

Neo-Nazi musician is guilty of assault

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OTTAWA - Anti-racism activists say yesterday's conviction of a Toronto neo-Nazi leader has shattered a powerful pillar of Canada's white supremacy movement.

George Burdi, 24, was convicted by an Ottawa jury yesterday of assault causing bodily harm for kicking an anti-Nazi activist in the face in a brawl at the Canadian War Memorial.

Alicia Reckzin, 22, suffered a broken nose when a group led by Burdi and Heritage Front leader Wolfgang Droege charged through downtown Ottawa on May 29, 1993.

Burdi, a Woodbridge insurance salesman and singer in a band called RaHoWa (Racial Holy War), was in Ottawa to play a concert to recruit high school students to the Heritage Front.

The concert was broken up by anti-racist protesters and the Ottawa police riot squad.

Bernie Farber, a senior member of B'nai Brith Canada who watched the trial, says Burdi's conviction will end his career as one of the bright lights of the North America neo-Nazi movement.

He said Burdi's band's records were being used by neo-Nazis to recruit hundreds of young people to the white supremacy movement. The Toronto activist is often in the U.S. on tours.

"This conviction means that his chances of getting into the States is nil to nil. It may not seem like a serious charge, but it does real damage to the North American neo-Nazi movement," Farber said.

In Burdi's week-long trial, Droege testified that he, not Burdi, led the charge of skinheads and neo-Nazis at the war memorial. He said Burdi had tried to maintain order.

But anti-racist demonstrators said Burdi led a charge of about 60 neo-Nazis from the steps of the Chateau Laurier to the National Arts Centre.

Burdi will be sentenced May 11.

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