Hitler Took Cyanide, Soviet Inquiry Found

Result of an Autopsy Is Disclosed in Book Published Today

Soviet investigators' autopsy report is on Page 14.

By HARRISON E. SALISBURY

Twenty-three years after the event, Soviet sources have finally disclosed details of the autopsy and other medical reports on the death of Hitler.

An exhaustive Soviet inquiry established positively, according to a book to be published today, that Hitler's death was due to cyanide poisoning. Identification of the body was made through detailed examination of dental evidence.

The Soviet version of Hitler's death contradicts earlier versions, including those of William L, Shirer and H. R. Trevor-Roper. Both historians

concluded that Hitler shot himself and that Eva Braun, his mistress, whom he had married the day before, poisoned herself.

The Soviet reports, suppressed completely by Stalin and to an extent by his successors, have been compiled by Lev Aleksandrovich Bezymensky, a former Soviet intelligence officer and translator and historical journalist. They are being published here today, under the title "The Death of Adolf Hitler," by Harcourt, Brace & World, and are being published simultaneously in Europe. The price here is \$3.95.

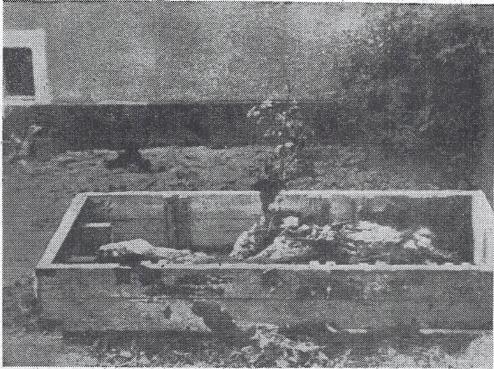


Photo made by a Soviet cameraman purportedly shows charred body of Adolf Hitler

Mr. Bezymensky's account confirms evidence, long known in the West, that Hitler died on April 30, 1945, in his Reichschancellery bunker in Berlin with Eva Braun.

What had not been previously known was that a Soviet counterintelligence team found the bodies believed to be those of Hitler and Eva Braun on May 5 in a shell crater where they had been put in a shallow grave.

The Smersh team was headed by Lieut. Col. Ivan I. Klimenko, chief of counter-intelligence with the Soviet 79th Rifle Corps. "Smersh" is a

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A frame from a roll of film marked "Last Pictures of Hitler," found in the files of Heinrich Hoffmann, the Führer's official photographer, when the Russians entered Berlin.

BODY IDENTIFIED BY DENTAL RECORD

Book to Be Published Today Contradicts Earlier View That He Shot Himself

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name by which Soviet counterintelligence forces were known colloquially in World War II and is an acronym for the Russian words "smert shpionam," which mean "death to spies."

On Hitler's instruction, according to historians, the two bodies were burned with gasoline in the shell crater.

The bodies, badly charred, were taken from the crater ad-· jacent to the bunker, wrapped in blankets and placed in wooden boxes along with the bodies of two dogs found in the same shell crater. They were transported to the counterintelligence headquarters of the Soviet Third Shock Army at Buch. a northern Berlin suburb, the Bezymensy account says.

A topflight Soviet medical team, headed by Dr. Faust I. Shkaravski, chief of forensic medicine for the Byelorussian Front, was assembled at Berlin-Buch, where the bodies of the Goebbels family and that of Gen. Hans Krebs, Acting Chief of the German Staff, had also been transported. All of the bodies came from the Reichschancellery bunker.

The forensic team performed autopsies on each body, examining those that proved to be Hitler's and Eva Braun's on May 8. The corpse believed to be Hitler's was badly burned. However, the medical examiners recovered fragments of a potassium-cyanide capsule from the mouth. They found no sign of wounds on the corpse but part of the skull was missing. Part of a cyanide capsule was also found in the mouth of the Braun corpse:

The verdict of the Soviet post-mortem was that death in both cases had been caused by cyanide poisoning.

Jaws Well Preserved

The upper and lower jaws of the corpse believed to be Hitler's were well preserved. The jaw bones, teeth and dental work were placed in a box and a team of investigators set out May 9, 1945, to locate Hit-ler's dentist, a Professor Blaschke. The dentist was not found, but with the aid of his assistant Mrs. Käthe Heusermann, the X-rays of Hitler's dental work and several gold crowns that had been made for him but had not yet been fitted were located in the Blaschke clinic.

These materials were taken to a dental technician named Fritz Echtmann, who had made the bridges and plates. The dental work matched that taken from the corpse believed

to be Hitler's.

A similar identification was made of Eva Braun. The dental examination, the Smersh investigators reported, according to Mr. Bezymensky, established the identity of the corpses beyond doubt.

However, Smersh did not halt here. It took detailed de-positions from all dental tech-nicians and specialists who had done any work for Hitler.

Witnesses Rounded Up

They rounded up witnesses of the events in the bunker and pieced together a chronological account of Hitler's last days and his suicide. They concluded that the two dogs found in the crater with Hitler and Eva Braun had been killed in tests of the cyanide-capsule's fragments, according to the Bezymensky narrative.

As Smersh reconstructed the scene, Hitler and Eva Braun retired to their quarters in the early hours of April 30 after Hitler had ordered his valet, Heinz Linge, to return after 10 minutes "when everything was quiet."

When Linge re-entered the room, the suicides had oc-curred. Acting on Hitler's instruction, Linge then carried out what he called "the most difficult order of his life." This, the Soviet investigators de-ducted, was to deliver a coup de grâce, presumably because of Hitler's fear that the poison

might not work.

Mr. Bezymensky leaves un-clear Stalin's reason for sup-pressing the evidence of Hit-ler's death. All the basic facts, Mr. Bezymensky noted, were fully reported to Stalin before the end of May. The first news of Hitler's suicide had been given to Stalin May 1 when General Krebs appeared at Marshal Vasily I. Chuikov's headquarters and delivered a letter from Goebbels announcing Hitler's death. General Krebs subsequently committed suicide by cyanide poison, according to official Soviet reports.

The letter was passed to

what had happened to Hitler in a box, searching for dental Mr. Bezymensky believes that Stalin first kept the evidence secret in order to use it in case of any trick, should today presents the full text of someone try to masquerade as the Utilan autonomy the autonomy.

the possibility that Hitler could viet archives of the bones, the somehow have escaped from charred bodies and extensive everyone it could find who had tion. everyone it could find who had been in the bunker or close to Hitler — his adjutant, Otto Günsche, his pilot, Hans Bauer, and the chief of the body-guards, Wilhelm Möhnke. They apprehended Linge, and a body-guard named Harry Mengershausen, who had witnessed the burning of the bodies, and many others.

tion.

According to an official of Harcourt, Brace & World, Mr. Bezymensky, with the knowledge of the Soviet authorities, sent his manuscript to Christian Vegner Verlag, a major West German publishing house in Hamburg. Vegner Verlag asfisigned the book and serial publishing rights to publishers in

Held Prisoners for Years

These individuals were in-France and Italy. terrogated again and again. They were held secretly in prison in the Soviet Union for years. As late as 1951, they were still being questioned by Smersh and were being com-pelled to sign new detailed declarations about Hitler's last moments.

In the end, Stalin never divulged a word of the evidence. It was locked in the archives along with the charred jawbones, the dental work, the charts, the photographs and possibly even the remains of

headquarters where Mr. Bezymensky transalated it for forwarding to Stalin. However,
the Soviet authorities were
skeptical of the Krebs report.
Although the Smersh investistation extablished the feats bey

Marshal Georgi K. Zhukov's the corpses.

gation established the facts bey-Reich and has included ex-ond dispute, Stalin did not cerpts from some key documake the information public ments.

In fact, he spoke cryptically to Prime Minister Churchill another Soviet interpreter, who and President Truman at the accompanied the Smersh team a Potsdam Conference in July, that raced about Berlin on May i 1945, as if he did not know 9 with Hitler's jaws and teeth t

someone try to masquerade as the Hitler autopsy, the autopsy of Eva Braun and the Goebbels Smersh was ordered to check family, photographs from So-

lishing rights to publishers in the United States, Britain,