

Visit Auschwitz first

When I left Chicago in February to spend 25 days in Poland on an educational exchange, I had taken a very academic stand on the Nazi march in Skokie. As long as no violence occurred, an American Civil Liberties Union contributor such as myself could take no stand other than to encourage the use of freedoms to which we subscribe. Now that I have returned, I have undergone a change. I have visited Auschwitz.

The world has preserved the dove and the olive branch as symbols of peace and goodness. In the same convention, the swastika and the label "Nazi," with all their attendant concepts, should become symbols of war and evil.

I am not a sentimentalist, nor was I unread of the atrocities committed in the Nazi concentration camps, but I was not prepared—and hope that I will never be prepared—to accept the evidence of the incredible inhumanity that was perpetrated under the symbol of Nazi Germany. A tour through Auschwitz should be a part of the education of every person throughout the world. That it happened is a nightmare. That it could happen again has no description.

If you ask me now, "Should the American Nazi Party march in "Skokie?" my response is, "Never."

If a group of distorted individuals want to walk around with signs saying that they hate Jews and blacks, such is their right. But if they flaunt the symbol that has been associated with the vile and inhumane acts to which Auschwitz stands witness, they are advocating the violation of humanity, and the violation of humanity should have no protection in any city, state or nation in the world.

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