

~ a list of the earliest Hitler sightings

(This is a segment of a 1960 article by James Collier entitled, "Hitler's Final Hours")

On **April 27, 1945**, a Swedish dispatch stated that Wilhelm Bartholdy, a Hitler double, was to be filmed dying on the barricades of Berlin as Hitler escaped elsewhere.

This was only the first of the rumors. On June 10, 1945, Russian General Georgi Zhukov, conqueror of Berlin, said he believed Hitler was alive.

On **July 16, 1945**, a *Chicago Times* correspondent in Montevideo, Uruguay, told his paper that he was "virtually certain" that Hitler and his consort Eva Braun were on a German-owned estate in Patagonia. The following day two unidentified submarines were seen off San Clemente del Tuyu, Argentina, giving credence to the rumors.

On **AUGUST 14, 1945**, the *New York Times* reported that a number of British officers believed that Hitler was in the North German province of Schleswig-Holstein with bogus army papers, awaiting discharge.

Three days later it was discovered that port authorities in Boston were screening passengers against the chance that Hitler was among them. On the same day rumors were published that he was in Japan, Argentina, and Sweden. The next November he was "seen" in Hamburg.

On **October 6, 1947**, a woman test pilot named Hanna Reitsch, who had been a confidante of Hitler's, recanted previous Nuremberg trial testimony and declared he was still alive. The day before, the Polish paper *Wieczor* quoted German Air Force Pilot Captain Peter Baumgart as saying that he flew Hitler and Eva Braun to Denmark on the eve of the collapse of Berlin.

Hitler sightings

On **December 11, 1947**, the Russians blew up Hitler's bunker in Berlin, destroying any further efforts to examine the Fuehrer's last residence and thereby giving credence to another batch of rumors that he was still alive.

Rumors flourished again in **1952** when Hitler's sister, Paula Wolf, penniless and on relief, tried and failed to get a death certificate for the former Fuehrer so she could share his meager estate. And there were reports he was still alive in **October of 1955** when the Russians released some of the men who had been with Hitler in the last days. Even the issuance of Hitler's death certificate at Berchtesgaden by Judge Henrich Stephanus did not put a halt to the rumors, as the report last June from Patagonia shows. In spite of voluminous investigation by trained officials of three nations, the story that Hitler is alive will not die.

This is not surprising. The Roman despot Nero showed a similarly persistent after-life, and the reports that Napoleon was in good health did not quiet down until a hundred years after his birth.

People, the noted sociologist Ernst Cassirer—who fled Hitler in 1932—suggested, often violently “deny and defy the fact of death”; if the powerful are thrown down, what chance has the ordinary human?

Psychological theorizing aside, there is one common-sense reason why the rumors of Hitler's existence persist: The suspicion that where there is so much smoke there must be fire. This attitude is enormously strengthened by one clear and indisputable fact: not so much as one single inch of Hitler's flesh has ever been publicly displayed anywhere.