

Coalition pledges to join Nazi foes in Skokie



By Bob Olmstead

The leader of a coalition of ethnic and racial groups pledged Monday to join the Jewish counter-demonstration against the Nazis scheduled for Sunday in Skokie.

Julian E. Kulas, spokesman for the group, said the 43-group coalition wants to stand beside Jews in Skokie "in order to make it crystal clear that Nazism is a threat not only to Jews but to all Americans."

Kulas, a lawyer and member of the Chicago Commission on Human Relations, made the statement at a press conference at the office of the Chicago chapter of the American Jewish Committee, 55 E. Jackson.

"To dismiss the appearance of swastikas, brown shirts and jackboots on American soil a scant generation after 6 million Jews and 6 million Christians died with these symbols before their eyes betrays willful inattention to one of the most tragic episodes of human history," Kulas said.

"THOSE WHO ALLOW an ideological malignancy to spread through the body politic by sitting silently abdicate their role as responsible members of society."

Kulas said members of the coalition would rally at Niles East High School, the site of the counter-demonstration planned by a Jewish umbrella group, the Jewish United Fund Political Action Committee.

He said his followers would not confront the Nazis at the Skokie Village Hall, five blocks from the counter-demonstration.

The Nazis, whose national headquarters is on the Southwest Side, plan to demonstrate Saturday afternoon at the Kluczynski Building Plaza, 230 S. Dearborn, and at 3 p.m. Sunday in front of the Skokie Village Hall.

Leader Frank Collin has said he will call off the rally in Skokie, which has a heavy Jewish population, only if the Chicago Park District grants his party freedom to demonstrate at Marquette Park near the Nazi headquarters.

U.S. District Court Judge George N.

Leighton will hold a hearing on the Park District dispute Tuesday.

Meanwhile, Collin scoffed at reports that the Nazi movement is divided.

"THE ONLY THING I can tell you," he said, "is that a year ago the movement was broken into splinter groups all over the country. Now, almost all of us are with the National Socialist Party of America (Collin's group)."

He said the long legal battle to gain the right to rally in Skokie was the issue that unified the Nazis.

Collin acknowledged that national Nazi membership is small but added that it has shown "phenomenal growth in Pennsylvania."

"I appeared on a television show in Philadelphia last fall, when we had a few people but no hard-core membership. We were deluged with requests for membership," he said.

"They've already got a building, although it's not open to the public yet."

Collin said he returned last week from a tour of Nazi centers in Cincinnati ("a brand-new unit"), Philadelphia, New York and Cleveland.

He said he may release national membership figures later this summer.

"For the first time, we'll be able to announce a figure because it'll be something decent," he said. "But I suppose it won't make any difference. Nobody will believe us anyhow."

"NAZISM is a threat not only to Jews but to all Americans," says Julian E. Kulas, leader of a coalition of ethnic and racial groups that plan to join a Jewish counter-demonstration against the Nazis in Skokie. (Sun-Times Photo by James DePree)