



The New York Times

Mr. Lippmann

WASHINGTON — For sixty years Walter Lippmann (who turned 84 last Sunday) has been a lodestone not only for American journalists but also for journalists around the world. It is an extraordinary career reaching into a past that must seem dim and remote. He has rarely if ever wavered in his pursuit of the truth in the nation and the world. It is safe to say that no other journalist, author or philosopher—for he is that too—has in this century been so often quoted and with such telling effect. Genius may be the word for it. But it is more than that. His scrupulous dedication to his craft, the unflinching care with which he has met how many thousands of deadlines, is a lesson which above all strikes home for us today.—Marquis Childs.

Walter Lippmann through the years:

I, for one, am not disposed to blame the politicians and the businessmen. They govern the nation, it is true, but they do it in a rather absent-minded fashion. Those revolutionists who see the misery of the country as a deliberate and fiendish plot overestimate the bad will, the intelligence and the singleness of purpose in the ruling classes. Business and political leaders don't mean badly; the trouble with them is that most of the time they don't mean anything.—1913.

It is of the very essence of despotism that it can never afford to fail. That is what distinguishes it most vitally from democracy. In a despotism there is no organized opposition which can take over the power when the Administration in office has failed. All the eggs are in one basket. Everything is staked on one coterie of men. When the going is good, they move more quickly and efficiently than democracies, where the opposition has to be persuaded and conciliated. But when they lose, there are no reserves. That is why democracies with the habit of party government have outlived all other forms of government in the modern world. They have, as it were, at least two governments always at hand, and when one fails they have the other.—1934.

American Presidents drift into trouble . . . because they are never quite sure whether they are primarily the chief magistrates of the Republic or the leaders of their party. As chief magistrate it would be the President's first duty to see that the executive was able to represent and to lead a true working majority in Congress. As chief of state he would see to it that the co-ordinate branches of the government were in fact co-ordinated. But as a party or, even, as a factional leader, the President takes a different view and thinks of himself as a man whose personal honor depends upon being ready to stand and fall for his personal convictions.—1938.

In this tremendous time the American people must look to their President for leadership. They are not getting leadership from the President. They are not being treated as they deserve to be treated and as they have a right to be treated. They are not being treated as men and women but rather as if they were inquisitive children. They are not being dealt with seriously, truthfully, responsibly, and nobly. They are being dealt with cleverly, indirectly, even condescendingly, and nervously.—1941.