

Walter Lippmann

Journalist (1889–1974)



Lippmann was born in New York City and, at age 17, he entered Harvard University where he studied under George Santayana, William James, and Graham Wallas. He graduated after three years and, in 1913, Lippmann, Herbert Croly, and Walter Weyl became founding editors of *The New Republic* magazine. During World War I, Lippmann became an adviser to President WOODROW WILSON and assisted in the drafting of Wilson's Fourteen Points.

He and CHARLES MERZ, in a 1920 study entitled *A Test of the News*, stated that *The New York Times'* coverage of the Bolshevik revolution was biased and inaccurate. In *Public Opinion* (1922), Lippmann noted that the stability the government achieved during the patronage era of the 1800s was threatened by modern realities. He wrote that a "governing class" must rise to face the new challenges. He saw the public as Plato did, a great beast or a bewildered herd – floundering in the "chaos of local opinions." He compared the political savvy of an average man to a theater goer walking into a play in the middle of the third act and leaving before the last curtain.

Philosopher JOHN DEWEY agreed with Lippmann's assertions that the world was becoming too complex for every citizen to grasp all its aspects, but Dewey, unlike Lippmann, believed that the public could form a "Great Community" that could become educated about issues, come to judgments and arrive at solutions to societal problems.

In addition to his Pulitzer Prize-winning column "Today and Tomorrow," Lippmann published many books. He was the first to bring the phrase "cold war" into common currency in his 1947 book by the same name.

In 1930, Lippmann was proposed for membership in the Century Club by (soon to be) Senator DWIGHT MORROW and Judge LEARNED HAND, and he remained a member until his death in New York City in December 1974.