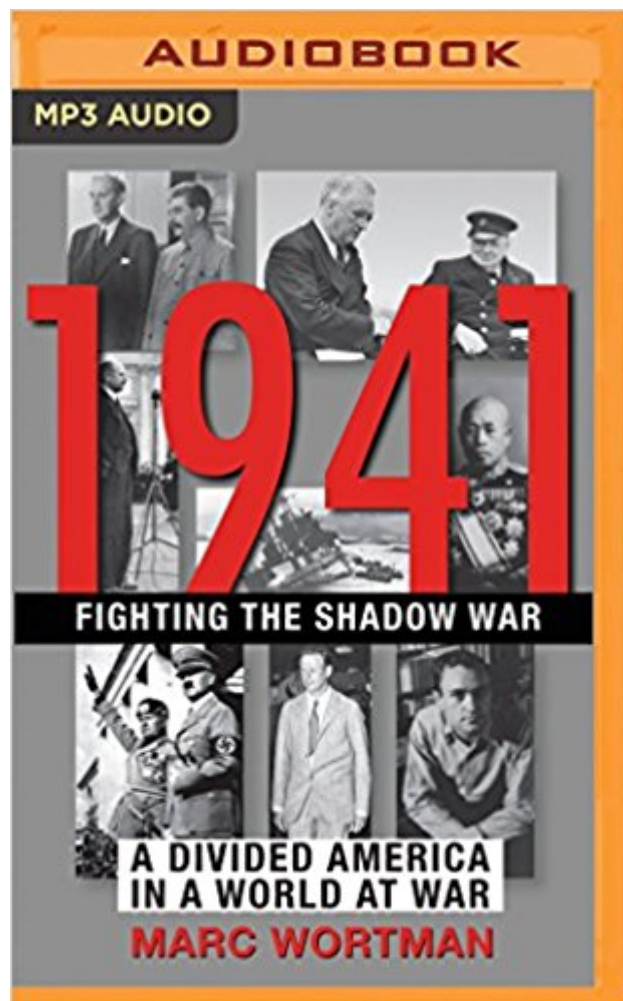




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1941: Fighting The Shadow War: A Divided America In A World At War



Synopsis

In 1941: Fighting the Shadow War: A Divided America in a World at War, historian Marc Wortman thrillingly explores the little-known history of America's clandestine involvement in World War II before the attack on Pearl Harbor. Prior to that infamous day, America had long been involved in a shadow war. Winston Churchill, England's beleaguered new prime minister, pleaded with Franklin D. Roosevelt for help. FDR concocted ingenious ways to come to his aid without breaking the Neutrality Acts. Launching Lend-Lease, conducting espionage at home and in South America to root out Nazi sympathizers, and waging undeclared war in the Atlantic were just some of the tactics with which FDR battled Hitler in the shadows. FDR also had to contend with growing isolationism and anti-Semitism as he tried to influence public opinion. While Americans were sympathetic to those being crushed under Axis power, they were unwilling to enter a foreign war. Wortman tells the story through the eyes of the powerful as well as ordinary citizens. Their stories weave throughout the intricate tapestry of events that unfold during the crucial year of 1941. Combining military and political history, Wortman tells the eye-opening story of how FDR took the country to war.

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Customer Reviews

"Engrossing . . . an absorbing world-wide epic set in [a] pivotal year. . . Wortman's brisk narrative takes us across nations and oceans with a propulsive vigor that speeds the book along like a good thriller." [Wall Street Journal](#) "Admirable work . . . superbly depicted."

[Winnipeg Free Press](#) "A wide-ranging examination of America's entry into World War II . . .

[Wortman] displays a nice sense of the dramatic scene and a solid ear for telling quotes, and ample documentation gives readers the opportunity to look further into the history. Even readers familiar with the broad history of the era are likely to find new insights and new details of the behind-the-scenes maneuvering that preceded Pearl Harbor. An engaging and well-researched look behind the scenes of an important historic era. Highly recommended." —Kirkus Reviews (starred review)

Marc Wortman is an award-winning freelance writer whose work has appeared in numerous magazines. His interest in World War I aviation began with a childhood fascination with the heroes, romance and lore of a long-ago military era, through histories and biographies as well as popular culture, including early films and the beloved Snoopy and the Red Baron battles in the Æ Å Peanuts cartoons. He has read widely in the history of war, especially World War I, and 20th century American history and culture. As a writer and editor affiliated with Yale, he came to know the historic world of the American WASP Establishment with close ties to the University and began to research their involvements in American wars, which led him to the untold story of the Yale Unit. Wortman attended Brown University and received a doctorate in comparative literature from Princeton University where he taught literature and writing. He also taught in a college programme for inmates at the maximum security Rahway State Prison in New Jersey. He lives in New Haven, Connecticut, with his wife and two children.

Hesitated to purchase this fine book because i had already read Lynne Olson's "THOSE ANGRY DAYS, 1939-1941" a couple of years ago, and her work was excellent. Thought to myself, why read Mr Wortman's book? I took a chance anyway though and read Mr Wortman's study, and that was a good decision. Both books are instructive of the times, illustrating how American-public-opinion zig zagged from against war in Europe, and against Nazi-Germany or something else. Mr Wortman's book is well-written + one gains a genuine feeling of what life was like in those fraught times in America. I highly recommend Mr Wortman's book.

Book compared with "Those Angry Days", about America's prelude to war is more interestingly prepared and covers subjects with a more human angle. However, this book has three factual errors that I know of. First, (and I contacted the author about this....and he just had a brain freeze) is that TR Jr. did not land at Omaha beach on D-Day, but rather Utah beach. Secondly he mentions that officers returned to ships via gig. While possible this could have happened during the attack.

Usually, when gigs were common in the Navy, a gig was deployed from the ship itself for the personal use of the Captain of the ship, only. He might allow others to use, if invited by him. Even today, whaleboats are used in Pearl Harbor for transportation by all ranks and rates around the harbor. Thirdly, the USS Utah, AG 16, a former battleship, is incorrectly claimed by Mr. Wortman to be part of Theodore Roosevelt's great white fleet, and one of the oldest ships, (if not the oldest in Pearl Harbor on the day of the attack) and to have four stacks and was originally painted white. The former BB 32 was commissioned in 1911, and on her trials was painted gray, and had two stacks and all occurred well after TR left office. Obviously the book shines better when dealing with the political realities of the day, is a fresh read and is a good accompanying and overarching reference to the highly specific focus of "Those Angry Days". This period, which my grandmother used to talk freely about, was an inflection point that directly led to the role that the United States plays today.

Most American lovers of history think about America's involvement in World War II from the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor until the war's conclusion in Spring and Summer, 1945. But as historian Marc Wortman tells it, U.S. participation in the war (particularly in Europe) began in certain respects at the beginning of hostilities in the mid-to-late 1930s, and increased steadily after the declaration of war in 1939. By 1941, Franklin Roosevelt was trying gallantly to enlist America to fight the fascist dictatorships, particularly Nazi Germany, in ways both public and surreptitious. Wortman brilliantly narrates the "secret war" against Germany as well as Japan throughout the year leading up to December 7, 1941. Beginning with a focus on such American Nazi supporters as famed architect Phillip Johnson, Wortman tells a tale that hasn't been told before and tells it in such a way that will lead most readers to "binge read" the book. It is simply impossible to put down. He relates as well the stories of anti-Nazi journalist and author William Shirer; famed pilot (and admirer of fascism) Charles Lindberg; and Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., who began as a staunch isolationist yet finished his life a military hero, winner of the Congressional Medal of Honor. Wortman also examines other key players in America's struggle to determine whether it would stay out of the war or join it on Great Britain's side, chief among them FDR's mainstay, Harry Hopkins. You will meet these characters and still others, and gain an insight into how Roosevelt and Churchill became key allies in the fight to save democracy and Western liberalism. Full disclosure: Wortman is an old pal, I won't hide it and I'm proud to say it. However, he did not ask me to write this review; truth to tell, I couldn't wait to write it upon finishing the book. I have now read all

three of his narrative histories (including the brilliant World War I saga, *The Millionaires' Unit: The Aristocratic Flyboys Who Fought the Great War and Invented American Air Power* and *The Bonfire: The Siege and Burning of Atlanta*, his book about Sherman's march to the Sea during the Civil War. Simply put: Wortman writes narrative with the sweep of history, and writes history like a great novelist. Put down whatever you're currently reading, and pick yourself up a copy of *1941: Fighting the Shadow War: A Divided America in a World at War*. Then thank me for the recommendation.

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