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.

Continued on Page 14, Column 1
BODY IDENTIFIED 
BY DENTAL RECORD

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

Continued From Page 1, Col. 3

name by which Soviet counter-
intelligence forces were known 
colloquially in World War II and 
is an acronym for the Russian 
words “sment shpionam,” which 
mean “death to spies.”

On Hitler’s instruction, ac-
cording to historians, the two 
bodies were burned with gas-
oline in the shell crater.

The bodies, badly charred, 
were taken from the crater ad-
jacent to the bunker, wrapped 
in blankets and placed in wood-
en boxes along with the bodies 
of two dogs found in the same 
shell crater. They were trans-
ported to the counterintelli-
gence headquarters of the So-
viet Third Shock Army at Buch, 
a northern Berlin suburb, the 
Bezymensky account says.

A topflight Soviet medical 
team, headed by Dr. Faust I. 
Shkaravski, chief of forensic 
medicine for the Byelorussian 
Front, was assembled at Ber-
lin-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, exam-
in ing 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 exami-
ners 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.

Jawbone Well Preserved

The upper and lower jaws 
of the corpse believed to be 
Hitler’s were well preserved. 
The jaw bones, teeth and den-
Marshal Georgi K. Zhukov's headquarters where Mr. Bezymensky transcribed it for forwarding to Stalin. However, the Soviet authorities were skeptical of the Krebs report.

Although the Smersh investigation established the facts beyond dispute, Stalin did not make the information public. In fact, he spoke cryptically to Prime Minister Churchill and President Truman at the Potsdam Conference in July 1945, as if he did not know what had happened to Hitler.

Mr. Bezymensky believes that Stalin first kept the evidence secret in order to use it in case of any trick, should someone try to masquerade as Hitler.

Smerh was ordered to check the possibility that Hitler could somehow have escaped from Berlin. It took into custody 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 bodyguards, Wilhelm Möhnke. They apprehended Linge, and a bodyguard named Harry Mengershhausen, who had witnessed the burning of the bodies, and many others.

Held Prisoners for Years

These individuals were interrogated 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 compelled 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 the corpses.

The full record, even now, has not been published in the Soviet Union although Mr. Bezymensky has written several popular works dealing with the last days of the Third Reich and has included excerpts from some key documents.

So has Yelena Rzhevskaya, another Soviet interpreter, who accompanied the Smersh team that raced about Berlin on May 9 with Hitler's jaws and teeth in a box, searching for dental specialists to complete the examination.

Now, the volume published today presents the full text of the Hitler autopsy, the autopsy of Eva Braun and the Goebbels family, photographs from Soviet archives of the bones, the charred bodies and extensive extracts from the interrogation.

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