



SKOKIE ILLINOIS

YOUR SKOKIE REPORT

1978

No. 2

MAYOR'S RESPONSE TO COURT RULING

The following is the text of Mayor Albert J. Smith's statement to the media on Thursday, February 23, 1978. It was delivered in response to the Federal District Court ruling that certain Skokie ordinances were unconstitutional and, therefore, could not be used to prevent a proposed march by the National Socialist (Nazi) Party of America.

Good afternoon. Another step in the legal process has been taken. However, it is far from the final step as far as the Village of Skokie is concerned. We strongly disagree with today's decision. We are morally, ethically and legally bound to take every recourse at our disposal to have Judge Decker's decision reversed.

We will appeal. To do less would mean this Village's government is not representing the views and feelings of virtually every Skokie resident, Catholic, Protestant and Jew alike. And, yes, we will ask the courts to forestall any demonstration pending the outcome of our appeal.

We are convinced that a ruling in our favor would strengthen rather than weaken the First Amendment which is meant to protect rights. It is unfortunate that today's decision ignores the First Amendment rights of thousands, in favor of the alleged rights of a few.

As we all know, not all speech is protected by the First Amendment. If there was ever a perfect example of the type of speech which should not be protected, it is the doctrine of Nazism which preaches hatred and violence because of a person's race or national origin. This is the real purpose of the proposed Nazi demonstration in Skokie, not a test of our founding fathers' wisdom. The courts must not be blind to the uniqueness of the Village of Skokie. The courts must not be blind to recorded history. The courts must not be blind to the rights of the citizens of Skokie to be protected from racial slurs.

The letters, calls and comments that I get from citizens of Skokie are matched in number and opinion by those I get from across the nation.

What Nazism represents is repugnant not just to the people of Skokie, to the people of Illinois, but to virtually every United States citizen and free people everywhere. Nazism has affected people of every creed and national origin and insults the dignity of human beings.

(Continued on page 2)

MAYOR'S RESPONSE Continued

Skokie is representative of thousands of American communities, a village of decent families, good homes, good schools and, yes, good government. It is a stable community for investment and continues to attract new business and industry. Public health care is second to none. Skokie residents boast of a great municipal park and recreational program. Skokians are among the most law-abiding citizens. The Village has one of the lowest crime rates of any suburb.

It is unfortunate that the Nazis have selected Skokie as a target community, but in one way, some good has resulted. I see an unprecedented unity of opinion among all of our residents, regardless of religious belief. This attitude has created a bond which typifies the feelings that must have existed when our founding fathers were molding our nation.