

# Editor at Large

By Richard Bjorklund

## Let's go back to Square 1 in grim game of handling Nazi march

THE MOUNTING TRAGEDY of the threatened Nazi march in Skokie is not what the Nazis have done but rather what we have done to ourselves in response to their obscene mouthings.



BJORKLUND

People who formerly stood foursquare for the principle of free speech have turned to any means available, constitutional or not, to prevent the march.

The consequence, of course, was predictable: A handful of Nazi

punks have had continuing worldwide publicity for racist doctrines that millions fought to stamp out in World War II.

Each court decision, each legislative action, each statement against the proposed Nazi march has been reported widely in the world press. Never in their wildest dreams could that little

band of Nazis have imagined such exposure for their hateful ideas.

State Sen. Howard Carroll (D-15th) and State Rep. Alan Greiman (D-15th), formerly staunch supporters of libertarian legislation, have called for the resurrection of a McCarthy-era "criminal libel" law to prevent the march.

CONG. ABNER MIKVA (D-10th), whose very career was founded on civil libertarianism, has publicly opposed the march and supported actions of Skokie village officials to prevent it.

Now comes the Decalogue Society of Lawyers, historically in the forefront of free-speech efforts, with an endorsement of repressive state legislation that is clearly violative of Supreme Court interpretations of constitutional guarantees of free speech.

Even Murray Kempton, firebrand liberal columnist for the New York Post, says that the circumstances of the threatened Skokie march are such that laws should be bent or rewritten to make sure that the Nazis are not al-

lowed to visit their venom on survivors of the Holocaust.

Perhaps the most constructive thing we've done in response to the march threat has been to reexamine for this generation what happened in Hitler's time. It is hoped that those who saw the TV programs and other reruns of the Holocaust will say "never again" to Nazi butchery.

YET TO SAY "never again" is not to automatically endorse anything that is done to stop a Nazi march in Skokie. Many of those who most deeply sympathize with the survivors of the Holocaust strongly believe that the march should be allowed to happen.

They maintain this for two strong reasons:

- First a practical consideration: So long as the march is resisted in edict and legislation, so long will the Nazi cause get worldwide publicity.

- Then an idealistic consideration: The best way to assure that the Holocaust or something like it will come "never again" is to hold firmly to the

deepest principles of American freedom, those principles that say that in a free atmosphere the best instincts of man will conquer bigotry and hatred.

If reruns of the Holocaust showed us anything it was that Hitler triumphed temporarily because he was successful in hiding from the world and from vast numbers of the German people exactly what was happening in the concentration camps. So successful was he in suppressing the truth that writers like Dorothy Thompson were rarely disbelieved when they warned the world of the monstrosity that was Hitler's Germany.

It's time for us to go back to Square 1 in the grim game of outguessing the neo-Nazis on the threatened Skokie march. We've got to ask ourselves what's really important in this situation.

Confronted with that question, we might reasonably conclude that it would be better to let the Nazis march under tight control to get it over with instead of allowing our basic freedoms to erode.