

Antonovich Blames Hotel for Clash Over Neo-Nazis

By VICTOR MERINA, *Times Staff Writer*

Angered by a weekend clash in Glendale involving a neo-Nazi group, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday denounced the white supremacists and criticized a hotel for allowing them to meet on its premises.

Board Chairman Mike Antonovich lashed out at officials of the Glendale Holiday Inn for allowing white supremacist J. B. Stoner to hold a meeting of his Crusade Against Corruption group.

"This entire ugly episode could have been avoided altogether had the Holiday Inn in Glendale canceled Stoner's scheduled use of its facilities to vent his hate-filled diatribe," said Antonovich, who represents the area.

"Instead, the national hotel chain allowed this convicted church terrorist to speak, thereby creating a near riot," he said.

Two Hurt in Protest

The Sunday appearance by Stoner, who was released from prison last November after serving time for the 1958 bombing of a black church in Alabama, attracted more than 250 chanting protesters outside the hotel. Several scuffles broke out, and two teen-age members of a white power group nicknamed the "Skinheads" suffered minor injuries when they were kicked and punched by protesters.

Supervisor Kenneth Hahn joined Antonovich and the other supervisors in condemning the white supremacists. Hahn also criticized the hotel for abandoning good sense in pursuit of a few dollars. Hahn added that he will ask the county counsel to determine whether it is legally possible for county employees to boycott Holiday Inn hotels while on public business.

"If they want to make a fast buck, maybe they can lose more than they gained in this by our not staying at their hotels," Hahn said.

Suggestion of such a policy was immediately criticized by a spokesman for Holiday Corp., which franchises the 1,456 Holiday Inns nationwide.

Screening Called 'Impractical'

"That's absurd on the face of it," said Robert Brannon, vice president of communications, at the company's Memphis headquarters. "No hotel can screen the politics of every organization that wants to hold a meeting there. That's totally impractical."

Brannon said the Glendale Holiday Inn is a franchise, and the parent corporation has no controls over the hotel guests.

Pat Duncan, general manager of the Glendale hotel, was not available for comment Tuesday. During a press conference last weekend, she indicated that the hotel was unaware that the tenets of the Crusade Against Corruption included racist beliefs or that Stoner had been invited to speak when reservations were first made two months ago. But she said that while hotel officials abhor his views, the hotel would honor its contract.

Stoner, 63, was convicted in 1983, some 25 years after the bombing that destroyed a Baptist church in Birmingham, Ala. He served three years and five months in prison.

About 75 Glendale police officers and county sheriff's deputies were on hand Sunday to help quell any disturbances. Among the protesters were members of the International Committee Against Racism, the Los Angeles-based Jewish Defense League and People Against Racist Terrorism.