

The Nazis... Is Our Guard High Enough?

BY RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE

A planned march by a small bunch of homegrown Nazis through a heavily Jewish suburb of Chicago has focused attention in the United States on what appears to be a resurgence of Nazism here and abroad.

At the same time, the proposed march provoked a strong counter-response by members of the Christian community.

Swastika-wearing members of the National Socialist Party of America planned to parade through Skokie, where 10 per cent of the Jewish residents are survivors of the Nazi persecution in Germany, on April 20, the anniversary of Adolph Hitler's birth.

But on March 17, a federal judge issued a 45-day stay, which in effect barred the Nazis from marching through Skokie, pending an appeal in the case.

Meanwhile, a group of Roman Catholic and Protestant clergy in Skokie issued a statement expressing their commitment "to identifying with the Jewish residents in their deep distress occasioned by the Nazi presence and exercise of un-American and irreligious free speech.

"We are also aware," said the group, "that a Nazi presence would be distressing for a variety of reasons to thousands of non-Jewish residents as well."

As a peaceful counter-demonstration to the threatened Nazi demonstration in Skokie, the National Conference of Christians and Jews announced plans for a National Day of Christian-Jewish Solidarity, April 22.

"While recognizing that Jews have been the primary victims of the Nazi ideology of hate and destruction," said Donald W. McEvoy, senior NCCJ vice president, "we do not see the emergence of neo-Nazism as a Jewish problem. We see the heightened activity of the Nazis as a threat and a challenge to Christians, as well. We believe the Nazi platform to be antithetical to Christianity."

To Philip M. Klutznick, president of the World Jewish Congress, the proposed Nazi march through Skokie had become "an international symbol of the effort to rebuild Nazism and all that it implies."

On March 27, Klutznick voiced alarm at the "growing neo-Nazism in the world. The question of anti-Semitic activities of certain governments and groups in Latin America has grown. The increasing numbers of incidents in the Federal Republic of Germany and the recurrence of the Hitler story has upset not only that government but has raised important questions for us all. . . . Reports from France in relation to the recent elections there have been identified as a new wave of anti-Semitism."

Even earlier this year, a rash of anti-Semitic acts broke out in parts of southern France. In Dijon, threats of violence were received by the head of the Jewish community, the local rabbi, and the area president of the International League Against Racism and Anti-Semitism.

Slogans which appeared on walls in Dijon and elsewhere included "Jew get out of France, Hitler was

right" and "Put the Jews into Camps."

Anti-Semitic slogans defaced synagogues in Marseilles and Toulon. The Jewish cemetery of Islesur-Sorgue was desecrated. In Marseilles, students at two high schools were offered — and a number of them wore — yellow T-shirts with the inscription, "Hungry? Put a Jew in Your Oven."

Meanwhile, in Hanover, West Germany, anti-Semitic incidents led to 25 official complaints to police.

These involved a beating and a threat to a Jewish shopkeeper, anonymous telephone threats and insults, a cemetery desecration, the distribution of anti-Jewish pamphlets, the daubing of anti-Semitic slogans on walls, and reports of racist comments and jokes in local schools.

In Argentina, threats against the American Jewish Committee's representative in Buenos Aires led the agency to close its office there last Summer, after 39 years of operation.

Earlier, neo-Nazi books appeared on the newstands in Buenos Aires and some other cities in Argentina and numerous Jewish businesses, synagogues and schools were bombed.

Self-styled "neo-Nazi" youth movements have sprung up in parts of Portugal, mainly in Lisbon, the capital, and the northern city of Oporto. Leaflets circulated in a high school in Oporto said, "All is not lost. National Socialism is the answer to the material and spiritual needs of Western man. Those who call Hitler a madman will come to understand the reason for his glorious acts."

At Mafra High School in Lisbon, Portuguese national flags were torn down and students chanted "Heil Hitler" and cheered the name of former Portuguese rightwing dictator Antonio Salazar.

In England, many Britons, including church leaders, have expressed grave concern over the growth of the racist National Front Party, which now ranks as the third-largest political group after the Labor and Conservative parties. The National Front is a lineal descendant of the British Union of Fascists of the 1930s.

Nazi parties or facsimiles thereof exist nominally in Denmark, Finland, Chile and Australia. Here in the United States, news stories chronicle threatened Nazi

France . . . 'Hungry? Put a Jew in the Oven'

Portugal Students: 'Heil Hitler'

Boston . . . Swastikas On Jewish Property

Synagogues Bombed In Argentina

And So On in England, West Germany, Latin America, Australia . . .

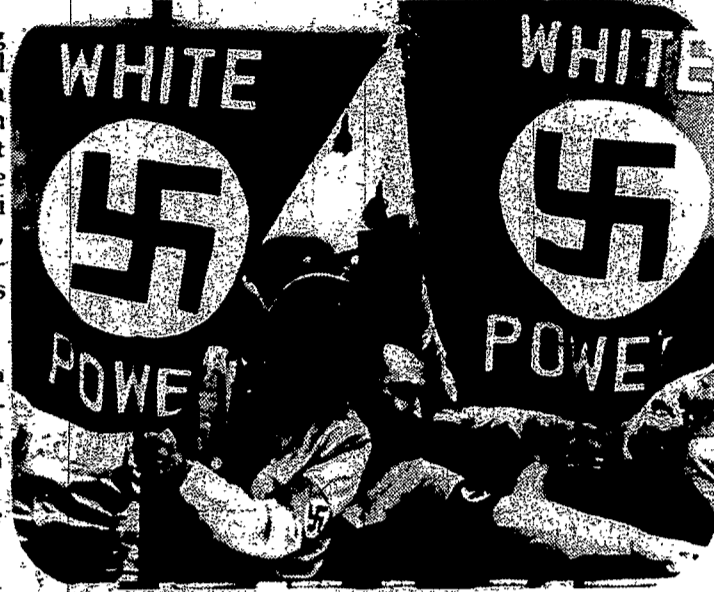
marches, clashes between Nazis and outraged citizens in Milwaukee, San Francisco and St. Louis and synagogue desecrations.

A recent outbreak of anti-Jewish incidents, including the daubing of swastikas on Jewish property and the vandalism of several synagogues, has been reported in the Greater Boston Area.

While fears and anxieties have been raised in the American Jewish community, a careful assessment of the neo-Nazi movement in the U.S. by the American Jewish Committee concludes that "a widespread assumption that Nazism is taking root in America" is "simply not true."

Alluding to the committee report, NCCJ vice president McEvoy said, America is not on the verge of a Nazi takeover. In fact, the eight separate neo-Nazi groups in this country (split by discord, hatreds and petty jealousies) have a combined membership of less than 2,000 persons."

"Their very presence, however," McEvoy added, "and particularly their recent emergence into public view, constitutes an aberration which cannot be ignored."



In St. Louis, U.S.A. . . . 1978



1938 in Berlin . . . Jewish shop wrecked.

"America is not on the verge of a Nazi takeover . . . their very presence, however, and particularly their recent emergence into public view, constitutes an aberration which cannot be ignored."