

1977 JULY ?

## Scientologists protest ruling

Ruled against by the Supreme Court, thousands of local members of the Church of Scientology took to the streets in protest and confronted agents of the federal government in an attempt to "educate the public" about alleged harassment of the church.

Last week's events were triggered by the Supreme Court's decision to uphold a Washington, D.C. appellate court decision that the search warrant used by the FBI in last July's raids on Washington and Hollywood church offices was valid.

The court's action, which

church lawyers said would be challenged, clears the way for the documents seized in the raids to be turned over to a grand jury.

Reaction in Los Angeles, the church's world headquarters, was swift. Within 24 hours several thousand church members were marching around the federal buildings in downtown Los Angeles, carrying signs assailing the government's alleged "facist tactics" used against the church.

The Church of Scientology has had what amounts to a running battle with various arms of the federal government over church practices and tax-exempt status. Through use of the Freedom of Information Act the church has obtained thousands of pages of files gathered by the government on church activities.

Claiming about 3½ million members in the U.S., including 200,000 in the Los Angeles area, the church considers itself an applied religious philosophy that aims at increasing a person's self-knowledge and awareness.

Two days after the demonstration, Scientologists attempted to confront local federal officials with a list of "questions" in an admitted effort to gain further publicity for their position.

They failed in attempts to obtain face-to-face meetings with top U.S. Attorney General's office and FBI officials, but a spokesman for the church said the "point of

the matter is we're making ourselves heard."

Officials who received the questions refused comment because of litigation pending between the church and the government.