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In The Bunker

Written by Matias Travieso-Diaz | 👁 Hits: 5

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It is April 30, 1945, and the Leader hides in the Führerbunker, a subterranean air-raid shelter in Berlin. He continues his desperate attempt to maintain an illusion of control as the enemy's army closes in on the city.

Here is a timeline of the key events leading to this day:

April 20, 1945: Hitler's 56th Birthday

- This was the last time Hitler was seen above ground.
- He emerged from the bunker to inspect a group of Hitler Youth, the last line of defense for the city. Witnesses noted his physical decline and trembling hand.
- He retreated into the bunker after this, never to see daylight again.

April 22, 1945: The Final Breakdown

- During an afternoon situation conference, Hitler was informed that his order to launch a counterattack by the special youth detachment had not been obeyed as suicidal.
- In a rage against his generals, he finally conceded that the war was lost. He announced his intention to remain in Berlin until the very end and then commit suicide.

April 29, 1945: Marriage and Final Testament

- As Soviet forces fight their way through Berlin, just blocks from the bunker, Hitler took two significant actions.
- He married his long-time mistress, Eva Braun, in a brief civil ceremony in the bunker.
- Immediately after the wedding, he dictated his political and personal last will and testament. In this document, he blamed the loss of the war on "international Jewry," praised the German people, and appointed Grand Admiral Karl Dönitz as his successor and President of the Reich. He also made his disdain for other top officials like Göring and Himmler clear, expelling them from the party.

April 30, 1945: The Final Act

- On this day, Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel confirmed that the forces on which Hitler had been depending to save Berlin were either encircled or on the defensive. The situation was hopeless and only hours remained until final defeat.
- After a farewell lunch with his secretaries, Hitler and Eva Braun said their goodbyes to the remaining bunker staff and dismissed them.
- Sometime in the afternoon, Hitler and Eva retired to Hitler's private study. The widely accepted account, based on eyewitness testimony, relates that Hitler committed suicide by a gunshot to the head while also biting on a cyanide capsule. Eva Braun died from cyanide poisoning.
- Their bodies were carried up to the Chancellery's Garden, doused in petrol, and burned in accordance with Hitler's instructions, to prevent them from falling into the hands of the Soviets and being put on public display. The cremation was hasty and incomplete due to ongoing Soviet bombardment. Some remains survived to serve for later analysis.

Hitler's final days were a grim, claustrophobic end to a horrific reign, fittingly characterized by a mix of delusional commands and the chilling, calculated preparations for his own death.

They serve as a reminder that, no matter what may appear during their reign, all tyrants will, sooner or later, come to a grievous end and be reviled by mankind.

Sic semper tyrannis.

END

Bio:

Born in Cuba, Matias Travieso-Diaz migrated to the United States as a young man. He became an engineer and lawyer and practiced for nearly fifty years. After retirement, he took up creative writing. Two hundred and thirty of his short stories have been published or accepted for publication in anthologies, magazines, blogs, audio books, and podcasts. A novel, an autobiography entitled "Cuban Transplant," and four anthologies of his stories have also been published.

