

**CHARLES LINDBERGH, THE ISOLATIONIST, AND HIS
PARTICIPATION IN THE AMERICA FIRST COMMITTEE**

BY

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CHARLES LINDBERGH, THE ISOLATIONIST,
AND HIS PARTICIPATION
IN THE
AMERICA FIRST COMMITTEE

A Research Paper
Presented to
the Graduate Council of
Austin Peay State University

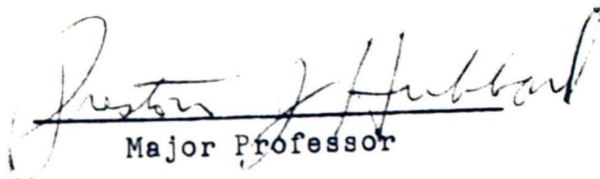
In Partial Fulfillment
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in History

by
Donald Ray Moore

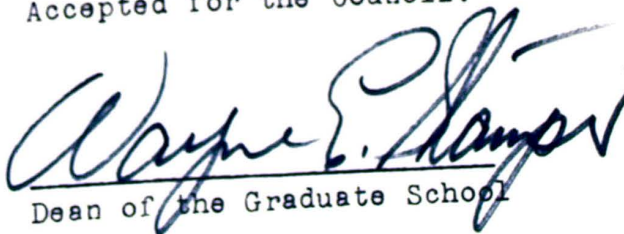
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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a Research Paper written by Donald Ray Moore entitled "Charles Lindbergh, The Isolationist, and His Participation in the America First Committee." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in History.


Major Professor

Accepted for the Council:


Dean of the Graduate School

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PREFACE

When one hears the name Charles A. Lindbergh, one immediately thinks of the great aviator who made the first trans-Atlantic flight in 1927. History tends to place a great deal of emphasis on his 1927 adventure, but it tends to ignore his contribution to the American society in the late thirties and the early forties. His contribution was his participation in the so-called "Great Debate."* He gave voice to that group of Americans who did not want any part of the European war.

Prior to the bombing of Pearl Harbor, which took the United States into World War II, there were two groups in America attempting to control the nation's foreign policy. The isolationists were led by the America First Committee and its "White Knight," Charles A. Lindbergh. The interventionists were led by the Roosevelt Administration and various other pro-war organizations. Colonel Lindbergh and America First challenged the interventionists in the "Great Debate."* He became America's most notable and most controversial isolationist during the era prior to the United States' entry into World War II. This man was deeply committed to a cause, and he fought courageously to the end. The names he was given were unjustified. He

ignored the attacks and continued his fight for isolationism. However, the end came on December 7, 1941, when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. Charles Lindbergh's fight for isolationism came to an abrupt halt.

Roosevelt and his fellow interventionists won the debate; they got their war.

*The title given to the era prior to American intervention into World War II in which interventionists and isolationists were involved in a battle with each attempting to get its principles accepted on what course of action America should take toward the war in Europe.

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There were three times in Charles A. Lindbergh's life when he felt a need to communicate with his fellow Americans. The first was as a pilot when he became aware that man had a great future in the air. He could see airplanes flying across the oceans bringing the world much closer together. Charles Lindbergh was convinced America should be the leader in aviation, so he devoted his entire life to improving flying and making the United States first in this area. The second time he felt a desperate need to communicate with the American people came prior to America's entry into world war II. He believed that American intervention into such a war would lead the United States down the road of destruction. Because of his great concern, he took it upon himself to warn his fellow citizens of the evils that would follow if America took part in the war. A third desire came following world war II. He traveled throughout the world following the war, seeing new developments which frightened him. He asserted that the United States and the world were caught up in what he called "scientific materialism." The civilized world was caught up in the vicious cycle where security depended upon the advancement of weapons, which would destroy man in the future. The great airman asked that nations work together

to limit arms. If there could not be any cooperation, the civilized world would be destroyed.¹ The following research will deal with Charles Lindbergh's life from 1936 through 1941, the tense years prior to the United States' entry into World War II.

In the late thirties, Charles Lindbergh traveled extensively throughout Europe. There he found the Western European countries turning their resources into bombing planes and other war material. Realizing what had occurred in Europe, he returned to America to warn Americans of what was taking place. For the next three years, Colonel Lindbergh traveled throughout the country speaking, arguing and writing against any undertaking by the United States government to intervene in Europe's affairs.

Lindbergh's philosophy called for the democratic nations of the world to arm themselves and stand by, while Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany destroyed each other. If the free world intervened on either side, they would have been promoting an evil cause. He knew a war in Europe would greatly threaten the security of the free world. His view was clearly stated in a speech made in early 1939:

I believe that a conflict between English and German groups of nations would leave Europe prostrate, destroy her cities, kill her finest men, and dangerously increase the Soviet Government's strength.²

According to Lindbergh, democratic nations should have negotiated a peace with the Axis powers and gotten out of

the war before destruction fell upon them. In priorities of allegiance America came first to him; thus, he warned his fellow citizens to stay out of Europe's internal wars. American involvement in Europe's troubles would weaken the American civilization and would greatly weaken America's chance to solve the problems that she would have to face in the future. Participation in the war, asserted Colonel Lindbergh, would cause an internal explosion, "a bloody revolution in America."³ Organized labor, he predicted, would pull in one direction and profiteering capital in the other, tearing the country apart.⁴

Colonel Lindbergh's views were those of an isolationist. They were closely related with a small number of fellow Americans. These isolationists banded together; and in the summer of 1940, they organized an anti-war organization known as the America First Committee.

America First grew out of a college anti-war organization. Its founder was a Yale law student, Robert Douglas Stuart, Jr., who had become dissatisfied with the American foreign policy. He and a small number of fellow students believed the United States should not aid England and France; instead America should build an impregnable defense.⁵ Stuart wanted to establish a committee on the national level to counteract America's pro-war organizations. He went to the Republican National Convention at Philadelphia in June, 1940, and talked to Senator Robert

Taft of Ohio. Senator Taft sent him to Washington, D. C. to talk to the Senate isolationists. In Washington he talked to Burton Wheeler, Democratic Senator from Montana, B. Champ Clark, Senator from Missouri, and Robert M. Lafollette, Senator from Wisconsin. They referred him to Robert Wood, Chairman of Sears, Roebuck and Company. Stuart went to Chicago to meet with Wood. In the meantime, he established his "Emergency Committee to Defend America First," to act as a temporary headquarters.⁶ Wood and Stuart worked diligently together; and in August, 1940, they officially established the America First Committee, a shortened version of the former committee. On September 4, 1940, the Committee made its first public announcement. Its total membership was fifty members.⁷ The committee's charter contained five basic principles:

1. The United States must build an impregnable defense for America.
2. No foreign power, nor groups of powers, can successfully attack a prepared America.
3. American democracy can be preserved only by keeping out of the European war.
4. 'Aid short of war' weakens national defense at home and threatens to involve America in war abroad.
5. The America First Committee advocates a national advisory referendum on the issue of peace or war.⁸

The main objective of America First was to lead the anti-war movement in America. America First was the most powerful noninterventionist pressure group in America prior to the bombing of Pearl Harbor, and it became the most

formidable adversary to the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies.⁹

The Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies was the antithesis to America First. It was formed by William Allen White, a Kansas newspaper publisher, and President Roosevelt in May, 1940. The President called him to Washington, and together they organized the pro-war committee. It was created to carry out a propaganda program that would influence the American people to the extent that they would want to go to war.¹⁰ Both committees were beneficial. They made the American people aware of what was happening not only in America but throughout the world.¹¹

Lindbergh's principles and America First's principles closely correlated; therefore the two became closely associated with one another. But before one can associate the two, one must first investigate Charles Lindbergh's activities prior to the creation of America First. His activities before 1940 prepared him for the great part he played in the anti-war organization.

To avoid publicity, Charles Lindbergh and his wife, Anne, left the United States in 1935 after the kidnapping and death of their son. They went to London and remained there until 1938. Then the family moved to Paris for a few months and returned to America in 1939. While he was in Europe, Lindbergh became America's most valuable observer of the rise of Nazi Germany.¹² Colonel Lindbergh watched

Hitler build a nation capable of destroying Europe.

In early 1936, Lindbergh got his first chance to see Hitler's Germany. Major Truman Smith, United States Military Attache in Berlin, sent him a letter offering an invitation to inspect the progress of Germany in aviation. Major Smith had arranged the invitation with Hermann Goering, head of the German Air Force.¹³ Field Marshall Goering agreed to be the guide. Colonel Lindbergh would be assisted on the tour by Major Arthur Vanaman, assistant to Major Smith at the American Embassy.¹⁴ Major Smith urged Lindbergh to accept the invitation, knowing that Goering would expose more important aspects of the Luftwaffe if Lindbergh, the great aeronautical hero, went to Germany.¹⁵ He accepted the invitation.

This was the first of three tours to Germany by Lindbergh. He made another trip in 1937 and another in 1938. On each occasion as Major Smith had planned, Goering outdid himself. During the three tours, Lindbergh was shown one-half of Germany's aircraft factories and went through the D. V. L., the Nazi's greatest aeronautical-research center.¹⁶ What he saw alarmed him. Germany had out manufactured the democratic nations of the world, and it was prepared for war.

In September, 1938, Charles Lindbergh went to Paris and told the French Foreign Minister, Georges Bonnet, of the Luftwaffe's great power. It frightened Bonnet so that

he felt peace had to be preserved at any cost. While in Paris, the aviator received an urgent wire from Joseph P. Kennedy, the newly appointed American ambassador to England, that he come to London. Colonel Lindbergh responded to the wire and went to London.¹⁷ The two men met in a long conference, and he told Ambassador Kennedy of the German Air Force. Kennedy asked him to write up a report on his findings; and on the following day, he wired the report to the State Department. Following his conference with Kennedy, a meeting was arranged for Lindbergh to meet with the British Air Secretary, John Slessor.¹⁸ The meeting with Secretary Slessor reinforced the previous conclusion of the British government that England was not prepared for a war with Germany.¹⁹ The so-called Lindbergh report played an important role in Chamberlain's final decision that war must be avoided at any cost.²⁰

Prior to his meetings with French and British government officials, he had taken a tour of the French, British and Russian Air Force, inspecting the aircraft capacity of the democratic nations. He found England, France and Russia lacking the ability to withstand Germany's Air Force.²¹ Although the United States was not well equipped at that time, he believed America was technologically ahead of Germany and able to build planes to match those of Germany.²² But Charles Lindbergh concluded that if Nazi Germany's technological progress continued as it

was, it would obtain technical parity with the United States by 1941 or 1942.²³ Lindbergh's visits to Germany were very important to the American government. He gave the United States first-hand information concerning the Luftwaffe. The United States, besides Italy, was thus the first nation to receive facts on Germany's military force.²⁴

The noted isolationist made his final trip to Germany during October, 1938. It was on this tour that he received a decoration that brought him much criticism in the future. During his last trip to Berlin, the United States had appointed a new ambassador to Germany, Hugh R. Wilson. Ambassador Wilson, on October 18, planned a dinner to get acquainted with the bigwigs of the Nazi government he had not met. He especially wanted Goering to attend; so to secure his attendance, he asked Lindbergh to attend.²⁵ Goering arrived at the dinner late, and he walked directly to Lindbergh and gave him a small box. Goering had "in the name of the Fuehrer" awarded the aviator the Service Cross of the German Eagle, second highest ranking medal in Germany, for his achievements in aviation.²⁶ He accepted the medal, and the guests applauded. The bestowal of the decoration occurred in the presence of distinguished guests. The Polish, Italian, Argentine, Irish, and American ministers were present. The decoration followed violent attacks on Lindbergh by the Russian government for the degrading remarks he had made against the Soviet Air Force

during his visit there in August, 1938.²⁷ The award to Lindbergh was probably a propaganda move by the German government.

Earlier that evening, Goering had notified Major Smith's office that he planned to award Lindbergh the medal at the dinner. However, the secretary who received the note failed to deliver it until the next day. None of the Americans present knew of the award. It was a complete surprise to Lindbergh and the guests. If he had refused the medal, it could have proven very embarrassing for the American Ambassador, and it could have weakened American-German relations.²⁸

Newspapers in America reported the incident, but they did not offer any criticism. However, shortly after the bestowal of the decoration, Hitler began an open attack on the Jews in Germany. When this occurred, his isolationist views and acceptance of the medal brought him much criticism.²⁹ The press also discovered he had considered moving to Berlin in the winter of 1938-1939.³⁰ Little did they know that the only reason he was moving there was to study the developments of the Luftwaffe more carefully.³¹ The Hero had become a Nazi to many Americans. The average American citizen was condemning a man who had rendered a great service to his country and his fellow Americans.

Hitler continued his violent attacks on the Jews, and in November, 1938, Roosevelt ordered Ambassador Wilson

to return home. American-German relations were becoming very tense. The American press began attacking Lindbergh because he had accepted the medal. Dr. Alexis Carrel, an associate of Lindbergh, and Colonel Truman Smith encouraged Lindbergh to return to America. They warned him that the American newspapers were publishing misleading articles about his intentions to live in Berlin. The great airman decided not to move to Berlin; however, he did not return to the United States. Instead he moved to Paris for the winter.

By April, 1939, Charles Lindbergh believed that the atmosphere for war existed throughout Europe and one small incident would start a conflict. He returned to the United States. "That voyage ended his self-imposed exile abroad and inaugurated new phases of his prewar and antiwar activities."³² The Lindberghs arrived in America on April 8, 1939.

Immediately, Colonel Lindbergh was asked by the Air Corps Chief to go on active duty to study aeronautical facilities in America and suggest any improvements that he felt necessary. Throughout the summer he devoted his time to the Air Corps.

One evening in August, 1939, however, after he had completed his tour and returned to Washington to write a report on his findings, he was asked to have dinner with William R. Castle, Herbert Hoover's Undersecretary of State.

Castle also had invited Fulton Lewis, Jr., a radio news commentator, so he could meet Charles Lindbergh. The three men exchanged views on the situation in Europe. They agreed that America should exclude itself from European affairs. Castle and Lewis suggested that Lindbergh express his views to the American people. Lewis agreed to make the arrangements for a radio address.³³ Undecided, Lindbergh declined but promised he would consider it.

On September 1, 1939, Hitler invaded Poland. Two days later England and France declared war on Germany. Lindbergh was outraged. He felt England and France were unjustified in their declaration of war. He thought they should let Hitler go as long as he was expanding eastward. By September 7, 1939, he had prepared a speech and two articles. He had become convinced it was his duty to warn the American people of the situation in Europe. Lindbergh was willing to use any and every means to keep America out of the war. He knew of his popularity, although some of it had diminished; and he was willing to sacrifice it, if it came to that, to keep the United States out of Europe's wars. On September 10, he called Fulton Lewis to arrange a radio address. Lewis made arrangements for him to speak on September 15. The Mutual Broadcasting System, the National Broadcasting System and the Columbia Broadcasting System agreed to carry the address.³⁴ On September 15, 1939, at 9:45 (C. S. T.) Lindbergh made his first public

address since 1932. His subject was "America and European wars." The "Great Debate" had officially begun.

Lindbergh's first speech was a national sensation. It was heard across the country. Isolationists in America were encouraged by the speech and hoped he might become the leader of a unifying movement in the United States to keep America out of the war. He and Herbert Hoover, a leading isolationist, met in New York City on September 21, 1939, to discuss the possibility of organizing a nonpolitical organization to keep the country out of war.³⁵

Encouraged by the responses from his first address, the noted isolationist made his second speech on October 13, 1939. His topic was "Neutrality and War." As he expected, the press was very critical toward his speech. But he felt his speeches were necessary to make Americans realize the dangers of American intervention. In November, 1939, Lindbergh published in Reader's Digest an article entitled "Aviation, Geography, and Race." In March, 1940, the Atlantic Monthly published his "What Substitute for War." On May 19, 1940, he made his third major radio address on "The Air Defense of America." This speech was followed by two more major speeches by Lindbergh.

The first year and a half after his return to America was a very busy time for him. Charles Lindbergh had made five major addresses and had written a number of articles which were published by well known magazines

throughout the United States. Each speech and article contained its own distinctive emphasis, but they all had one thing in common. In each speech and article, he urged the United States not to aid any country involved in the war but prepare for war and stand by.

While Lindbergh was making his speeches which opposed aid to any warring nation, Churchill was asking President Roosevelt, through letters, for use of American ships and other military aid. Newspapers in England bitterly attacked the isolationist. One paper made the statement: "America's number one trouble-maker has been shooting off his mouth again."³⁶ The northern neighbor of the United States, Canada, had also become quite upset with Lindbergh's statement that America should take over Canada's foreign affairs. Canadian papers bitterly attacked Lindbergh. In one edition, a paper published an article asking about his next demand--would he ask the Roosevelt administration to rescue the American minority in Canada from those evil Canadians?³⁷

The great isolationist was not only attacking European governments but also the United States government. Lindbergh definitely was not an admirer of President Roosevelt. He cast his vote for Herbert Hoover in 1932, and he was in England during the election of 1936 and did not vote. In 1940 he voted for Wendell Willkie, and in 1944 he voted for Thomas Dewey. The two men were extreme

opposites. Lindbergh, as previously noted, was a die hard isolationist; whereas Roosevelt was an extreme interventionist. The Roosevelt administration's war policy conflicted with Lindbergh's ideas. From the beginning of the war, President Roosevelt wanted to get involved. Throughout the early years of the war, he argued for action short of war.³⁸ However, his argument changed as the war progressed. He eventually proclaimed that Americans not only wanted to aid the allies but to enter the war and fight for democracy.³⁹ Because of the conflicting ideas, Lindbergh's most bitter enemy became President Roosevelt, whom he blamed for the drift toward war. During the election of 1940, without mentioning any names, Lindbergh questioned the leadership in America.⁴⁰ He saw the President slowly but surely taking America into a war. The noted isolationist did not blame European countries for America's drift toward war; he blamed the United States government.

We are in danger of war today not because European people have attempted to interfere with the internal affairs of America, but because the American people have attempted to interfere in . . . Europe. Our danger in America is an internal danger.⁴¹

In this passage, one can clearly see that Lindbergh was attacking the Roosevelt administration. He felt that Roosevelt enticed England and France to enter battle by promising that he would come to their aid.⁴² The President was greatly concerned with the attitude of Lindbergh and

rightly so; he had become the President's most prominent competitor on radio and in the papers. Like Roosevelt, Lindbergh had acquired the great quality of oration. Each man had the ability to persuade an audience to follow him. President Roosevelt feared Lindbergh might have an overwhelming effect on public opinion. He was afraid Lindbergh might possibly acquire the support of enough Americans to keep the United States out of the war. The President knew Lindbergh had to be quieted down. In September, 1939, only days before Lindbergh's first isolationist speech, Roosevelt promised him a post in his cabinet if he would "play ball" with the Administration. Roosevelt had decided to create an Air Force coequal with the Army and Navy.⁴³ Lindbergh could have become Secretary of the Air Force had he promised to go along with Roosevelt or vowed not to make any further announcements against the President's war policy. However, Lindbergh refused the position and strongly criticized the steps taken by the President. The great isolationist continued his tour promoting his isolationist views. Although Lindbergh violently attacked the President, Roosevelt did not offer any opposition toward Lindbergh in the early years of the European war. But the more closely related Lindbergh became with America First, attacks became more prominent from the White House.⁴⁴ The President's prolonged silence eventually came to an end, and he publicly began attacking the noted isolationist.

Charles Lindbergh was not a member of America First during its first year and a half of existence, but he did encourage its development and growth. When he received contributions for his fight for isolationism, he would send the money directly to America First. America First leaders wanted Lindbergh to join the committee, but he refused the invitation.

The great airman became closely associated with the Committee in September, 1940, and became a member in April, 1941. He gave America First a big boost on September 13, 1940. On that date Colonel Lindbergh and General Robert Wood, Chairman of Sears, Roebuck and Company and later to become national chairman of America First, met with Henry Ford, President of Ford Motors, in an attempt to interest him in America First. Through effective deliberations, Lindbergh persuaded Ford to join the committee.⁴⁵ The Committee was in desperate need of financial assistance, and Ford pledged to help finance its advertising agency. In its first nine months of existence, America First spent four hundred thousand dollars advertising.⁴⁶ A large sum of this was to be financed by Ford. Lindbergh also pledged one hundred dollars to the Committee and allowed his name to be included on its list of contributors.

Although Colonel Lindbergh was not a member of America First in 1940, the leaders of the Committee confided in the great airman. They discussed their problems and

progress with him, and he became the real leader of America First. His opinion was usually the final decision. General Wood and the Committee placed great trust in Lindbergh's isolationist views. After becoming an official member of America First, he always was given a detailed study of its plans to approve. If he disagreed, the Committee adopted new plans to meet the demands of Charles Lindbergh.

After his meeting with Ford, Lindbergh set out on another speaking tour. He went to New York, Cleveland, Washington and Boston. Immense crowds gathered to hear what the "Hero" had to say, and his trip proved very helpful to America First. Chapters were formed in each of these cities. The chapter in New York was to become the headquarters of the eastern operations, while Chicago was to serve as the midwestern headquarters. By the end of 1940, America First had sixth thousand members, eleven local chapters and an organization drive that was continually expanding. Lindbergh, although not an official member, had greatly aided the activities of the Committee. Leading isolationists were pledging their full support to Lindbergh and the America First Committee.⁴⁷ Hugh Johnson, Senator Burton Wheeler of Montana, Norman Thomas of the Socialist Party, and Kathryn Lewis (daughter of John L.) were a few of the many isolationists who joined Lindbergh's fight.

By the end of 1940, the allies' financial status was at its very lowest. Churchill told Roosevelt that the time

was coming when England could not pay cash for goods. On December 17, 1940, the President described, in a radio address, the troubles that would follow if England collapsed. He asked the American people to make the United States "the arsenal of democracy." In early January, 1941, the President urged Congress to enact a lend-lease program. The isolationists bitterly attacked the idea. For the next two months, the lend-lease proposal was subject to much discussion and criticism.

A hearing was held before the House Foreign Affairs Committee dealing with the lend-lease bill, and Colonel Lindbergh was asked to testify before the Committee. On January 23, 1941, Lindbergh spent four and a half hours before the Committee, speaking on America's air defense in time of war.⁴⁸ He told the Committee he did not believe there was any danger of an invasion, by a foreign nation, in the Western Hemisphere.⁴⁹ When asked "Whom do you want to win the war?" he replied, "I want neither side to win."⁵⁰ Aid to England, the noted isolationist continued, would only prolong the war and eventually take the United States into the conflict. Lindbergh asked that America act as the mediator and get a negotiated peace between England and Germany. He was the only distinguished American who predicted England's defeat. Following his speech, the Herald (New York) labeled him the "Perfect Neutral."⁵¹ In an attempt to counter Lindbergh's condemnation of English

policy, the President, on the following day, drove thirty-three miles to Annapolis to welcome England's newly appointed ambassador, Lord Halifax, to the United States.⁵² On February 6, 1941, Lindbergh testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee concerning lend-lease. Once again he spoke against aid to England. The great airman believed that England could not obtain air strength equality with Germany without assistance from America. Even then he felt the small concentrated area of the British Isles would not offer enough air bases to match Germany, who had bases scattered throughout Europe.⁵³ As usual Lindbergh and the isolationists were defeated. The Lend-Lease Act was passed by Congress, and the President signed the bill into law on March 11, 1941.

In April, 1941, Lindbergh, who up until then had been waging his battle of nonintervention without organized sponsorship, joined the America First Committee on the executive level. In early March, 1941, he had been offered the national chairmanship of the Committee, but he refused to accept the position. He felt he could not be chairman and carry on his speaking campaign. If he tried to carry on both duties, each job would have been weakened because he lacked the time to deal with both situations. He also feared the Nazi label which his opponents had placed on him would damage America First's influence. Lindbergh felt he could better serve the Committee by speaking at America

First rallies, so he only joined the national committee.⁵⁴ Joseph P. Kennedy also was suggested for the position, but for reasons unknown he refused.⁵⁵ Robert Wood was the then chairman, and he had previously stated that he was going to resign from the position because he lacked the time to fulfill the duties of the office. Lindbergh met with him and persuaded the General to remain as chairman of the Committee.⁵⁶ It was General Wood who had suggested Lindbergh's name for the position. He felt the noted isolationist had become the real leader of the Committee.

Lindbergh's joining America First was subject to questioning among the leaders of the Committee. As mentioned previously, Wood felt America First needed a great speaker like Lindbergh, and he would greatly benefit the development of the organization. Although he greatly admired Lindbergh, Stuart felt differently. He was uneasy about the extreme conservatism of the Colonel. He was afraid that Lindbergh's association with the Committee would bring on attacks and smears that would discredit the organization.⁵⁷ Perhaps this is one reason why Lindbergh refused the chairmanship.

America First was experiencing internal friction throughout late 1940 and early 1941. The various anti-war groups within the Committee were having differences of opinions on what its objectives should be. Many wanted to aid the allies, yet remain militarily independent of the

war. Others wanted to remain economically and militarily independent of the situation.⁵⁸ The Committee also had been labeled an anti-Semitic organization. A public effort was made in September, 1940, to ease the tension. Lessing J. Rosenwald, a Jew and director of Sears and Roebuck, became a member of the executive committee. Henry Ford, whose anti-Semitic campaign through the 1920's was not forgotten, also had joined at the same time. Stuart, organizer of the Committee, deliberately announced the two appointments at the same time because he hoped this would demonstrate that persons with different views were able to put them aside and unite with America First to oppose intervention.⁵⁹ Ford refused to serve on the council with Rosenwald; therefore, Rosenwald stepped down from the executive level and resigned from America First. Committee leaders attempted to mend the breach, but it was too late. Ford was forced to resign his position also; he had given America First an anti-Semitic label.

Colonel Lindbergh knew this would be the kind of situation the Roosevelt administration and other pro-war groups would exploit in order to stir up public opinion against America First. If this could be proven, Roosevelt could label the Committee and Lindbergh with very unpopular names; so he decided to be very cautious and slow in publicizing his official connection with America First.⁶⁰ Lindbergh worked very hard during his association with

America First to bring the various anti-war groups in America under the direct control of the Committee. He knew there had to be a nationally accepted doctrine if the Committee was to be successful.

From the moment he joined America First, the star of the show was Charles Lindbergh. He drew large crowds who were willing and anxious to follow him. America First was expanding at a very rapid pace. Every large city in the East, Midwest and West established a chapter. The Committee was growing so rapidly that it had become impossible to keep a record of the new chapters and members. Every America First chapter, large and small, wanted the great isolationist to speak at a rally. The national headquarters promised a "Lindbergh rally" to the chapter bringing in the largest number of new recruits.⁶¹ By the end of May, 1941, it was estimated that there were six hundred and fifty America First chapters across the United States. The growth of the Committee was due largely to the brilliant speeches and persuasive quality of Lindbergh. The South was the only section of the country in which America First chapters did not prosper.⁶² This does not mean that the other sections of the country were entirely anti-war, but pro-war sentiment appeared to be stronger in the South than in any other section. The Texas State Legislature at Austin was a good example of the hatred for Lindbergh in the South. It passed a resolution forbidding

Lindbergh to speak in Texas.⁶³

Lindbergh's association with America First was not the only factor that promoted the growth of the organization; the misguidance by the federal government also was a factor. When Roosevelt became President, he tended to advocate a policy of economic nationalism which allegedly emphasized purely American interests at the expense of international cooperation. He and his New Dealers were going to end the depression and employ every worker in America. America was going to be first in every aspect. The President had supposedly told Europe this at the London Economic Conference. He was going to watch after America, and Europeans could settle Europe's problems. But, in 1940 the President decided he wanted to help settle Europe's problems; he wanted to get involved in a war. This change of attitude caused dissatisfaction among many Americans, so they threw their support behind Lindbergh and America First.⁶⁴

Lindbergh's first speech under the auspices of America First came on April 17, 1941, at the Chicago Arena. The crowd was estimated at ten to eleven thousand inside and four thousand outside.⁶⁵ It was at Chicago that Lindbergh defined the purpose of the America First Committee. He described the Committee as being purely an American organization, founded to give voice to the people of the United States who opposed sending American boys to

Europe again.⁶⁶ He had become "America First's idol and white knight."⁶⁷ Colonel Lindbergh had made his membership in America First public. From this point on in his fight against America's entry into World War II, Lindbergh was supported publicly by America First.

After his speech in Chicago, Lindbergh came under constant fire from the press, the government and the American people. On April 21, 1941, he was bitterly attacked by Newbold Morris, President of the city council in Brooklyn, and C. H. Johnson, Grand Secretary for the Grand Lodge of the state of New York. They accused the great isolationist of being a very weak man and an appeaser. Johnson accused him of stating that Christianity and democracy would be banished from the earth.⁶⁸

Lindbergh had become a Nazi in the eyes of many Americans, yet he ignored the insults and continued his speeches for America First. The Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies bitterly attacked the great isolationist. It accused him and America First of being composed of cowards and appeasers.⁶⁹

Colonel Lindbergh, backed by America First, was to lead an anti-convoy rally in Manhattan on April 23, 1941. In an attempt to get him to back down, Leon Birkhead, President of the Friends of Democracy, sent Lindbergh a letter telling him that the pro-Nazi organizations were adjourning their meetings to attend his. He also told the

isolationist he had a twelve page document linking America First with pro-Nazi groups. Birkhead had hoped this would convince Lindbergh to leave America First, but it failed.⁷⁰ He, Lindbergh, ignored the letter and made his speech in Manhattan. The speech at the rally proved to be very beneficial to America First. The New York Times reported in its April 25th edition that his appeal had won three thousand new members for the Committee. Two thousand joined at the rally and one thousand phoned in to the New York City headquarters for membership.⁷¹

President Roosevelt bitterly attacked Lindbergh because of his speech in Chicago and Manhattan. In his speeches, Lindbergh had stated that England was on the verge of losing the war in Europe, and its only hope was to pull the United States into the war. Eighty percent of the American people, asserted Lindbergh, were against American entry into the war.⁷² The President had become fed up with Lindbergh's attacks. In early April, 1941, Roosevelt had asked news commentator Jay Franklin (John F. Carter) to do some research for him on the Civil War Copperheads, a name given to individuals who felt the North could not win a war against the South. He submitted his research to Roosevelt on April 22, 1941. At a news conference, three days later, President Roosevelt labeled Colonel Lindbergh a "Copperhead."⁷³ Lindbergh had been accused, by Roosevelt, of being an appeaser.

The attack delighted interventionists and infuriated isolationists. Statements were released from both camps attacking each other. Lindbergh now had been vehemently attacked by important Americans. Although the great isolationist had received a tarnished name, America First still pledged full support to him. General Wood had given Lindbergh complete freedom of speech. He was promised by the Committee that no matter what his speeches contained America First would support him.⁷⁴ His speeches were not censored by anyone nor were they written by anyone else. Lindbergh and America First continued to attack President Roosevelt in retaliation. Lindbergh was so upset over the situation that he sent a letter to President Roosevelt on April 28, 1941 announcing his resignation from the United States Air Corps effective immediately.⁷⁵ After his resignation, his speeches took on a different flavor. "They became less temperate and more demagogic."⁷⁶

Through this stormy period, Charles Lindbergh maintained a very private life. His contacts were limited to only the top rank-in-file of America First. The Copperhead label given to him was a severe blow; he felt he had become an outcast. Prominent military men were ordered by the President not to associate with the noted isolationist leader. In Little Falls, Minnesota, the water tower which proclaimed in painted letters that it was the birthplace of the hero was given a new coat of paint, and

Lindbergh's name was not mentioned. In Chicago the tallest airplane beacon would no longer be called Lindbergh Beacon. In Charlotte, North Carolina, the city changed the name of Lindbergh Drive to Avon Avenue. America had falsely accused a true American.

Although Lindbergh did not maintain much of a social life during this stormy period, he did continue his speaking tour. He would go to America First rallies and make his speech; then he immediately would return to his room and began preparing for his next speech. In May he addressed meetings in St. Louis, Minneapolis, Philadelphia and New York. The purpose of his meetings in St. Louis and Minneapolis was to discuss with the leaders of the two chapters a way to finance a national advertising program. The Philadelphia address was important because it was the first major address after Roosevelt's "full national emergency" speech, which was made on May 27, 1941. Lindbergh knew war was near.⁷⁷

The New York chapter of America First had co-presidents, John T. Flynn, columnist for Scripps-Howard, and Edwin S. Webster, a New York broker. Although the two men had different viewpoints, the two had learned to work together for a common cause. Flynn was considered a "left liberal," while Webster was considered to be a "right wing conservative." Lindbergh traveled to New York to speak at a rally and to see that harmony still existed between

the two men. He felt this was an ideal situation for the organization. The liberal could lead the followers, while the conservative would command the main body of troops. The conservative, asserted Lindbergh, would consolidate the successes of the liberal; and when the liberal failed, he could fall back on the conservative's position to reorganize. The noted isolationist hoped the two could continue to work together, but he feared a split might occur.⁷⁸

Lindbergh and America First leaders were shocked, in June, to hear from Senator Burton Wheeler that he had received information stating that Roosevelt wanted America First to stir up more anti-war agitation. Senator Wheeler reported that the President felt the interventionists were pushing him into war too quickly. The situation in Europe was looking very bad for the Allies. Many sources felt Roosevelt was using the war to build up his powers here in America and keeping himself, as in the past, in a position to jump to either side.⁷⁹ The America First national council met to discuss the supposed turnabout of the Administration; no conclusion was finalized. This was probably a propaganda move by the President. The anti-war movement continued.

The latter part of June was a busy one for Charles Lindbergh and America First. The organization sponsored a tour to the west coast. Lindbergh was to inspect the

development of the organizations in that area. He traveled to San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Diego.

In early July, it was learned that the Federal Bureau of Investigation had been tapping America First telephone conversations. Once again Colonel Lindbergh was chosen to speak for the Committee. In a public statement, he made it clear that neither he nor America First had anything to hide. He pledged to speak more clearly in his conversations by phone, so they could be more clearly understood. The tapping of the phones did bother Lindbergh. His interests lay in knowing whether or not these tactics were ordered by President Roosevelt.⁸⁰ Colonel Lindbergh continued throughout July severely attacking the Roosevelt administration.

The Copperhead label given to Lindbergh by the President continued to haunt him. Although he persisted in speaking at America First rallies in August and September, he knew he and the Committee were on the verge of defeat. Kenneth Davis, author of The Hero, stated:

. . . probably what did most to keep him going through August into September was sheer inertia, the momentum of a commitment made in circumstances where its revocation was virtually impossible.⁸¹

Through America First's influence in the Senate, on August 1, 1941, Gerald P. Nye, Republican Senator from North Dakota, and Bennett Champ Clark, Democratic Senator from Missouri, introduced a joint resolution to the Senate

calling for an investigation of the radio and movie industry. The Nye-Clark Resolution proposed that a committee be established to investigate any propaganda disseminated by motion pictures and radio to influence the American people in the direction or participation in Europe's war.⁸² The Senate referred the resolution to the Interstate Commerce Committee, headed by Senator Burton Wheeler. He appointed a subcommittee to consider the resolution. It was headed by D. Worth Clark, Democrat from Idaho, and included Homer T. Bone, Democrat from Washington; Charles Tobey, Republican from New Hampshire; C. Wayland Brooks, Republican from Illinois; and Ernest McFarland, Democrat from Arizona, all isolationists except McFarland.

The Nye-Clark Resolution was drafted largely by John T. Flynn, President of America First's New York chapter. He called motion pictures . . . "the most potent instrument of communication of ideas."⁸³ Flynn had been chosen by America First to carry on an independent investigation of the industry. President Roosevelt, according to Flynn, had ordered the industry to run a certain percentage of "war films." The Government had recently strengthened its anti-trust action against monopolies; therefore, asserted America First, the industry was afraid not to cooperate with the President, fearing he would investigate monopolistic practices in the movie

industry. The industry wanted to be in harmony with Washington. To establish this harmony, they were forced to play ball with the President.⁸⁴

Flynn, using funds provided by America First, directed most of the research for the probe. He furnished the subcommittee with information related to the investigation. Robert Wood, John Flynn, Charles Lindbergh, Burton Wheeler and D. Worth Clark were in constant contact throughout the investigation. They were exchanging information, which they hoped would be strong enough to find the industry guilty of propagandizing the movies.

The hearings opened on September 8 and ran through September 26, 1941. Wendell Willkie, counsel for the industry was not allowed to speak during the hearings. However, because of his profound statements to the press, he counteracted the progress the committee had made during the hearings. But it was not Willkie's statements that did the most harm to the investigation; it was the speech in Des Moines, Iowa, delivered by America First's white knight, Charles Lindbergh. The noted isolationist was determined to bring the movie scandal to the public's attention. Charles Lindbergh and America First were approaching an unforeseeable tragedy. This came on September 11, 1941.

In exposing the Administration's scandal in the motion picture industry, the great airman made mention of

the Jewish influence in America. This began the erosion of his and America First's influence among the American people. In Des Moines, he had stated that the three most important groups that had been pressing America toward war were the British, the Jews and the Roosevelt administration. This small minority of war agitators, according to Lindbergh, comprised only a small part of the American people, but it controlled a tremendous amount of influence.⁸⁵ The Jews had a great deal of influence in the motion picture industry, the press, radio and the American government; therefore, Lindbergh concluded, they were responsible for the pro-war films.⁸⁶ This was the end of the hero. Up until then he had only been labeled pro-Nazi, now he and America First would be labeled "anti-Semitic."

Many America Firsters were disturbed by the speech. John Flynn called the speech "stupid."⁸⁷ Norman Thomas, head of the Socialist Party, branded the speech as a terrible blow to the America First Committee, and he refused to attend any future America First rallies. This was the chance the interventionists had been waiting for. They began an all out attack on the noted isolationist. But, the big question was--would the America First national committee stand behind the hero or would it excommunicate him? Two weeks later, on September 24, 1941, a statement was released by the council. The statement read:

. . . Colonel Lindbergh and his fellow members of the America First Committee are not anti-Semitic.

We deplore the injection of the race issue into the discussion of war or peace. It is the interventionists who have done this . . . "88

The council at Chicago also scheduled an address for Lindbergh at Fort Wayne, Indiana. It also scheduled a meeting at Cincinnati at which Senator Nye would publicly deny the anti-Semitic label.⁸⁹ The Committee had backed Charles Lindbergh's speech at Des Moines.

Although the end was near, the Committee continued to hold rallies. It fought vigorously against the repeal of the vital provisions of the Neutrality Acts. Rallies held by America First were not peaceful as before; they had become very unrestful. Police had to be on hand to protect from riotous disturbances. The national committee and Lindbergh kept in close contact throughout October and November discussing war trends. War was near and they realized this, but they refused to give up. Lindbergh even advocated that America First take part in the 1942 congressional elections; but the fight of isolationism was coming to an end, and their participation in the elections would not occur. Many of the leaders of America First were ready to disband the Committee, but Lindbergh's efforts blocked this idea.

On October 3, 1941, Lindbergh addressed an America First rally in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Without mentioning the Jews, he defended his speech at Des Moines. He felt that his statements had been distorted. He said he did not

"speak out or hate for any individual or any people."⁹⁰ In Madison Square Garden, on October 30, 1941, the great isolationist made his final public address for America First. In his speech, Lindbergh reviewed his experiences in his fight for isolationism. The great orator was very tired, now he would retire and wait.

On December 7, 1941, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. While Roosevelt was delivering his war message, Charles Lindbergh sat in his home declaring that the United States could have remained independent of the war in Europe. Once again the isolationist blamed the entry of America into the war on President Roosevelt. On December 8, 1941, through America First's headquarters, he issued a statement concerning his view toward America's entry into the war:

We have been stepping close to war for many months. Now . . . we must meet it as united Americans regardless of our attitudes in the past. . . . We must now turn every effort to building up the greatest and most efficient Army, Navy, and Air Force in the World.⁹¹

Colonel Lindbergh was asked if he would have declared war after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. He replied that had he been in Congress, he would have voted for declaration of war.

In mid-December the America First Committee met in a special session to decide on the course it should take. Colonel Lindbergh advocated only adjournment; the Committee

voted to disband. For Charles Lindbergh and America First, the anti-war movement was over; the interventionists had won. Lindbergh had fought courageously and had been deeply committed to his cause. H. R. Knickerbocker wrote in late 1941:

. . . he towers in influence above our other isolationists . . . Lindbergh . . . is, I am convinced, mainly responsible for the long hesitation of this country to go to war. . . .⁹²

One must consider whether the America First Committee believed in Lindbergh or was only using him to benefit itself. It is safe to conclude that the Committee was dedicated to him. On a number of occasions, it could have divorced itself from the noted isolationist, but each time it publicly stood behind him. The Des Moines episode was an example. Lindbergh had delivered a speech that almost destroyed the influence of the Committee, but it stood behind him. On the other hand, Charles Lindbergh admitted he was using America First. When asked why he joined the Committee, he stated: ". . . because the committee gave me reliable and easily available speaking platforms."⁹³ The America First Committee was revived in the post-war era but without the aid of Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh.

Lindbergh offered his services to the United States Army; but before the Roosevelt administration would accept his aid, he was ordered publicly to admit he was wrong in

his view of isolationism.⁹⁴ The hero refused to heed to the demand. The Administration was unwilling to forget the past and look ahead to the future. It attempted in every way to alienate Charles Lindbergh from any association with the United States government. Finally, in the Spring of 1942, he went to work as a consultant at Ford's Willow Run Plant where B-24 bombers were to be built.

Charles Lindbergh was a man ahead of his time. He saw that another world war would bring destruction to all those involved. He, like his father, Charles A. Lindbergh, Sr., did in World War I, opposed the United States' entry into World War II. His father was strongly ridiculed by the American people and the press for his views; Charles Lindbergh, Jr., received the same treatment. He did not share the same fear of special "interest groups" as his father did nor did he believe there could be a society without wars. "I believe that wars can be reduced in frequency and intensity (and this is what we should concentrate on doing); but I doubt that war can be eliminated."⁹⁵ He definitely was a man ahead of his time. America and the world failed to recognize the prophecy he had brought to them. They chose the violent course of war. The result was destruction to Western Europe, the rise of the Soviet Menace, which presently threatens the world, and the prolonged problems that face the world today.

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