

## Facing the Second World War

Strategy, Politics, and Economics in Britain and France 1938-1940

Covering the period from the late 1930s up to the spring of 1940, this book offers the first systematic comparison of how two countries, Britain and France, responded to the possibility and then reality of total war by examining developments in three dimensions: strategic, domestic political, and political economic. To date, studies of French and British policies during this period have focused almost exclusively on diplomatic and military events. Yet because twentieth-century war demanded a massive effort on the part of nations and societies, its study requires a broader approach, one that encompasses the political, social, and economic dimensions as well as the links between them. Using a wide array of archival and secondary sources, including the records of government departments, trade unions, business groups, and political parties, the book demonstrates that the British were more successful in managing the strains of modern industrial war than the French. Whereas in France political, economic, and military developments combined to produce a multi-faceted crisis by early 1940, imperilling the war effort against Germany, developments in Britain followed a different course that laid the political and economic foundations for a long war. The book's wide-ranging approach will interest political, social, economic, and military historians as well as historians of modern Europe, France, and Britain. More precisely, it addresses such current historical debates as the nature of the political Right and Left in Europe during the 1930s, the extent of rearmament and economic mobilization, and the causes of France's defeat in 1940. The book will also interest political scientists, particularly International Relations (IR). As an extended comparison of how two liberal democracies met the challenge of war, it addresses debates concerning the relationship between democratic regimes and capabilities for war, the influence of domestic versus systemic factors on national policies, and the nature and relative performance of different types of political economic regimes.

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