

Editorial

American freedom will win over Nazi hatred

THE DECISION OF U.S. District Court Judge Bernard Decker upholding the right of Nazis to march in Skokie was the only judicial option consistent with the First Amendment guarantee of free speech.

We share with the people of Skokie, and especially those Skokians who survived Hitler's holocaust, the trauma of having race hatred paraded on the streets of the village. It is something like suffering a jab in the eye, but the character of the marchers cannot be allowed to blur our vision of freedom.

Court approval of the Nazi march, which has now come from both state and federal courts, creates some severe problems for Skokie, notably the challenge of properly policing a super-charged, potentially dangerous demonstration.

As we have said in previous editorials, the most effective counterdemonstration to any Nazi march would be a grim silence on the part of all residents of Skokie. Turning one's back on Nazi marchers is the strongest and most effective answer to their tactic of confrontation applied to a community that has a large, proud Jewish population.

We strongly reject suggestions that there be an equal and opposite reaction from Jewish organizations and that there be a patriotic parade to take attention away from the Nazis. Either of these tactics would make the police problem more difficult and might serve to give additional national and international publicity to the Nazi cause.

Nevertheless, we support the efforts of the village administration to get a final court ruling on the constitutionality of the ordinances that were adopted to keep the Nazis out. The village should pursue its appeals, as Mayor Albert Smith has announced that Skokie will do.

However, while we support the right of the village to do what the administration feels it has to do to protect the citizens of Skokie, we applaud Judge Decker's decision and the other decisions that have uniformly upheld First Amendment rights of free speech and Fourteenth Amendment rights to equal protection under the law. To say that is not to give support to the Nazi cause; rather it is to say that American freedom is stronger than Nazi hatred.