

# Will counter-march aid Jewish survival?

LAST JUNE, I wrote a column which was given the headline "Collin Pipes and We Dance."

Since then, Frank Collin has become nothing less than a virtuoso and the collective "we" are still kicking up our heels.

Nine months of time and energy and money later, nothing has changed. Proposed Nazi marches continue to dominate conversation throughout the northern suburbs. Crazy and not-so-crazy people all over the world send in their suggestions for turning back the Nazi menace. And a few Skokie residents have become minor celebrities as spokesmen for anti-Nazi sentiment.

But somewhere in the commotion, in the rush to stifle what one Jewish leader last year called "a group of 15 pimply adolescents," looms a larger question:

DOES THE CURRENT preoccupation with Frank Collin and his cohorts really have anything to do with Jewish survival? If 50,000 counter-demonstrators gather in Skokie to provide the Nazis with an audience, will the world be safer for Jews? Will freedom ring throughout the land?

The Skokie situation is totally out of hand. It's no longer a valid political or

social issue, but a bandwagon. When Erna Gans and John Nimrod hold a joint press conference giving Nimrod credit for the mass counter-demonstration proposed by heads of the Jewish Federation, one becomes skeptical of motives on all sides. Likewise, a planned weeklong 24-hour-a-day vigil at Niles Township Democratic headquarters seems senseless, if not in poor taste.

There is no virtue in mourning the six million and learning no lesson. The lesson of Jewish survival goes beyond the threats of a swastika. It tells of Russia, of Syria, of the Middle East, of the United States.

FRANK COLLIN is not Adolf Hitler, who quietly spread a message of hate. Collin has already reached everyone who can read a newspaper or flip on a TV set, so the outcome of a Skokie confrontation will not affect the success of his movement.

The destruction of American Jewry will come not from the teachings of Hitler but from the disinterest of American Jews, from apathy, intermarriage and assimilation.

On the worldwide front, it is no secret that the Jews of Eastern Europe and the U.S.S.R. are not free to practice their religion or to emigrate.

This past weekend saw the slaughter of nearly 40 Israelis and the wounding of at least 80 more-by Palestinian commandos outfitted with Russian planes and weapons, not by the National Socialist Party of America.

How should the Jews of Skokie observe April 20, the date of Hitler's birthday, the day of a scheduled Nazi march?

THEY CAN go to the synagogue. Or donate money to a Jewish charity (Mogen David Adorn, Israel's Red Cross, for example). They can volunteer to work at a social service agency or bring food, clothing and housewares to the Ark, which provides medical, legal and survival services for poor and elderly Jews. They can contemplate the fact that 800,000 Jews in the United States are said to be living below the poverty level.

They can spend an hour with their children, reading stories of Jewish survival in past centuries-perhaps the story of Passover (this year beginning on April 22), which commemorates the Jewish struggle against slavery at the hands of the Egyptians.

Or they can go stare at Frank Collin and his friends.