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## The fall of Berlin, 1945, part 8/X

2014-12-14

in [Bombs and rockets](#), [Writing](#)

“As people waited for news, they hid their anxiety in grim humor. A new greeting swept the city. Total strangers shook hands and urged each other “*Bleib übrig*” – Survive. Many Berliners were burlesquing Goebbels’ broadcast of ten days before. Insisting that Germany’s fortune would undergo a sudden change, he had said: ‘The Führer knows the exact hour of its arrival. Destiny has sent us this man so that we, in this time of great external and internal stress, shall testify to the miracle.’ Now those words were being repeated everywhere, usually in a derisive imitation of the Propaganda Minister’s spellbinding style. One other saying was making the rounds. “We’ve got nothing at all to worry about,” people solemnly assured one another. ‘Gröfaz will save us.’ Gröfaz had long been the Berliner’s nickname for Hitler. It was an abbreviation of ‘*Grösster Feldherr aller Zeiten*’ – the greatest general of all time.

...

But would barricades such as these [such as “old trucks and disused tram cars filled with stones”] stop the Russians? ‘It will take the Reds at least two hours and fifteen minutes to break through,’ a current joke went: ‘Two hours laughing their heads off and fifteen minutes smashing the barricades.’”

Ryan, Cornelius. *The Last Battle*. 1966. p. 371-2, 375 (italics in original)

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