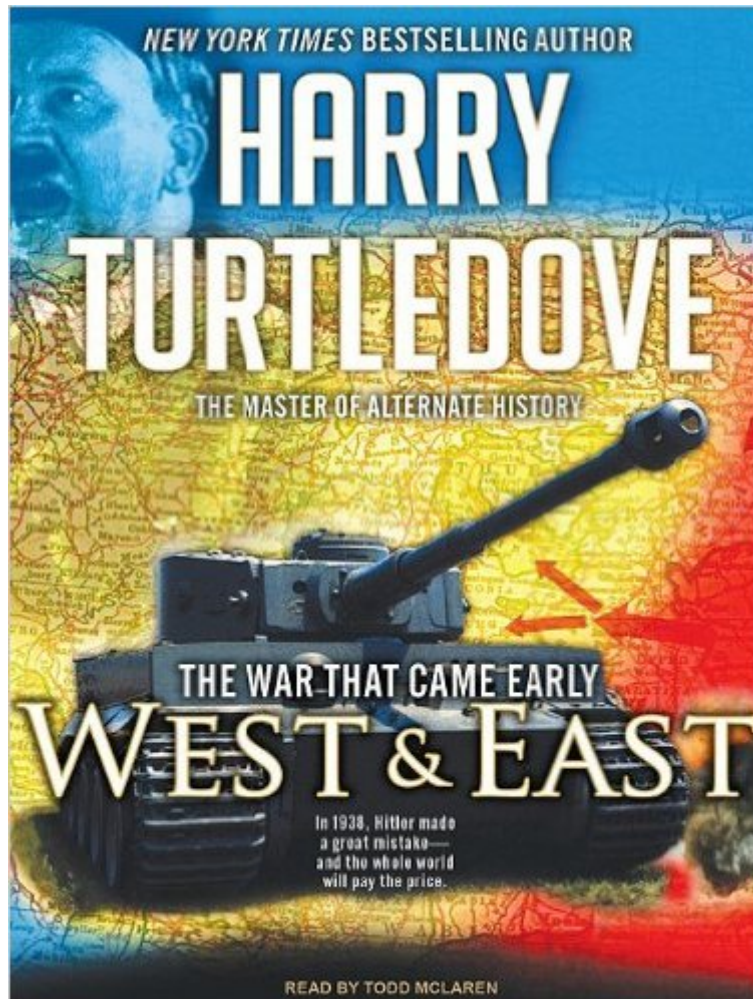


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The War That Came Early: West And East



Synopsis

In 1938, two men held history in their hands. One was Adolf Hitler. The other was British prime minister Neville Chamberlain, who, determined to avoid war at any cost, came to be known as "the great appeaser." But Harry Turtledove, the unrivaled master of alternate history, has launched a gripping saga that springboards from a different fateful act: What if Chamberlain had stood up to Hitler? What would the Nazis' next move have been? And how would the war-which Hitler had always regretted waiting eleven months to start-have unfolded and changed our world? Here, Turtledove takes us across a panorama of conflict fueled by ideology and demagoguery. Nations are pitted against nations, alliances are forged between old enemies, ordinary men and women are hurled into extraordinary life-and-death situations. In Japanese-controlled Singapore, an American marine falls in love with a Russian dance hall hostess, while around him are heard the first explosions of Chinese guerilla resistance. On the frontlines of war-ravaged rural France, a weary soldier perfects the art of using an enormous anti-tank gun as a sniper's tool-while from Germany a killer is sent to hunt him down. And in the icy North Atlantic, a U-boat bearing an experimental device wreaks havoc on British shipping, setting the stage for a Nazi ground invasion of Denmark. From an American woman trapped in Germany who receives safe passage from Hitler himself to a Jewish family steeped in German culture and facing the hatred rising around them, from Japanese soldiers on the remote edge of Siberia to American volunteers in Spain, *The War That Came Early: West and East* is the story of a world held hostage by tyrants-Stalin, Hitler, Sanjuro-each holding on to power through lies and terror even in the face of treacherous plots from within. As armies clash, and as the brave, foolish, and true believers choose sides, new weapons are added to already deadly arsenals and new strategies are plotted to break a growing stalemate. But one question looms over the conflict: What will it take to bring America into this war?

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"It's a tough life being an everyman character in a turtledove trilogy" sighed Vaclav, the Czech cliché as bombs fell all around. "How do you think I feel" muttered Cpl Von Typicalgerman-name "I expected to be a hard bitten cynical war veteran in a King Tiger in 1945 and instead I'm a hard bitten cynical war veteran and its only 1938. Also, I wish to point out that I am in a PzII, a great let down, I may say. "Don't get me started boyo, I mean, pal, I mean chum" groaned an allegedly Welsh soldier "look, he calls me Walsh, why not Llewelyn, or Griffiths something that actually is Welsh as opposed to sounding like it. And another thing, I don't even sound welsh, see? I talk all posh I do. I bet I dont even know the words to Cwm Rhondda and I dont mention rugby once". "Way to go Tommy" commented the cut out german landser "I'm supposed to be a german but why do I speak like a yankee gangster or a US marine?" "Perhaps a lot of US Marines and gangsters were germans? or because Turtledove is trying to emphasise the common experience of the horror of war?" mused the US Marine who had done nothing so far apart from drink and sleep around and felt very nervous because obviously something bad was going to happen to his white Russian girlfriend who was very pretty even though she was made of cardboard. Meanwhile, "Heheheh" muttered the voice of the Author "you think this is bad, I can do entire trilogies of trilogies! For you the short war book is over!" I tried to like it but really you can switch in chapters from the WW2 era of the aliens books and I dont think you'd notice. Mr Turtldove is asleep at the wheel.

I have read almost everything Turtledove has written from the recasting of the Byzantine Empire to the various alternate history series. A lot of these series were very well-written and interesting. I was looking forward to this series, because it has always seemed one of the major missed chances in history that Germany wasn't confronted in 1938. Several of the panzer divisions that crushed France two years later were equipped with Czech tanks that Chamberlain made a gift of to the Nazis. With this second book, the idea has fizzled out and been overwhelmed by Turtledove's focus on detailed examination of the smoking habits of a dozen or so minor characters who have minimal importance in the scheme of things. About half the 448 pages are devoted to descriptions of the characters smoking, which is tedious beyond belief. A good alternate history series needs to have a balance

between the plotlines of ordinary characters who show what's happening in the trenches, and some material from the POV of high-ranking or close to high-ranking characters so we can see the more interesting developments of strategy. This series has only the low level characters, with the only one drawn from history (if you can call his autobiography history, rather than fiction) being Hans Rudel, the Stuka pilot. This will be the last book in the series I purchase, and I have to regard the money paid for this volume as not well-spent.

I am in total agreement with the other reviewers who found this novel lacking. Sorry, Harry, but with an alternate history I need to know more about how the grand strategy of the war changed. What is the Churchill - Chamberlain dynamic, how does the US view Japan, who went after Hitler? This novel is essentially an All Quiet on the Western Front spread over the western front, the eastern front (1)(Germany -Russia), the eastern front (2) (Japan - Russia, the southern front (Spanish civil war) and the non-front (US - Japan) in China. Since each front has two sides and two sets of grunts, everything gets simplified so that it seems the same on all fronts. Everyone freezes in the winter, every front seems to turn into something very closely resembling the trench warfare of WWI, everyone either hates or dislikes their senior officers or non-coms, etc. Oh, yeah, everyone also complains about the quality of the tobacco. I assume at some point there will be an Italian or North African front to add to the confusion, although how he is going to have soldiers complaining about wet trenches in North Africa holds some interest. Global weather change? In alternate history, you are very interested in changes in the over all strategy of the war and then want to see how these changes played out on the grunts. Here its all grunts, too many grunts, in too many places effectively doing the same things and complaining about the same things. By the way, Rudel survived the war flying to the end. He lost a leg and kept flying winning 11 decorations some specially designed by Hitler. The guy killed so many Russian tanks that it is incredible. See his autobiography Stuka Pilot. Its more fascinating than this book.

This series seems to be an effort to milk as much mileage as possible from yet-another World War II alternate history. Unfortunately the author has become very formulaic in his approach, and most of the fictional characters are pretty shallow and one dimensional; only Julius Lemp and Hans Ulrich Rudel (real life characters) seem to have anything to really contribute to progress of the background storyline. As has become the pattern of Turtledove's works recently, the tale proceeds at a glacial pace and ensures several more sequels. I share the sentiment of several other reviewers dislike of the almost continual references to Navy Cuts, Gitanes, and other cancer sticks. As a true fan of the

genre, I regret giving this work only 2 generous stars; it could have been much more entertaining!

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