

## World War II and the Walters (Lippmann and Winchell): Their Implications for Our Time

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Around the turn of the century, I wrote a book about white advocate William Pierce (1933–2002)—*The Fame of a Dead Man's Deeds* (1stBooks Library, 2001). One of the things that stuck with me about that experience is Pierce's consuming interest in World War II. I put it this way in the book:

**Pierce is engrossed in the World War II period. The most powerful stimulus behind Pierce's consuming interest in this era is his conviction that it was a monumentally important turning point in the course of Western history [i.e., white history]. The direction cultural and political events of Europe and America have taken over the past half-century were set in motion by that war, Pierce believes. If white people are to understand their time, he contends, they are going to have to get beyond the official version of what World War II was about and take a hard look at what really happened back then. He sees himself in a tough battle in getting them to do it, however, because there are powerful forces that make questioning the prevailing interpretation of those years, and any suggestion of an alternative account, a highly unwelcome, and even condemned and punished, undertaking.**

A primary focus in Pierce's work was the effect Jews have on the wellbeing of white people. Basically, he saw World War II as bad news for whites and, despite the Holocaust (which Pierce was skeptical about), good news for Jews, as it contributed to the formation of Israel, the ascendancy and sacred cow status of Jews, and to this country's obsession with Middle East politics (that is, with the fate of Israel), and to what Pierce saw as the Jewish agenda of egalitarianism, racial integration, and feminism, and the demonization, emasculation, and displacement of whites. It can be

argued that indeed these are the policies that have been favored by the mainstream Jewish community and its activist organizations in America.

Pierce went so far as to say that if we thought we had to fight in World War II, which we didn't, we should have been on the other side, with the Germans taking on the Russians, and to have put our efforts into working out peace terms between Germany and Britain. Pierce's claim was that Hitler was an Anglophile and never wanted war with Britain (or the U.S.) in the first place. If Churchill would have backed off he would have. Churchill and Roosevelt were the ones that wanted war, not him. That brought me up short—I'd never thought of that.

Since my contact with Pierce, I've thought about World War II now and again, though not systematically or in any great depth and not necessarily through Pierce's lens; I have my differences with his outlook. He did get me to look at World War II more critically than I expect I would have, however. For example, back in 2007, I didn't uncritically accept the premise of Ken Burns' seven-part PBS documentary on World War II, called "The War," that it was an absolutely necessary, and good, war -- case closed.

This writing is a report on some concerted reading and thought on this topic I've done over the last month or so. I'll cite some books I've read, all but one of them old, and what I've made of them with the idea that you may want to check into some of them and work with some of the topics and concerns I identify. At the end, I'll invite you to answer two questions in particular.

To begin, and it's the strongest feeling—it's visceral, more than just a thought—that's come out of this month for me: What a god-awful surreal/bloodbath/horror World War II was! I've started reading a new book at this writing by Victor Davis Hanson, *The Second World Wars: How the First Global Conflict Was Fought and Won* (Basic Books, 2017). Hanson writes:

**Some sixty million people died in World War II. On average, twenty-seven thousand people perished on each day between the invasion of Poland (September 1, 1939) and the formal surrender of Japan (September 2, 1945)—bombed, shot, stabbed, blown apart, incinerated, gassed, starved, or infected. The Axis losers killed or starved to death about 80 percent of all those who died during the war. The Allied victors largely killed Axis soldiers; the defeated Axis, mostly civilians. More German and Russian soldiers were killed in tanks at Kursk (well over 2,000 tanks lost) than at any other battle of armor in history. The greatest loss of life of both civilians and soldiers on a single ship (9,400 fatalities) occurred when a Soviet submarine sank the German troop transport Wilhelm Gustloff in the Baltic Sea in January 1945. The costliest land battle in history took place at Stalingrad; Leningrad was civilization's most lethal siege. The death machinery of the Holocaust made past mass murdering from Attila to Tamerlane to the Aztecs seem like child's play. The deadliest single day in military history occurred in World War II during the March 10, 1945, firebombing of Tokyo, when a hundred thousand people, perhaps many more, lost their lives. The only atomic bombs ever dropped in war immediately killed more than a hundred thousand people at Hiroshima and Nagasaki together, most of them civilians, while tens of thousands more ultimately died and were maimed from radiation exposure. World War II exhausted superlatives. Its carnage seemed to reinvent ideas of war altogether.**

The challenge is to come to grips with these realities. Sixty million deaths, 27,000 a day, 100,000 in a night. Human beings did this to each other? White people, including Americans, did this to one another in Europe? This is madness. Who thought this was a good idea?

I picked up in school -- and everywhere else, really -- that everybody bought into this war back then. Not so. Writing the Pierce book, I learned about large-scale organized opposition to the impending war by right-wing women who identified themselves as

mothers — history books hadn't told me about them. In the book, I quoted one of the movement's leaders, Lyrl Clark Van Hying:

**Those boys who will be forced to throw their young flesh against that impregnable wall of steel are the same babies mothers cherished and comforted and brought to manhood. Mother's kiss healed all hurts of childhood. But on invasion day no kiss can heal the terrible hurts and mother won't be there. Mothers have betrayed their sons to the butchers.**

For background, see Glen Jeansonne, *Women of the Far Right: The Mother's Movement and World War II* (University of Chicago Press, 1996).

One individual who tried to keep the U.S. out of World War II was Charles Lindbergh. Lindbergh was a great American hero for having been the first person, in 1927, to fly solo across the Atlantic. Arguably, the two most prominent Americans at that time were President Franklin Roosevelt and Charles Lindbergh. Lindbergh's radio talks would reach upwards of half of the adult population in the country. There was talk of him running for president. I checked a book out of the library about Lindbergh's non-interventionist activity by Wayne Cole published back in 1974, *Charles Lindbergh and The Battle Against American Intervention in World War II* (Houghton Mifflin) and found it very informative.

Lindbergh was the leading figure in the America First Committee, which in the late 1930s and early '40s sought to keep the U.S. out of the European war that began on September 1, 1939. On September 11, 1941 in a speech in Des Moines, Iowa, Lindbergh listed three groups as the most important in pressing the United States to enter the war: the British, the Roosevelt administration, and the Jews. Of the Jews, Lindbergh said:

**It is not difficult to understand why Jewish people desire the overthrow of Nazi Germany. The persecution they suffered in Germany would be sufficient to make bitter enemies of any race. No person with a sense of the dignity**

**of mankind can condone the persecution of the Jewish race in Germany. But no person of honesty and vision can look at their pro-war policy here today without seeing the dangers involved in such a policy, both for us and for them.**

**Instead of agitating for war, the Jewish groups in this country should be opposing it in every possible way for they will be among the first to feel its consequences. Tolerance is a virtue that depends on peace and strength. History shows that it cannot survive war and devastations. A few farsighted Jewish people realize this and stand opposed to intervention. But the majority still do not. Their greatest danger to this country lies in their large ownership and influence in our motion pictures, our press, our radio, and our government.**

**I'm not attacking either the Jewish or British people. Both races I admire. But I am saying that leaders of both the British and Jewish races, for reasons which are understandable from their viewpoint as they are inadvisable from ours, for reasons which are not American, wish to involve us in the war. We cannot blame them for looking out for what they believe to be their own interests, but we must look out for ours. We cannot allow the natural passions and prejudices of other peoples to lead our country to destruction.**

Biographer Cole reports that those three paragraphs constitute Lindbergh's only public reference to Jews, and that they reflect his thoughts as expressed in his journals and private communications. It's a matter of interpretation to be sure, but as I see it, while Lindbergh's comments are critical of Jews and reflect an us-them perspective with regard to Jews, they don't demonstrate the kind of unhinged animus I associate with anti-Semitism; they don't rise to "ism" status. More, in his mind he was trying to help Jews (his warning that if there is war, "they will be among the first to feel its consequences"). Plus, according to Cole, American Jews were in fact actively promoting U.S. entry into the war

Nevertheless, after Lindbergh spoke those words in Des Moines, the roof caved in on him. He was denounced as an anti-Semite, the America First Committee was called upon to repudiate him, and there were calls for a Congressional investigation of him. The Texas legislature adopted a resolution informing Lindbergh he was not welcome to speak in that state. Vandals broke windows in the Manhattan offices of America First, and security was greatly increased at Lindbergh's later (and few) public appearances in response to threats against his safety. That was the end of Lindbergh.

If Americans ultimately weren't listening to Lindbergh back then, who were they listening to? Two people are worthy of special mention. *The New Yorker* magazine critic and commentator Alexander Woollcott writing in 1933 predicted that historians would someday label that era "the Age of the Two Walters, Lippmann and Winchell."

Walter Lippmann and Walter Winchell, both Jewish, were nationally known journalists. In the past couple of weeks, I've read two excellent biographies of the two men: *Walter Lippmann and the American Century* by Ronald Steel (Knopf, 1980), and *Walter Winchell: Gossip, Power and the Culture of Celebrity* by Neal Gabler (Knopf, 1994). The conclusion I came to after reading the two books is that indeed Lippmann and Winchell were enormously influential in shaping mass opinion and public policy during the World War II era and post-war period. They both banged the drums—particularly Winchell—for U.S. entry into WWII, and they came out in favor of what's come to be known as the politically correct side of issues that became salient after the war: black civil rights, racial integration, immigration, and women's issues. In my view, you can speak of these two men in the same breath as the Frankfurt School of intellectuals and Freudian psychology in influencing what America has become since the 1930s. They are not at that level of significance I suppose, or maybe they are, but anyway, they are in the ballpark.

I'll leave the details of Lippmann and Winchell's lives, ideas, approaches, and impact to your investigations. In this context, just capsule descriptions of the two:

Walter Lippmann (1889–1974), born and raised in New York City, from a cultured upper-middle-class German-Jewish background, private school and Harvard education, philosophy major at Harvard, studied with George Santayana, erudite, on a first name basis with heads of state worldwide, the type to receive honorary degrees, commencement speaker par excellence. Lippmann authored a number of best-selling books on public policy and, for much of his working life, wrote a widely syndicated and much discussed column for the *New York Herald Tribune* newspaper.

Biographer Steel describes Lippmann:

**For nearly forty years, his syndicated column appeared in the leading newspapers of the United States and throughout the world. When he went into semi-retirement in 1967 it was as though an institution had suddenly ceased to exist. Three generations had been led through the maze of political affairs by Walter Lippmann. Readers turned to Lippmann, not for solutions, but for dispassionate analysis. [Well, he proposed solutions.] He had a marvelous ability for simplifying the complex. His extraordinary success was due to two qualities, a mind that could plunge through the miasma of contention to grasp the essence of a situation, and a superbly lucid literary style. He had an intellect of a sort that is rarely attracted to journalism.**

Lippmann was personally a cold fish. One telling anecdote from the Steel biography: After several decades of marriage, Lippmann decided to divorce his wife. From that moment on, he never spoke another word to her, not one. He phoned her father, his father-in-law, and asked him to inform his daughter that her marriage had ended. From then on, it was lawyers. The point here, Lippmann was not of the sort to lose sleep worrying about

snuffing out the lives of twenty-year-old Iowa farm boys in order to keep German-speaking Sudetenland part of Czechoslovakia.

Walter Winchell (1897–1972) was also from New York City, but contrasted starkly from Lippmann: money scarce growing up, descended from the more raucous Eastern European Jewish stock, sixth grade dropout, down to earth manner, former vaudeville song and dance man. Biographer Gabler:

**By the time of Walter Winchell's death, a friend admitted that trying to explain him to a generation unfamiliar with him "would be like trying to explain Napoleon to the second French generation after the Napoleonic wars." For more than four decades Walter Winchell was an American institution, and arguably one of the principal architects of the culture. By one estimate, fifty million Americans—out of an adult population of roughly seventy-five million—either listened to his weekly radio broadcast or read his daily column, which, at its height in the late thirties and forties, was syndicated in more than two thousand newspapers; it was, according to one observer, the "largest continuous audience ever possessed by a man who was neither a politician nor divine." Winchell helped inaugurate a new mass culture of celebrity—centered in New York and Hollywood and Washington, fixated on personalities, promulgated by the media, predicated on publicity, dedicated to the ephemeral and grounded in the principal that notoriety confers power. Few lives are more instructive of the forces that shaped mass culture in America than Walter Winchell's.**

Winchell wrote this about himself:

**I'm not a fighter, I'm a "waiter." I wait until I can catch an ingrate with his fly open, and then I take a picture of it. When some heel does me dirt I return the compliment some day. In the paper, on the air, or with a bottle of ketchup on the skull.**



Consider this an invitation to check into the two Walters, Winchell and Lippmann. The Steel and Gabler biographies would be good places to start.

A lot of questions come out of what I've just discussed, but a couple in particular to think about:

The first, *The Occidental Observer* [this article appeared in this webzine] is devoted to an examination of “White Identity, Interests, and Culture.” A thought experiment: If the United States had done a Switzerland and successfully managed to stay out of World War II — no war in Europe or the Pacific — how, if at all, would present day white identity, interests, and culture in this country be different from what they are? William Pierce thought that World War II had a big, and negative, effect on whites. Was he right? Or was he wrong?

And the second, referenced by the successes Lippmann and Winchell had in influencing a mass audience, what are the best strategies for communicating with the general public? It's one thing to get a message across to a niche audience, but how do you do it with a mass audience? And to particularize this question, in 2017 what's the best way to get a white message — the kind of thing you might read in TOO, let's say — across to average, everyday white Americans? Picture them: in living rooms and back yards and playing fields and malls and workplaces and schools going about their lives. I think it fair to say that the vast majority of them don't know that the ideas and proposals contained in this and similar publications even exist. And those who do encounter these ideas and proposals dismiss both them and those who espouse them as being beyond the pale.

Is there anything that can be done about this? Am I painting too bleak a picture? What do you think? What can we do? What should we do? What are you going to do?

