



# Strange Victory: Hitler's Conquest of France

*Prof. Ernest R. May*

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## **Strange Victory: Hitler's Conquest of France** Prof. Ernest R. May

A dramatic narrative-and reinterpretation-of Germany's six-week campaign that swept the Wehrmacht to Paris in spring 1940.

Before the Nazis killed him for his work in the French Resistance, the great historian Marc Bloch wrote a famous short book, *Strange Defeat*, about the treatment of his nation at the hands of an enemy the French had believed they could easily dispose of. In *Strange Victory*, the distinguished American historian Ernest R. May asks the opposite question: How was it that Hitler and his generals managed this swift conquest, considering that France and its allies were superior in every measurable dimension and considering the Germans' own skepticism about their chances?

*Strange Victory* is a riveting narrative of those six crucial weeks in the spring of 1940, weaving together the decisions made by the high commands with the welter of confused responses from exhausted and ill-informed, or ill-advised, officers in the field. Why did Hitler want to turn against France at just this moment, and why were his poor judgment and inadequate intelligence about the Allies nonetheless correct? Why didn't France take the offensive when it might have led to victory? What explains France's failure to detect and respond to Germany's attack plan? It is May's contention that in the future, nations might suffer strange defeats of their own if they do not learn from their predecessors' mistakes in judgment.

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