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The Hitler Book: The Secret Dossier Prepared for Stalin from the Interrogations of Otto Guensche and Heinze Linge, Hi

By Henrik Eberle, Matthias Uhl



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Stalin had never been able to shake off the nightmare of Adolf Hitler. Just as in 1941 he refused to understand that Hitler had broken their non-aggression pact, he was in 1945 unwilling to believe that the dictator had committed suicide in the debris of the Berlin bunker. In his paranoia, Stalin ordered his secret police, the NKVD, precursor to the KGB, to explore in detail every last vestige of the private life of the only man he considered a worthy opponent, and to clarify beyond doubt the circumstances of his death.

For months two captives of the Soviet Army--Otto Guensche, Hitler's adjutant, and Heinz Linge, his personal valet--were interrogated daily, their stories crosschecked, until the NKVD were convinced that they had the fullest possible account of the life of the Führer. In 1949 they presented their work, in a single copy, to Stalin. It is as remarkable for the depth of its insight into Adolf Hitler--from his specific directions to Linge as to how his body was to be burned, to his sense of humor--as for what it does not say, reflecting the prejudices of the intended reader: Joseph Stalin. Nowhere, for instance, does the dossier criticize Hitler's treatment of the Jews.

Today, the 413-page original of Stalin's personal biography of Hitler is a Kremlin treasure and it is said to be held in President Putin's safe. The only other copy, made by order of Stalin's successor, Nikita Khrushchev, in 1959, was deposited in Moscow Party archives under the code number 462A. It was there that Henrik Eberle and Matthias Uhl, two German historians, found it. Available to the public in full for the first time, *The Hitler Book* presents a captivating, astonishing, and deeply revealing portrait of Hitler, Stalin, and the mutual antagonism of these two dictators, who between them wrought devastation on the European continent.



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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Even after Hitler's death, Stalin remained so intrigued by his nemesis that he commissioned a top-secret dossier detailing every aspect of the late dictator's private life, political behavior and personality. The result—File No. 462a, now known as *The Hitler Book*—was discovered hidden in the Soviet archives just two years ago by Uhl, of the Institute of Contemporary History in Munich and Berlin, who presents it with Eberle, a historian at Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg. Much of its material was extracted, not entirely voluntarily, from two of Hitler's captured SS aides, though one should avoid taking all their gossip too literally, for the book reveals as much about the Soviet mentality as about the German. The dossier's authors, after all, appreciated the regime's need to present Hitler as a degenerate, drug-addicted tool of German imperialist capitalism. Their lives depended on how well they understood that unwritten imperative. To that end, the text is silent about the Nazi-Soviet Pact and, owing to Stalin's paranoid anti-Semitism, about the Holocaust. This revelatory document was an extraordinary find and gives an absorbing, truly disturbing, account of Hitler and his demonic court. B&w photos. (Nov.)

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Review

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