

Commends vigil as way to counterdemonstrate

WHEN PLANS were announced for a counter-demonstration at the same time and place as the threatened Nazi march in Skokie, I don't think I talked to a person over the next few days, Skokian or non-Skokian, Jew or non-Jew who thought the countermarch was a good idea. It was always said, that somehow or other, the two marches would come together and it will be a bloody mess. And the Nazis will have gotten what they wanted.

After watching television last weekend and seeing anti-Nazis being clubbed by police having to protect 42 brown-shirted Nazis in St. Louis and hearing top Chicago Nazi goon Frank Collin refer to the event as "sort of a kicker to the grand march in Skokie on April 20," a lot of people feel even less inclined to let the Nazis orchestrate their response to this detestable march.

And yet, most people want to do something to demonstrate their hatred of Nazism and all it stands for in betrayal of human decency and brotherhood. But what: The options are few: a demonstration alongside the Nazi march, the counterdemonstration elsewhere or ignoring the whole thing. A counterdemonstration somewhere else than Skokie might have been the answer. That doesn't seem to be in the cards.

ANOTHER IDEA for an action people can take came up at the March 8 meeting of the Niles Township Democratic organization. I had come to the meeting to hear candidates running in the March 21 primary. During the meeting, Calvin Sutker, Niles township Democratic committeeman, announced plans. for holding a week-long vigil, starting 10 a.m., Monday, April 16, that he described as "a vigil of conscience for human dignity and human rights."

Sutker said a candle would be kept burning in the window of the party's new headquarters at 4448 Oakton, so that everyone would know, "we would rather light a candle than just curse the Nazis." He added he is inviting political organization, both Republican and Democratic, Jew and non-Jew, to participate in the vigil "to show the world that we are one in an honor roll of people, who oppose all that Nazism stands for now, in the past and in the future."

AS YOU can imagine Sutker's announcement was greeted with applause. He received on-the-spot offers of support to man the vigil, including one from Lynn Williams, New Trier Township Democratic committeeman and candidate for a suburban seat on the Cook county board.

Williams, an old adversary of Sutker, added that on this he and Sutker were in agreement. "It is important not to forget this is not just a fight between the Nazis and Jews but a fight between the Nazis and all decent people," Williams said.

When it came time for Samuel Berger, a candidate for state senator from the 4th legislative district to address the group, he too commended the idea.

People might say I'm Naive and this is only a political ploy. But I'm not going to question Sutker's motives in holding this vigil. I just think it is a darn good idea and I hope plenty of people participate.

I would even suggest that more vigils be scheduled. Then the world will see candles lit up all over this village and know that people here care about each other. If anything the '70s has lacked it is people showing they care about each other. The greatest good that could come of this Nazi march is if we demonstrate this caring to each other.