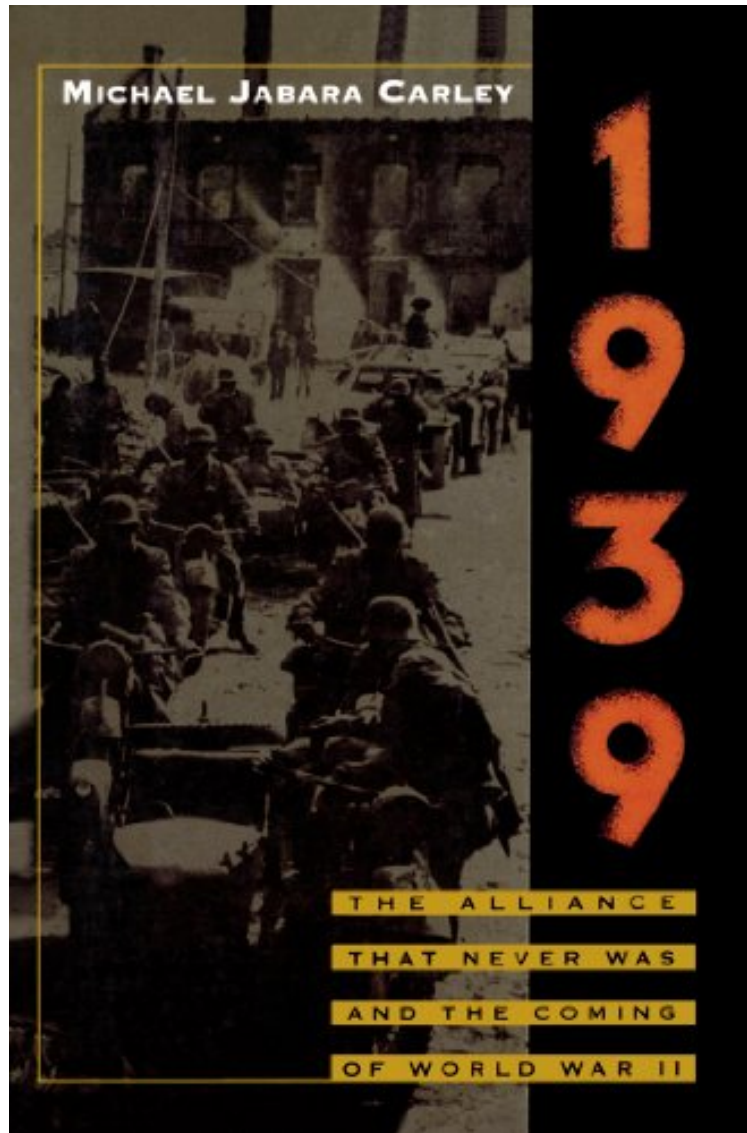


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1939: The Alliance That Never Was and the Coming of World War II

Von Michael Jabara Carley

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Von Michael Jabara Carley : 1939: The Alliance That Never Was and the Coming of World War II before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised 1939: The Alliance That Never Was and the Coming of World War II:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Exposing the Cold War mentality of the 1930sVon alvin FinkelMichael Carley's 1939: The Alliance That Never Was

demolishes the Cold War-inspired revisionism regarding the diplomacy that led to World War 2. From the Cold War perspective, Stalin, the left-wing dictator, betrayed the Western democracies who were wooing him, to form a dictators' pact with Hitler, the right-wing dictator. This allowed Hitler to invade Poland, giving the Soviets the chance to steal eastern Poland, a forewarning of how they would behave after World War 2 once the Nazis were beaten. Wrong in every respect, argues Carley. The Soviets had been pressing for a front with the democracies to prevent Nazi rearmament and aggression since 1934. They still wanted this desperately in 1939, but after Munich, they did not think they would get it. Fanatic anti-communism on the part of most of the leadership of Britain and an important section of the French political class made such an alliance seem unlikely. Indeed the Western democracies appeared to prefer Nazi Germany to Communist Russia. While the Soviet Commissar of Foreign Affairs, Maxim Litvinov, worked tirelessly to press for collective security, and the Soviet Ambassador to London, Ivan Maiski, had an important network of friends in high places in Britain who trusted Soviet initiatives, the Soviet plans were always blocked by the "men of Munich." Led by Neville Chamberlain himself, they included key Cabinet members, members of the Foreign Affairs ministry, and the military. These men were impervious to pleas from Maiski, and from Winston Churchill, and Robert Vansittart for an alliance with the Soviets against the Nazis. Carley's book is the result of painstaking research in the foreign affairs documents of all the principal players. Particularly important here is his work in the archives of the old Soviet Union that began to open a variety of once-closed documents in the era of glasnost. While this book focuses almost exclusively on the events of 1939, it reinforces the views expressed in Clement Leibovitz and Alvin Finkel, *In Our Time: The Chamberlain-Hitler Collusion*, that in the years leading up to World War 2, the leaders of the Western democracies deliberately tried to build up Hitler's power in the hope that he would take on the hated Soviets. He could have all of eastern and central Europe as a reward if he could keep his hands off Britain and France, their empires, and their spheres of influence. Only when it became clear that Hitler would not do these things, did the Western countries reluctantly decide to fight him.

Kurzbeschreibung At a crucial point in the twentieth century, as Nazi Germany prepared for war, negotiations between Britain, France, and the Soviet Union became the last chance to halt Hitler's aggression. Incredibly, the French and British governments dallied, talks failed, and in August 1939 the Soviet Union signed a nonaggression pact with Germany. Michael Carley's gripping account of these negotiations is not a pretty story. It is about the failures of appeasement and collective security in Europe. It is about moral depravity and blindness, about villains and cowards, and about heroes who stood against the intellectual and popular tides of their time. Some died for their beliefs, others labored in obscurity and have been nearly forgotten. In 1939 they sought to make the Grand Alliance that never was between France, Britain, and the Soviet Union. This story of their efforts is background to the wartime alliance created in 1941 without France but with the United States in order to defeat a demonic enemy. 1939 is based upon Mr. Carley's longtime research on the period, including work in French, British, and newly opened Soviet archives. He challenges prevailing interpretations of the origins of World War II by situating 1939 at the end of the early cold war between the Soviet Union, France, and Britain, and by showing how anti-communism was the major cause of the failure to form an alliance against Hitler. 1939 was published on September 1, the sixtieth anniversary of the Nazi invasion of Poland and the start of the war. .de Any book named after that most fateful of years, 1939, is sure to tell a tragic tale. As Michael Jabara Carley writes in the opening pages of this volume, "This is not a pretty story. It is about appeasement and the failures of collective security in Europe against Nazi aggression. It is about moral depravity and blindness, about villains and cowards." Carley offers a provocative thesis: anticommunist passions in England and France prevented these countries from forming an antifascist alliance with the Soviet Union that might have headed off the bloodiest conflict in human history. This is not a totally original idea, but Carley makes a forceful case that just a few years ago was an especially tough sell: "Cold war ideology tended to overshadow Anglo-French culpability and responsibility for the path to war in 1939." In other words, the anticommunist sentiments that made it so difficult to deal with the Soviet Union during the 1930s also made it nearly impossible during the cold war to blame anticommunism for what went wrong. Carley's tale is not entirely bleak; he devotes a fair amount of attention to "a motley, imperfect group of heroes" who warned about the rise of Nazi power and urged a joint strategy with the Soviets to contain Germany. One of these Cassandras was Winston Churchill, but others have been nearly forgotten. Carley revives them on these pages in a thought-provoking--and certainly controversial--book that takes a fresh look at an old topic. --John J. Miller *Pressestimmen* A well-documented book...Carley has presented a strong case.--Allen Blitstein "Journal Of Military History" Diligent and thorough.--Adam Ulam "Washington Post" It is to Carley's credit that he reminds us why the 1930s remain such a fascinating decade in European history.--Talbot Imlay "International History" It is to Carley's credit that he reminds us why the 1930s remain such a fascinating decade in European history.--Talbot Imlay "International History" An exceptionally fine piece of work...fabulous!--Geoffrey Roberts, author of "The Soviet Union and the Origins of the Second World War" Diligent and thorough.--Adam Ulam "Of Higher Education" An exceptionally fine piece of work . . . fabulous!--Geoffrey Roberts, author of *The Soviet Union*

and the Origins of the Second World WarIt is to Carley's credit that he reminds us why the 1930s remain such a fascinating decade in European history.--Talbot Imlay "International History "Carley has done what many would say is impossible. He has given us a new understanding of the coming of World War II in Europe.--Lloyd C. Gardner, Rutgers UniversityA well-documented book. . . . Carley has presented a strong case.--Allen Blitstein "Journal of Military History "Diligent and thorough.--Adam Ulam "The of Higher Education "