



NBC Memo

Deloris MeBain

Mayor Smith:

Per our conversation, attached is text of Nazi Court Ruling Editorial.

I have set aside tape time for you for Tuesday, March 7, 1978 at 11:00 a.m.

If there is a problem with this date & time, please do not hesitate to give me a call.

If your text is prepared on Monday, it could be taken down via phone by me and typed for teleprompter on Tuesday when you arrive. In any case, I will need the text by 9:30 a.m. Tuesday.

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Federal Judge Bernard Decker has ruled that Skokie ordinances that were designed to prevent Nazis from demonstrating in that suburb are unconstitutional.

One quote from the judge's decision is particularly significant. "It is better," he said, "to allow those who preach racial hate to expend their venom in rhetoric rather than to be panicked into embarking on a dangerous course of permitting the government to decide what its citizens may say and hear."

It is certainly understandable that the people of Skokie, most of whom are Jewish, find hateful the doctrine preached by the Nazis.

And they are fearful that violence that has accompanied previous Nazi marches could result in their community. But violence most often involves two sides. Allowing the Nazis to march in Skokie will result in no disturbances if they are left alone and ignored.

The idea of a counter demonstration somewhere else is fine. Let the people of Skokie express their feelings in their own peaceful way. Naturally they have a right to do that which is protected by the First Amendment.

But, hard as it may be for us to accept the idea, Nazis rights are protected too.

American freedoms are diminished unless they can withstand the tough tests, like the question of Nazi punks marching with swastikas in Skokie.

But as Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes said, the First Amendment protects free thought -- "not free thought for those who agree with us but freedom for the thought we hate."

(This editorial was broadcast February 25 & 27, 1978.)