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Milwaukee Jewish Council



MJC STATEMENT ON THE NAZIS AND THE COUNTY PARKS

The Milwaukee Jewish Council has given careful consideration to the problems surrounding the granting of permits by the Milwaukee County Park Commission to members of the so-called National Socialist White People's Party for the purpose of holding two rallies in Milwaukee County Parks.

Milwaukeeans are aware that the philosophy of Nazism is a threat to the freedom of Americans of every ethnic and religious group. Millions of men, women and children of every nation in Europe and of every faith died in Nazi gas chambers and concentration camps, victims of a philosophy of totalitarianism and of racial superiority. Millions of Americans fought and many thousands died in a war to destroy the criminal Nazi regime. The presence in Milwaukee of those who wear the symbols of that regime will remind all of us to rededicate ourselves to the principles of democracy and human rights.

The Milwaukee Jewish Council has studied the legal and community relations aspects of Nazi activity in the streets. The recent experience of the Jewish community in Chicago has affirmed the view of the Milwaukee Jewish Council and the national Jewish community relations agencies that confrontation in the courts and on the streets is what ugly extremist groups, like the Nazis, need in order for them to remain in the public eye. There is a strong likelihood that First Amendment principles guaranteeing freedom of speech and assembly will prevail in the courts and if there is a court challenge the Nazis become beneficiaries of protracted media coverage which is what they seek.

The Milwaukee Jewish Council is also deeply committed to the principles of the First Amendment guaranteeing freedom of religion, of press and of assembly. These are rights which are precious to all Americans and especially to the American Jewish community which has achieved religious freedom and equal opportunity under the protection of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The Milwaukee Jewish Council will not support attacks on the First Amendment because of the activity of a tiny group of ugly misfits marching about the streets with their symbols of hate. The Milwaukee Jewish Council does commit itself and its program to the support of democratic values and human rights. The struggle against Nazism is best waged, not in the streets, but in the schools, universities, Churches and Synagogues, in the media, and on all levels of government.

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The Milwaukee Jewish Council will remain continually alert to the activities of any extremist and anti-Semitic group. We will continue to work vigorously with the widest spectrum of religious and ethnic groups, with our schools and churches to promote intergroup understanding. We will urge agencies of law enforcement to strictly uphold the law and to prosecute unlawful acts by these groups. We urge all members of our community to "quarantine" this sick group of extremists by avoiding their rallies thereby denying them the public attention which they seek.