

## The Histories, Vol. 2, No. 1, Fall 2002

Tony Giammarco  
*La Salle University*

Kristin Hess  
*La Salle University*

Matthew Kowalski  
*La Salle University*

Matthew Smalarz  
*La Salle University*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.lasalle.edu/the\\_histories](https://digitalcommons.lasalle.edu/the_histories)

 Part of the [History Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Giammarco, Tony; Hess, Kristin; Kowalski, Matthew; and Smalarz, Matthew () "The Histories, Vol. 2, No. 1, Fall 2002," *The Histories*: Vol. 2 : Iss. 1 , Article 1.

Available at: [https://digitalcommons.lasalle.edu/the\\_histories/vol2/iss1/1](https://digitalcommons.lasalle.edu/the_histories/vol2/iss1/1)

This Complete Volume is brought to you for free and open access by the Scholarship at La Salle University Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Histories by an authorized editor of La Salle University Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [careyc@lasalle.edu](mailto:careyc@lasalle.edu).

***The Histories***  
***Volume 2, Number 1***  
***Fall 2002***

## *Welcome to the Histories*

Welcome again to another issue of the Histories! For those of you who are unfamiliar with this journal, the Histories is an organization that is dedicated to educating all Lasallians about historical topics through scholarly historical research articles and photographs. It is our hope that we can deliver to you the same quality product that we did last year.

As with all student journals, an evolution in format and content is inevitable. In terms of this year's format, this issue hopes to take on a sleeker look, one that will hopefully be pleasing to the superficial eye as well as to the deeply intuitive thoughts of the mind. Likewise, our issue is comprised of a vast array of historical subjects. The Histories intends to cover social, military, religious, and political topics in this issue.

Lastly, I would like to thank all those individuals who have contributed to the Histories in a number of ways. I would like to thank our History Department for its support of this magazine. Without their encouragement, the Histories would cease to be. I would also like to thank our writers for their contributions. Also, I greatly appreciated the advice and financial assistance given to me by Chris Kazmierczak. Finally, I want to thank the La Salle community for accepting this journal as its own. As a senior, I now understand what it means to leave a Lasallian legacy. I can only hope that the future of this magazine will be as bright as its past.

*Editor-in-chief*

*Matthew Joseph Smalarz*

**WRITERS:** *Tony Giammarco, Kristen Hess, Matthew Kowalski, Matthew Smalarz*

**MODERATORS:** *Dr. Charles Desnoyers, Dr. Stuart Leibiger, Prof. Jeffrey LaMonica*

## *Table of Contents*

<i>Fleming vs. Florey: It All Comes Down to the Mold</i> <i>Kristen Hess</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>The Battle of Germantown: A Forgotten Fight for Philadelphia and Freedom</i> <i>Tony Giammarco</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Hitler and Operation Barbarossa</i> <i>Matt Kowalski</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Pius XII and the Holocaust Under His Very Windows</i> <i>Matthew Smalarz</i>	<i>27</i>

**This program was funded by the Activities Programming Board  
of La Salle University.**

**Fleming vs. Florey: It All Comes Down to the Mold**

***Kristen Hess***

Without penicillin, the world as it is known today would not exist. Simple infections, earaches, menial operations, and diseases, like syphilis and pneumonia, would possibly all end fatally, shortening the life expectancy of the population, affecting everything from family-size and marriage to retirement plans and insurance policies. So how did this “wonder drug” come into existence and who is behind the development of penicillin? The majority of the population has heard the “Eureka!” story of Alexander Fleming and his famous petri dish with the unusual mold growth, *Penicillium notatum*. Very few realize that there are not only different variations of the Fleming discovery but that there are also other people who were vitally important to the development of penicillin as an effective drug. This paper will focus on the discovery of penicillin by Alexander Fleming and the subsequent controversy that entails over the ‘Fleming Myth.’

Coming from a large farming family, Alexander Fleming has ample chances to discover nature in its purest form and to develop a keen interest in science. His decision to go to medical school and become a bacteriologist led him to St. Mary’s Medical School, London University. After graduation, he served in the Royal Army Corp before returning to St. Mary’s to teach and do further experimentation. (Rowland, *The Penicillin Man*) While doing experiments using *Staphylococcus* bacteria, Fleming discovered lysozyme, an enzyme within the human body capable of fighting infections and destroying certain bacteria. This discovery was purely coincidental when he supposedly sneezed on a plate of bacteria and some of his mucous landed on the plate killing the bacteria around it. This observation proved important in analyzing the body’s defense mechanisms. He furthered his lysozyme work, which grew out of his interest in showing the ineffectiveness of chemical antiseptics to treat infection. Fleming believed it was more important to enhance the body’s own natural immune responses to treat disease. (Friedman, 168-181) It is also at St. Mary’s, in 1928, where Fleming discovered the saving mold.

Two accounts exist pertaining to the actual discovery of the mold. Both focus on Fleming’s untidy work habits and lack of sterile working conditions. Some sources suggest that the dedication and work ethic of Alexander Fleming drove him to go work one day even though he was covered in boils. At lunchtime, Fleming supposedly found a moldy sandwich, and having nothing else, he ate it and found his boils were cured shortly thereafter. Using this as a basis, Fleming began experimentation using the mold in hopes of discovering what led to his recovery. This has only been quoted a few times and seems to be the least reliable

of the two recollections.

More sources recall that on the day before he went on a two-week vacation, Fleming prepared petri dishes of bacteria cultures he wanted to grow over the break. Unbeknownst to him, a *Penicillium notatum* spore from a laboratory on the next floor landed on one of the plates. [The laboratory upstairs did not have a working hood over the lab bench, and the scientist was therefore forced to work under sloppy conditions, with the spores able to freely move about based on air circulation.] Because the vacation was two weeks long, Fleming noted he did not have to put the plates in the incubator to speed the growth; the time period would be such that the bacteria would flourish on their own. This was a fortunate occurrence because the penicillium spore would have died in the incubator and would not have been detected. Upon returning to the lab, Fleming found his Staphylococcus bacteria had grown very well on all the petri dishes but one. One had a fuzzy greenish mold growing in it and the area around the mold was void of bacteria.

The discovery of the green mold surrounded by the yellow halo void of bacteria is often described as the “Eureka!” moment of Fleming’s career. When asked about what he thought about that special moment, he said, “My only merit is that I did not neglect the observation and that I pursued the subject as a bacteriologist.” (Ho, 117-123) This stems from the fact that the ability of *Penicillium notatum* to kill bacteria had been noted by two other scientists: John Tyndall in 1875 and D.A. Gratia in 1925. Both scientists found the observation intriguing but did not follow it up with any further experimentation; believing simply that the substance would be of interest only to fellow scientists and not to the rest of the world. Fleming, however, decided to experiment with the mold and found out what other bacteria it would affect. He found that the *Penicillium notatum* killed streptococcus, staphylococcus, pneumococcus, gonococcus, meningococcus, and diphtheria bacteria. This information led Fleming to believe the penicillin had potential as a local antiseptic in order to treat wounds and concentrated diseases.



Alexander Fleming: The Man responsible for discovering Penicillin

Fleming had two assistants who helped him with the penicillin experiments: Frederick Ridley and Stuart Craddock. These two were in charge of finding more of the properties of the mold, doing toxicity tests, and using the mold grown in broth to put on local wounds. Fleming did titrations, a procedure used in determining acidic and basic properties of a substance, with their experimental results and then decided to inject some of the broth into living animals - a rabbit and a mouse. In using live animals he made an error - he did not use animals that were infected with a bacteria; rather he used healthy animals just to see if any penicillin would have any effect on their biological systems. He noted that in the presence of blood and serum the *Penicillium notatum* lost a large percentage of its activity; consequently, Fleming incorrectly assumed that penicillin would be unsuitable for use in a living organism. Had he injected it into an infected animal the potential of penicillin to kill bacteria could have been realized earlier; instead it was left untested at this point. Fleming did write an article about his findings to date and stated, "It has been used in a number of indolent septic wounds and has certainly appeared to be superior to dressings containing potent chemicals." (MacFarlane, 139) In the summer of 1929, Fleming abandoned his research on penicillin because he was not a chemist and he was having difficulty isolating and identifying the active component involved.



Ernst Boris Chain



Sir Howard Walter Florey

It was now in the overall scheme of things, that other people became intimately involved in experimenting with penicillin and from this controversy inevitably arose. Howard Walter Florey took over as the Chair of the Pathology Department at Oxford University. He was looking for a project to revitalize the program and he stumbled across the work of Alexander Fleming. Florey felt lysozyme appeared to hold medicinal importance, seeing as it had once demonstrated the ability to destroy bacteria and that it existed in multiple bodily fluids. Florey got right to work on more experiments with lysozyme and hired

Ernst Boris Chain to help him with the chemistry aspects of the experiments. While doing research for the project, Chain found Fleming's paper on the possibilities of penicillin and the two scientists decided to take on that project instead. Fleming did not publish all the information about the random experiments he had his assistants do with penicillin, leaving Chain and Florey with little to go on. The two men had no alternative but to test and learn by trial and error. Chain was responsible for purifying and identifying the active principle of penicillin and toiled numerous hours doing so. There were other members of the Oxford team who also participated: N. G. Heatley (production work), A. G. Sanders (pathologist), A. D. Gardener (bactericidal work) as well as some lab hands. This was an incredibly large investment both in time and energy for a Chair (Florey) to put into a project - had it failed miserably the consequences, undoubtedly, would have been dire.

The team isolated penicillin in 1939 and began proving its safety and efficacy. Florey had always been a big promoter of simply doing the experiment instead of wasting time hypothesizing. He promptly set up a trial involving eight mice - all infected with bacteria. Four of the mice were given doses of penicillin and four were left alone as control mice. The four treated mice lived and the other four lasted a few days before dying. Before allowing themselves to get excited, the two researchers did the experiment over - this time with ten mice and again the five treated mice lived and the five control mice died. Based on these findings the team published an article in **The Lancet** entitled, "Penicillin a Chemotherapeutic Agent," on August 24, 1940. After reading of the Oxford team's article, Fleming decided to pay them a visit. When Chain found out Fleming was coming he supposedly said, "Fleming? Good God, I thought he was dead!" When Fleming showed up at the lab he said, "I've come to see what you've been doing with my old penicillin." (Parshall, 58-63) It was these words that provoked a bit of controversy. Even though Fleming can be credited with discovering the agent, the Oxford team felt that after all their hard work and difficulties, they too had rights to penicillin. No harsh words or ill feelings were exchanged at this meeting, however, and Fleming gladly walked the laboratory and took note of their experiments and latest findings.

The meeting with Fleming had no effect on the actions of the Oxford team; they continued to do experimentation and decided to take it a step further by actually seeing the effects of penicillin in a human being. Because they did not think it prudent to inject a healthy person in case of adverse side effects, they used a terminally ill patient who was supposed to die within two months and who agreed to it, Mrs. Akers. The effects penicillin had on her were not promising - she merely had a slight seizure. A second patient, Albert Alexander, who had developed a bacterial infection after getting a small scratch from a rosebush in his garden,



normalized after being given penicillin but the supply ran out and he died soon after. Various other tests were done, leading the team to publish their second article in August 1941 in **The Lancet** - "Further Observations on Penicillin" which included details about techniques for developing cultures of the mold, extracting the active ingredient, purifying the penicillin and then testing it. The results were proving optimistic and Florey decided he needed financial aid to get penicillin production underway in hopes of aiding the war effort. Because the financial burden of World War II was less strenuous on the United States in the beginning of the war, U.S. labs were continuing experimentation and financial backers were willing to aid the research. Florey received the money from the Rockefeller Fund and began producing penicillin as fast as possible.

Meanwhile, Fleming, who for the most part had taken a spectator seat during all this experimentation and development of his "discovery," decided things were looking up for his 'old penicillin' and therefore began to emphasize his rights on penicillin. The articles that came out about the new findings were responded to by a regurgitation of his original conclusion in regards to penicillin and its possible medicinal use, "suggested that it may be an efficient antiseptic for application to, or injection into, areas infected with penicillin-sensitive microbes." (MacFarlane, 188) Fleming felt it necessary to make sure people remembered that he was the one who first realized the potential of penicillin. Slowly he was integrating himself back into the picture after his ten-year hiatus. When one of his close friends was taken ill, Fleming called on Florey and asked for a supply of penicillin for the patient. Florey answered and gave direction for dosage etc. The patient was cured and Fleming was finally able to place confidence in his discovery. He then began supporting mass production of penicillin for medical purposes and the public caught wind of the story.

Publications began to appear with stories of the "wonder drug" and the amazing recoveries that happened because of it. When an article appeared without giving credit to any one person for penicillin, Sir Amroth Wright took action and wrote a letter into **The Times** stating that, "... it should be decreed to Professor Alexander Fleming of this research laboratory. For he is the discoverer of penicillin and was the author of the original suggestion that the substance may have medical importance." In response, letters came in giving Florey credit saying, "...if the laurel wreath was to be given to Fleming then Florey deserved a bouquet at least, and a handsome one too." (MacFarlane, 198) The press bombarded the two researchers; Fleming welcomed the attention and allowed pictures to be taken and stories ran. Florey, on the other hand, was skeptical of publicity on his project and then was ruined when his experiment did not come out as expected. Florey may have also been hesitant because he was afraid the great publicity would create a demand for penicillin that could not possibly be met, seeing as production

was slow and tedious. The reporters had to report on the information that they were given and it was Alexander Fleming that welcomed them with open arms. (Goldworthy, 176-178) It is with this that the Fleming story erupted.

Alexander Fleming had not been an active participant in the quest for medicinal penicillin for ten years and all of sudden he found himself in the middle of a media swarm. There was a constant demand for Fleming to appear in public - both to receive awards, present awards, give inspirational speeches, and talk of his discovery of penicillin. The favorite way the media liked to portray him was a hero figure. The 'hero' figure is a result of the exaggeration by the media not only of Fleming's original discovery but also of the subsequent years when he literally stopped work on penicillin. Pictures of the original plate of bacteria with the mold growth on it circulated. Publicity began hitting the press about how Fleming was simply brimming with anticipation during the years he was not working on penicillin, waiting for the world to accept his findings and realize his genius. As is the case with journalism, the world saw the headlines and read the stories and attached onto Fleming as a brilliant scientist, making his name synonymous with penicillin. Every patient that received penicillin was quoted as saying, "Thank you Alexander Fleming!"

At first Fleming laughed at all the publicity. He clipped the newspaper articles and pictures and continued about his work trying not to draw so much attention to himself. Any time it was appropriate, Fleming mentioned the contributions of Florey and the Oxford team. He stated, "... although my work started you [Florey] off on the penicillin hunt, it was you who made a practical proposition and it is good that you get the credit." The two men mutually exchanged thanks and appreciative letters. Soon enough though, Fleming found himself overwhelmed with social obligations - he constantly was being awarded honorary degrees and giving lectures. There was little time left for his actual work. The continuous adoration of Fleming by the public began to gnaw at the nerves of Florey, who managed to hold his tongue but was generally aggravated by the situation. The closest he came to publicly downplaying Fleming's discovery was when he was quoted as saying, "In 1940, the first observations on penicillin were published...up to this time the real nature of penicillin has escaped detection." (Parshall, 58-63) All the members of the Oxford team felt slighted at the lack of recognition being given to them. Chain was especially upset because he had urged Florey to get a patent on penicillin and Florey had felt it would not be fair to monopolize a scientific discovery - exactly what was happening with Fleming. [John Sheehan of a United States institution was the first to synthesize penicillin and; consequently obtained a patent for penicillin in 1957.] The glorified hero story of Fleming's discovery was taking all the limelight.

People could not believe how unselfish and altruistic Fleming was - he

had not even made money off of his discovery and yet people's lives were being saved! Donations began flowing into the newspaper publishers and people willingly gave money to support awards to Fleming. It was easier for people to comprehend the deductive insight of a single individual than the technical feats of a team of scientists. (MacFarlane, 198) Florey had always placed strong emphasis on the teamwork factor involved in the experimentation and discovery. This attitude was not as understood by the general public who appreciated the idea of one lone genius. Florey's desire for privacy allowed Fleming to take center stage.

In the midst of all the publicity, it appeared that Alexander Fleming was taking more credit for more than he was due or at least that he was not actively trying to set the story straight. Was he a conniving man that longed for attention that he felt he would never get otherwise? Or was he just human and enjoying the fame bestowed on him by the public, although inwardly realizing the depth of his contribution vs. the contributions of the Oxford team? Those closest to Fleming felt he was a man of good character that honestly did not realize that there was any slight being committed. Everyone who knew him generally spoke of him highly - not only for his scientific insight but also for his social skills in games and after dinner drinks. He was described as easy-going, modest, uncritical, and gregarious. His meek mannerism and far-from commanding presence left one liking Fleming right from the start. When awarded the Nobel Prize in 1945 along with Florey and Chain, he disclosed to one friend that he felt he might not deserve such esteem. Fleming admitted, however, that he enjoyed the publicity and was excited at the momentum from the public over his discovery. The source reiterated that one could not help but see how sincere Fleming was in these comments.

Meanwhile, the Oxford team believed the publicity was all contrived and that behind it was a dishonest campaign trying to credit Fleming and therefore get financial aid to St. Mary's. They felt their anger was justified mainly by the fact that Fleming was not awarded the Nobel Prize when he first discovered penicillin but was only awarded it after the Oxford team had proved its importance and developed penicillin into a practical substance. Fortunately, Chain and Florey were co-recipients of the Nobel Prize in regards to penicillin but it was difficult for them to fathom why Fleming was basking in glory. Fleming's main contribution was simply observing the original mold. He had little inkling that the mold could be as medicinally important as it turned out to be. It had taken a team of scientists to turn the discovery into something really worth being excited about and the least amount of credit was going to them.

There is no evidence that Alexander Fleming purposely took credit for anything that he did not do. Numerous quotes suggest he insisted that he 'didn't

make penicillin...nature made it, he just discovered it.' The ambiguity found when researching this topic suggests the publicity was simply media driven and Fleming, not knowing how to handle the situation, decided to go with it. This circumstance where one scientist develops another's discovery, bringing it to full potential, is a difficult one because the line for credit becomes blurred and it becomes dependent on the public to decide based on the information provided. Perhaps in the end the constant fame and publicity given to Fleming gave Florey the opportunity to focus on developing penicillin and was therefore a good thing. Because Fleming is enshrined in encyclopedias and books everywhere as the 'penicillin man' and the 'good doctor Fleming,' it is unlikely public knowledge will be enhanced much beyond that. The scientific and medicinal circles will always have the opportunity to debate this issue but as always it will forever come down to the mold.

### *Bibliography*

- Friedman, Meyer. Friedland, Gerald W. *Medicine's Ten Greatest Medical Discoveries*. Yale University Press. New Haven CT. 1998. 168-181.
- Goldworthy, Peter D. McFarlane, Alexander C. "Howard Florey, Alexander Fleming and the Fairy Tale of Penicillin." *Medical Journal of Australia*. 18 February 2002, 176-178
- Ho David. Park, Alice. "Bacteriologist: Alexander Fleming," *Time*, 29 March 1999, 117-123.
- MacFarlane, Gwyn. *Alexander Fleming. The Man and the Myth*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA, 1984. 139.
- Parshall, Gerald. "Medicine's accidental hero." *U.S. News and World Report*. 17 August 1998, 58-63.
- Rowland, John. *The Penicillin Man*. Roy Publishers: New York, NY. (no date given)

**The Battle of Germantown:**  
**A Forgotten Fight for Philadelphia and Freedom**  
**Tony Giammarco**

Throughout the past three years, my teammates and I have crossed streets and fields that have bore witness and stood as seldom noticed monuments to an event that has helped to define our nation's momentous past. As a member of the LaSalle University Cross-Country Team, our daily routine, a brisk nine-mile run, takes us through the heart of historic Germantown. Turning left from Belfield Avenue, we begin our ascent up Church Lane. Reaching its summit, we then make a right onto the cobblestones of Germantown Avenue. After another quick left, we find ourselves on Schoolhouse Lane and on our way to the wooded trails of Valley Green. On the way to our final destination, we cross streets named Greene, Wayne, and Cliveden. Although my teammates and I have made this trek countless times, I wonder if any of them realize the historical significance of their surroundings. Do any of them take into consideration the great sacrifices made by many men their age upon the streets that they now shuffle along? Unfortunately, I fear the answer to this question is no.

The Germantown of today looks little like it did during the late 18th century. Now expanding on both sides of Germantown Avenue for miles, the once small village has grown to a small city within a city. Choked with buses and strangled with decrepit row homes, the image of Washington and Howe's Germantown, with its stately stone mansions, rich farmland, and vast orchards, has been lost forever. More importantly, and perhaps more disturbing, the very events that took place in Germantown, which helped to shape the outcome of the American Revolution, might very well be lost as well, hidden under the trash and blocked from view by the burnt out buildings that cover modern day Germantown.

Although there are few plaques or statues commemorating the events of October 4, 1777, the blood spilt by American patriots on the streets and fields of Germantown is no less significant than that of more heralded places like Bunker Hill or Yorktown. In the early morning hours of October 4, over 200 years ago, American forces, of both the Continental army and militia, valiantly attacked encamped British and Hessian troops. For hours, the American forces struggled against the early morning darkness, fog, and unfamiliar terrain in a courageous attempt to dislodge the British and Hessian troops stationed at Germantown. Ultimately, the outcome of the battle was unfavorable for the Americans. However, even in defeat, the brash and tireless American forces displayed to the world that their farmer led uprising was for real.

Outnumbered and poorly equipped, the American army could have never

defeated the British without foreign assistance. The Battle of Germantown, along with the American victory at Saratoga, secured a Franco-American alliance that proved absolutely crucial for the success of the American Revolution. For this reason, the events leading up to and of the Battle of Germantown must be brought to light. History has proven to be unkind to the soldiers that fought and died at Germantown, little has been written in textbooks and even less has been discussed in schools across the country about the battle. Any individual that takes pride in the actions and sacrifices made by patriotic Americans throughout the centuries on days like October 19, 1781, July 4, 1863, or June 6, 1944, must be properly informed about the events of October 4, 1777.

By 1777, the Americans and British has tasted both victory and defeat. The Americans, under the generalship of George Washington, had been decimated at Brooklyn, but had also scored opportunistic victories at Princeton and Trenton. As for the British, after experiencing early troubles at Lexington and Concord, they had rallied to capture strategically important New York City. Prior to spending the winter of 1776-1777 in the comfort of New York City, the British had devised a plan that they believed would win the war. Their plan called for the isolation of various regions throughout the country. General Burgoyne, commanding the British army of the North, would march down from Canada in an attempt to capture Albany in order to isolate New England. While Burgoyne made his way towards Albany, the British Southern army, under General Howe, would attempt to secure Philadelphia. The British believed that if the capital was under occupation and New England isolated, the Americans would lose their will to fight and surrender. (Jackson, 3)

While the British prepared to implement what they believed to be their war ending campaign of 1777, Washington and his army spent the winter of 1776-1777 in the less hospitable confines of Morristown, New Jersey, vigilantly watching the British forces in New York City. Sensing a British invasion sweeping down from Canada, General Gates and the Northern army prepared to meet Burgoyne in upstate New York. By June of 1777, Howe had not yet departed New York City for Philadelphia. Parliament, becoming increasingly weary of the American rebellion and its costs, desired a hasty conclusion to the conflict. Hoping to fulfill King George III and Parliament's wishes, Howe finally set off for Philadelphia. (Jackson, 5)

As the British were boarding ships in Sandy Hook, New Jersey destined for the Chesapeake Bay area, Washington was already aware of their movement, but not their destination. He later received information that the British 256-ship flotilla, the largest ever assembled in America, was sailing south down the Atlantic coast. Maintaining the British within sight for most of their journey, Washington's 11,000-man army humped their way from northern New Jersey to

Wilmington, Delaware, approximately 20 miles south of Philadelphia. After several miserable weeks at sea, Howe and 17,000 British troops landed at Head of Elk, Maryland. In an attempt to save time lost at sea, Howe quickly organized his army for their march north towards Philadelphia. During all this excitement, a nervous Continental Congress, residing in Philadelphia, watched, waited, and listened while Washington scrambled to position his troops between Howe and the city. (Jackson, 7)

For weeks after their landing, the British made their way north from Maryland towards Philadelphia. Small groups of militia confronted the British along their journey and only a few light skirmishes broke out. Easily sweeping past the bands of militia, the British continued their drive towards the American capital. However, on September 11, British and American forces clashed along the Brandywine Creek in Pennsylvania. The plan was to confront and defeat the British before they ever reached Philadelphia. Unfortunately, the Americans were unsuccessful in thwarting the British advance towards the city. After the engagement, the British encamped on the battlefield as the Americans regrouped and fled for Chester, Pennsylvania. Finding little refuge in Chester and in no condition for another battle, Washington and his battered army crossed the Schuylkill River and marched along its east bank to the Falls of Schuylkill near Germantown. Guarding against a British surprise attack, General Wayne and a detachment of 1500 troops remained on the west side of the Schuylkill. With Philadelphia's comforting church steeples in sight and only a few miles down river, Washington's troops begrudgingly followed Washington north along the river. (Gifford, 69)

Washington ordered Wayne and his men to cut off the British baggage train and to harass the British rear guard. By September 20, Wayne, believing his position was undetected by the British, planned an attack for the next day. Unfortunately for Wayne and his troops, his position was given away by the smoke of their campfires and by Tory farmers. (Gifford, 75) British forces, under General Grey, stealthily approached the small group of unsuspecting American troops. General Grey ordered his men to use only swords and bayonets in an attempt not to give away their position with loud volleys of musket fire. The Americans were taken completely by surprise and suffered heavy losses. Although many troops were taken prisoner, the British use of the bayonet, which the Americans considered somewhat barbaric, led the public to perceive the incident as a massacre. (Gifford, 76)

Following what came to be known as the Paoli Massacre, the British were able to move virtually unmolested up and down the banks of the Schuylkill River. On September 26, British and Hessian forces paraded into Philadelphia. Writing in her diary, British Loyalist and Philadelphia resident, Sarah Fisher remarked that she "rose very early this morning in hopes of seeing a most pleasing sight ... First came the light horse, led among by Enoch Story and

Phineas Bond, as the soldiers were unacquainted with the town and the different streets, nearly 200 I imagine in number, clean dress and their bright swords glittering in the sun. After that came the foot, headed by Lord Cornwallis. Before him went a band of music, which played a solemn tune and which I afterward understood was called "God Save great George our King." Then followed the soldiers, who looked very clean and healthy and a remarkable solidity was on their countenances, no wanton levity, or indecent mirth, but a gravity well becoming the occasion seemed on all their faces. After that came the artillery and then the Hessian grenadiers." (Gifford, 85)

Meanwhile, Washington, after receiving several thousand reinforcements, moved his army from Schwenksville, Pennsylvania, down the Skippack Road and encamped sixteen miles from Germantown. Determined to attack the British army at Germantown, Washington called a Council of War on September 28. By a vote of ten to five, Washington's council suggested that the army should move within twelve miles of Germantown to await more reinforcements. (Jackson, 29) Then, on October 2, Washington received very favorable information. He learned that Howe had sent 3000 men to Elkton in an attempt to gather supplies and another 3000 men were in Philadelphia under Cornwallis. In addition, the 10th and 42nd Regiment had been sent into New Jersey in order to capture a fort along the Delaware River. The council, upon receiving this information, decided that it was now time to attack Howe. (Gifford, 86)

Washington designed a plan that called for a four-pronged attack against Howe's position in Germantown. Although impressive on paper, his plan was extremely complicated and a bit naive. Washington's plan called for: "The Divisions of Sullivan and Wayne, flanked by Conway's Brigade, were to enter the Town by way of Chestnut Hill, while General Armstrong, with the Pennsylvania Militia should fall down the Manatawny Road by Vanderings Mill and get upon the Enemy's left and rear. The Divisions of Greene and Stephen, flanked by McDougal's Brigade, were to enter by taking a circuit by way of the Lime Kiln Road at the Market House and to attack their Right wing, and the Militia of Maryland and Jersey under Generals Smallwood and Foreman were to march by the Old York road and fall upon the rear of their right. Lord Stirling with Nash and Maxwell's Brigades was to form a Corps de Reserve. (Jackson, 31) In order for the plan to be successful, Washington's four columns had to travel great distances in darkness and over unfamiliar territory, separated by miles, with no form of communication, and arrive at their destinations simultaneously within two miles of the British pickets. Due to the inexperience of the American troops and officers, successfully implementing this plan was virtually impossible. (Gifford, 87) At seven o'clock in the evening on October 3, the American forces began to march

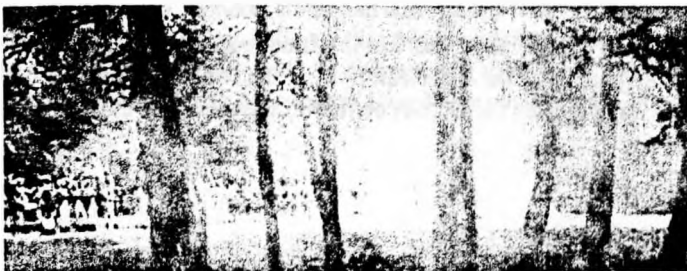


along their various routes towards Germantown. For days prior to the battle, Washington has sent out mounted patrols to harass British outposts. Washington hoped that because of these mounted patrols, the appearance of American forces on October 3 would not create undue alarm within the British ranks. Unfortunately, before the first shots were even fired, the Americans suffered a huge setback. The Maryland and New Jersey militias, under Smallwood and Foreman, perhaps confused by the unfamiliar terrain, wandered aimlessly along Old York Road. Their meandering cost so much time that their arrival at Germantown was too late to be a factor in the battle. (Jackson, 32)

Despite this setback, the Americans were able to capture the upper hand during the early stages of the battle. General Conway's brigade was the first to engage the British at Mt. Airy. Their attack forced the British back, but not before their field guns alarmed the remainder of the British forces in Germantown. (Gifford, 88) After a brief British counterattack, Wayne's division, eager to avenge the Paoli Massacre, began to cut down scores of British troops. The British began to retreat while Wayne's men gave chase. Later, Wayne wrote: "Our people, remembering the action of the night of the 20th of September, pushed on with their bayonets, and took ample vengeance for that night's work. Our officers exerted themselves to save an many of the poor wretches, but to little purpose; the rage and fury of the soldiers were not to be restrained for some time, at least not until great numbers of the enemy fell by their bayonets. (Gifford, 89)

As the frightened and confused British scampered back towards Germantown, Colonel Musgrave, along with 120 British troops barricaded themselves in Benjamin Chew's country house, Cliveden. The events that followed proved to be the turning point of the battle. Musgrave and his men closed the heavy wooden shutters and gathered every available piece of furniture in front of the house's doorways. A few British troops were posted by the doorway on the first floor while the remainder of the men crouched below windows on the upper floors. After Musgrave delivered an impassioned speech, the British troops prepared to defend their "castle" against an impending American siege. (Gifford, 90)

#### Re-enactment of the battle of Germantown



At this point during the battle, a heavy fog descended upon the low-lying village of Germantown and the surrounding area. Stumbling their way through the thick mixture of fog and smoke, General Sullivan's division made their way past the virtual British fortress at Cliveden and began firing at every moving apparition that appeared or was believed to have appeared. Angered by this wasteful use of precious ammunition, Washington sent Timothy Pickering to settle down Sullivan and his men. After meeting with Sullivan, Pickering made his way back to Washington and discovered Musgrave and his men inside the Chew house. Pickering delivered the information of his discovery to Washington and advised him to leave a small detachment behind to deal with Musgrave and his men. On the contrary, General Henry Knox told Washington "It would be unmilitary to leave a castle in our rear." (Gifford, 91)

Despite Pickering's pleas, Washington was persuaded by Knox. Lieutenant Colonel Matthew Smith of Virginia volunteered to deliver the summons of surrender to Musgrave. Unfortunately, while carrying a flag of truce, Smith was cut down by a British musket ball. Enraged, the Americans quickly surrounded Cliveden while Knox positioned artillery pieces directly in front of the house. A hail of musket balls and grape pounded Cliveden's formidable stonewalls and blasted through its wooden shutters and doors. However, the British remained inside. While British blood splattered the interior walls and spilt on the floor, the blood of Americans painted the lawn surrounding the house a deep red. Whether attempting to enter the house or trying to light it on fire, courageous Americans were cut down by British troops raining fire down from Cliveden's upper floors. (Gifford, 94)



Cliveden (Cliveden of the National Trust)

Washington's decision to attempt to dislodge the British from Cliveden cost precious time and valuable American lives. Meanwhile, Sullivan and his men made their way towards the British center on the west side of Germantown

Road (now Germantown Avenue) as Wayne and his men traveled down the eastside. Due to the heavy fog, both Sullivan and Wayne made their way past Cliveden without noticing the battle that raged around it. At the same time, General Greene, along with two-thirds of the American army, had already reached the British center at Market House. (Gifford, 95) Unfortunately, General Adam Stephen, who was reported to have been drunk at the time of the battle, diverted his force away from Greene's right wing and started towards the noise coming from Cliveden. Amidst the thick fog, Stephen's men encountered Wayne's force and began to fire upon them, mistaking them for the British.

Believing to be under heavy enemy fire, Wayne's division broke ranks and began to flee. Pushing their way forward, Sullivan's men battled their way towards the British center to meet up with Greene. Unfortunately, Sullivan and his men ran out of ammunition and were forced to join Wayne in retreat. Instead of chasing after the retreating Americans, the British decided to focus their attention on Greene. (Gifford, 96) Despite many setbacks, Greene and his men were fighting very well. If Sullivan and Wayne remained in the fight, the Americans would have been able to pin the British against the banks of the Schuylkill River. Instead, with Sullivan and Wayne being forced to retreat, the British were able to muster their full force against Greene. Hungry, tired, and short of ammunition, Greene and his men began a fighting retreat. (Gifford, 97) Despite encouraging pleas from Washington, the inexperienced American forces were unable to reorganize for a counterattack. At this point, realizing defeat, Washington reluctantly sent out couriers to all commands ordering a general withdrawal. (Gifford, 101)

After the battle, the British remained in Germantown while the Americans retreated towards Schwenksville. The victorious British reported 4 officers and 66 men killed, 30 officers, and 396 men wounded, and 1 officer and 13 men missing. The defeated Americans reported 30 officers and 122 men killed, 117 officers and 404 men wounded, and approximately 400 missing. Although the British were victorious, the battle proved to be an ultimate success for the Americans. News of the battle spread to Europe and more importantly France. The French, covertly supporting the Americans with supplies throughout the war, were now leaning towards openly supporting the weary Americans. (Jackson, 50)

By late 1777, the French had received news about both Germantown and Saratoga and they were very pleased with what they heard. French diplomats learned that in the north, General Gates had surrounded General Burgoyne and forced his surrender. They believed that this victory had raised American spirits throughout the continent and had disheartened the British. (Murphy, 58) The French also believed that Washington scored a near victory at Germantown.

French diplomats were told that if the smoke and fog had not created disorder amongst the American forces, the British would have been defeated. More important to the French, the Battle of Germantown demonstrated that the British attempt to crush the Americans during the campaign of 1777 was a failure in the northern as well as the central theaters of the war. The battle also displayed that the Americans would be a welcomed addition to the French who were preparing to make the Revolutionary War a world war. (Murphy, 64)

A young British officer, Wilfred Owen, once penned these poetic words shortly before his death in the First World War:

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace /  
Behind the wagon that we flung him in, /  
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face, /  
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin; /  
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood /  
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs, /  
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud /  
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues- /  
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest /  
To children ardent for some desperate glory, /  
The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est /  
Pro patria mori. (Kennedy and Gioia, 41)

This old line that Owen refers to in Latin at the closing of his poem is "It is sweet and fitting to die for one's country." The Americans that fell and bled the ground red along the streets of Germantown believed in this ancient Latin axiom. They felt that the ultimate sacrifice they were laying before the altar of freedom would make their home a better place to live in for the one they loved. What they did not realize was the fact that their sacrifices would help to create a country that would become a beacon for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

October 4, 1777 was a huge milestone in the life of young America. Throughout the colonies, there was a belief that the revolution would be a success. Many Americans believed that they could fight toe to toe with the British, however, most of Europe did not. The Battle of Germantown changed the opinions of many Europeans and the Americans quickly garnered the respect and admiration of many foreign nations. If the events of October 4 had never taken place, the Americans might have found themselves fighting a war against a world power by themselves, hopelessly outnumbered and under supplied. Fortunately, the Battle of Germantown was fought and the heroic sacrifices made by many Americans on that day changed the course of the war and American history forever.

**Bibliography**

- Gifford Jr., Edward S. *The American Revolution in the Delaware Valley*. Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Society of Sons of the Revolution, 1976.
- Jackson, John W. *With the British Army in Philadelphia*. San Rafael, CA: Presidio Press, 1979.
- Kennedy, X.J. and Dana Gioia. *An Introduction to Poetry*. New York: Wesley Longman, Inc., 1998.
- Murphy, Orville T. "The Battle of Germantown and the Franco-American Alliance of 1778," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 82, no. 1 (1958): 55-64

**Hitler's character and its impact on Operation Barbarossa**

**Matthew Kowalski**

On June 22, 1941, Adolf Hitler launched Operation Barbarossa, his invasion of the Soviet Union, which he looked upon as the fulfillment of his life's mission. When assessing the German invasion of the Soviet Union, most historians will point to the immense geographic and logistical disadvantages faced by the Germans as the main reasons for the campaign's failure. This said, many of these disadvantages could have been nullified, if not for a series of blunders committed by Adolf Hitler during the opening phases of Operation Barbarossa. Almost every one of these strategic blunders were results of deeply rooted flaws in Hitler's character. These major flaws were his inflated beliefs in his skills as a military tactician and his program of waging a war of annihilation on racial and ideological terms. Both of these would prove to be disastrous in the key early months of the Russian campaign, when the German army could have defeated the Soviet Union before it could harness its advantages in manpower and greater industrial output. Rather Hitler's flawed decision-making in this key opening stage of the invasion negated the potential for a quick victory which he needed and resulted in a long war of attrition that Germany simply had no hope of winning.

Before examining Hitler's impact on the course on the Russian campaign, we must first explore what forged his character. The roots of the racial worldview that shaped his character, and indeed the invasion of Russia itself, can be found in his formative years and are summed up in his book Mein Kampf. This idea of seeking lebensraum {living space} at the expense of the Slavs, whom he considered untermench {sub-human}, was not an original one. This is made clear in this quote, "other Germans, other Europeans, had talked and written in racist terms before Hitler; but he alone set about translating ideology into action." {Bullock 415}

This said, we must conclude that Hitler's racism was inherited from the intellectual movements of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, which he was first exposed to during his time in Vienna from 1908-13. Indeed, in Mein Kampf he clearly states the importance of this period of his life in his proclamation that, "during this time I formed the basic picture of the world and ideology which has become the granite foundation of my deeds." {Hitler 50} The Austro-Hungarian Empire, of which Hitler was a product, was in a state of decay with its large non-German minorities clamoring for greater autonomy. For the zealous German nationalists of the day, the future survival of the Teutonic race lied in the colonization and exploitation of the lands to the east. To support their rhetoric, they looked toward the "scientific racism" implied in the philosophy of Social Darwinism. This perversion of Darwin's theory of survival of the fittest, concluded that races like all other living things were engaged in a struggle against one another. As in Darwin, one race will prevail in this struggle

because it is biologically superior. In the hands of proto-Nazis, like the racial theorists Adolf Lanz and the geopolitical scientist Karl Haushofer, this biologically superior race was applied to the Germanic peoples. All of this would have had a great impact on the impressionable young artist Adolf Hitler, who at the time was jobless and searching for meaning. The notion that there was a "hierarchy of races" would go far to help alleviate the young Hitler's own personal sense of inferiority.

The impact of this racial worldview that Hitler had first absorbed in Vienna, and then expanded upon, would become apparent in his assessment and conduct of the war in Russia. One result of this deep-rooted facet of Hitler's character was his fatal under-estimation of his Soviet adversary. In his book Operation Barbarossa, Bryan Fugate states that "the narrow-minded Nazi prejudice about the Russian people were perhaps the single biggest problem to overcome." {Fugate 75} In the eyes of Hitler, the Soviet Union was inherently weak due to the fact that "Bolshevism had robbed the Russian people of those Germanic organizers who had created the Russian state and replaced them with that ferment and of decomposition." {Rich 210} This rabid racism, plus the poor performance of the Red Army in the Finnish campaign of 1939-40 and in the opening months of Operation Barbarossa, led Hitler to the conclusion that the war in the East would last five months at the most.

The truth of the matter was that the Red Army's early setbacks, were due more to the disastrous effects of Stalin's purges of his military leadership in the mid-thirties, then to the actual quality of the Soviet fighting man. The Germans would soon learn that when led by competent officers, such as a Marshall Zhukov, the Red Army was just as effective a fighting force as the Wehrmacht. Also, the assertion that victory could be achieved in a relatively short period of time only served to blind Hitler to the reality of preparing for a possible winter campaign. On three separate occasions Field Marshall von Brauchitsch requested that winter clothing be issued to the troops. However, every time the matter was brought up, Hitler assured him that victory would be achieved before winter set in.

The other major blunder that came as a result of Hitler's racism, was the failure of the Germans to utilize the dissatisfaction of significant portions of the Soviet population to harsh Stalinist rule to their own advantage. In his work How Hitler Could Have Won World War Two, Bevin Alexander is of opinion that of all of Hitler's blunders, "his most disastrous error was to go into the Soviet Union as a conqueror, instead of a liberator." {Alexander 81} In the early months of war in the East, many segments of the Soviet population saw the German invasion as a deliverance from the terror of the Stalin regime. This attitude was particularly prevalent in the areas that had only recently been brought under Soviet control under the terms of the Nazi-Soviet Pact of August 1939. In the Baltic Republics and the western Ukraine, there existed strong separatist movements that the Germans could have used to their own ends. It is very conceivable that had Hitler sought to

exploit these sentiments, "the Bolshevik regime itself may have disintegrated, as the Tsarist armies had in 1917." {Shirer 939} Some have even gone so far as to estimate that a "German policy of liberation would have been enough to assure a complete German victory in 1914 or 1942." {Dupuy 95}

All this said, however, Hitler's conviction that the Slavs were an inferior people, compromised what could have been one of the best opportunities the Germans had in defeating the Soviet Union in a quick campaign. Hitler saw the war against Russia as the fulfillment of his dream for the attainment of "lebensraum." As far as he was concerned the Slavic population would have to be systematically decreased, in order to make way for the future German settlement. Hitler's Reich's Commissar for the Eastern Territories, Alfred Rosenberg, best sums up this policy by his quote, "we see no reason for any obligation on our part to feed the Russian people with the products of that surplus territory." This policy of exploitation and repression automatically negated the positive impact of the strong anti-Stalin sentiments of many Soviet citizens, as it simply replaced one form of terror with another. The results of this policy in military terms was that what could have been a wide degree of active support on the part of the Russian population, instead became a greater desire to resist manifesting itself in the form of partisan warfare. A war was waged behind the lines that not only threatened the German's over-extended lines of communication and supply, but also tied -down additional troops which were needed in the frontlines.

After dealing with the blunders attributed to Hitler's racial views, we must now examine the elements of his character that influenced his military decision-making. The first of these aspects which needs to be looked at is Hitler's firm belief in his military genius. This inflated view of his skills was deeply rooted in the success of the Wehrmacht's previous campaigns, particularly in the west in the spring of 1940. His general staff, in planning the invasion of France, had been wrong in their assessment of where best to strike at the Allies. Their reworking of the old Schlieffen Plan lacked imagination, while the Manstein strategy adopted by Hitler, led to German victory in less than six weeks. As Bevin Alexander puts it, "the adoption of the Manstein Plan by Hitler, was the best decision he ever made." {Alexander 7} This and the slew of other successes, such as the move into the Rhineland in 1936, in which Hitler's decisions proved correct as opposed to the assessments of his generals, had infused him with a sense of arrogance.

Hitler's inflated opinion of his own military greatness may also have been a result of his experience in the First World War and his long held mistrust of the German military elite. As a frontline soldier in the trenches Hitler always had been under the impression that "he the humble veteran knew more about the conduct of war than the generals." {Overy 274} After all, was it not these same members of the military elite who had during the course of Great War, questioned his leadership



qualities? Their assessment of the then Lance corporal Hitler was that he was “too moody to ever rise to a position of leadership,” regardless of his impressive war record. It could be assumed that this feeling of being snubbed might have had a profound impact on Hitler’s future relationship with his generals. His domination of staff conferences and stifling of any independent thought but his own, may have been as Field Marshall von Rinchhofen put it, “sweet revenge for the ex-corporal.” {Overy 277}

All this said, however, Hitler had practically no real experience at military leadership. His decision making was not based on any practical military thought process, but rather a combination of his belief in the ability of the German fighting man to overcome adversity and a habit of reckless gambling at the expense of an overall strategy. All of these facets of Hitler’s military thinking contributed in some way to the execution of the invasion of Russia. His belief in the “will” of the German fighting men, a result of his racial outlook, was to form the basis of Hitler’s policy of strategic withdrawals, which was simply that they were not allowed. The very thought of yielding ground to the enemy, even when it made more strategic sense to do so was absolutely repugnant to Hitler. It was his opinion that simply by their sheer courage the German soldier would somehow always win the day, even under intense pressure. The results of this “stand and die” defense were only the senseless waste of men and material. Hitler, however, failed to see the coastlines of this strategy. When approached by General Guderian about this problem he replied, “Do you think Frederick the Great’s grenadiers were anxious to die? They wanted to live too, but the king was right in asking them to sacrifice themselves. I too am entitled to ask any German soldier to lay down his life.” {Bullock 737}

Another of Hitler’s character traits that effected his ability to lead effectively was his inability to balance his role as both a military and political leader. Hitler, for all his political skill was never able to effectively fit into the model of an effective wartime commander and chief. Rather than laying out an overall strategy and leaving the military details up to the professionals, in the fashion of a Roosevelt or Churchill, Hitler was obsessed with the most minute details of waging war. Regularly at conferences “Hitler interfered with the smallest details of battle; regiments and air squadrons were moved on the instructions of the Supreme Commander.” {Overy 277} The results of this meddling was that, “instead of an overall strategy Hitler substituted a jumble of individual decisions and orders.” {Overy 277}

Finally, the two character traits that had the greatest impact on Hitler’s execution of the war in Russia, was his habit of opportunistic gambling. From the very beginnings of his career, Hitler had showed himself to be both a gambler and an opportunist. From the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Pact to the invasion of France, he had always been willing to seize an opportunity if he felt it would fulfill his aims. Hitler’s opportunistic nature is best summed up in the statement that, “once

embroiled in a camp, he was ready to toss away even his general goal to seize an opportunity that appeared.”{Alexander 98} So far, this policy of reckless gambling had resulted in nothing but success. In the war in the East, however, Hitler’s persistent opportunism most likely compromised Germany’s best chance of achieving victory in a quick campaign.

*Hitler’s Operation Barbarossa on paper*



During the operational planning of invasion of the Soviet Union, Hitler’s generals were of the opinion that Moscow was to be the campaign’s overall goal. This strategy made logical military sense, due to the centralized nature of the Stalin regime. Moscow was for all intensive purposes the nerve center of the entire Soviet Empire. It was from this epicenter of the Soviet Union, where all governmental policy was formulated and then distributed. The fall of Moscow would then mean, “if not the complete crumbling of the entire Union, at least the paralysis of her effective resistance, owing to the chaos in communication and administrative life.”{Anders 23} This said Hitler, who never appreciated the strategic importance of the Soviet capital to begin with, delayed the drive on Moscow by recklessly committing divisions to other sectors of the front.

The prime example of this was his decision to move the bulk of Army Group B’s panzers to the Ukraine, which were rapidly advancing towards Moscow, for the assault on Kiev in late August. This move has been classified as being, “one of the greatest examples in history of how a leader can be reduced by a vision of short term gain into abandoning a course of action that would have given him victory.”{Alexander 98} His reasoning for this sudden change in strategy was not the product of sound military judgment, although there was a large concentration

of Red Army units were defending the city, but rather pure opportunism. Hitler simply just could not resist the temptation of possibly encircling an entire Soviet army group. Indeed, the number of prisoners taken following the German victory at Kiev was staggering, numbering some 665,000 men.

### Hitler's Panzer Divisions



This said, however, it delayed the drive on Moscow, which was by far the more important strategic objective. By the time Hitler ordered the resumption of the drive on Moscow, on September 30<sup>th</sup>, he had given the Soviets time to prepare an ample defense for the city. The assault on Kiev also wasted precious men and material that would have been better used in the assault on Moscow, at a time when the German supply lines were becoming increasingly overextended. Although by far the most serious consequence of Hitler's decision to delay the drive on Moscow, this meant that German troops would run the risk of failing to capture the city before the onset of winter. This unanticipated eventuality was why the German army had to stop its advance in December, within sight of the Kremlin. The German assault on Moscow, code named Operation Typhoon, was first slowed by muddy roads in October and then finally ground to a halt by the snow and subzero temperatures of the Russian winter.

### Russia's greatest ally during Hitler's Invasion: The Winter



The brunt of the blame for the failure to capture Moscow, and conceivably ending the war on the Eastern Front, squarely rests on the shoulders of Adolf Hitler. It was his decision to halt the drive on the Soviet capital and gamble at Kiev that doomed the prospects of Germany achieving victory in 1941. Bevin Alexander's comment that, "at Kiev Germany won a great local victory, but surrendered its last chance to the win the war" {Alexander 99}, best sums up this fatal blunder. The missed opportunity to capture Moscow before winter meant simply that Germany was now faced with a longer war in the East, which it could not win. The massive advantages in manpower and industrial production possessed by the Soviets would eventually overpower the Third Reich.

In conclusion, the defeat of Nazi Germany on the Eastern Front was due to several factors. The operation itself was an immense gamble to begin with, considering the immense advantages the USSR possessed in size, population, and industrial capability. This said the ability of the German armed forces to achieve victory was severely compromised by decisions made by Hitler during the early stages of the campaign. These blunders, among them the failure to exploit the disenchantment of the Russian population with the Stalin regime and the costly delay to press on to Moscow, were all direct results of flaws within Hitler's own character. Had Hitler not pursued his brutal racial policy toward the Slavs and left the actual waging of the war to the military professionals, he may have achieved his aim of a quick victory. Instead, he found himself embroiled in a prolonged conflict in which Germany simply could not win. Antoine Henri Jomini may have put it best when he observed, "Russia is a country that is easy to get into, but very difficult to get out of."

### Bibliography

- Alexander, Bevin. *How Hitler Could Have Won World War II*. New York, NY: Random House International, 2001.
- Anders, Wladyslaw. *Hitler's Defeat in Russia*. Chicago, IL: Henry Regnery Co, 1953.
- Bullock, Alan. *Hitler and Stalin, Parallel Lives*. New York, NY: Alfred Knopf, 1992.
- Dupuy, Trevor. "War in the East, The Russo-German Conflict 1941-45." *An Analysis of the War*. New York, NY: Simulations Publications Inc, 1977.
- Fugate, Byran. *Operation Barbarossa*. Navato, CA: Presidio Press, 1984.
- Hitler, Adolf. *Mein Kampf*. Trans. Ralph Manheim. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin, 1969.
- Overy, Richard. *Why the Allies Won*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Co, 1995.
- Rich, Norman. *Hitler's War Aims*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Co, 1973.
- Shirer, William L. *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1960.

**Pius XII and the Holocaust Under His Very Windows**  
***Matthew Smalarz***

The Holocaust was one of the worst atrocities committed in all of human history. Nazi propaganda was devoted to the destruction of Jewish communities and culture during the 1930s and 40s. In January 1942, Hitler began his Final Solution with every intention of wiping out every last remnant of Jewish life. From that point on, the Nazis systematically murdered six million of the Jewish faith. While this occurred, Pope Pius XII waited out the war in the Vatican. As Jews were butchered in concentration camps, the Pope failed to intercede on their behalf. This is the problem addressed in this paper. Did Pius XII attempt to save the Jewish population in Europe or were his inactions responsible for the murders of six million Jews? The purpose of this paper is to show Pius XII's unwillingness to speak out against the Holocaust. By failing to condemn the ongoing killings, Pius XII aided Nazi Germany in its plan to extinguish European Jewry. In the final analysis, this paper hopes to give an honest interpretation of the hidden truth of Pius XII's irresponsibility and anti-Semitic tendencies during the Holocaust.

For the first three years of World War II, the Final Solution was an idea Nazi Germany was planning in secret. On January 3, 1939, Hitler delivered an address about the Final Solution, an idea that would take two years to implement. By June 1941, Reinhold Heydrich was asked to prepare for the Final Solution. In other words, Hitler intended to arrest all European Jews and then send them off to concentration camps. On January 20, 1942, the proposal was officially adopted and by March the deportations began. This was the beginning of the end for six million innocent Jews. (McInerny, 74)

During this time of human suffering, many turned to religion to cope with the killing. The one person many Catholics turned to for answers about the extermination of the Jews was Pope Pius XII. During 1942, Pius XII received a constant flow of information concerning the Jewish deportations. The world anxiously awaited a statement of condemnation from the Pope concerning the European Jews. Instead, Pius remained silent. (Goldhagen, 24) To say that all Catholics were anti-Semitic, however, is an incorrect statement. For example, Pius XII's papal nuncio to Germany, Orsenigo, tried desperately to prevent further deportations. (McInerny, 74) Yet the Pontiff was indifferent to the demands made by world leaders to issue a condemnation. It was believed only diplomatic pressure from the British and United States would force the Pope to open up. Francis D'Arcy Osborne, the British Foreign Officer in the Vatican, attempted repeatedly, without success, to get Pius to speak out. (Cromwell, 281) Osborne noted the British public's aggravation at Pius XII's reluctance to condemn the Holocaust. (Cromwell, 282) Likewise, Osborne's counterpart, Harold Tittman, the American envoy from the United States, tried

repeatedly to get Pius to formally condemn the atrocities, but with no success. In both men's conversations with one another, Osborne and Tittman complained that Pius XII was staying quiet because he either wanted the Axis to win or he was too afraid to speak out on secular matters. (Cromwell, 283)

As the diplomatic pressure continued, news reports began to filter in about the mass slaughtering of Jews. For example, on July 17, 1942, Apostolic Visitor Giuseppe Ramiro Marcone informed the Vatican that 2 million Jews had already been exterminated. (Zuccotti, 102) Reports were also being consistently filed from Hungary, Switzerland, and Slovakia that Jews were being rounded up and then sent off to the camps. (Phayer, 48) In the Summer of 1942, hundreds of thousands of Jews were deported from France, Belgium, and the Netherlands. On August 7, the papal nuncio to Vichy, Valerio Valeri, sent a report to the Vatican that Jews were being carried away on trains to Poland and the Ukraine. (Zuccotti, 103) In September 1942, Myron C. Taylor, Franklin D. Roosevelt's special envoy to the Vatican, was asked to deliver an important communique to the Pope regarding the fate of European Jews. (Zuccotti, 104) There were two important proposals within this message. First, the United States wanted to delay the Pope's inclinations towards a peace proposal with the Axis powers. (Cromwell, 289) Secondly, and most importantly, was the Pope's formal denunciation of the mass deportations and killings of European Jews. Given the information the Vatican received, the pressure to declare the killings morally unjust overwhelmed Pius XII. If Pius had been more forthcoming, chances are the Allies' reports about the Jewish deportations may have been taken more seriously. (Cromwell, 286) Rather, Cardinal Maglione, Secretary of State for the Vatican, stated his belief that, "it has not been possible to verify the accuracy" of these sources. (Phayer, 48) However, Pius XII decided to make a half-hearted effort by saying, "no year has passed that We have not appealed in Our public utterances to all the belligerents ... to show some feeling of pity and charity for the sufferings of civilians." Nowhere in this statement does Pius condemn the atrocities committed by Nazi Germany against the Jews. (Cromwell, 290) The American envoy, Harold Tittmann even said that he, "called attention to the opinion that the failure of the Holy See to protest publicly against Nazi atrocities is endangering its moral prestige and undermining faith both in the Church and in the Holy Father himself." (Friedlander, 118) The pope's intransigence was now being perceived as a fatal blow to the papacy's prestige.

While the papacy continued its silence, one significant report revealed convincing evidence of the Papacy's denial of the events that were occurring. Kurt Gerstein, a committed Protestant who sided with the Waffen SS to discover the cover-up of Nazi atrocities, was turned away by the Papal Nuncio in Berlin. After this failed attempt, Gerstein gave the report to a Dr. Winter, who

then handed it off to the Pope's good friend, Bishop von Preysing of Berlin. It was then sent to the Vatican. Meanwhile, two German Catholic spies, Dr. Hans Globke and Dr. Josef Muller, handed over further evidence about the Jews to German bishops. (Zuccotti, 108) In these reports, most specifically Gerstein's, they provided first hand accounts of mass executions of Jews in gas chambers. How could the Papacy believe the accounts of gassings by a Waffen S.S. officer, let alone from two German Catholic spies? (Friedlander, 129) The Vatican immediately dismissed the fallacious accounts; it was becoming apparent that the Vatican felt no sympathy for the Jewish people. (Phayer, 46)

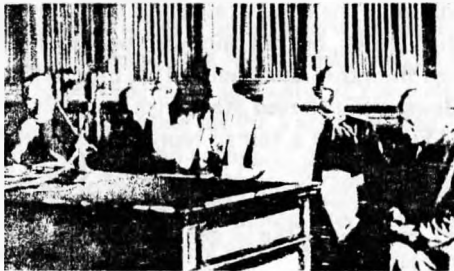
What can be said for Pius XII's reluctance to issue a formal statement denouncing the Holocaust? First, we must look briefly into Pius XII's past to see why he acted the way he did. During the 1920s and 30s, Pius XII commanded two of the most important diplomatic posts the Vatican had to offer; they were Papal Nuncio to Germany and Secretary of State for the Vatican, respectively. (McInerney, 20-21) Pius XII's correspondences to the Vatican during this time indicates his hatred of Jews. He even went so far as to associate the Jewish race with Bolshevik ideology. (Goldhagen, 37) As an envoy, Pius XII never attempted to sanction the German Catholic Church from issuing anti-Semitic statements. (Cromwell, 296) Finally, Pius XII, in 1937, was responsible for writing the encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge*. In this encyclical, the Church formally condemned Nazi Germany's policies. The encyclical reprimanded the Nazis for its intolerance towards the Catholic Church, but not one word was uttered on behalf of the Jews. What can be inferred from this document is that Pius, while not foreseeing the destruction of the Jews, still believed the Jewish race was not worth saving. (Goldhagen, 25) How can God's human representative on Earth belittle a race which had done no injustice to him? Quite simply, Pius's anti-Semitism was more forthright than initially thought. And for that reason, his pre-Papal background laid the groundwork for some of the larger mistakes that he was about to make involving the Jewish Holocaust.



Pacelli presides over the signing of the Reich Concordat at the Vatican on July 20, 1933.

After Taylor's failed mission and the dismissal of Gerstein's report, Pius XII's concern now laid with Rome's security. Osborne, the British envoy, wrote in his diary in December 1942 that he was utterly disgusted by the Pope's concern for Rome, when so many Jews were being slaughtered. Pius XII hoped the Allies would not bomb Rome, but if they did, "the pope would protest publicly." (Phayer, 62-3) Pius never responded in such a manner about the Jews. At the same time, Jewish organizations from around the globe lobbied the Vatican to save its people. Montini, the Secretary of State for the Vatican, informed these groups that the Vatican "was doing all that it could." (Cromwell, 291) Yet these statements flew in the face of reality.

Before 1942 ended, one last attempt was made by Osborne to get the Pope to denounce the killings. He asked the Pope to condemn the mass murders of Jews in his Christmas Eve address to the world. Domenic Tardini, the pope's intermediary, told Osborne that "the Pope could not take sides." The Allies resorted to their last plan of action. The United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union decided to issue a statement denouncing the extermination of the Jews. The Pope was asked to sign. Even now, the Pope was afraid he might betray the neutrality he believed in. (Chadwick, 217)



Pacelli broadcasts to the world with Giovanni Mantini, the future Paul VI, at his left shoulder. His 1942 Christmas Eve broadcast was perceived as a weak and hallow statement regarding the Nazi Final Solution.

The Pope's Christmas Eve address is the only legitimate statement His Holiness made condemning war atrocities. It is obvious that his objective was to keep the statement as vague as possible for fear he might be portrayed as taking sides. In the address, Pius says that, "the hundreds of thousands who, through no fault of their own, only because of their nationality and descent, are condemned to death." (McInerney, 95) In this twenty-six page statement, only twenty-seven words actually make reference to the Holocaust. Yet in those twenty-seven words,



not one directly refers to the Jews. In an interview with Harold Tittmann, the American envoy to the Vatican, he says Pius, "thought it was plain to everyone that he was referring to the ... Jews ... when he declared that hundreds of thousands of persons had been killed ... sometimes because of their race or nationality." Yet later on Tittmann admitted he was still confused by the vagueness of the statement. (Friedlander, 133-34) In early 1943, Pius XII wrote to Bishop Preysing in Berlin informing him that his message was clear, concise, and to the point. In reality, his words failed to instruct the world about the Holocaust. And for that matter, the most important group he tried to reach, the Jews, did not view it as a condemnation. (Phayer, 49)



Pacelli tries to calm the Italian crowds during the bombing of Rome, August 13, 1943.

In July 1943, the Allies began their assault up the Italian peninsula. Rome was now under attack and there was little Pius could do. Mussolini's government had fallen from power, and Italy reverted back to a constitutional monarchy. (Friedlander, 183) On September 11, German forces occupied the city and declared martial law. Reports were coming in from across Italy that Italian Jews were being deported to camps. (Zuccotti, 150) During this crisis, Pius was more or less responsible for Rome's inhabitants and its Jewish community. (Cromwell, 299) The Jewish community in Rome, however, could not depend on the Pope's protection. Instead, the Germans intended to deport all the Jews in Rome. S.S. Lieutenant Colonel Herbert Kappler, chief of the German security police in Rome, was responsible for carrying out these orders. On September 26, however, Kappler asked to meet with Rome's Jewish leaders for an important meeting. Dante Almansi (president of Union of Italian Jewish Communities) and Ugo Foa (president of the Jewish Community in Rome) were given an ultimatum. Kappler was willing to broker a deal that gave the Jews their lives; the Jews, however, had to hand over

all their gold possessions for the sake of the German war effort. (Zuccotti, 153) This seemed to solve the Jews' problem, but they still had to muster 50 kilograms of gold. As word spread, Jews from across the city brought their gold to Rome's synagogue on the banks of the Tiber. (Cromwell, 301) A great debate has ensued as to Pius's role throughout this episode. Defenders of Pius XII have said that he was so disturbed by the German demand that he offered a gift of fifty kilograms of gold. (McInerney, 116) This, however, is a lie. It was meant to be a loan and nothing more. For that reason, it gave the Jewish community in Rome a sense of security from the Pope that had never existed. The community continued to believe that the fifty kilograms and the Pope's assurances would save them from deportation. (Zuccotti, 154)

The Germans, however, also lied about the safety of the Jews in Rome. After the Jews had delivered the gold on September 28, the Germans entered the Jewish officials' offices in Rome. They proceeded to steal 2 million lire as well as the names and addresses of the Jewish community of Rome. (Zuccotti, 155) Unfortunately, the Jews would be in for a greater shock on October 16. Adolf Eichmann, chief of the Gestapo forces in Rome, ordered that the Jews of Rome be rounded up. Under the command of SS officer Theodor Dannecker, the 365 S.S. and the Waffen S.S. entered the Jewish ghetto. (Cromwell, 303) By 2:00 P.M., over 1,200 Jews had been detained and sent to the Italian Military College, a little less than a half a mile away from the Vatican. (Zuccotti, 155) Pius was immediately informed of the roundup by Principessa Enza Pignatelli-Aragona, who ran to the Vatican to inform the Pope. The Pope instantly contacted the German ambassador to the Holy See, Ernst von Weizsacker. Weizsacker immediately went to meet with Secretary of State Maglione about the roundups. At this meeting, Maglione explicitly asked the German ambassador to take every measure necessary to stop the roundups. But then Weizsacker asked Maglione, "What would the Holy See do if the events continued?" Maglione replied, "the Holy See would not want to be put into the necessity of uttering a word of disapproval." In other words, Maglione believed the Germans should handle the roundups and allow the Vatican to remain silent on the issue. (Cromwell, 305)

However, the German diplomatic staff in Rome found the "resettlement" of the Jews of Rome distasteful. The German ambassador to Italy, Eitel Friedrich Mollhausen, decided that they needed to prevent the roundups. They decided to write a letter to the German occupying forces in Rome through the hand of Bishop Hudal, rector of the Collegia del Anima. In this letter, Hudal wrote that the Vatican requested that the Germans discontinue the roundup of Jews. The interesting thing is that the Vatican never informed Hudal to do such a thing. (Phayer, 99-100) It was sent that evening of October 16 at 11:30. (Cromwell, 306) As a last resort, Weizsacker also wrote a letter to the Foreign Office in Berlin,

which stated that, "the Curia is dumbfounded, particularly as the action took place under the very windows of the pope, as it were." Weiszacker was trying to convince the ministry that the Vatican would protest the further roundup of Jews. Lastly, he requested that the Jews be kept to work in Italy. His pleas went unheeded. (Zuccotti, 163)

By Monday, October 18, 1943, the deportations had already taken place. The trains left Rome and headed out to the Apennine mountains, where frigid temperatures swarmed the train cars. The Jews were treated horribly, receiving little food or water. While this went on, the Vatican was updated frequently about the Jewish prisoners. As the Jews were led to their deaths, Pius's concern now rested with the fear of an eventual Communist takeover in Rome. (Phayer, 101) In Pius's opinion, the Germans should make a concerted effort to prevent the Communists from tearing Rome apart. Pius conveyed his feelings about the Germans to the American and British envoys. To Harold Tittman, Pius said, "Germans had respected the Vatican City and the Holy See's property in Rome. When speaking to Osborne, the British envoy, Pius thanked the German army for assuring the neutrality of the Vatican. In the end, Pius overshadowed the plight of the Jews with his concern for the security of Rome. Five days after the Jews left Rome, 1,060 of Rome's Jews were gassed at Auschwitz. Some 149 men and 47 were forced into servile labor. At the war's end, only 15 of Rome's Jews had survived. In later roundups, another 1,084 would be sent to Auschwitz and Italian concentration camps, where few managed to escape with their lives. (Cromwell, 309-310)

On October 25-26, 1943, an article in *L'Osservatore Romano*, otherwise known as the "Voice of the Holy See" recognized Pius XII for his "paternal charity ... it might be said, ever more active; it knows neither boundaries nor nationality, neither religion nor race." (Friedlander, 208) These words did not convey the feelings, however, of many of the diplomatic envoys to the Vatican. Osborne, the British envoy, believed the Pope had failed to take a "strong line." Likewise, the Jesuit rescuer of Jews, Tacchi-Venturri, despised the Vatican for its failure to approach the deportations in a more open and candid light. (Phayer, 101-102) How could the Holy Pontiff, with his detractors so close to him, not feel shame for his cowardly acts? As we are about to find out, Pius's reluctance to save hundreds of innocent Jews would come back to haunt him again in 1944.

By March 1944, the Final Solution had taken millions of Jewish lives. The Germans continued to find pockets of Jewish populations that still needed to be exterminated, such as the 670,000 Hungarian Jews. Eichmann, who had been put in charge of rounding up the Italian Jews, now began his roundups in Hungary. (Zuccotti, 293) The papal nuncio to Hungary, Angelo Rotta, made an appeal on behalf of the Hungarian Jews to the newly appointed Hungarian ministry. Cromwell points out that no Vatican representative had officially

lobbied a protest during the war until now. (Cromwell, 325) Pius was receiving pressure from the Allied Powers to denounce the deportation of Hungarian Jews. Pius, however, only protested to the Hungarian dictator, Miklos Horthy, on June 25. Horthy finally complied with the Pontiff's protest on July 9, at which point Hungary had already been emptied of its Jewish population. If Pius XII had taken notice earlier, he may have been able to save 437,000 Jewish victims from deportation and execution. Instead, His Holiness only conformed to Ally pressure after he had been informed that the Germans were losing the war. Pius, was more or less, waiting on the sidelines to see which side he could align himself with. By becoming a political pawn, he neglected the dire circumstances the Hungarian Jews had been placed in. (Goldhagen, 24)

What can be said for Pope Pius XII and his lack of compassion for the Jews of Europe? Based on the facts gathered, it is hard to refute the true nature of Pius XII's anti-Semitic tendencies. His inability to act as an honest arbiter on behalf of all European Jews resulted in the loss of many innocent lives. How can any God-loving Catholic believe their Holy Father to be so dishonest? As any Catholic or good hearted religious person should know, we all sin. But some in the Catholic faith tend to take the dogma of papal infallibility too far. Garry Wills points out, "Catholics have fallen out of the healthy old habit of reminding each other how sinful popes can be. Authoritative as a Pope may be by his office, he is not impeccable as a man - he can sin, as can all humans." (Wills, 1) Pope Pius XII was a sinful pope. All popes have sinned. But does that make Pius XII any less responsible for the deaths of those Jewish victims of the Holocaust, especially those that were "under his very windows?" Sadly, there will be those that say Pius did more than his part in saving Jewish lives, while his detractors will continue to vilify the true nature of his actions. In the end, however, Pius XII must not answer to us, but to the one true God he was meant to represent here on Earth.

### **Bibliography**

- Chadwick, Owen. *Britain and the Vatican during the Second World War*. Cambridge, England, 1986.
- Cromwell, John. *Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII*. New York: Penguin Publishing, 1999.
- Friedlander, Saul. *Pius XII and the Third Reich: A Documentation*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1966.
- Goldhagen, Daniel. "What Would Jesus Have Done? Pope Pius XII, the Catholic Church, and the Holocaust," *The New Republic*, January 21, 2002, 21-44.
- McInerney, Ralph. *The Defamation of Pius XII*. South Bend, Indiana: St. Augustine's Press, 2001.

Phayer, Michael. *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust, 1930-1965*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000.

Wills, Garry. *Papal Sin: Structures of Deceit*. New York: Doubleday Publishing, 2000.

Zuccotti, Susan. *Under His Very Windows: The Vatican and the Holocaust in Italy*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000.

The photos for this issue were taken from the following books and websites:

Cornwall, John. *Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII*. New York: Penguin Publishers, 1999.

[www.cliveden.org](http://www.cliveden.org)

[www.mtsu.edu/~aps2g/ww2/barbarossa.htm](http://www.mtsu.edu/~aps2g/ww2/barbarossa.htm)

[www.nobel.se/medicine/laureates/1945/fleming~bio.html](http://www.nobel.se/medicine/laureates/1945/fleming~bio.html)

**If you would like to contribute a future article to the Histories,  
please contact Matt Smalarz at [HundYrsWar@aol.com](mailto:HundYrsWar@aol.com).**