

Aryan Nations portrayal a shocker

by Randal Smathers

The Aryan Nations group has moved into Alberta this year and are drawing a strong and varied response from the community.

One reaction from campus is a series of films and discussions led by the U of A Chaplains' Association. The seminars are titled *Is Christianity Racist?*, and the first meeting featured a disturbing film last week.

The film is called *The Aryan Nations* and it focuses on the activities of the white supremacist group in Idaho over the past few years.

The film is a documentary which focuses on three men. First is Richard Butler, described as "the godfather of the world-wide Aryan movement." Butler is also head of the Church of Jesus Christ Christian, the Aryan Nation group's religious focal point.

Second is Keith Gilbert, the chairman of the Socialist National Aryan People's Party. During the film, he was interviewed in jail as he was serving a 45-day sentence for making "racist and threatening remarks" to a Coeur d'Alene teenager, the son of a mixed marriage.

Gilbert was quoted at his trial as telling the youth, Scott Wylie, that his parents' marriage was "an abomination" and that his mother was "a traitor to her race."

Gilbert also said to Wylie, "How art thee today? Thou should not live long." In addition to his jail term, Gilbert was fined \$300.

The third key figure is David Lane, ex-Texas Klu Klux Klan, and chief of security at the Aryan Nations' compound in the Idaho woods.

By the time the documentary aired in Calgary, Lane had been arrested by the FBI for the murder of Denver talk-show host Alan Berg. Berg had been threatened for speaking out for Jewish causes in the face of harassment from Aryan groups.

Lane represents the organized para-military aspect of the neo-Nazis. He proudly displayed the cameras around the Idaho stronghold, pointing out the area cleared back from the fences, complete with sound and motion detectors.

"It would be hard to get in here without our knowing about it," he said. Lane also displayed his rifle, a Ruger Mini-14, explaining that most white supremacist groups are "standardized on .223 calibre."

When asked if most members carried guns, Lane replied, "Probably, yes. It's a free man's right. If you don't carry a gun, you're not a free man."

Lane led para-military training for Aryan recruits, including indoctrinating children with the idea of fighting alongside their parents when they grow up.

Richard Butler denied the white power movement is violent, despite his having been arrested in Lancaster, California in 1976 while in possession of five tons of ammunition.

He stated the Aryan Nations is a "Christian faith organization." He explains the weaponry as an "army to protect the territorial imperative. No nation, no ethnic (basis) of a nation has existed without a territorial imperative."

Butler also teaches a revised history in his church. "There was a Jewish holocaust inasmuch as 250,000 white women and children died" in Hamburg and Dresden.

He went on to say that "most Jews had their lives saved" because they were "pulled out" of these areas, and that they were "fed for free" in the concentration camps.

Butler also maintains the "U.S. constitution is not meant to be democracy... democracy and communism are one and the same thing when you get right down to it."

If Butler is the religious and Lane

the military man of the three, then Keith Gilbert is the radical. "Some joys we reserve for ourselves," he said. "To hack into the chest of a nigger, rip his heart out, and bite into it... have the blood spurt up over your face."

Gilbert claims credit for starting the Aryan Brotherhood in San Quentin prison, a group blamed in numerous racially-motivated deaths. "They do what is necessary to survive," he said, and "sometimes" kill for sport.

He claims these and similar killings are not murders, but warfare, and that "Killing Jews and blacks is no different than killing a dog or a chicken."

Gilbert says that Canada is prime territory for the Aryans, claiming Canadians are "much more down on rag-head niggers and Jews. I wish we had some of the racial strongholds Canada does."

Statements such as Gilbert's cut two ways. First, they do frighten people. Dana Wetzel, the deputy District Attorney who prosecuted Gilbert, admitted to being afraid, and Scott Wylie's family was intimidated to the point that they were moved out of the Coeur d'Alene area by the Simon Weisenthal Center.

On the other hand, they may also stir up otherwise apathetic citizens. After Gilbert's conviction, Idahoans successfully petitioned their governor for new harassment laws.

Canada has stiffer laws already. The convictions of Jim Keegstra and Ernest Zundel have proven the ability of our laws to stifle anyone promoting racial hatred in this country.

As for Terry Long and his Aryan Nations group in Caroline, Alberta, the RCMP have indicated they are watching the group closely, but cannot act until a law is broken in Canada.

In Calgary, the U of C student

council has invited Long to speak. This has raised strong protest there, as reported last week in *The Gateway*. On the U of A campus, there seems to be little concern outside the Chaplains' Association.

While SU council has debated motions on apartheid in South Africa, there has been no real mention of racism in Alberta. SU VP External Mike Hunter was not available for comment.

According to Rev. Steve Watson of the Chaplains' Association, the

film was screened "to provide an opportunity for the education of the university community," as well as to "address and confront the media priorities of the Terry Long episode in Caroline."

"The media portrayed a tension between free speech and religious liberty, not the protection of a group of people," he said.

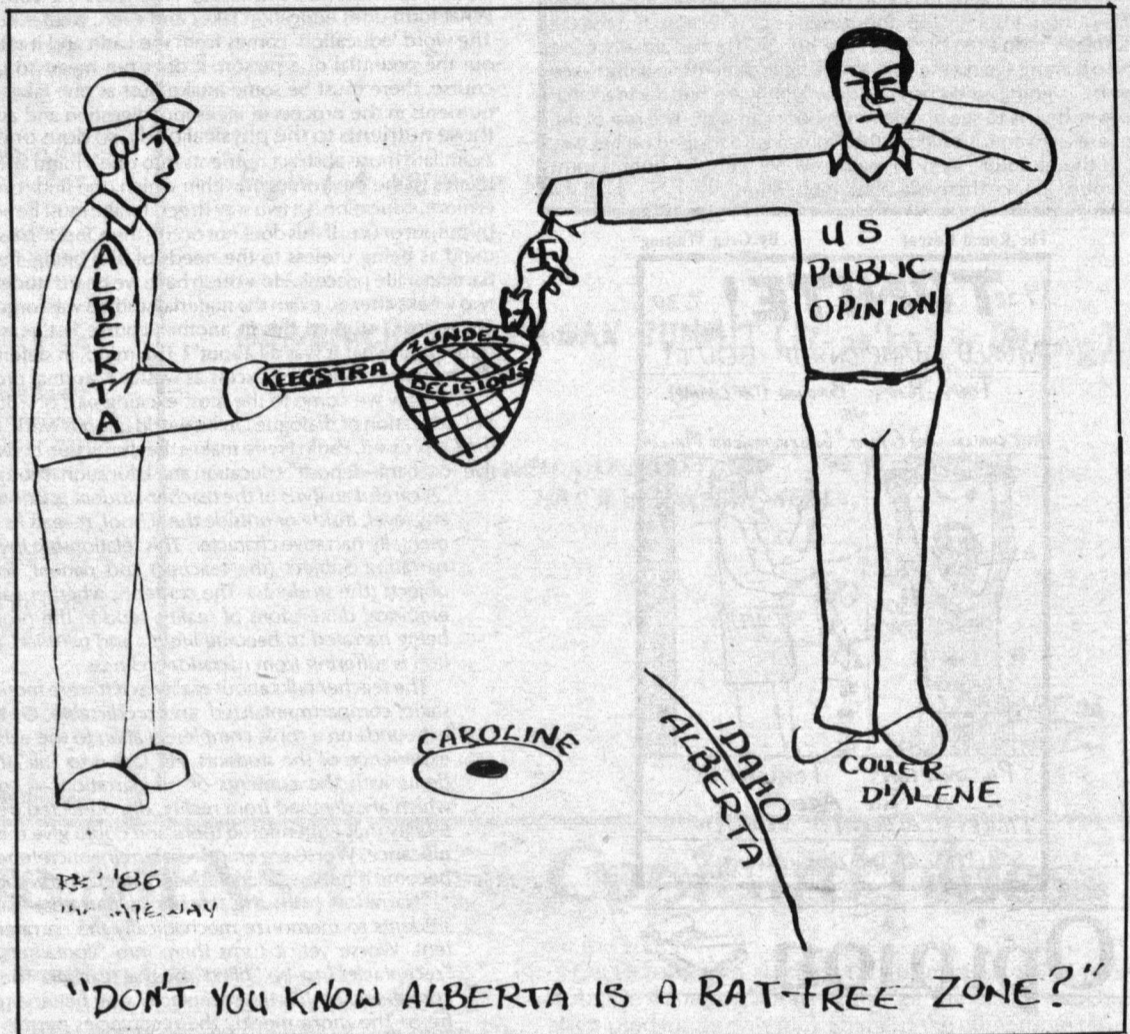
In addition, the series will "explore historical examples of the abuse of Christianity by racism." Watson cited apartheid as an

example.

On the invitation by the U of C to Terry Long, Rev. Watson said it was "A big mistake. We don't need to give a platform to these people."

On the other hand, he also pointed out that in refusing to hear Long, we had to make sure that "the cure isn't worse than the disease" in restraining free speech.

The Chaplains' discussion series continues next Tuesday at 12:30 p.m., with the topic being *Christianity and the Holocaust*.



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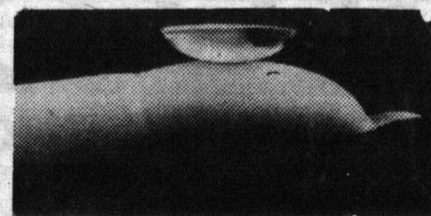
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