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**NEW TITLES**

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*History*

**WALTER LIPPMAN  
AND THE AMERICAN  
CENTURY**  
by Ronald Steel  
Atlantic-Little, Brown, 1980  
669 pp. \$19.95

Today, it is hard to understand how a newspaperman could work as assiduously behind the scenes with Washington's higher-ups as Walter Lippmann did for 50 years and still maintain credibility. Lippmann (1889-1974) was a founder of the progressive *New Republic* in 1914, a political and foreign affairs editor for Pulitzer's *New York World*, and a long-time columnist for the *New York Herald Tribune*, and later for *Washington Post/Newsweek*. His magisterial style and long view of the world made him an oracle of his time, despite some faulty judgments (in 1933, he lauded Hitler as "the authentic voice of a genuinely civilized people"). Having supported Woodrow Wilson in the *New Republic* in 1916, Lippmann then went to work for him and helped draft the Fourteen Points. After the war, he turned against Wilson and advocated the defeat of the Versailles Treaty. Later, Lippmann advised Al Smith, Wendell Willkie, FDR, and Adlai Stevenson, among others. He helped formulate and promote the Marshall Plan after World War II and was consulted by JFK about choosing a Secretary of State. Lippmann's success at juggling politics and journalism, historian Steel asserts, was due to his fierce patriotism, conceit, and the firm belief that persons of superior intellect, not just elected officials, should participate in setting the nation's course. Yet his activism was at some cost to his objectivity. Lyndon Johnson's adviser McGeorge Bundy once observed that Lippmann had a "useful tendency" to think of Presidents as being right. It was an astute remark, but in Johnson's case it did not prove true. Lippmann broke with LBJ over Vietnam in 1965, gave up Washington for New York, and at long last began to question just how closely journalists should work with those in power.