# FABRICATING THE DEATH OF ADOLF HITLER

The little that most of us think we know about the circumstances of Hitler's demise comes to us courtesy of British MI6 agent Hugh Trevor-Roper, and there are many reasons why we shouldn't believe the "bunker bunk".

Part 1 of 3

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# Introduction: Debunking the bunker legend

any people are broadly familiar with the official narrative of Adolf Hitler's "last days", which was revisited on our cinema screens only recently in the form of the German film *Downfall (Der Untergang*, 2004). What they do not know is that the official narrative is a political fiction—and that the revulsion it inspires is the result of deliberate planning.

As the war reached its dreadful conclusion, Churchill and the British government set out to ensure that history never repeated itself—that there would be no resurgence of German nationalism—by dictating how history would view the ultra-nationalistic Third Reich down to the very last detail. The narrative was to be so unedifying as to permanently tarnish the regime's prestige in the eyes of even its most ardent supporters. At no stage was historical truth a consideration. Neither the British nor the Americans showed genuine interest in Hitler's fate. Their only interest lay in assigning to the movement's leader the most ignoble exit from the historical stage as possible. In this sense, the consignment of Hitler's charred corpse to a rubbish-strewn bomb crater functioned as a metaphor for the consignment of the Hitler regime itself to the dustbin of history.

In the foreword to *Hitler's Death* (2005), an anthology of documents from the Russian state archives designed to buttress the official narrative of the German leader's fate, historian Andrew Roberts avers: "Part of the reason why Germany has been such a successful, pacific, liberal democracy for the past sixty years is precisely because of the way that Hitler met his end in the manner described in mesmerising detail in this book. Germany needed Year Zero in order to be reborn." Few people stop to consider the sheer unlikeliness of the Germans making the Allies such a fine farewell present as a narrative of Hitler's demise that would serve the Allies' postwar agenda perfectly.

In fact, *Hitler's Death* offers a considerable amount of evidence inviting the *opposite* conclusion to that peddled by Roberts. When the documents presented in this volume are examined in chronological order and correlated with other contemporary sources such as news reports, they show that the Soviet investigation of Hitler's death encountered major obstacles virtually as soon as it began.

In this article series, I tell the story of the abortive Soviet investigation and show how Stalin's failure to be taken in by planted evidence and bogus witnesses forced the British to take the initiative. Working in tandem with the Americans, the British built a veritable house of cards on the testimony of Hitler's chauffeur, Erich Kempka, despite the fact that he was almost certainly not even in Berlin during the closing days of the Third Reich.

As I tell the story, I disclose a considerable amount of evidence—most of it almost entirely overlooked—that supports the theory first outlined in Hugh Thomas's pathbreaking 1996 book *The Murder of Adolf Hitler*,² to the effect that the Germans concealed Hitler's exit from history in a well-thought-out forensic fraud. Thomas may not be right about *how* the Germans pulled it off, but there can be no doubt the German regime succeeded in both obfuscating the true circumstances of Hitler's demise and ensuring that Hitler's corpse never fell into the hands of his enemies.

### The paucity of evidence

Without bodily remains, it is impossible to affirm that a person is dead, let alone determine the manner in which he or she died. At least officially, there is no Hitler corpse because in 1970, so the Soviets/Russians maintain, the presumptive Hitler remains were macerated and intermixed with the remains of 10 other persons—allegedly Hitler's wife

Eva, Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels, his wife Magda, the Goebbels's six children and General Hans Krebs—and buried in the grounds of a KGB installation in Magdeburg, East Germany. This was done ostensibly to preclude the possibility of a burial site developing into a Nazi pilgrimage centre.

This story is an obvious deception, however. The Soviets hardly lacked the space to store the remains in the USSR, where there was no danger of a Hitler cult emerging. Its function can only have been to relieve them of the obligation to ever make the alleged Hitler corpse available for scientific testing. Today, all the Russians admit to possessing are fragments of what they claim to be Hitler's jawbone and two small pieces of skull.

The skull fragments, one of which is distinguished by a large bullet hole, are sometimes stated to have been found in the bomb

crater together with the other remains initially assumed to be those of Adolf Hitler; however, it is more usually maintained that they had been found in Hitler's study inside the Reich Chancellery building (Reichskanzelei). Unfortunately, there is no proof that the fragments were found in the Chancellery, let alone that they came from Hitler. No photographs were taken of the fragments in situ, while none of the documents included in Hitler's Death sheds any light on their discovery.

In matters concerning the authentication of the alleged Hitler remains, the Russians have behaved as inscrutably as their Soviet predecessors. In 1999, a foreign researcher, Michel Perrier of the Institute of Forensic Science at Lausanne University, was denied permission to inspect the remains.<sup>3</sup> It is hard to see a plausible reason why the Russians would do this unless there were a chance of a negative identification. This opens up the possibility that the skull fragments are fake. We may be looking at a hoax similar to that of the Piltdown man—a notorious case in which a jawbone discovered in

1912 was subjected to rigorous testing 40 years later by a research team at the British Museum. The researchers found that the jawbone was that of a modern ape and had been artificially stained with potassium dichromate to make it appear ancient.<sup>4</sup>

More than 60 years after Hitler disappeared from history, therefore, the Russians are obstructing research that would provide a definitive answer to the question of whether the fragments belonged to the *Fuehrer*. As D. Marchetti et al. wrote in 2005: "The available literature concerning Hitler's cause of death is incomplete...because the skull bone fragment with a gunshot wound possibly from Hitler's corpse has not been properly examined." Since the Russians clearly do not regard Hitler's skull fragments with religious reverence—we are not talking about the Shroud of Turin here—no other conclusion can be drawn than that the Russians are afraid of what will be found once the fragments are subjected to scientific testing.

The best explanation for such fears is that the Russians already know that the fragments did not come from Hitler. So far they have made no effort to have mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) extracted from the skull fragments for comparison with mtDNA extracted from the corpse of either Hitler's half-sister Paula or his mother Klara or from any of their living relatives—the process suggested

by Marchetti et al. as the only way out of the present impasse. The Russians' unwillingness to subject the fragments to mtDNA testing implies that they already know that the result will only be negative.<sup>6</sup>

The next most reliable kind of evidence—documentary evidence—also sheds no light on Hitler's fate. Strikingly, no films or photographs exist that would corroborate any aspect of the official narrative of the Third Reich's last days, least of all the claim that Hitler committed suicide. Given his towering importance in the Third Reich, it is hard to believe that, if Hitler had remained in Berlin until the regime fell, a comprehensive photographic record would not have been made of his final stand. Yet there are no known photos or films of Hitler that can securely be dated to April 1945.

As for written sources, all we have is an obscure entry dated 30

April 1945 in a document that is purported to be a diary kept by *Reichsleiter* Martin Bormann from 1 January to 1 May 1945:

30.4.45 Adolf Hitler D. Eva H. (Hitler) ^

Not only is it hard to believe that even in the most cursory entry Bormann would not at least have recorded the precise time of the *Fuehrer*'s demise, but we possess unique testimony that proves the diary to be a fake. Shortly after the war, pilot Hanna Reitsch, who was in the *Fuehrerbunker* for three days (26–29 April), told American interrogator

Robert E. Work that during this period Bormann had been writing an extremely detailed document which he intended to preserve for posterity. Work recorded: "Bormann rarely moved from his writing-desk. He was 'putting down events for future generations'. Every word, every action was recorded on paper. Often, he would approach someone and gloomily ask about the exact contents of the Fuehrer's conversation with a person to whom he had just given an audience. He also meticulously wrote down everything

that took place with the others in the bunker. This document was supposed to be removed from the bunker at the last moment so that, according to the modest Bormann, it could 'take its place among the greatest chapters of German history'."

However, the Bormann diary which the Russians subsequently presented to the world is a paltry affair containing entries that are typically only between one and three short lines long. The most substantial entry, that for 27 April, runs to a mere eight lines. Clearly, the diary does not provide a complete narrative of the death throes of the Third Reich. Although most historians (including David Irving, the self-described apostle of "real history") accept its authenticity without demur, it can only be a fake. In sum, there is no physical evidence nor evidence of a visual or written kind that would shed any light whatsoever on Hitler's fate.

# Eyewitness testimony

The case for the conventional view that Hitler committed suicide and was cremated on the afternoon of 30 April 1945 therefore depends entirely upon the verbal and written statements furnished immediately after the war by a small group of captured Nazis, most of whom were members of the *Schutzstaffel* (SS), who claimed to have observed these important historical events with their own

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eyes. The six most important accounts are those of SS-Obersturmbannfuehrer Harry Mengershausen, SS-Sturmbannfuehrer Otto Guensche, SS-Obergruppenfuehrer Johannes ("Hans") Rattenhuber, SS-Obersturmbannfuehrer Erich Kempka, SS-Unterfuehrer Hermann Karnau and SS-Hauptscharfuehrer Erich Mansfeld.

The first three eyewitnesses, Mengershausen, Guensche and Rattenhuber, all fell into Soviet hands after Berlin was captured on 2 May 1945. They recounted their respective versions of Hitler's fate to Soviet authorities between 13 and 20 May 1945. The three men's accounts were not available to the public until the 2005 publication of the anthology *Hitler's Death*. Although Hitler's valet, SS-Sturmbannfuehrer Heinz Linge, was captured at the same time, his interrogation statements are not included in *Hitler's Death* and, so far as I know, have never been made public. Given that Linge subsequently emerged as one of the central protagonists in the official story of Hitler's demise, this fact obviously raises questions about the pretensions of *Hitler's Death* to constitute virtually the last word on the subject.

The three accounts can be supplemented by various other accounts given by German prisoners to the Soviets in May 1945, in particular that given on 7 May by SS-Sturmbannfuehrer Dr Helmut Kunz. Although Dr Kunz did not profess to know anything pertaining directly to the deaths of Adolf and Eva Hitler, his statement contains a highly significant account of Eva's last known conversation.

The other three eyewitnesses, Kempka, Karnau and Mansfeld, were interrogated by the Americans and the British. Until Hugh Trevor-Roper's *The Last Days of Hitler* was published in 1947,8 the accounts of Kempka and Karnau were the only ones available to the general public. The other four accounts have subsequently become available, three as recently as 2005. This means that it is possible *only now* to consider the six earliest eyewitness statements together as an independent body of evidence. *Only now* is it possible, in effect, to leave *The Last Days of Hitler* behind and concern ourselves with the best available original source material.

Strikingly, the information derived from these six individuals represents *the bulk of the firsthand evidence that would ever become available*. Only two of the persons specifically named by

others as having been involved in the final days-Heinz Linge and Reichsjugendleiter Artur Axmann—survived the war and were able to give their own accounts later. However, in both cases, the eyewitnesses appear to have been pressured to conform their testimony to the Trevor-Roper account, which was treated by the Anglo-American establishment from the very beginning as definitive. None of the other individuals identified in the six earliest accounts as having been involved—Jansen, Kruge, Lindloff, Medle, Schaedle, Burgdorf, Krebs, Bormann, Goebbels—survived the war (so far as we know). We therefore find ourselves saddled with the task of trying to make sense of one of modern history's most important events on the basis of a remarkably thin body of evidence.

The six accounts describe *similar* events. If we compare them, we find that there is general agreement on the following five points: (1) a male body was carried from a room in the bunker to a location just outside

the exit door from the bunker; (2) the male body was wearing black trousers, shoes and socks like those Hitler usually wore; (3) at the same time, a female body was carried out of the bunker whose face was uncovered and was readily identifiable as Eva Hitler; (4) Heinz Linge carried the body of the male; and (5) the two bodies were laid down on the ground beside each other, doused with petrol, cremated and buried together in a bomb crater or ditch situated a very short distance from the bunker exit door. As soon as we look at elements of the story other than those listed above, discrepancies prove to be the rule. If they had been referring to the same event, *authentic* accounts ought to have agreed on most details as fully as they agreed on the aforementioned five points.

It is impossible to distinguish between eyewitnesses who were "telling the truth" and eyewitnesses who were lying. In the absence of material or documentary evidence that would serve as a control, any such distinction is untenable. Indeed, each eyewitness account is as credible as any of the others.

The approach that has most widely been followed, therefore, is that taken by Trevor-Roper, which simply involved assimilating all the available accounts into a narrative of a single event and ignoring or explaining away the details that did not fit with it. By this means, to give just one example, Trevor-Roper accepted an account of events which the eyewitness Erich Mansfeld stated had taken place "not later than the 27th of April" but treated it as if it were a description of an event that a different eyewitness, Erich Kempka, claimed to have observed on 30 April 1945.9

The shortcomings of Trevor-Roper's homogenisation technique are rather obvious, however. If one accepts the overall reliability of Mansfeld's account to the extent that one is willing to make use of the information it contains, by what right does one ignore Mansfeld's statement that he is "positive" that the events he was describing had taken place "not later than" 27 April?

Trevor-Roper did the same with the eyewitness testimony of Hermann Karnau, who stated that the events he had observed had taken place on 1 May. Clearly, one cannot simply cherry-pick the evidence in this way. Yet it is by this very method that Trevor-Roper assembled the grand narrative of the fall of the Third Reich which is accepted by most people, including most historians, as essentially correct!



Photo taken in 1946, showing the exit from the *Fuehrerbunker*. The wooden guard tower was added by the Soviets in early July 1945.

In the following sections, I review the six earliest known accounts while resisting the obvious temptations to dismiss certain accounts as wholesale fabrications or resort to the Trevor-Roper "cherry-picking" strategy. As we shall soon learn, the only way to make sense of the six accounts is to treat them as authentic accounts of different events. That said, it is not the case that each account represents a pure or unadulterated version of a particular cremation. The accounts of persons who had apparently observed two or more cremations—above all, Guensche—appear to represent a conflation of events remembered from different cremations.

#### **Testimony from Soviet-held eyewitnesses**

The first eyewitness to give an account of the events that occupy our attention was Harry Mengershausen, who was a member of Hitler's personal bodyguard, the RSD. Mengershausen was interrogated by a team of Soviet operatives headed by Lt-Colonel Ivan Klimenko on 13 May 1945, and by a different team headed by Lt-General Alexandr Vadis six days later. The second version came from Hitler's aide-de-camp, Otto Guensche, who furnished a long written statement on 17 May. The third version came from RSD chief Hans Rattenhuber, who gave his account in Moscow on 20 May. Although all

three accounts referred to a cremation which had taken place on 30 April, Mengershausen claimed to have witnessed the cremation around noon while Guensche and Rattenhuber both stated that the cremation had taken place around 3.00 or 4.00 pm.

There are no reasons to think that Mengershausen was mistaken and that in fact he witnessed the 3.00/4.00 pm cremation. Mengershausen mentioned important details which were not mentioned by either Guensche or Rattenhuber, the most problematic of which is that the male's face had been

visible. While Guensche and Rattenhuber both stated that the male's upper torso was covered with a blanket—so that nothing could be seen of him other than black trousers, socks and shoes— Mengershausen made no mention of a blanket, stating instead: "When Hitler was being carried out I clearly saw his profile—his nose, hair and moustache." 10 Mengershausen also gave a full description of the clothes in which Hitler had been dressed. Hitler "...had black trousers worn over high boots and gray-green uniform jacket. Under the uniform jacket, I could see a white shirtfront and a necktie." He also described Eva's clothing as "a black dress with several pink flowers made from cloth on the breast".11 Guensche and Rattenhuber were unlikely to have overlooked such a touching detail as a corsage of pink flowers; they therefore cannot have witnessed the same cremation that Mengershausen described. Last, Mengershausen stated that only four people were involved: "Except for Guensche and Linge, no one was present during burning of the corpses of Hitler and his wife, and the burial was performed by two men of Hitler's guard."12 In contrast, the three available accounts of the 3.00/4.00 pm cremation mentioned a larger cast of participants including Bormann and Goebbels important personages whom Mengershausen could not possibly have failed to notice, if they had been present.

It would be easy, but unfair, to suggest that Mengershausen had fabricated his story. Rattenhuber himself affirmed that Mengershausen had been present at the scene. It can therefore be accepted that both Mengershausen and Rattenhuber were present at a cremation on 30 April. The conclusion that makes most sense is that this was a cremation that took place at around midday, just as Mengershausen said. This cremation is not to be confused with a subsequent cremation that took place nearby, sometime between 3.00 and 4.00 pm that same afternoon.

A helpful piece of information here is that while Guensche and Rattenhuber recalled the presence of Hitler's chauffeur, Erich Kempka—who also acknowledged his own presence on this

occasion—Mengershausen did not notice Kempka. On the other hand, of all the eyewitnesses who observed the latter cremation, Rattenhuber is the only one who mentioned seeing Mengershausen. But this does not mean that Mengershausen was present at the 3.00/4.00 pm cremation. The appropriate conclusion to draw, I suggest, is that Rattenhuber observed *both* cremations that day, and the account that he subsequently gave the Soviets represented a *conflation* of remembered elements from the two cremations he had witnessed.

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# Statements from prisoners of the British and Americans

The next two accounts that were to be given came from Erich Kempka and another member of the RSD, Hermann Karnau. Both were reported by the press on the very same day, 20 June 1945. I have long pondered the significance of the fact that both the British and Americans went public with their alleged eyewitnesses on the exact same day. Indeed, Kempka's statement was dated 20 June 1945, suggesting that only a very short time passed between the drafting of Kempka's statement and

his presentation to the press.

The most probable catalyst for such haste—and co-ordination between the two Western Allies was the publication in Stockholm of Count Folke Bernadotte's book The End: My Humanitarian Negotiations in Germany in 1945 and Their Political Consequences.<sup>14</sup> Published on 15 June 1945, only five weeks after the end of the war in Europe, this short book commands the distinction of being the first insider account of the closing phase of the Third Reich. It contains an appendix in which Bernadotte recounted the story of Hitler's fate as it had been related to him by SS-Reichsfuehrer Heinrich Himmler's intelligence chief, SS-Brigadefuehrer Walter Schellenberg, in Stockholm shortly after the war. No more authoritative version of Hitler's demise can exist than such an account given freely, within a few weeks of the events themselves, and by one of the best-informed men in the Reich. While it is true that Bernadotte shared the Allies' goal of preventing the growth of a "Hitler legend", there is no reason to believe that he misrepresented Schellenberg in order to do so. There has never been, and probably never will be, a more reliable "inside" account of Hitler's fate than that furnished by Schellenberg.

For the Western intelligence agencies, the problem was that Schellenberg told Bernadotte that Hitler had been murdered.

According to Schellenberg, the state of Hitler's health had become a subject of discussion between Himmler, Bormann and himself in early April after Schellenberg had established that Hitler was suffering from Parkinson's disease. Schellenberg believed that Himmler had slowly and only very reluctantly awakened to the necessity of having to do away with Hitler, whose increasingly erratic behaviour was endangering the war effort. Schellenberg told Bernadotte that he believed that Hitler had been given a lethal injection, probably on 27 April. He told Bernadotte that he had determined the date on the basis of certain "calculations", implying that he had possessed pieces of information which, while he did not share them directly with Bernadotte, enabled him to deduce the most probable date. It was almost certainly the publication of Bernadotte's book, whose content was being summarised in the US and Canadian press as early as 16 June, which forced the Western Allies to go public, prematurely as we shall see, with stories of captives claiming to have been actual eyewitnesses to the events which Schellenberg did not pretend to have seen himself.15

Evidence of the Western Allies' haste to respond to the claim that Hitler had been murdered is their failure to reconcile the discrepancies between the two alleged eyewitnesses' accounts before presenting them to the press. While Kempka's statement confirmed that a cremation had taken place at around 3.00 pm on 30 April, Karnau's statement referred to a cremation on 1 May.

In Berchtesgaden on 20 June 1945, Erich Kempka made a statement for American interrogator George R. Allen, the counterintelligence agent of the 101st Airborne Division. In it, Kempka gave the Americans their first eyewitness account of any of the events connected with the death of the *Fuehrer*. He declared that on 30 April—although he felt unable to say that this was the date "with complete sureness"—at precisely 2.30 pm, SS-Sturmbannfuehrer Guensche called him at the Reich Chancellery garage, asking him to bring five cans of

petrol over to the bunker. There Guensche told him that the Fuehrer was dead and that he had been ordered to burn his corpse "so that he would not be exhibited at a Russian freak-show". Kempka said he then helped carry the corpses. While Linge and an orderly whom he did not remember were carrying the corpse of Adolf Hitler, he carried the corpse of Eva Hitler. Kempka simply assumed that the corpse he had seen Linge carrying was Hitler's, for he noticed "the long black trousers and the black shoes which the *Fuehrer* usually wore with his field-gray uniform jacket". The corpses were taken from the bunker to a spot in the Chancellery garden, "about 4 to 5 m distant from the bunker exit". At this location, both bodies were cremated: "...SS-Sturmbannfuehrer Guensche poured the complete contents of the five cans over the two corpses and ignited the fuel. Reichsleiter Martin Bormann, Reichsminister Dr Goebbels, SS-Sturmbannfuehrer Guensche, SS-Sturmbannfuehrer Linge, the orderly and I stood in the bunker entrance, looked towards the fire and all saluted with raised hands."17

The evidence of the fifth eyewitness, Hermann Karnau, is interesting because he is the only eyewitness to the alleged cremation of Adolf and Eva Hitler who fell into the hands of the British whose story has ever reached the public. Like Kempka, Karnau escaped from Berlin, but by mid-May he had made his way to his British-occupied hometown, Wilhelmshaven, where he

surrendered to Canadian troops. After being interrogated by British intelligence officer Captain K. W. E. Leslie, Karnau related his version of the events he had witnessed to an audience of reporters which included Walter Kerr from Reuters and Daniel De Luce of the Associated Press. Leslie told the reporters: "I am sure that Karnau's report about Hitler's death is authentic. I have interrogated many German prisoners of war and I would call this man a reliable witness."

Unfortunately, Karnau's statement clashed with Kempka's in two important respects. First, Karnau claimed to have been certain that one of the bodies was that of Hitler. He told the reporters that he had been able to recognise Hitler "by his brown uniform and his face"19 and, in particular, by his distinctive moustache.20 Second, Karnau claimed that the cremation had taken place at 6.30 pm on 1 May. Karnau's account of the events of 1 May is sufficiently detailed that it cannot be said that he was mistaken about either the date or the time at which the cremation occurred. Karnau had seen Adolf Hitler alive and sitting in his favourite wicker chair when he went for breakfast on the morning of 1 May. During that morning, he recalled, four men arrived carrying gasoline cans "for the airconditioning system". Karnau said that as he knew the bunker's air conditioning system used Diesel oil, he denied them entrance. He only allowed them in after Linge intervened.21 Karnau, who last saw Hitler alive at around 4.00 pm, believed that Hitler was

subsequently poisoned by one of his personal physicians, Dr Ludwig Stumpfegger, and cremated at around 6.30 pm that same day.

It should not be concluded that Karnau was wrong about a cremation having taken place on 1 May. On 7 May, Dr Helmut Kunz, who had worked in the Reich Chancellery dental surgery from 23 April 1945 onwards, was interrogated by the Soviets. The evidence he gave on this occasion cannot be lightly dismissed because it was the *first* account ever given by a bunker survivor—meaning

that it is the least influenced by accounts given by others. It is also the most reliable, in the sense that the events it discusses had taken place only a week before.

Dr Kunz explicitly affirmed seeing Eva Hitler alive on at least two occasions on the evening of 30 April. Dr Kunz told his Russian interrogators that he had seen Eva playing with the Goebbels children on that evening and that a little later, between 10.00 and 11.00 pm, he, Professor Werner Haase and two of Hitler's secretaries had joined her for coffee. On the latter occasion, Eva told Dr Kunz that Hitler was not yet dead but he "would die when he received confirmation that [his] will had reached the person it had been sent to".22 It is very hard to imagine that Dr Kunz could have been confused about the date, that in such circumstances he could have mistaken Eva Hitler for someone else or that Eva did not actually know whether Hitler was yet dead or not. Moreover, since Hitler's will never reached its intended recipient(s), it is entirely plausible that Hitler would not have decided to die until the last possible moment, which is consistent with a time of 6.30 pm on 1 May.

The odd thing is the response that Karnau's story evoked from Kempka. On 4 July, Kempka made a second statement<sup>23</sup> in which he insisted that Karnau couldn't have seen Hitler's moustache because "[t]he upper part of Hitler's body was fully covered by a blanket". Karnau must therefore have seen "other cremations", the

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implication obviously being that Karnau had mistaken someone else's cremation for that of Adolf Hitler and Eva Hitler. However, the fact that Karnau had seen Hitler's face while Kempka had not suggests that it was Kempka, not Karnau, who must have been referring to "other cremations".

Kempka also stated that he was now certain that Hitler had been cremated on 30 April 1945, and added the claim that the wind had blown Eva's dress, exposing her garters. However, in this respect, Dr Kunz's evidence seems decisive. Eva Hitler could not possibly have been cremated on 30 April because Dr Kunz spoke with her on the same night. What's more, on this occasion Eva told Dr Kunz that Adolf Hitler was still alive. Therefore, if Kempka saw any cremation at all on 30 April, the bodies he witnessed being burned were not those of Adolf and Eva Hitler.

No serious attempt seems ever to have been made to reconcile the discrepancies between Kempka's and Karnau's accounts, e.g., by confronting the pair with one another. The 1947 book Who Killed Hitler?, by Herbert Moore and James W. Barrett,24 criticised Trevor-Roper's *The Last Days of Hitler* for "belittling" Karnau's testimony and relying instead on Kempka's. In her review of Who Killed Hitler? in the Oakland Tribune, Nancy Barr Mavity retorted that Kempka's and Karnau's accounts "differ in detail, as eyewitness accounts of a complex occurrence notoriously do". 25 How a single episode—the burning of two bodies—can be represented as a

"complex occurrence" I have no idea, but her statement does show that the only option available to those who wish to believe Kempka involves explaining away or simply ignoring discrepancies between his account and those of the other eyewitnesses.

The third account, given to US interrogators by RSD member Erich Mansfeld on 30 July 1945, which referred to a cremation on either 26 or 27 April, establishes beyond reasonable doubt that there were numerous cremations and that at least some of the eyewitnesses were

mistaken when they asserted that they had witnessed Hitler's cremation. In fact, the first such cremation was observed by Mansfeld while he was on guard duty on the afternoon of 27 April. After recounting what Mansfeld claimed he had seen, the statement concludes: "Subject claims there is a possibility these events took place on the 26th instead of the 27th, but is positive it was not later than the 27th of April 1945 [my italics]. 126

The earliest six eyewitness accounts—effectively, the only reliable accounts we have—establish that at least four cremations of corpses, which were assumed by observers to be those of Adolf Hitler and Eva Hitler, took place in the Reich Chancellery garden between 26 or 27 April and 1 May. In each case, the male body wore a pair of Hitler's trousers.

In each case, also, the male body was accompanied by a female who bore a convincing resemblance to Eva Hitler. It is obvious, therefore, that many bunker veterans who thought they had witnessed the cremation of Adolf and Eva Hitler had only witnessed the burning of other corpses—that is to say, corpses they were meant to mistake for those of Adolf and Eva Hitler. No one was therefore in a position to say whether they had witnessed the cremation of the real Adolf Hitler or of a substitute. However, one of the two "Hitlers" whose face had been visible appears to have been Hitler's double, whose corpse was found by the Soviets on 4 May.27

### "We know nothing"

Clearly, there are no grounds to assume that accounts of cremations which took place on different dates can simply be conflated as if they were all accounts of the same event. This raises the question of whether on any of these occasions the real Adolf and Eva Hitler were cremated. This is a question that can be answered in the negative.

While he was interned for several years in two Soviet POW camps in Strausberg and Posen, the Wehrmacht surgeon-general, Major-General Walter Schreiber, had the opportunity to speak with four persons, each of whom had been present in the bunker until Berlin fell to the Soviets. While he was unable to draw any information on the subject of Hitler's fate out of the "arrogant" Wilhelm Mohnke,28 Hitler's pilot Hans Baur told him only that he had never seen Hitler dead. Heinz Linge and Otto Guensche were more forthcoming. Linge told him that he "did not see Hitler, but toward the end noticed two bodies wrapped in carpet being carried out of the bunker". Linge told Schreiber that while at the time he had assumed the bodies to be those of the Hitler couple, only later had he been told that this was the case. This admission is astounding, because Linge is the one person mentioned by all eyewitnesses as having carried Hitler's body up the stairs and into the Chancellery garden. Guensche, with whom Schreiber spoke only a short time after the regime fell, proved even more

informative. Like Linge, Guensche admitted that he had never seen Hitler's dead body. He added the enigmatic comment: "Those things were all done

without us."29

Such evidence is corroborated by General Helmuth Weidling, who told the Soviets on 4 January 1946: "After I was taken prisoner, I spoke to SS-Gruppenfuehrer Rattenhuber and SS-Sturmbannfuehrer Guensche, and both said they knew nothing about the details of Hitler's death."30

On the basis of Schreiber's and Weidling's revelations, it can be regarded

as certain that neither Guensche nor Linge, the two mainstays of the Hitler suicide legend, nor Mohnke nor Rattenhuber, had anything to do with Hitler's death or knew anything about it. It would seem appropriate to conclude that no one who knew anything for *certain* about what happened to Hitler has ever spoken about it publicly. Hitler's inner circle in Berlin knew nothing about what had happened to him, and the stories they told publicly after 1945 (in the cases of Kempka and Karnau) and since 1955 (in the cases of Linge and Guensche) have been lies. They were either writing themselves into history or, as seems more likely, under pressure from their captors to make statements to help buttress the Hitler suicide narrative. Indeed, it may well have been a condition of Linge's and Guensche's release from Soviet captivity in 1955 that they agreed to furnish such statements.

Continued in the next edition of NEXUS...

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Eva Hitler could not possibly

have been cremated on

30 April because Dr Kunz

spoke with her on the same

night. What's more, on this

occasion Eva told Dr Kunz that

Adolf Hitler was still alive.

# Fabricating the Death of Adolf Hitler

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#### **Endnotes**

- 1. Andrew Roberts, Foreword to V. K. Vinogradov et al. (eds), *Hitler's Death: Russia's Last Great Secret from the Files of the KGB*, Chaucer Press, London, 2005, p. 11
- 2. Hugh Thomas, *The Murder of Adolf Hitler: The Truth about the Bodies in the Berlin Bunker*, St Martin's Press, New York, 1996
- 3. "Hitler's Final Enigma Solved", *The Sunday Times*, UK, 24 October 1999: "Although he was not granted access to the bones, Perrier analysed Russian archive documents and photographs that could help him identify the remains." http://www.fpp.co.uk/Hitler/docs/death/CorpseID.html
- **4.** http://www.museumofhoaxes.com/hoax/ Hoaxipedia/Piltdown\_Man/
- 5. D. Marchetti et al., "The death of Adolf Hitler forensic aspects", *Journal of Forensic Sciences* 2005 Sept; 50(5), Abstract, http://journalsip.astm.org/JOURNALS/FORENSIC/PAGES/5060.htm
- 6. Dr Mark Benecke, a forensic criminologist associated with the German police, claims to have unexpectedly been shown the skull fragments by a Russian state archivist in 2002. However, he did not take a sample for DNA testing. He says that this was only because he didn't happen to have a sterile drill with him at the time. This is probably one of the more ingenious cover-up stories of our time, for if Dr Benecke had been shown the skull

fragments by prior arrangement, then he would have had no excuse for not taking a sample for DNA testing.

http://www.benecke.com/images/hitler\_express.jpg 7. *Hitler's Death*, pp. 210-11

- **8.** Hugh R. Trevor-Roper, *The Last Days of Hitler*, Macmillan, New York, 1947
- **9.** The Last Days of Hitler, p. 202. Mansfeld's interrogation report, which was made at the US interrogation centre in Bremen, is reproduced at: http://www.tbrnews.org/Archives/a039.htm
- 10. Hitler's Death, p. 72
- 11. Hitler's Death, p. 72
- 12. Hitler's Death, p. 79
- 13. Hitler's Death, p. 196
- 14. Count Folke Bernadotte, *Slutet. Mina humanitära förhandlingar i Tyskland våren 1945 och deras politiska följder* ("The End. My Humanitarian Negotiations in Germany in 1945 and Their Political Consequences"), Norstedts, Stockholm, 1945
- **15.** For example, *New Castle News*, 16 June 1945, and *Lethbridge Herald*, 16 June 1945
- **16.** Horace R. Hansen, *Witness to Barbarism*, Thousand Pinetree Press, St Paul, MN, 2002, p. x, http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/witness/wtb\_first.pdf
- 17. http://www.nizkor.org/ftp.cgi/imt/nca/nca-06/nca-06-3735-ps (translation of document 3735-PS)
  18. TASS, "Report on the Evidence of Hitler's Death", 21 June 1945, in *Hitler's Death*, pp. 283-85
- **19.** *Hitler's Death*, pp. 283-84

- **20.** Daniel De Luce, "Saw Bodies of Hitler, Braun Burn, Says Guard", *Globe & Mail*, 21 June 1945, http://collections.civilisations.ca/warclip/objects/common/webmedia.php?irn=5091401
- 21. Daniel De Luce, ibid.
- 22. Hitler's Death, pp. 61-62. Dr Haase's interrogation record, as well as those of several other bunker survivors, affirms that Dr Kunz was in the bunker in the period in which these events took place. Unfortunately, the record of Dr Haase's interrogation published in Hitler's Death, pp. 82-86, contains no information pertaining to either Adolf or Eva Hitler.
- 23. http://www.nizkor.org/ftp.cgi/imt/nca/nca-06/nca-06-3735-ps
- **24.** Herbert Moore and James W. Barrett, *Who Killed Hitler? The Complete Story of How Death Came to* Der Fuehrer *and Eva Braun*, The Booktab Press, New York, 1947
- 25. Oakland Tribune, 7 September 1947, p. C-3
- **26.** http://www.tbrnews.org/Archives/a039.htm
- 27. Hitler's Death, p. 24
- 28. However, in a statement for Soviet authorities dated 18 May 1945, Mohnke wrote: "I personally did not see the Fuehrer's body and I don't know what was done to it." *Hitler's Death*, p. 178
- **29.** "Persons Who Should Know Are Not Certain Hitler Died in Berlin Bunker", Long Beach *Press-Telegram*, California, 10 January 1949, p. B-12. I have interpreted the word "us" to refer to Hitler's personal staff.
- **30.** *Hitler's Death*, p. 238