

Protesters shout down supremacists

10 arrested at gathering to mark Hitler's birthday

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DENVER — Protesters outnumbered white supremacists Saturday at an angry rally at the State Capitol commemorating Adolf Hitler's 102nd birthday.

Police arrested at least 10 protesters. One police officer was hit in the head by a pop bottle and treated and released at a hospital. One woman suffered knee injuries when she was struck by a car. Mace was sprayed on at least one man as he tried to enter the Capitol.

Sporting hooded robes, shaved heads and swastikas, about 60 members of the Ku Klux Klan, Nazis and skinheads praised the white race as an estimated 500 people protested.

Protesters represented a cross section of the state, including whites, blacks, Jews, Native Americans, Hispanics and Asians. They carried placards with statements such as "Fascist insects, go back under your rocks," "Kan the Klan" and "Aztecs before Aryans."

A busload of University of Colorado students and members of the Boulder chapter of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom was among those protesting.

They came despite pleas from politicians and minority activists to ignore the gathering. Jewish, Christian and political leaders condemned the rally but rejected a counter-protest out of fear of violence.

"To those who would say ignore them, that's like saying ignore cancer and it will go away," said Glen Morris of the American Indian Movement. "By ignoring it, we will allow it to fester and grow and grow and grow."

Fearing violence, "A lot of my friends tried to talk me out of coming," said Cindy Lair of Boulder. "I'm not going to let them intimidate me."

Officers on foot, horseback and motorcycles escorted the white supremacists to the west steps of the Capitol and back to their cars afterward.

They were peppered with spit and rocks. The supremacists raised their arms in a salute to Hitler as the protesters raised their fingers in 'V's and obscene gestures.

One group walked across the street to the RTD Civic Center bus station where the bus they boarded was pelted with eggs, bottles and rocks.



PROTESTING: Counter-rally demonstrators stand along Broadway across the street from the State Capitol where the white supremacists held their rally.



SALUTE: Skinheads give the Nazi salute during the rally.

"We're here to make a statement and not for confrontation," said Mark Cohen of New Jewish Agenda and Bring Democracy Home, the group that organized the counter-protest. "We're here to make the point that this kind of hatred and racism has no place in our society."

Among the white supremacists were Ed Novak of the Chicago Knights of the Ku Klux Klan and Matt Hale of the American White Supremacists Party.

Denver Nazi Mark Johnson said before the formal rally began that only blacks and minorities should be sent to fight wars. "If you're not white, I'm not going to back you up," he said. "I'd just as soon kill you."

Moved to Capitol itself, where this photo was actually taken.