

Anti-Nazi Resistance

As the Nazi threat became clear, anti-fascists around the world organized to sound the alarm, to combat the danger, and to rescue the victims.

The American League for the Defense of Jewish Rights, founded in May 1933 by Yiddish journalist Abraham Coralnik, became the Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League to Champion Human Rights, under the leadership of Samuel Untermyer. The League organized boycotts of German goods as a political response to the Nazi boycott of Jewish businesses. Untermyer felt that the mobilization needed to be focused well beyond the Jewish community; he attempted to build a broad united front, which appealed to people of every faith and political persuasion, to oppose Nazi tyranny. The Emergency Committee to Save the Jewish People of Europe appeared later, in 1943, organized by the Zionist Revisionist movement. Following a 1940 visit of Vladimir Jabotinsky to the United States, his deputy Hillel Kook, using the pseudonym Peter H. Bergson, began organizing a secret Jewish army (the Irgun Zvai Leumi) to fight against Nazi Germany, to rescue European Jews from the Holocaust, and to establish a Jewish state in Palestine. The Emergency Committee became the main front group for those activities, holding mass demonstrations and placing full-page advertisements in major newspapers that were endorsed by such celebrities as Ben Hecht, Max Lerner, William Randolph Hearst, Harold Ickes, Fiorello La Guardia, and Will Rogers Jr.

Both the left (Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League) and right (Emergency Committee) wings of the anti-fascist movements in the United States distributed seals and poster stamps to raise money and to spread propaganda in support of their resistance activities. Although the Emergency Committee used President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Four Freedoms as a theme, in reproductions of paintings by renowned artist Arthur Szyk, it failed to win FDR's endorsement.

