

THE
NEWSPAPER
AXIS

Six Press Barons Who Enabled Hitler

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Yale
UNIVERSITY PRESS
New Haven and London

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Introduction

ON CHRISTMAS EVE 1934, Lord Harold Rothermere, owner of the London *Daily Mail*, filed a story from Munich about a magnetic national leader who had “given Germany a new soul.” As Rothermere explained to his millions of readers, young Germans were now full of vigor and “zest for work.” They were nothing like the oppressed people of fifteen years earlier, when their nation was reeling from its defeat in World War I and the vengeful peace treaty that followed. Germany was “on her feet again.”

What was responsible for this marvelous transformation? “By what force has this land been lifted from a despondent, discouraged, disregarded condition to its old place in the front rank of the Great Powers?” Rothermere asked his readers rhetorically. “HITLER. That is the whole answer.” In less than two years in power, Rothermere wrote, the Nazi chancellor had fulfilled a “predestined task” by assuming all of Germany’s “forces and energies,” now placed in the hands of one strong leader. Rothermere went on to assure his readers that accounts of the Nazis’ persecution of Jews were untrue. In German restaurants and hotels during the Christmas season, he frequently saw “merry and festive parties of German Jews who showed no symptoms of insecurity or suffering.”¹

While Rothermere praised Hitler’s “rekindling of the German soul,” the Nazi government had ousted Jews from most professions and public positions, banned opposition political parties, and arrested

and killed political opponents. It had also established a network of concentration camps. Although not yet mass-extinction factories, these camps imprisoned tens of thousands of Jews, communists, and others the Third Reich considered inferior or dangerous.²

Rothermere was extreme in his enthusiasm for Hitler, but not unique. For years, he and his fellow press barons in the United States and the United Kingdom pressured their nations' leaders to ignore the menace of fascism. As a result, these publishers helped give the aggressor nations the opportunity to seize valuable territory and resources. The press lords' insistence that their governments should not confront the fascist dictators made a war against fascism both more likely and more difficult to win.

The six most powerful media moguls in the United States and the United Kingdom—Rothermere, Lord Max Beaverbrook, William Randolph Hearst, Robert McCormick, and Joseph and Cissy Patterson—all dismissed the fascist threat. These five men and one woman owned and directed the best-selling newspapers in their countries, reaching up to 16 million Britons and 50 million Americans in the late 1930s—and more during the war.³ Their xenophobic, nationalist, imperialist, and anti-Semitic views made it harder for anti-fascists in their governments to challenge the Nazis earlier.

These six publishers were among the most influential and controversial political players of their day. Lashing out at the administration's critics, one Roosevelt official called them "the newspaper axis." British prime minister Stanley Baldwin publicly denounced Rothermere and Beaverbrook for exercising "power without responsibility."⁴ Ernest Bevin, a Labour leader, claimed that Beaverbrook and the rest of the British press, known collectively as Fleet Street, after the thoroughfare in London where most had their headquarters, wielded more authority than the people's elected representatives. "I object to this country being ruled from Fleet Street, however big the circulation, instead of from Parliament," he said in 1945.⁵ In the United States, readers boycotted the press lords and burned copies of their papers. Some proprietors welcomed this image of themselves as master manipulators. Beaverbrook once boasted that he ran his newspapers "purely for the purpose of making propaganda."⁶

The mass-circulation newspaper publishers helped develop a new style of journalism that gave them power to mold the political opinions of their fellow citizens. Nineteenth-century newspapers had been subsidized by political parties, but modern mass-market newspapers relied on funding from advertisers. To increase profits, therefore, they required more readers. They quickly discovered that they could attract these readers by selling outrage and scandal. William Randolph Hearst, the most successful media entrepreneur of them all, described his ideal newspaper this way: “You looked at the first page and said, O GOSH!—and at the second page and said GEE WHIZ!—and at the third page and said HOLY MOSES!”⁷ And once they had the attention of their readers, these press lords could try to sell them policy positions as well as consumer goods.

These modern newspapers favored spectacle over substance, celebrity over leadership, and polemics over sober debate.⁸ The most successful publishers discovered that they could attract readers by highlighting race, nation, and empire—themes that their advertisers could also support. They could make money and gain political power by selling an exclusionary vision of their nations—“us” versus “them.” The new journalism was not always reactionary, but its emphasis on individuals, personality, strength, and ethno-nationalism could help promote authoritarian politics.

Though these newspapers catered to the average reader, their publishers made their own outrageously consumerist lifestyles and outsized personalities part of their brand. They sold themselves by writing front-page editorials, launching campaigns for political causes, and carefully curating the coverage of their personal images in their papers. They did not just sell the news: they sold “the news,” a product they constructed, sometimes by reporting on events that had not happened—in other words, by lying.

These media moguls, who trafficked in populist slogans but lived like kings, were part of a transnational movement to boost white supremacy and discourage resistance to fascism. They did not shrink from all British or American military interventions abroad. Rather, they opposed American or British intervention against the Nazis specifically. They fought public officials’ attempts to challenge Hitler, whose goals, as they saw them—order, anti-communism, “racial

purity,” and Anglo-Saxon domination—they generally supported even as they condemned his methods.

Some of these publishers, untethered from local parties, cooperated across the Atlantic to promote their shared values and policies. At a very dangerous moment in world history, as Hitler built up his military and invaded his neighbors, these press lords worked together to pressure their respective governments to dismiss and ignore the fascist threat. In the process, they helped create a discourse of right-wing grievance and ethno-nationalism that still animates British and American politics today.

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Lord Rothermere was the most notorious of these press barons because of his blatantly pro-fascist views. In news articles that he wrote himself, the publisher praised Benito Mussolini’s Italy and Hitler’s Germany as the “best-governed nations in Europe today.” He rhapsodized about the “immense benefits” the Nazis had brought to Germany, claiming that Hitler had “saved his country from the ineffectual leadership of hesitating, half-hearted politicians.” While conceding that the Nazis might have committed some “minor misdeeds,” Rothermere argued that they needed to control the “alien elements” and “Israelites of international attachments” who were “insinuating themselves” into the German state.⁹ He also cheered the British Union of Fascists (“Hurrah for the Blackshirts!” read one infamous headline) because he believed Britain needed a right-wing party to take over national affairs “with the same directness of purpose and energy of method as Mussolini and Hitler have displayed.”¹⁰

By contrast, Lord Max Beaverbrook, owner of the London *Daily Express*, *Sunday Express*, and *Evening Standard*, was no Nazi apologist. But he did encourage readers and British policy makers to dismiss or appease Hitler throughout the 1930s. He believed in “splendid isolation”: protecting the British Empire while ignoring conflicts on the European continent. “The policy for Britain is plain: no more truck with the foreigners,” he wrote in 1933. “No more European trammels on our freedom. Backs to the Continent and faces to the Empire!”¹¹ He repeatedly assured his readers that Britain need not bother itself about Hitler’s anti-Semitism or his threats to neighboring countries. The publisher also tried to prevent his read-

ers from hearing alternative viewpoints. Because Beaverbrook regarded his longtime friend, the Tory MP and anti-Nazi Winston Churchill, as a warmonger and an enemy of the empire, he fired Churchill as his columnist in 1938. Beaverbrook insisted until the last possible moment that Hitler posed no threat to Britain. As late as August 1939, he assured his millions of readers there would be “no war this year.”¹² Just three weeks later, the Nazis invaded Poland and World War II began in Europe.

Across the Atlantic, William Randolph Hearst, one of the most dominant figures in American media history, owned the largest newspaper chain in the world. At his peak, he published twenty-eight newspapers. One in four Americans read his Sunday papers. He also owned thirteen magazines and a news syndication service that sent news, photos, and features around the world. A pioneer in new media, he produced feature films, serials, and newsreels.

Hearst’s critics at the time called him a fascist, though the articles he himself wrote were never overtly pro-Nazi. He did, however, do business with the Third Reich, and his critics believed that the Nazis had bribed him in return for favorable coverage.¹³ In private, Hearst praised Hitler’s “enormous energy, intense enthusiasm . . . and great organizing ability”; in public, he predicted that the Nazis would soon turn away from anti-Semitism.¹⁴ His admiration for fascists extended to Mussolini, whom he called “a marvelous man.”¹⁵ Hearst hired Mussolini, Hitler, and other top fascist officials to write self-serving articles for the Hearst press.

Like Beaverbrook and Rothermere, Hearst worried that the “white race” would be eclipsed and destroyed by “savage races” if European nations fought one another. He was not a pacifist. He had warned his readers against the “yellow peril” for decades and frequently demanded that his government prepare for war against Asian nations; he also argued for various U.S. invasions in Latin America. But he maintained that the United States should not intervene in Europe in either world war. Even after America joined World War II, Hearst told his readers that the war in Europe had begun much like the Continent’s previous conflicts: “a tribal squabble” over “trivial commercial advantages or inconsequential territorial tracts,” characterized by “hatred and jealousy of this European nation for that or the other European nation.”¹⁶ The “vilest deed”

Nazi Germany had committed was to unite with Japan and turn an intra-race dispute into a world war by allying “against its own white race with the yellow peril.”¹⁷

In addition to Hearst, America’s most influential publishers included a trio of cousins: Robert McCormick of the *Chicago Tribune*, Joseph Medill Patterson of the *New York Daily News*, and Eleanor “Cissy” Medill Patterson of the *Washington Times-Herald*. Grandchildren of Joseph Medill, an early owner of the *Chicago Tribune* and a founder of the Republican Party, the cousins built on their inheritance to acquire a media empire second only to Hearst’s. And like Hearst, they used their papers to proselytize for nationalism, appeasement, and isolation.

McCormick enjoyed a reputation as the most reactionary major publisher in the United States—the “greatest mind of the fourteenth century,” one critic called him.¹⁸ He viewed Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal as not merely wrongheaded but a plot to destroy the Constitution, the republic, and the liberties of the American people. He singled out Roosevelt’s Jewish advisers, such as Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter, as members of a foreign-directed conspiracy against America.¹⁹

Like Hearst, McCormick was a hemispheric imperialist who supported U.S. invasions of Latin America while warning against the dangers of confronting Hitler. He never wrote pro-Nazi stories or editorials or made business deals with the Nazi government. But he did allow a pro-Nazi reporter to cover European news for the *Tribune*, even after it became clear that the reporter was unreliable and biased. (He became a Nazi propagandist during the war.) McCormick told his readers that neither Germany nor Japan threatened the United States. When the United States joined the war, McCormick insisted that the struggle was pointless, that Roosevelt was incompetent in directing it, and that the president might have conspired to enter it so that he could become a totalitarian dictator and create a one-world “superstate.”

Known as “the colonel,” his rank in the U.S. Army in World War I, McCormick was an ultra-nationalist who questioned the patriotism of his American political enemies and even the legitimacy of their laws. McCormick went so far as to defy national security laws by printing two stories based on secret information. One,

published before the United States entered the conflict, exposed the military's secret war plans; and the second, printed during the war, could have revealed to the Japanese that American cryptographers had broken their codes.

McCormick's cousin Joseph Medill ("Joe") Patterson also vehemently opposed American entry into World War II. Like Hearst, he worried that a war in Europe would lead to the "passing of the great race" and allow "yellow hordes" to invade America.²⁰ To avoid this racial catastrophe, he urged his government to appease Germany and, after 1940, Japan. His newspaper covered anti-Semites so sympathetically that Jewish groups organized boycotts against it.

Joe's sister, Cissy Patterson, ran the largest newspaper in Washington, D.C., and was the first female publisher of a major U.S. metropolitan daily in the twentieth century. She did not have strong political opinions or write many editorials. But she printed her brother's editorials in her newspaper almost every day beginning in 1941, putting them in the hands of national policy makers. She also published stories by the Patterson/McCormick reporters, who slanted the news in favor of isolationism.

These proprietors published the most popular newspapers in their countries, and indeed the world. In 1930, Rothermere's *Daily Mail* sold more copies, 1,845,000, than any other daily in Britain; after a few years of decline, it still enjoyed sales of 1,580,000 in 1937. The *Daily Express* increased its daily sales from 1,693,000 in 1930 to 2,329,000 in 1937 to claim the title of the world's best-selling daily newspaper. By contrast, the staid, respectable, pro-appeasement *Daily Telegraph* sold 637,000 copies a day and the London *Times* just 192,000.²¹

In the United States as well, the papers that earned the least respect sold the most copies. In 1937, the distinguished and interventionist *New York Times* reported 472,000 daily sales and 712,000 on Sundays; the *New York Herald Tribune*, another high-end, internationalist publication, sold 327,000 daily papers and 476,000 on Sundays. (Unlike in Britain, Sunday newspapers were not separate publications with distinct staff, but rather weekend editions of the daily newspaper.) These might seem like impressive numbers, but they were just a fraction of the circulation of the most popular isolationist papers. The tabloid *Daily News*, the nation's best-selling

newspaper, sold more than 1,600,000 daily copies and 2,800,000 Sunday copies. The *Chicago Tribune*, America's most popular broadsheet, boasted 800,000 daily sales and more than 1,000,000 on Sundays; and the Hearst chain had more than 6,889,000 daily and 7,364,000 Sunday sales.²²

Estimating four readers per copy, it is likely that the McCormick/Patterson press reached more than 12 million Americans daily and 20 million on Sundays. Hearst had 30 million readers, and the *Mail* and the *Express* together counted about 16 million British readers. As tensions in Europe reached crisis levels in the late 1930s, more than 60 million people in both countries got their news from these isolationist newspapers.

These publishers did not always agree on domestic political issues. Rothermere, Hearst, and McCormick were on the far right in the 1930s; they consistently opposed government spending, high taxes on the rich, and labor unions, and they believed that liberals and leftists in their countries were stooges for the Bolsheviks. They fabricated stories to draw false connections between the New Dealers or Labour Party members and the Soviets. Beaverbrook and Joe Patterson, on the other hand, never showed much concern about the dangers of communism, either at home or abroad. They appeared to be sincere believers in democracy, at least in the Anglo-American world. Patterson was a genuine liberal who endorsed Franklin Roosevelt for the presidency three times and was an ebullient promoter of the New Deal's policy revolution.

But they all shared the same assumption about foreign policy. It would be disastrous, they believed, for their nations to endanger their own interests by confronting the Nazis.

■

This is the first book to analyze how British and American press lords worked together to delay and undermine the Anglo-American alliance against Hitler. A transnational approach, as opposed to a focus on a single nation, reveals common arguments, beliefs, and language in the debate about resisting Nazism. An Anglo-American analysis can help us better understand where "isolationism" comes from, how the term was used, and what it meant.

In the United States, some opponents of intervention in Europe disavowed the term *isolationism* because they believed that it

lacked nuance, and scholars have expressed reservations about it in the years since. Many different groups in Britain and America opposed a confrontational policy with Hitler: imperialists as well as pacifists, Socialists and fascists, Democrats and Republicans, Tories and Labour Party members. Given the breadth of this coalition, some historians have argued that “isolationist” and “isolationism” should be used with skepticism, if not completely retired.²³

A transnational study, however, can help uncover the origins and meaning of the term. Since the Victorian era, British public officials had used the phrase “splendid isolation” to describe a system of imperial preference and protection. “This policy of splendid isolation,” as Beaverbrook said in 1933, “is the traditional policy of the Conservative Party. It was the policy of Disraeli, of Salisbury, and of Joe Chamberlain,” he continued, referring to past Tory prime ministers.²⁴ Once Hitler came to power and Beaverbrook worried that his nation might become involved in the affairs of Europe, the *Express* publisher frequently used “isolationism” and “isolationist” to describe his insistence that Britain should remain aloof from the repression and pogroms in Nazi Germany. By 1934, he believed that he was making headway in persuading other Britons in the media as well as those in government to adopt his policies. “We are all Isolationists now,” he crowed in one editorial.²⁵ Rothermere also used “isolation” and “isolationism” to describe his preferred foreign policy, though he was not as much of an evangelist for the terms as Beaverbrook.²⁶

Beaverbrook did not confine his enthusiasm for isolationism to Britain: he also worked to promote the language and substance of isolationism in the United States. In April 1935, for example, he wrote a piece for the Hearst press explaining the ideology of “the section of opinion to which I belong—the Isolationists.” He argued, “Britain should make no alliances except with the United States, that we should incur no obligations, no responsibilities, no liabilities to any nation outside the Empire except in relation to the Anglo-Saxon race.” It was through splendid isolation, he said, that Britain could gain “freedom of will and action” and avoid “Continental intrigues and maneuvers.”²⁷

Joe Patterson, who worked with Beaverbrook to promote isolation on both sides of the Atlantic, also eagerly embraced the term

isolationist. As early as 1925, in an obituary for Senator Medill McCormick of Illinois, Patterson's cousin, the *Daily News* described the anti-League of Nations lawmaker as "an isolationist."²⁸ Patterson called himself, his sister, and his cousin Robert McCormick "the isolationist furies," and referred to his allies in Britain, both Beaverbrook and Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, as isolationists as well.²⁹ He angrily rebutted the interventionists' attempts to make the term an epithet. "We've been accused by some readers of being an isolationist paper. You bet we're an isolationist paper," the *News* stated in 1938.³⁰ In 1944, during the war, Patterson wrote an editorial proclaiming himself an isolationist, even though the "world-savers" had tried to make the term a "brand of infamy."³¹

Hearst was not as enthusiastic about the term *isolationist*, and McCormick explicitly disavowed it. But they both argued for similar policies even as they used different language. Hearst preferred the phrase "America First"—the slogan some of his newspapers wore on their front-page nameplates from 1919 into the 1960s. But for Hearst, "America First" and "isolationism" meant essentially the same thing: a refusal to participate in "squabbles" among Europeans. "Your columnist is an isolationist, yes," he wrote in his front-page column in November 1941, shortly before U.S. entry into the war.³² McCormick described himself as a "nationalist," but he allowed his reporters to use "isolationist" in their news stories.³³

When they spoke of "isolation" or "isolationism," the mass-circulation publishers did not mean that they wanted to cut off all contact with other nations. For Rothermere and Beaverbrook, "splendid isolation" meant defending the British Empire, imposing high tariffs on nonimperial products, and refusing formal alliances with other nations. Beaverbrook explained his meaning: "isolation for Britain, isolation splendid and secure through our closer relations with the Empire."³⁴ It might seem strange to us today, but in the 1930s British imperialists believed they could best defend the empire through what they called isolationism.

The U.S. press lords practiced an American version of splendid isolation. They opposed the League of Nations and what they called "entangling alliances," echoing George Washington; they supported tariffs on imported goods, strict immigration controls, and a military strong enough to dominate Latin America and project U.S.

power into the Pacific. They argued that isolationism meant opposing any “meddling” in European affairs.

Though these publishers did not want to isolate America or Britain from the world, they did want their governments to work in isolation from other major powers, especially those in continental Europe. Far from being neutralist, noninterventionist, or anti-militarist, they were committed to military interventions in their formal (British) or informal (American) empires; they believed, in effect, in a kind of autarkic imperialism.

These British and American press barons opposed resisting Hitler because they either sympathized with the Nazis (in Rothermere’s case) or failed to sympathize with the Nazis’ victims. They worried that challenging the Nazis would endanger what they most cared about: the imperial power of their respective nations.

■

The most conservative of these press lords did not always achieve their domestic goals, at least in the short term. Franklin Roosevelt won reelection to the presidency in 1936, 1940, and 1944, despite the overwhelming opposition of the mainstream media. In Britain, after Prime Minister Baldwin proved that a canny leader could outflank the publishers, Rothermere and Beaverbrook never again wielded as much power over Conservative Party politics.

Given their limited success in domestic politics, how do we know that the newspaper owners played a major role in shaping public views on foreign policy? It can be difficult to assess the relative influence of newspapers on public opinion as opposed to other sources of information. We do know, though, that leaders of both nations believed that the isolationist publishers wielded enormous influence on perceptions of foreign policy.

Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and his cabinet read the national newspapers closely to discern the public mood. Scientific polling did not come to Britain until 1937, and policy makers paid little attention to the polls before 1939. “The lack of faith in the emerging science of opinion polling,” explains historian Daniel Hucker, “ensured that the press remained the principal means of gauging opinion.”³⁵ If the press supported appeasement, Chamberlain believed, then the public must as well. At least one poll suggests that he was correct. In a 1938 survey on the possibility of war,

a plurality of Britons—35 percent—said they based their opinions on what they read in the newspapers.³⁶

As in England, newspapers in the United States helped mold the public's views on national and foreign affairs. Eighty-two percent of Americans read a daily newspaper regularly, and 57 percent said they got most of their news—and, presumably, many of their opinions—from the papers.³⁷ As a result, leaders of both parties monitored and tried to influence print coverage. Former president Herbert Hoover, desperate to return to a leadership role in the Republican Party, read thirty papers a day, and he assiduously courted their publishers and editors.³⁸ Anti-interventionist senators like Burton Wheeler of Montana and Robert Reynolds of North Carolina routinely entered the Patterson/McCormick editorials into the *Congressional Record*.³⁹ Archibald MacLeish, the director of the Office of Facts and Figures, expressed the views of many Roosevelt advisers when he declared that the press “played a larger part than any other instrument,” including government, in “shaping the public . . . mind.”⁴⁰ President Roosevelt complained to his aides that the right-wing press barons made it difficult for him to convince Americans to take more forceful action against aggression abroad. “It’s a terrible thing,” he once told an adviser, “to look over your shoulder when you are trying to lead—and to find no one there.”⁴¹

To keep tabs on the news and opinion in the mass-circulation dailies, Roosevelt read eleven papers each morning, including a Hearst paper and two Patterson/McCormick dailies, and received editorial summaries of other newspapers from his staff. He also realized the value of opinion polling much sooner than Chamberlain did. He hired pollsters and directed them to keep him informed of the public's shifting views on neutrality.⁴²

After the war in Europe began, Roosevelt set up several different information and propaganda agencies to survey the press and devise strategies to combat the publishers' isolationist views.⁴³ When they continued to question the value of the war after the United States joined it, he criticized the press lords directly, insisting in one Fireside Chat, for instance, that the war effort must not be impeded by “a few bogus patriots who use the sacred freedom of the press to echo the sentiments of the propagandists in Tokyo and Berlin.”⁴⁴

Roosevelt attacked the press barons not out of personal pique but as a political necessity. He understood that their pro-appeasement, anti-interventionist, and even pro-Nazi press coverage and editorials made it harder for ordinary Americans and Britons to understand the threat Nazi Germany posed. Moreover, once their countries joined the war, the policies the press lords had advocated for so long—and in some cases continued to promote—impeded their governments' efforts to win the war.

■

Scholars have found it challenging to evaluate the coverage of these newspapers because of the difficulty of accessing them. Despite the immense reach of the Hearst press and of the *New York Daily News*, for example, archivists only recently digitized these papers and added them to major databases. Some important papers, such as the *Washington Times-Herald*, are still available only on microfilm as of early 2021. Thus researchers have, quite understandably, focused more on the digitized *Washington Post* than the better-selling *Times-Herald*.⁴⁵

Historians have also tended to dismiss the more popular papers because they were rowdier, angrier, and generally less respectable than their more sedate rivals. Because these publications were overtly anti-intellectual, it's easy to overlook them as key sources of ideas. "It would be ludicrous to devote as much space or attention to Lord Beaverbrook's or Lord Rothermere's few unsophisticated and obsessive ideas as to the development of important ideas and attitudes in the columns and offices of the quality newspapers," writes one historian of the British press.⁴⁶ In the United States, scholars of the right-wing media have mostly focused on the post-World War II period and on special-interest periodicals or broadcasters with a relatively small reach.⁴⁷ Yet in the 1930s and 1940s, media conservatism was not a fringe phenomenon: the mainstream media *was* the far-right media.⁴⁸

Even at the time, opinion leaders underestimated these newspapers' influence because they were sensational rather than sober. Elite journalists' dismissal of his newspaper infuriated Joe Patterson. In 1938, when the *New York Times* reprinted a *New York Herald Tribune* editorial as part of a roundup of media opinion but did not print anything from his *Daily News*, Patterson fumed that "the

News currently has three times the circulation of the *Times* and five times that of the *Herald Tribune*. If the *Times* pretends to collect cross sections of press opinion on important national affairs and print them for its readers' full information, it ought to include the *News* opinion."⁴⁹

He had a point. The *Times* should have acknowledged the *News*'s powerful influence, and so should we today. The more high-brow, quality newspapers may have influenced opinion leaders, but Rothermere, Beaverbrook, Hearst, McCormick, and the Pattersons shaped the views of millions of ordinary Americans and Britons. Their divisive politics and sometimes hateful messages had enduring appeal, as the recent resurrection of the phrases "America First" and "Britain First" show.⁵⁰

The isolationist press lords trumpeted their love for their country, festooned their newspapers with waving flags and soaring eagles, and promoted war bonds. Yet they also tried desperately to undermine public officials' anti-fascist, interventionist policies before the war and, in the case of the American publishers, sought to contradict the nation's commander in chief during the war. They demonized liberals and internationalists, they invented and spread conspiracy theories, and they encouraged Americans and Britons to view everyone who did not think as they did as an "alien." In fighting against resistance to fascism, they helped lay the foundation for the nationalist, racist, and anti-Semitic Right that we live with today.