

From across America: Ignore Nazis

Editor's note: In light of Holocaust week and the national attention that Skokie has gained because of the attempt by Nazis to stage a demonstration in the village, we present excerpts from letters we have received from throughout the country on the matter.

It is our fervent hope that the good people of Skokie will rise to their challenge. We hope that perhaps the heritage of wisdom and understanding will prevail.

Those who watch from a distance (but many of whom are with you in spirit) hope that you will do something positive, something contributory, something representative of what was once the "world's largest village." If others insist on their right to be idiotic, we hope that you will give us something to remember our birthright to be free: A "Skokie Fest," a "Freedom Day," or a "Day of Understanding."

Don't let hate and ignorance live in Skokie. Many of you saw what they did to Nazi Germany. Instead of fighting fire with fire, we implore you to fight fear (of others) with understanding (of self and others). Do something to make us proud of Skokie.

Bruce A. Eller

Lindenhurst, Ill.

I hope the people of Skokie stop the Nazi parade by appeals through the courts. But in the meantime, as an alternative, the citizens of Skokie should plan a memorial service for the victims of the Nazi Holocaust.

Hold it on the opposite side of town from the proposed parade – not just a prayer service, but a memorial and celebration of life. Invite everyone – make it truly ecumenical. Remember the dead, pray for them, honor them. Pray also, if the people of Skokie can possibly manage it, for the bigots across town.

Let the Nazis have their tacky parade. The rest of the town doesn't have to watch. They can be dancing in the streets.

Mary L. Linstrom
Greenbelt, Md.

Ignore the Nazis! Little people who must hate because they cannot love want attention. Ignore them!

When the Nazis march in Skokie, stand on the street with your backs to them, with no sound. Stay at home and let them march up and down the street in a silent atmosphere. Throughout the world, violence is used; now is the time for the role of silence to be understood as a symbol of rejection of violence and those who use it.

Many eyes will be on Skokie. Let them see a new scene – the aggressor ignored; the silent, victors.

Georgenia Irwin
Claremont, Cal.

The choice is clear. Don't let hate, revenge and the passions of 30 years ago deny anyone (you or me or them)

of their civil rights, regardless of how inappropriate it seems. Give them the hour to march and during that hour everyone simply turn his back in quiet neglect. Remove your opposition and you remove the focus of attention. Remove your opposition and you remove the passion of a news story for the media.

Take this opportunity and pull the plug on their publicity. Quietly grant them the permit to march and just as quietly ignore them, if they do. Once permitted, they may decide against it. Why march if no one will televise or notice?

As long as you censor them, they will seek (and with certain success) their American rights. They'll not likely be noticed if left alone. But if persecuted, they will be generally noticed by everyone – and, my dear friends, that is what they want.

Ron Grow
Elmhurst, Ill.

The Nazi parade route should be lined not by an angry mob, but by adults dressed in black who systematically turn their backs as the marchers approach each block. Not a contest of strength, but a statement of dignified protest.

I am concerned that Skokie makes a peaceful dramatic reply to the marchers. A reply that will show the world the proud heritage of the Jewish people and the strength of our inherited heritage – a nation that can contain all the freedoms, for all the people, even when the ideas exhibited are shared by the smallest minority.

Doris DiGiorgio
Bayside, N.Y.

I have two principle objections to the Skokie handling of the projected Nazi march. The first is strategic. The Skokie opposition to the march has provided a small group of Nazis with

nationwide publicity such as it wanted and has given impetus to the formation of likeminded groups in other parts of the United States.

My second objection is legal. Our founding fathers provided that what is meant by any part of the Constitution or its amendments should be decided by the courts – not by you, me, or any other individual – not even the President of the United States, not by police, army, navy, air force, or marines, not by state or national legislature or village board.

If and when the Nazis march in Skokie, will the people of the village choose to be governed by emotion or by law?

James S. Ayars
Urbana, Ill.

Those insensitive dredges of society plan to march in your town, on your streets, by your homes. That they are permitted to do this is unbelievable, ludicrous and sick. But march they will, so here is my plan:

What is the greatest put-down of all? To be ignored! Oh, what fun! On the day of the march, do not leave your homes. Make Skokie a ghost town for the day. Stay inside – pull your shades and srapes – let the marchers see no one!

If you could help the people of Skokie pull this off, you will go down in history.

Can't you just picture those misfits getting all spruced up for their parade – pinning on their arm bands, cleaning their swastikas practicing their little goose steps, prancing and strutting for nothing and no one? Oh, I love it! I wish I could be there.

Barbara K. Dowling
Harrisburg, Pa.

This is a test of our courage and principles. Each of us in our own hearts and minds must not let curiosi-

ty, anger, vindictiveness, or hatred get the best of us. Rather we should stay home or if we have the strength, we should confront the demonstrators with a street lined with people who turn their backs to them as they pass as a sign of utter contempt and disinterest.

To meet them with violence or anger is to show them they mean something worth our concern. And they do not.

Diane P. Nelson
Skokie