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Southbury, Connecticut, Defeats Local Nazis in 1937

Invoking the Muses

Hear the voices of Southbury's leaders
Recalled for their moral courage at a dangerous time.
Preaches the Reverend Felix Manley
Of Southbury Federated Church:
"Un-American inhabitants can
Not tear down what has been built so slowly
At so much cost."¹

Insists Jennie Hinman,
The town's leading citizen and oldest
Taxpayer: "The display of emblems indicating
Allegiance to a foreign power on
Public roads or streams in this community
Shall be prohibited."²

Resolves the Reverend M.E.N. Lindsay
Of the South Britain Congregational Church:
"I am compelled by the nature of my office
To warn my people of the evil consequences
Of such movements, and to this end,

¹ "Elderly Woman Helped rid Southbury of Nazis in 1937," *Republican-American*. 11 November 2012.
archives.rep-am.com/2012/11/11/elderly-woman-helped-rid-southbury-of-nazis-in-1937/. Accessed 11
November 2022.

² *ibid.*

Must address myself at the time of discourse
During the Sunday morning worship hour.”³

Southbury Lays Down the Law

Consider this response to well-placed words:
Well-organized Yankees lift their voices
To defend rural Southbury—their home—
From American Nazis’ gaining ground
In Kettletown, by calling constables
To stop Nazi camp construction on a Sunday in 1937.
First, blue laws; next, new-cast zoning policies
Protect a farming people at peace
With hard-won freedom, inherited truths
That make no way for hatred’s marching tunes.
Southbury makes the rules, then plays by them:
No training camp for fascist families here.
The lesson: Know what you stand for; then, stand.
Community thrives when respect for law
Frees every citizen from hatred’s thrall.

Postscript

After the slaughter of European
Jews and the leveling of landscapes,
Eleanor Roosevelt warns us to learn:
“We let our consciences realize too late
The need of standing up against something
We knew was wrong. I hope in the future,
We are going to remember that there
Can be no compromise at any point

³ Lindsay, M.E.N. Letter to the Editor of the *Republican-American*. 18 November 1937. EHRI Project, EU. portal.ehri-project.eu/collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn90002#?rsc=144123&cv=4&c=0&m=0&s=0&xywh=-133%2C954%2C5009%2C3281. Accessed 11 November 22.

With the things we know are wrong.”⁴ Learn it:
“Those who treat life as their toy, death as their
Tool, if these men be immune, the law has lost
Its meaning and we must all live in fear.”⁵
What will you do when the menace draws near?

Antiphon

An elderly Jewish survivor
Recalls this pivotal childhood moment
When he fled Hitler’s war for a new world:
“The fog lifted, and there it was after all:
The Statue of Liberty,
After all, after all, I see it all
Now, after all these years,
The taste of freedom, here.”⁶

–Sandy Lee Carlson
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⁴ "Speech before Women's Division of the United Jewish Appeal of Greater New York ." Eleanor Roosevelt Papers, Volume 1. Encyclopedia.com. 9 Nov. 2022 <<https://www.encyclopedia.com>>.

⁵ Prosecutor Benjamin Ferencz in his closing argument at the Nuremberg Trials

⁶ Survivor Joseph Hilsenrath in Ken Burns’s 2022 documentary *The U.S. and the Holocaust*