

Skokie asks court to block rally by Nazis

By Lloyd Green

The Village of Skokie asked the Circuit Court Wednesday for an emergency order to stop a Nazi group from holding a march and rally in the heavily Jewish suburb.

Frank Collin, leader of the National Socialist Party of America, has announced plans to speak at 3 p.m. Sunday in front of the Skokie Village Hall to protest the village's refusal to grant the group a park rally permit last month.

The suit contends the rally would incite violence in the community where more than 40,000 of the 70,000 residents are Jewish.

"The march. . . is a deliberate and willful attempt . . . to incite racial and religious hatred," the petition charges.

It says that members of the Nazi group, with headquarters at 2519 W. 71st St., have been phoning Skokie residents with Jewish surnames telling them of Sunday's planned rally.

Joe Weber, a spokesman for the Nazis, denied any such phone calls had been made.

"We're not trying to harass anyone," he said. "We've been denied permits for rallies in Chicago so we decided to go to the suburbs. Skokie is a Jew suburb, so we figured that would be a good place to apply the pressure.

Weber said the Nazi members, some of whom will be in uniform, plan to march around the village hall before Collin's speech. He said he did not know how many members there would be.

"Collin's speech will be mainly political," Weber said. "Whether it will be anti-Jewish will depend on the circumstances."

The American Civil Liberties Union has been representing the Nazi group in its legal efforts to obtain rally permits in Chicago Parks. David Hamlin, executive director of the ACLU's Illinois Division, said free speech is the issue at stake.

"I imagine we'll represent them in a hearing on this Skokie suit, if they ask us," said Hamlin. "It seems to be against the free-speech guarantees of the Constitution."