

Aryan church a Nazi front, lawyer argues

Religion claim doubted

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The Aryan Nations inquiry ended Tuesday with charges that the group's contention that it is a religion in fact hides its goal of Jewish genocide.

"The Aryan Nations (church) appears to be nothing more than a Nazi political movement aimed to commit genocide, and it cloaks itself as a religious movement," said lawyer Bruce Mintz.

He said the Provost white supremacist rally being examined by the inquiry was "a test of who was prepared to fight for this cause."

Mintz represents Harvey Kane, the executive director of Canada's Jewish Defence League who was one of seven people to complain about the Sept. 8-9, 1990, event.

The gathering included people in Ku Klux Klan robes marching around a burning cross chanting "death to the Jew" at an acreage, and armed men parading in Nazi uniforms.

Kane, a Calgary pensioner, said in an interview he has spent about \$3,500 from his savings to take part in the inquiry in addition to an unspecified legal bill.

"This is my responsibility to my God and my people."

An official estimated the inquiry, which has lasted about three weeks since it started in August, has so far cost \$350,000 to \$400,000.

It may not spend its entire \$713,000 budget, he said.

The inquiry adjourned Sept. 25 after Canadian Aryan Nations leader Terry Long refused to complete testifying.

The RCMP has had up to 12 officers looking for Long, visiting his rural home near Caroline and questioning his family, Insp. Dennis Massey of Red Deer says in a sworn statement.

Massey says Long has apparently left Alberta. Police didn't find him when they searched his house last Saturday.

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But Mintz successfully urged the three-member inquiry panel to continue Long's arrest warrant so he can possibly be cross-examined, even though final arguments have been made in the case.

He also wants to see Long cited for contempt of court by a Queen's Bench judge.

"It just appears to me unthinkable that there could be no action taken."

In a rambling nine-page written argument, Long's assistant, John Ross Taylor, contended the rally did nothing wrong.

He insisted it was a private religious gathering, and some complaints were based on an "inflammatory" newspaper article.

But John Hustwick, lawyer for the Alberta Human Rights Commission, dismissed claims the group didn't break a law against publicly displaying discriminatory signs and symbols.

He warned of rising nationalism and increased right-wing activity.

"It is not appropriate for this organization to hide behind the Bible in order to purport to justify activities which are in violation of the laws of Alberta."

The panel must now decide whether the case involves a constitutional challenge to the human rights law, and could reconvene for further arguments.

If it finds the law was broken, it can order Long and the Aryan Nations not to display swastikas and other discriminatory symbols again.