



The Rev. Heber Jentsch, Scientologists' president, says the government has waged a vendetta against the church.

# Travolta & other Scientologists swarm into Portland to protest

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and S.L. Sanger.  
P-I Reporters

PORTLAND, Ore. — Thousands of Scientologists, including actor John Travolta and jazz musician Chick Corea, showed up in Portland yesterday to rally behind their beleaguered church.

Members of the Church of Scientology flew to Portland from all over the United States and as far away as Europe and South America.

In Seattle, about 80 Scientologists singing "We Shall Overcome" and protesting what they called an assault on religious freedom gath-

ered last night at the Flag Pavilion in Seattle Center.

The Scientologists, most from the Seattle area, held an hourlong candlelight vigil to express their support of fellow church members rallying in Portland to protest a \$39 million judgment against the church in a fraud case.

Ann Ruble, president of the Church of Scientology in Washington state, told the young adults and children in Seattle that the Portland decision "strikes at religious liberty everywhere."

In the huge Portland rally, the Scientologists marched through the streets carrying banners saying such things as "Restore the Bill of

Rights" and "Religious Freedom Begins in Oregon."

They distributed booklets by Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard; they quizzed passers-by about the First Amendment; they clogged the church's Portland headquarters with sleeping bags, backpacks and attache cases.

They are staging a weeklong "Crusade for Religious Freedom" in a small, tree-shaded park across the street from the Multnomah County Courthouse.

It was at that courthouse last Friday that a jury reached a verdict in what will be remembered as one of the biggest trials in See TRAVOLTA, Page A-3



Julie Titchbourne of Portland won a \$39 million judgment against the Church of Scientology. She accused it of fraud.

Seattle, Washington

21 MAY 1985



DAVE EKREN/P-I PHOTOS

Chick Corea, the jazz pianist, greets about 3,000 members of the Church of Scientology at a rally in a downtown Portland park. Corea flew in from Japan to join the protest against a jury's award of \$39 million to a former member of the church.

# Travolta joins church's mass protest

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Oregon history. After hearing 10 weeks of bitter, accusatory testimony about the inner workings of the Church of Scientology, the jury awarded \$39 million to ex-church member Julie Christofferson Titchbourne of Portland.

Titchbourne, a nine-month member in 1975 and 1976, had sued the church for fraud. She testified that among other things, the church had promised to improve her weak eyesight, raise her IQ, and make her more creative.

Titchbourne, now 27, was a teen-ager from Libby, Mont., when she first encountered the Church of Scientology. She testified that she blew her college savings on Scientology counseling sessions.

But when she went home to "disconnect" (break off contact) from her unsympathetic parents, they locked her up for two days and had her deprogrammed. She then sued the church.

## Appeal planned

In a first trial in 1979, the jury awarded her \$2 million in damages. But the Oregon Court of Appeals overturned the judgment on technicalities and sent the case back to the lower court for retrial.

The church plans to appeal the case again.

Titchbourne, now vacationing, said Friday that the issue is consumer fraud, not religion.

"I sued on basic, garden-variety fraud," she told The Associated Press. "We did not attack religious freedom."

That, however, is not a view shared by the estimated 4,000 Scientologists who crowded Portland's narrow streets yesterday in protest.

"This is like saying that if a Catholic was given communion and it didn't work, he could sue the priest," said Bill Yaude of Los



Carrying protest signs, members of the Church of Scientology march beside the Multnomah County Courthouse in Portland.

Angeles.

Yaude, nattily dressed in an olive suit and narrow tie, said most Scientologists are professional people in their 30s.

"We're the Yuppie generation," he said, "not cultists."

Ken Wasserman, a Los Angeles lawyer who flew up with Yaude, insisted that Scientologists are being singled out for persecution because their religion is unpopular.

The Rev. Heber Jentsch, president of the Church of Scientology International, decried the verdict as an all-out attack on religious liberties guaranteed by the First Amendment.

He charged here that the FBI, the Internal Revenue Service, the

Justice Department and other government agencies have waged a 30-year vendetta against the church.

"Those who deprogrammed her and the assaultive techniques of psychiatry should be the persons who pay her the \$39 million, because they destroyed her life which Scientology had helped so much," said Jentsch, a bulky, gray-haired man who wears snake-skin cowboy boots and works out of the church's Hollywood, Calif., headquarters.

With fanfare, the church unveiled what it promises will be a parade of Scientologist celebrities.

Travolta, the film star, flew his private plane to Portland for a brief visit and a 1 a.m. news

conference. Bedraggled and in need of a shave, the star of "Saturday Night Fever" said he interrupted filming of a movie to come to Portland and join the protest.

"It's simple," Travolta said. "I've been a Scientologist for 10 years now — I receive counseling and I give counseling — and I just feel that it's time to stand up for what one believes."

Corea, a jazz pianist, was in the midst of a 16-city concert tour in Japan when he got the word that the church was in trouble.

"It's an insane decision," said Corea, who headlined a free protest performance at a downtown waterfront park here last night.

Corea credited Scientology with "putting me in the driver's seat of my life. I'm still on an incredible journey."

Nonsense, argued Garry McMurry, Titchbourne's attorney.

McMurry, who has spent years investigating Scientology, brought several former Scientologists to the witness stand to tell tales of harassment, intimidation and brainwashing.

21 MAY  
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