about his true potential:

. . . You, your beingness, is so tremendous, actually, that the force and power of this small 'you' can actually burn down mountains. If it couldn't, why do they go to so much trouble to fix you so you can't? ... Put the ball and chain on him quick, because in the centre of his beingness he is. And don't let him ever find it out, because then he will be. (*Hubbard, "Decision", lecture of 20 May 1952*)

The development of this worldview eventually transformed Scientology from a relatively harmless self-help group into a highly disciplined, utterly self-centered organisation intent on imposing its agenda through any means necessary, fair or foul. Freedom, control and responsibility came to be defined entirely in terms of Scientology's own agenda - and woe betide those who disagreed with it.

## 2. Organisational Control

Organisational control is the second thread in the control agenda. Considering Scientology's later reputation for authoritarianism, not to say the alleged brainwashing of its members, it is surprising to find that it developed relatively slowly. Nonetheless, the elements were present from the very start of Scientology.

Hubbard had learned quickly from the messy demise of Dianetics amidst a flurry of lawsuits and bills. Determined not to let the same thing happen to Scientology, he placed himself firmly in control of the organisation and its assets; he believed firmly that the financial failure of Dianetics had been due to the incompetence and in some cases malice of his colleagues on the board of management of the Dianetics Foundation. Thus it was that in December 1953, the very first Church of Scientology was incorporated in Camden, New Jersey, under the signatures of L. Ron Hubbard, his son L. Ron, Jr. and his daughter-in-law Henrietta. The so-called "Founding Church" of Scientology, in Washington, D.C., was actually established three months later; today the Camden incorporation is studiously ignored by Scientology. For the Washington Scientology organisation, Hubbard was merely a member of the board of directors. However, he made sure of his complete dominance by obtaining signed but undated letters of resignation from all of the other directors. The same tactic was adopted for other Scientology corporate entities for which Hubbard was nominally only a co-director. It was a simple but effective device. Nobody doubted who was really in charge, whatever the article of incorporation might have said.

While Hubbard's control at the board level might have been absolute, at the local level in individual Scientology organisations, Hubbard initially appears to have been relatively easy-going in terms of management. He was happy at first to allow, indeed encourage the contribution of others to building the new society which he desired. Very early Scientology publications included new techniques created by and attributed to people other than Hubbard himself. Books providing new glosses on basic Scientology principles were written by Scientologists - Reg Sharpe in England, U. Keith Gerry in South Africa and Ruth Minshull in the USA, to name a few - and published with Hubbard's blessings. Hubbard himself wrote in May 1953:

It is definitely none of my business how you apply these techniques. I am no policeman ready with boards of ethics and court warrants to come down on you with a crash simply because you are "perverting Scientology." If there is any policing done, it is by the techniques themselves, since they have in themselves a discipline brought about by their own power. All I can do is put into your hands a tool for your own use and then help you use it. (*Hubbard, Professional Auditor's Bulletin no. 2, "General Comments", ca. May 1953*)

Scientologists themselves were allowed a fair degree of self-expression, as an examination of contemporary local Scientology magazines demonstrates. London's Scientology organisation, then based on Holland Park Avenue, began publishing a magazine called *Certainty* in January 1954 (it is still published to this day). At first, it was very much a "club magazine" featuring primarily articles by local Scientologists, under their own bylines, with relatively few advertisements for Scientology products. In Johannesburg, South Africa, the organisation there inaugurated its magazine *Understanding* at the start of 1958. It followed much the same template, with articles by locals on how Scientology would change the face of South Africa (not surprisingly, it was seen as providing a new and humane way of handling the "native problem").

This editorial independence changed radically - and permanently - in November 1958 when

Hubbard issued a new editorial policy for all Scientology magazines worldwide. In HCO Policy Letter of 24 November 1958, "Magazine Policy," he instructed that, "the basic purpose of the magazine is to sell books on Dianetics and Scientology." The new policy immediately affected *Certainty* and *Understanding*. Individually bylined articles became few and far between, unless they were by Hubbard himself; articles by Hubbard became predominant, often occupying entire issues; above all, the magazines very rapidly became dominated by advertising of the latest Scientology courses, books and related products such as e-meters. The localised "social" elements of the magazines were all but lost as they became more or less exclusively instruments of corporate propaganda and salesmanship. The same is true today; modern Scientology magazines often resemble a cross between an illustrated catalogue and a glossy sales brochure.

This revocation of local publishing autonomy was part of a broader move by Hubbard to impose his absolute control over Scientology's management, development and, ultimately, of his followers' lives. The following year, 1959, saw the publication of Hubbard's "Manual of Justice" - still a key policy document for the Church of Scientology - which laid down directions for internal discipline within Scientology and how to deal with what Hubbard regarded as infractions committed against Scientology by the outside world. Hubbard's former tolerance for local interpretations of Scientology had already disappeared, due at least in part to the continued existence of offshoots of Dianetics and Scientology. These were ruthlessly driven out of existence; Hubbard instructed in the "Manual of Justice" that:

A person or an organisation using Dianetics or Scientology wrongly or without rights, or a wildcat magazine, is best shut down or shut up by hiring a private detective. Tell the detective "We don't care if they know you're investigating them for us. In fact, the louder the better." (*Hubbard, "Manual of Justice," 1959*)

The Church of Scientology maintains a list - the most recently known copy of which dates to 1991 - of hundreds of "enemy" individuals and organisations, with those that have been "shut down" specially annotated as such. These Hubbard termed "squirrels" and the act of altering Scientology doctrine or practice without authorisation "squirreling", words which he invested with a profound degree of loathing.

The year 1959 also saw the introduction of an institutionalised security system within Scientology. It is surprising that Hubbard did not go down this road earlier, as he had shown clear signs of acute paranoia for many years previously. The system he adopted was an extension of Scientology auditing, using the e-meter to uncover "overts" and "withholds" harboured by the subject - basically moral transgressions committed in present or past lives. Some of the matters under scrutiny were distinctly strange:

Have you ever enslaved a population?  
Did you come to earth for evil purposes?  
Have you ever zapped anyone?  
Have you given robots a bad name?

(*Hubbard, "Whole Track Sec Check", HCO Bulletin of 19 June 1961*)

"Security checking" or "sec checking", as Hubbard dubbed it, did have a positive side. It was presented as an equivalent to the Catholic rite of confession, a way of obtaining expiation for one's misdeeds, and indeed it was later renamed "confessional auditing" or "integrity processing" to reinforce this supposed link. Hubbard drew a direct connection between the exposure of "overts" and Scientology's promotion of self-control, arguing that it was impossible for a person to gain true freedom from external influences if he did not take responsibility for his actions:

When one falls away from responsibility on the various dynamics he can then become less and less able to influence those dynamics and therefore becomes a victim of them. One must have done to other dynamics those things which other dynamics now seem to have the power to do to him. Therefore one can be injured. One can lose control. One can become in fact a zero of influence and a vacuum for trouble. (*Hubbard, HCO Bulletin 23 December 1959, "Responsibility"*)

Nonetheless it is clear from many of the "sec check" lists and the related context that Hubbard's priority was not expiation but the corporate security of Scientology. The "Employment Sec Checks" are a case in point; the subject is asked questions such as:

Are you or have you ever been a Communist?  
If you were employed here would you try to damage this organization?  
Have you ever worked in an organization just to spy on it for others?  
Have you ever taken money for passing on confidential information?  
Do you privately think we are a fraud or a racket?  
(*Hubbard, "Whole Track Sec Check", HCO Bulletin of 19 June 1961*)

One might wonder why these might be an issue for a religious organisation. The answer was that Hubbard felt that Scientology had become a target for covert intelligence operations, hence the pointed questions asked above:

"As the Organization rapidly expands so will it be a growing temptation for anti-survival elements to gain entry and infiltrate, and attempts to plant will be made." (*Hubbard, "Security Risks - Infiltration", HCO Policy Letter of 30 October 1962*)

Nor were "sec checks" intended to be entirely voluntary; Hubbard advised South African Scientologists to strap e-meter cans to the soles of recalcitrant subjects' feet. This approach (in HCO Bulletin of 30 March 1960, "Interrogation") is to this day part of the official corpus of Scientology policy. Holding back "withholds" during a "confessional" was a punishable offence. In an Orwellian twist, even thoughts deemed unsuitable could get a person into trouble; Hubbard ordered that, "Any anti-Scientology overts or intentions disclosed are to be reported to the Ethics Officer and the Guardian's Office." (*Hubbard, "Auditors Who Miss Withholds - Penalty", HCO Policy Letter of 28 November 1978*)

As the 1960s went on, Hubbard became increasingly obsessed with the internal and external threats which he believed faced Scientology. It was perhaps inevitable that he should seek to extend still further the regulation of his followers' lives, as in his view Scientology could not afford the luxury of tolerating internal misbehaviour when the organisation was so threatened by the outside world. In 1965 Hubbard announced a new regime of "Ethics Technology" to provide what is today claimed to be a complete system of moral guidance. As usual, though, he went far beyond his ostensible aims. According to Hubbard, 2.5% of the population is made up of "Suppressive Persons" (SPs), individuals who are chronically and permanently "antisocial" and instinctively oppose anything that could benefit mankind - such as Scientology, of course. Another 17.5% are "Potential Trouble Sources" by virtue of their past or present contact with SPs. Such individuals can be found anywhere, even in Scientology.

Hubbard introduced what was, in effect, Scientology's own version of a judicial system and code of laws in order to address this problem. A wide range of "hostile" activities was explicitly prohibited, while a new Ethics Branch was established to police the enforcement of the new regime. As in the communist states of eastern Europe, the system relied on individuals informing on each other by submitting what would later be termed "knowledge reports" on any alleged

"Crimes" or "High Crimes". A sufficient number of knowledge reports, or reports of a sufficiently serious nature, would result in the culprit being called before a Committee of Evidence ("Comm-Ev") - in effect, a court. If the level of "criminality" was sufficient the person would be regarded as an "Enemy" and declared to be a Suppressive Person. This resulted in automatic expulsion from Scientology and exposed them to the rigors of the infamous Fair Game policy, whereby they "[m]ay be deprived of property or injured by any means by any Scientologist without any discipline of the Scientologists. May be tricked, sued or lied to or destroyed."

Although things have changed a little over the years - notably, Fair Game is no longer labelled as such because it "causes bad public relations" - this extremely tight system of internal discipline is still very much in force. It has great advantages for the leaders of the Church of Scientology. It has a strong direct regulatory effect on the activities of individual Scientologists, reinforced by the way in which colleagues constantly maintain surveillance and inform on each other. It enables Scientology's intelligence agency, the Office of Special Affairs (successor to the Guardian's Office), to maintain an early warning system for potential problems; the new recruit to OSA's Investigations [Intelligence] branch is required to write an essay on Knowledge Reports:

"ESSAY: Why are Knowledge Reports key to the Invest area? Why is an Invest officer interested in them? Give 5 examples of how they could be used in an investigation." (*"OSA Investigations Officer Full Hat Checksheet", OSA Int ED 508R of 1991*)

It is also an extremely useful tool for dealing expeditiously with perceived dissidents - like authoritarian regimes anywhere, the judicial (or in this case, Ethics) process is readily and frequently used to pursue political goals. There is no separation between the executive and the judicial aspects of Scientology. Nor, seemingly, is the executive layer of Scientology subject to the Ethics system. The organisation's own leaders, including Hubbard himself, have frequently ignored or bypassed the Ethics system. At a conference of Scientology Mission Holders held in San Francisco in October 1982, the current leadership declared several individuals to be Suppressives on the spot, without even the figleaf of a Committee of Evidence or any due process. Surely an Ethics violation, but who would - or could - enforce that discipline on those responsible for running the system in the first place? It is, as with many other authoritarian systems, a situation where control can be exercised without accountability.

One final point about the nature of the organisational control practiced by Scientology. Both in this and in the previous sphere of interest, personal control, things which non-Scientologists would regard as being desirable have been jettisoned in the pursuit of the goals of Scientology. In the first sphere, the burden of mental blockages has (supposedly) been relieved but at the cost of suppressing individual emotionalism and effecting what amounts to a personality change. In the second sphere, the risks of disunity and misuse of Scientology technology have been reduced by establishing a tough disciplinary code, rigorously enforced, but at the cost of suppressing individual expression and liberty. It is surely a deep irony that an individual who has gained control over "matter, energy, space and time" should simultaneously be prohibited on pain of expulsion from expressing views dissenting from those of Scientology's leaders or official policies. The same trend of sacrificing something important for the sake of achieving a Scientology goal is carried over into the third sphere, with disturbing consequences for Scientologists and non-Scientologists alike.

### 3. Societal Control

The third track of the control agenda, societal control, is concerned with Scientology's relationship with the outside world. To the non-Scientologist, this is perhaps the most significant sphere of control. What Scientologists do to themselves or what the Church of Scientology does to its members is of strictly limited interest to the outside world, except where it has to pick up the pieces. The Church of Scientology's activities in wider society are of much more direct relevance to non-members, not least because it is an organisation with huge financial resources.

The development of this aspect of Hubbard's control agenda was, unlike the other elements, driven at least as much by outside influences as by any of Hubbard's own priorities. There is a clear causal relationship between events in the outside world and developments in Hubbard's strategy. It is somewhat ironic, given Hubbard's strictures about seizing control of events, that many of the actions which he undertook in this sphere were purely reactive responses to perceived external threats. Foremost amongst these threats was that of psychiatry; Hubbard's reaction to this challenge was crucial in forming his approach to wider society.

Hubbard was not originally opposed to psychiatry; indeed, in October 1947 he had written to the US Veterans' Administration to request psychiatric examination and treatment to relieve his prolonged depression and suicidal thoughts, although there is no evidence that he ever actually did receive psychiatric treatment. Prior to the publication of *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health* in June 1950, he had worked with psychiatrists to refine his "discoveries". His friend and co-sponsor of Dianetics, John W. Campbell, wrote that "with cooperation from some institutions, some psychiatrists ... [he has] worked on all types of [mental] cases." Hubbard's first article on Dianetics was submitted to the *Journal of the American Medical Association* and the *American Journal of Psychiatry* but both rejected it on the ground of insufficient clinical evidence of the technique's effectiveness. A lengthier version of the article was later published as *Dianetics: The Original Thesis*. Significantly, it does not even mention the word psychiatry.

When Dianetics was eventually presented to the public in book form, it was printed by a company, Hermitage House, which was itself a publisher of psychiatric textbooks; the dust jacket of the book carried advertisements for other psychiatry-related works. *Dianetics: MSMH* was certainly not complimentary about the profession, castigating it for "the practices of the 'neurosurgeon' and the ice-pick which he thrusts and twists into insane minds" in order to "reduce the victim to mere zombie-ism, destroying most of his personality and ambition and leaving him nothing more than a manageable animal." Even so, Hubbard went out of his way to stress that he was not against psychiatry as a whole:

Many persons investigating the treatment of the mentally ill by psychiatrists and others in charge of mental institutions are prompted ... to revile the psychiatrist as unworthy of trust and accuse him of using it to conduct vivisection experiments on human beings... A witch-burning attitude toward these people is very far from the one adopted by dianetics. Pointing to the fact that they have murdered minds which would otherwise have recovered, labeling them "mind snatchers" and making a horror story out of their actions is far from rational conduct. On the whole these people have been entirely sincere in their efforts to help the insane.... (Hubbard, *Dianetics: MSMH* (1988 ed), fn p. 205)

The scientific community was not impressed either by Hubbard's criticism or his suggested remedy. His book received extremely poor reviews - the Nobel Prize-winning physicist Isaac Isidor

Rabi declared in *Scientific American* that "This volume probably contains more promises and less evidence per page than has any publication since the invention of printing" while a New York M.D., Dr. Martin Gumpert, denounced it in *The New Republic* as "a bold and immodest mixture of complete nonsense and perfectly reasonable common sense, taken from long-acknowledged findings and disguised and distorted by a crazy, newly invented terminology" and castigated "the repeated claim of exactitude and of scientific experimental approach, for which every evidence is lacking." To the Church of Scientology today, this marked the opening shot in a continuing war between Scientology and psychiatry:

The first attacks against LRH [Hubbard] and Dianetics are well known. They began almost the day Dianetics came off the presses... Their initial attacks have been mentioned over the years by us. First they got "technical reviews" by psychiatrists hatcheting Dianetics. They published these critical reviews in their psychiatric trade magazines. Of course, these psychs never even bothered to read the book ... (*David Miscavige, President of the Religious Technology Center, speech to International Association of Scientologists, 1 October 1993*)

Yet for at least two years after the publication of *Dianetics: MSMH*, Hubbard continued to position Dianetics as being complementary to orthodox psychiatry. In April 1950 he predicted that "Washington School of Psychiatry will probably adopt it as a standard therapy." (*letter to Russell Hays, 2 April 1950*) When this did not happen, Hubbard claimed that his ideas had quietly been put into practice anyway, since the rank-and-file mental health practitioners did not share the hostility which their leaders expressed towards Dianetics:

Under quiet test for over a year in the hands of leading psychologists and mental practitioners, the application of this science [i.e. Dianetics] has been found to resolve cases with considerable ease so that in at least one state all state government treatment of the insane is shortly to be placed under practitioners such as psychiatrists and psychologists who are skilled in this new science. (*Hubbard, "A Brief History of Psychotherapy", The Dianetic Auditor's Bulletin, vol. 2 no. 5, November 1951*)

While often harshly critical of the medical profession and what he saw as its brutality and inefficiency, he stressed that he was not opposed to it:

[Psychologists, psychiatrists and medical doctors] are entirely in error when they express the opinion that Scientologists are against them. Scientology does not consider them sufficiently important to be against ... We have no more quarrel with a psychologist than we would have with an Australian witch doctor. We have no quarrel with a psychiatrist any more than we should quarrel with a barbarian because he had never heard of nuclear physics ... Scientology cares nothing about either medicine or psychiatry. (*Hubbard, "The Scientologist: A Manual on the Dissemination of Material", Ability Major 1, ca. March 1955*)

This view shifted radically only a few months later. Hubbard announced a new policy which stands to this day:

"We are not even vaguely propitiative toward medicine or psychiatry, and we are overtly intent upon assimilating every function they are now performing." (*Hubbard, Professional Auditor's Bulletin no. 53, "Ownership", 27 May 1955*)

This desire to replace psychiatry was coupled with an intense dread of communism. Hubbard's political views were somewhat idiosyncratic and were never particularly easy to pin down - during his long career he was accused of being everything from a fascist to a communist -

but on the issue of communism he was crystal clear. Communism, to him, was the opposite of everything he strove for. Instead of psychological freedom, there was brainwashing; instead of free will there was state control; instead of embracing a spiritual dimension it was soullessly materialistic. Worse still, the "slave states" of Russia and the East were content with resting on their laurels, but intended to bring communism to the inhabitants of the free West.

This was hardly a unique viewpoint in the era of Joseph McCarthy and the "Red Scare" of the early 1950s. Hubbard was, however, unusually preoccupied - indeed, obsessed - with it. As early as the end of 1950, he began writing long, rambling letters to the FBI to denounce those around him, including his second wife Sara, of being communist agents. The Russians, he claimed, were seeking to co-opt Dianetics in order to strengthen their own brainwashing techniques. He claimed that he had discovered the nature of those techniques and how to reverse their effects, and that whenever he approached the Pentagon to offer the use of his techniques he and his organisation suffered fresh harassment - obviously the result of Communist infiltration even at the highest levels of the US defence establishment. Hubbard also appears to have believed that his own life was in danger. His girlfriend at the time, Barbara Klowdan, recalled his behaviour years later:

He was highly paranoid and would be rushing along the street with me and I would say, "Why are you walking so fast?" He'd look over his shoulder and say, "Don't you know what it's like to be a target?" (*Barbara Klowdan, interview with Russell Miller, 28 July 1986*)

This was not simply a show for dramatic effect; there is every sign from Hubbard's correspondence and reported behaviour that he was profoundly convinced of the reality of the threat. It is not surprising that the FBI stopped responding to his letters, one agent adding the handwritten observation, "Appears mental".

Given his obsessive fear of communist subversion and his tendency to see Reds under every available bed, it was probably inevitable that Hubbard should link communism and psychiatry. The psychiatric profession was hostile to Scientology; therefore communist infiltrators were clearly inducing it to attack Scientology:

The attack made by psychiatrists using evidently Communist connected personnel on the Elizabeth NJ Foundation in 1950 and 51 and the attack made on the Wichita Foundation in 1952 all ended on the same note of reports to IRS and much rumor concerning what the IRS would do. (*Hubbard, letter to FBI, 11 July 1955*)

The attack on the HASI [Hubbard Association of Scientologists International], like the attacks on the 1950 Hubbard Dianetic Research Foundation found psychiatry and Communist connected personnel very much in evidence and both active with defamation and very unreasonable - and unsuccessful - attack. (*Hubbard, letter to FBI, 29 July 1955*)

Hubbard saw the fight against "communist-connected psychiatry" in Manichean terms, as an elemental battle of survival against the dark forces threatening to enslave the West. In 1968, he explained to his followers the scale of the threat:

Western governments and peoples are under ceaseless and unrelenting attack from the communist forces in the "cold war". The enemy has for a long time been inside, getting laws passed, degrading the society, seizing persons in the name of "psychiatry", pushing up taxes, inflating money ...

The orders the governments followed in attacking us were originated by REDS, by the



usually foreign psychiatrist, operating as per Communist instructions to destroy all Churches and Scientology in particular ... We came to two conclusions:

A. We are largely on our own.

B. On our own we can make steady progress.

This then leads to the conclusions that

1. We must be an awfully effective group

2. And, wildly enough, we are better than the continued [sic] governments of the West in defense from Red attacks ...

We didn't set out to be a political force. We don't care to be one.

BUT WE ARE BEING FORCED INTO TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WEST.

Wow.

*(Hubbard, "Western Countries", LRH ED 69 INT of 20 December 1968)*

This premise - that Scientology was "taking responsibility" for wider society - was and is still crucial to its approach to the non-Scientology world. It is a logical extension of its approach to individual and organisational control. Individuals have to take responsibility for their actions, which must be regulated through personal discipline; organisations have to take responsibility for their members, which must be regulated through organisational discipline. The difference comes in the direction from which the control comes. In the first two cases, the regulation is top-down - the thetan to its component elements (reactive mind, analytical mind, body thetans etc) and the organisation to its component elements (in other words, its members). In the case of society, Scientology plainly is not the controlling influence. Quite the reverse; even by its own wildly inflated membership count, Scientologists make up barely one tenth of one per cent of the world's population.

This inevitably means that the world is controlled by the "aberrated" and, worse, by the downright insane. A case in point is the invention of atomic weaponry. It is no accident that the book *What is Scientology?* should symbolise the suppressive 2.5% of the population with a picture of a white-coated scientist and atomic bomb explosion. Hubbard argued, with some justice, that the atomic arms race was the ultimate "counter-survival" activity. He declared:

Just as you would not let a child play with a .45-caliber automatic, loaded and cocked, so should no relatively aberrated person with hates and passions not at all under control be permitted to handle or direct the use of anything as broadly fatal as atomic fission. *(Hubbard, "Radiation", lecture of 5 November 1956)*

Here we come to the crux. Ideally the world should be run by sane, unaberrated individuals - in other words, Scientologists. "Clearing the planet", by giving the whole population Scientology processing, was the ultimate long-term goal. Hubbard was not prepared to wait this long, however, and was quite open about the means by which Scientologists could make the world "go right" in the meantime. As early as 1956, he proposed using infiltration tactics to bring nuclear arsenals under the control of "sane" people:

[T]here are two levels where we could operate here. One would be an infiltration of the personnel and departments that do handle [atomic weapons] and try to guarantee that those people that make policy are in a good state of sanity ...

Infiltration of atomic areas to guarantee the sanity of those who direct atomic policy is, of course, something that would take time, but that is being worked on. *(Hubbard, "Radiation", lecture of 5 November 1956)*

These ideas were developed more fully in Hubbard's "Special Zone Plan", announced in June 1960, in which he proposed the use of classic entryist tactics: Scientologists not on Church staff should seek to obtain strategic positions in society at large, by taking positions next to the influential. For example,

. . . . a housewife, already successfully employing Scientology in her own home, trained to professional level, takes over a woman's club as Secretary or some key position. She straightens up the club affairs by applying comm practice and making peace and then, incidental to the club's main function, pushes Scientology into a zone of special interest in the club - children, straightening up marriages, whatever comes to hand and even taking fees for it - meanwhile of course going on being a successful and contributing wife. (*Hubbard, "Special Zone Plan - The Scientologist's Role in Life", HCO Bulletin of 23 June 1960*)

Government was another key area to infiltrate:

And see this: a race is staggering along making difficulties for itself. Locate its leaders. Get a paid post as a secretary or officer of the staff of the leaders of that race. And by any means, audit them into ability and handle their affairs to bring co-operation not trouble ... It is easy to get posts in such areas unless one has delusions of grandeur or fear of it. Don't bother to get elected. Get a job on the secretarial staff or the bodyguard, use any talent one has to get a place close in, go to work on the environment and make it function better. (*Hubbard, ibid.*)

While Scientology might deny that this amounted to "infiltration", there was no doubt that this was exactly what Hubbard meant; he had used that very word in relation to the control of atomic weapons, and lest the Scientologist misunderstand what he had said about the Special Zone Plan, he emphasised its covert nature:

The cue in all this is don't seek the co-operation of groups. Don't ask for permission. Just enter them and start functioning to make the group win through effectiveness and sanity. (*Hubbard, ibid.*)

Within weeks of announcing it, the Special Zone Plan was subsumed into a permanently staffed body within the Hubbard Communications Office of the Church of Scientology - the "Department of Government Affairs". Hubbard was even more explicit about the goals of this body, which still exists to this day as a function of Scientology's Office of Special Affairs:

The goal of the Department is to bring the government and hostile philosophies or societies into a state of complete compliance with the goals of Scientology. This is done by high level ability to control and in its absence by low level ability to overwhelm. Introvert such agencies. Control such agencies. (*Hubbard, "Dept of Govt Affairs", HCO Policy Letter of 15 August 1960*)

He was equally explicit about the means to be used, again involving infiltration tactics:

The action of bringing about a pro-Scientology government consists of making a friend of the most highly placed government person one can reach, even placing Scientologists in domestic and clerical posts close to him and seeing to it that Scientology resolves his troubles and case. (*Hubbard, "Department of Official Affairs", HCO Policy Letter of 13 March 1961*)

Hubbard realised that this was unlikely to happen without opposition. In the original Special Zone Plan he commented that "[o]nly the very criminal would object and they are relatively ineffectual when you can know and spot them." For this reason, he established a special

department of Scientology to deal specifically with external threats - the Guardian's Office (GO), forerunner of today's Office of Special Affairs (OSA).

The OSA's internal newsletter, *Winning*, proclaims that its business is "Auditing the 4th Dynamic." What exactly does this mean? It is, again, an example of the fractal nature of Scientology's philosophy. Just as a Scientology auditor seeks to uncover the negative elements in an individual's mind, Hubbard suggested, so Scientology could audit society as a whole and unearth the "rotten spots":

You see the same thing in a preclear. He has a rotten spot in his behaviour. He attacks the practitioner. The spot is located on a meter. It blows and the preclear relaxes.

Well this is just what is happening in the society. We are a practitioner to the society. It has rotten spots in it. Those show up in attacks on us. We investigate and expose - the attack ceases.

We use investigators instead of E-Meters. We use newspapers instead of auditor reports. But it's the same problem exactly ...

We must convert from an attacked group to a reform group that attacks rotten spots in the society. We should not limit ourselves to mental healing or own line. We should look for groups to investigate and blow the lid off and become known as a mightly [sic] reform group. We object to slavery, oppression, torture, murder, perversion, crime, political sin and anything that makes Man unfree ...

Remember - the only reason we are in trouble with the press or government is that we are not searching out and exposing rotten spots in the society. We must practice on the whole group called society. If we do not it will attack us just as a preclear will attack a Scientologist that won't audit him. (*Hubbard, "Attacks on Scientology (Additional Pol Ltr)", HCO Policy Letter of 15 February 1966*)

The consent of the outside world was not necessary for Scientology to undertake this; indeed, was not obtainable, for Hubbard suggested that "homo sap" was so unenlightened and engrams-ridden that he would fail to recognise help when it was being given. There is a notable irony in this, as Hubbard had campaigned vigorously against the mentally ill receiving involuntary treatment from psychiatrists, yet was entirely in favour of wider society receiving involuntary "treatment" from Scientologists.

The Office of Special Affairs, like the GO before it, displays the control agenda in its most naked form. Its formal objective, as stated in the "OSA Investigations Officer Full Hat Checksheet," is to produce "handled situations which result in the total acceptance of Scientology and its Founder throughout the area". According to the official definition cited in the checksheet, one of its key duties is to "[clean] up the rotten spots of society in order to create a safer and saner environment for Scientology expansion and for all mankind". The Church of Scientology does not, of course, publicise this aspect.

While nobody would deny that Scientology has the right to put its case for change or to challenge inequities in society, its activities go far beyond this. The OSA is effectively the enforcement arm of the Church of Scientology, guided by Hubbard's system of Ethics rather than by any conventional societal norms. It seeks not only to counter Scientology's enemies, real and imagined, but, (to quote from the operational policies of its "Investigations Section" as laid out in the full hat checksheet) to "bring about the failure of influence of hostile groups or persons".

Hubbard was unambiguous in his view of the critics of Scientology and his instructions on how to deal with them:

- (a) People who attack Scientology are criminals.
- (b) [I]f one attacks Scientology he gets investigated for crimes.
- (c) If one does not attack Scientology, despite not being with it, one is safe. (*Hubbard, "Project Squirrel", ED 149 INT of 2 December 1966*)

Scientology's critics have pointed out that this appears to contradict Scientology's declared support for freedom of speech. The "Code of a Scientologist" does include a personal pledge, which every Scientologist must make, to "work for freedom of speech in the world." But it also includes commitments to "decry and do all I can to abolish any and all abuses against life and Mankind" and to "actively decry the suppression of knowledge, wisdom, philosophy or data which would help Mankind" - by which Hubbard meant opposing any who stood in the way of Scientology.

Strange though it may seem considering this extreme attitude, Hubbard claimed that his motives were purely humanitarian. While his behaviour suggests that there was more to it than that, it may well have been the case that a humanitarian desire was indeed a major motivating factor; he does seem to have genuinely believed in Scientology's efficacy and correctness, and put in far more effort in developing it than one would have expected had he simply been a con-man. His essay "My Philosophy", written in 1965 as an apologia for his life and work, is a case in point. Although it has been dismissed by his critics as another example of his notorious unreliability with facts and as a cynical exercise in spin-doctoring, at a time when he was under especially heavy fire from critics in the media and in official circles, it does nonetheless point to themes which are present throughout his approach to wider society. Hubbard declares:

I like to help others and count it as my greatest pleasure in life to see a person free himself of the shadows which darken his days ... So my own philosophy is that one should share what wisdom he has, one should help others to help themselves, and one should keep going despite heavy weather for there is always a calm ahead. (*Hubbard, "My Philosophy," 1965*)

It is this philosophy which underlies - and is used to justify - Scientology's entire approach to society, encompassing everything from recruitment to "social reform" activities to its attacks on critics. Helping humanity, even if in its ignorance humanity does not always want to be helped, is the highest purpose of all to Scientology. It is deemed to surpass every other consideration:

So the biggest right there is, is not the right to vote, is not the right to freedom of speech, or press, or religion, or anything else. The biggest right there is in Human Rights, is the right to help.

And now I just want to ask you one more question, looking at this, the index of willingness to help being the highest index in demonstration of Clearing, do you any longer doubt my statement that those people in Dianetics and Scientology are the upper tens of thousands of the population of Earth, because they volunteered to help, didn't they? (*Hubbard, "Clear Procedure", lecture of 5 July 1958*)

Scientology's approach to wider society clearly is not simply a matter of self-aggrandizement, in spite of the well-documented excesses of Hubbard himself. Ordinary Scientologists see very little of the large cashflow which the Church of Scientology generates; their motivation necessarily has to have a large interest of selflessness, as they personally receive very little material return. Their undoubtedly sincere belief in the need for them "taking responsibility" for the rest of the world is, however, based on an inherently unreliable premise: that Scientology is the best, indeed the

only, way to solve the world's problems.

That is a deeply contentious proposition, to say the least. The Church of Scientology has the right to persuade the rest of society of the merits of its position. The danger is that it also believes that it has the right to impose its agenda unilaterally. Its control agenda for society can clearly be seen to encompass both aspects: persuasion and coercion at the same time. The fourth sphere of the control agenda, however, illustrates why its task has been so difficult - and perhaps helps to explain why the Church has had to put as much effort into coercion as persuasion

## 4. Cosmological Control

Virtually every belief system that exists seeks answers to certain fundamental questions - who are we? Where do we come from? What forces are responsible for the workings of the universe? Scientology is no exception, and its views on the subject constitute the fourth, final and most fundamental aspect of Hubbard's control agenda: cosmological control.

Scientologists, and the Church of Scientology in general, are very reluctant to discuss Hubbard's views on the nature of the universe, despite the fact that these views underpin so much of Scientology. What, for example, is the ultimate cause of engrams? Why are supposedly all-powerful thetans trapped in "meat bodies" with no awareness of their true nature?

Such matters were not originally treated as unmentionable secrets. They had been a logical development of Hubbard's "past lives" research in the 1950s. While past lives were initially quite modest - 18th century English seafarers or 14th century Chinese peasants, for example - they rapidly became increasingly elaborate. It was not long before Hubbard was citing examples of "past lives" trillions of years old in exotic extraterrestrial environments. His followers soon responded in kind. In *Have You Lived Before This Life?*, a compilation of "past life" stories produced by Scientologists during a 1955 Scientology congress held in London, the sheer weirdness of the accounts rivals anything written by Hubbard. One Scientologist recalled life as a sex-crazed child of "space parents" who was ultimately executed in a "zap machine"; another had met his end under a road roller driven by a Martian bishop; a third had been "a very happy being who strayed to the planet Nostra 23,064,000,000 years ago." The most commonly reported cause of death was, surprisingly, falling out of spaceships.

It appears that, from the very start of his work on past lives, Hubbard was convinced that the phenomena he "discovered" were influenced by malign outside forces. There is a presentiment of this in the original *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health*, where he frequently lays the blame for engrams on the misdeeds of an individual's parents, usually the mother. Within only two years he had already devised an elaborate cosmology covering trillions of years and multiple universes. In the same month that he launched Scientology, April 1952, he was describing to his followers in a taped lecture entitled "Battle of the Universes" how Earth was being used as a "prison planet" to drop off "entheta beings" who were being delivered here on flying saucers. These entities were, he implied, responsible for physical maladies; on attempting to uncover them through auditing, he reported that "I am, for the first time in ages, completely without a somatic" - as if they had all gone into hiding when he tried to find them. It was a theory he would return to 15 years later, when he came up with the theory that people were infested with parasitic "body thetans" which caused localised physical complaints in particular areas of the body.

"Battle of the Universes" exposed to public scrutiny the methods which he used to make his "discoveries". This involved hooking himself up to an e-meter read by his wife Mary Sue, whilst trying out various ideas and seeing if they provoked a reaction on the meter. The lecture - which is today deemed confidential and thus off limits for ordinary Scientologists - makes for fascinating reading; it shows Hubbard devising a cosmology by checking a stream-of-consciousness narrative with readings on an early e-meter:

LRH: Okay! Just ask me the questions and we'll watch the meter.

MSH: Okay. What's the purpose of the entities in the MEST [Matter, Energy, Space and Time - the physical] universe?

LRH: Destroy it.

MSH: Big tone drop.

LRH: I'll be darned. Big drop?

MSH: Big drop. Yeah.

(Hubbard, *"Battle of the Universes"*, lecture of April 1952 - exact date unknown)

Whatever provoked a reaction on the e-meter was thus deemed true, having been "confirmed" by the meter's supposed infallibility. It seems likely that he used similar methods throughout his "research programme", the results of which clearly showed his fertile imagination at work. Numerous bizarre alien races were introduced to Scientologists during the course of the 1950s; in Hubbard's own words, "the Fifth Invaders, the Fourth Invaders, the 3½ Invaders, the people on Mars, Saturn, Jupiter, Arcturus, the Markab Galaxy, the Markab System, the Psi Galaxy, Galaxy 82" (*"The Story of a Static"*, *Professional Auditor's Bulletin no. 105*, 1 February 1957). Some of Hubbard's aliens were truly surreal:

"A thetan from the Fifth Invader Force believes himself to be a very strange insect-like creature with unthinkable horrible hands." (Hubbard, *Scientology 8-8008*, 1974 ed., p. 132)

A common thread uniting these alien races was that they were participants in what Hubbard described as a "war between theta and MEST" (his word for the physical universe). Thetans were deliberately being targeted and subjected to brutal treatment in "implant stations" scattered around the universe, powerful electronic devices being used to erase their memories and render them dysfunctional by implanting them with traumatic engrams. In our own Solar System ("Space Station 33", as Hubbard called it) implant stations had been set up on Mars, Venus and in the Himalayas "about seventy-two miles northwest of the Khyber Pass" (*"The Role of Earth"*, lecture of 30 October 1952). Whenever a thetan's host body died, it would head straight for the nearest "between-lives" implant station, receive a fresh set of implants and be sent back into a new body - a process taking about fifteen minutes. This, Hubbard claimed, was the root cause of human aberrations; by discovering the truth about the alien implant stations, he had managed to break the endless cycle of cosmological control which was trapping thetans on Earth.

At first glance, this seems to be a break with Hubbard's insistence on taking responsibility - whether of the individual taking responsibility for his self-control, the organisation for the individual or the Scientologists for society as a whole. In the cosmological sphere, responsibility for the problems of thetans rests not with the unfortunate thetans in the first instance, but with the extraterrestrials running the implant stations. Nonetheless, it is of a piece with Hubbard's insistence that "Man is basically good"; no matter how badly individuals may behave, their behaviour is prompted not by individual wickedness but by their implanted engrams. Hubbard does make one important qualification - some individuals (the suppressive 2½%) are so badly aberrated that they cannot be helped at all. In *Science of Survival*, Hubbard suggests that society "dispose of them quietly and without sorrow", noting that "[t]he sudden and abrupt deletion of all individuals occupying the lower bands of the tone scale from the social order would result in an almost instant rise in the cultural tone and would interrupt the dwindling spiral into which any society may have entered."

Cosmological control is, for Scientologists, perhaps the most important element of Scientology; it explains who, what and why they are, and puts the nature of the universe into a new framework. The Church of Scientology treats the issue with the greatest delicacy - those undergoing the Operating Thetan courses are sworn to silence and the handwritten notes produced by Hubbard are treated as if they were military secrets.

It is, however, an aspect of Scientology that has caused it a great deal of difficulty in terms of its public image. Very little of Hubbard's cosmological theories escaped into the public domain during the period of intense scrutiny of Scientology, in the 1960s and early 1970s. Criticism of Scientology during this period focused primarily on its practices, especially the allegation of brainwashing. After Hubbard withdrew into seclusion at the end of the 1970s, a steady stream of defecting Scientologists - which became a positive flood during the turmoil which the organisation experienced in the early 1980s - brought with them knowledge, and in some cases hard copies, of the OT levels.

By the 1990s the cat was well and truly out of the bag. The rapid growth of the Internet proved to be the final breach in the wall of secrecy surrounding Hubbard's cosmology, with ex-Scientologists defying the Church by distributing copies of Scientology's most secret texts. The mainstream media took up the baton, publicising such matters as Hubbard's account of the tyrant Xenu's genocide of thetans on Earth (then "Teegeeeack") some 75 million years ago. The Church of Scientology, for its part, has fought a desperate battle inside and outside of the courts to prevent any aspect of its secrets from being made public; to no avail, as there are few if any significant areas of the "secret scriptures" which are not now public knowledge. As a result, there has been a subtle shift in the nature of public comment on Scientology in the last few years, with its cosmological beliefs coming increasingly into play. Whereas it used to be portrayed mostly as "sinister and dangerous", to borrow a phrase, it now tends to be seen as kooky. The exposure of Scientology's more unorthodox beliefs will certainly have caused it some difficulty in convincing potential recruits to take it seriously. Yet a certain degree of ridicule is not entirely a bad thing for Scientology. Hubbard himself made this point way back in 1963, when he highlighted as a "very significant win":

Incredulity of our data and validity. This is our finest asset and gives us more protection than any other single thing. If certain parties thought we were real we would have infinitely more trouble. There's actual terror in the breast of a guilty person at the thought of OT, and without a public incredulity we never would have gotten as far as we have. And now it's too late to be stopped. This protection was accidental but it serves us very well indeed. Remember that the next time the ignorant scoff. (*Hubbard, "Scientology Review", HCO Bulletin of 29 July 1963*)



# Conclusion

Talking about a coherently defined "control agenda" is to some extent a false premise. The body of beliefs and assumptions that makes up Scientology is emphatically not a coherent system; it was assembled piecemeal over the years, and the effect of external influences and Hubbard's own changing state of mind can clearly be seen in its many contradictory elements. Even so, there are certain consistent themes running throughout Scientology, replicated through increasingly broad areas of interest - something which the concept of the control agenda highlights.

Those involved in counseling ex-Scientologists have often commented on the extremely durable hold which the belief system has over its adherents. This is especially true of current members (see Bob Penny's excellent *Social Control in Scientology* for an analysis of the ways in which Scientologists are influenced by their Church) but also applies far beyond the confines of the Scientology organisation. Many ex-Scientologists go through a stage of continuing to practice Scientology whilst rejecting what they see as the arbitrary authoritarianism of the Church; some remain in this stage for a long time, joining the loosely-knit group of "independent Scientologists" known as the Freezone or joining other offshoots of Scientology.

Hubbard frequently described Scientology as "the science of certainty", and this is the true appeal of the control agenda: it provides the individual Scientologist with a complete worldview ranging from his personal life to the nature of the universe itself and promises him the prospect of taking complete control of every aspect of life. This is a highly attractive proposition to many. It is no wonder that people choose to follow the certainties of Hubbard's control agenda rather than face an uncertain world governed by uncontrollable and incomprehensible forces. Parting from the control agenda is, then, not simply a matter of exposing Hubbard's errors and personal faults; it requires a leap of faith, out of the light of easy certainty and into the uncertain darkness of the real world.

Chris Owen  
November 2000

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