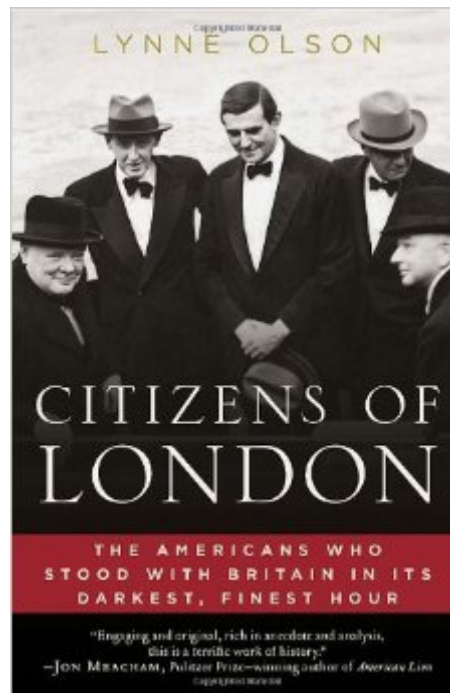


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Citizens Of London: The Americans Who Stood With Britain In Its Darkest, Finest Hour



Synopsis

The acclaimed author of *Troublesome Young Men* reveals the behind-the-scenes story of how the United States forged its wartime alliance with Britain, told from the perspective of three key American players in London: Edward R. Murrow, the handsome, chain-smoking head of CBS News in Europe; Averell Harriman, the hard-driving millionaire who ran FDR's Lend-Lease program in London; and John Gilbert Winant, the shy, idealistic U.S. ambassador to Britain. Each man formed close ties with Winston Churchill "so much so that all became romantically involved with members of the prime minister's family. Drawing from a variety of primary sources, Lynne Olson skillfully depicts the dramatic personal journeys of these men who, determined to save Britain from Hitler, helped convince a cautious Franklin Roosevelt and reluctant American public to back the British at a critical time. Deeply human, brilliantly researched, and beautifully written, *Citizens of London* is a new triumph from an author swiftly becoming one of the finest in her field.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

It is with no small amount of irony that the words Thomas Paine used to rail against a Britain who had an "army to enforce her tyranny" so aptly describes the aura captured in Lynne Olson's "Citizens of London: The Americans Who Stood With Britain in its Darkest, Finest, Hour." But it is must be no coincidence to Ms. Olson that those few U.S. citizens who did stand with Britain during the dark days of the fall of France, the 57 consecutive nights of the bombing of London (and cities throughout the UK) from September 7, 1940 through May 10, 1941, and the evisceration of British merchant shipping by U-Boats in the North Atlantic richly deserve Paine's view that those "that

stand by it now, deserve[s] the love and thanks of man and woman."In *Troublesome Young Men: The Rebels Who Brought Churchill to Power and Helped Save England*, Olson told the story of the small group of Conservative MPs who opposed Neville Chamberlain's policy of appeasement toward Hitler's Germany from the mid-1930s until Churchill's accession to power. Olson's focus on a small group of relative unknowns (at least as far as an American audience is concerned) provided a valuable perspective of the era of appeasement and the premiership of Neville Chamberlain. Similarly, in *"Citizens of London"*, Olson focuses on a small group of U.S. citizens resident in the U.K. who saw earlier than their compatriots that Britain's battle would soon be their own and who found it within themselves to do everything possible to aid a nation on the brink of starvation and despair. In so doing she provides valuable perspective on U.S.

I liked this book a lot, but it really is 3 books in one. It's a 6 star book for how well 2 of them turn out and a 4 star for the other. The first 40% of the book follows three Americans who moved to London and were essential in tying the two countries together: Edward R. Murrow, Averill Harriman, and John Winant, respectively the great CBS radio correspondent, the presidential special envoy on Lend Lease, and the American Ambassador who replaced the wrong-headed Joseph Kennedy. Lynne Olson has done excellent research on this period and she includes interesting (and sometimes saucy) anecdotes about which are very informative. This part of the book is history writing at its best. She has a wonderful narrative style and she also got a very good editor. This part of the book flies by and is exceptional for its prose and the tale it tells. The focus then shifts to a host of other characters who also helped on one side or the other and well as tracks Harriman after he was posted to Moscow as ambassador over his strenuous objections. The focus also shifts to telling us more about the progress of the war and the campaigns. When the secondary characters are interesting, this part of the book is as good as the part referenced above. The section about Tommy Hitchcock who single mindedly drove adoption of the P-51 by the Army Air Force over the objections of senior staff because it had a British engine tells a seldom told tale and tells it very well. However, the general narrative of the war and all of the squabbles really loses a lot of energy from the first part. This tale has been done before, and done better (see John Keegan's *History of World War II* as an example.

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