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To my wife, Peg, and to our four sons,
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tive encouragement and belief in this
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gave me the necessary persistence and
determination to keep going.
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To those retired agents of the U.S. Treasury Department whose reports and files brought into focus the magnitude of Martin Bormann’s campaign to shift the liquid assets of Germany to neutral nations during the last months of the war.

To those German nationals who, for the sake of history and to set the record straight about the leader they believe was the mainspring of West Germany’s postwar recovery, contributed to my knowledge and insights into the remarkable Bormann organization.
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Paul Manning as a CBS news correspondent during World War II.
DID THE WORLD EVER REALLY KNOW MARTIN Bormann? A man of indescribably vast power and the sole trustee of Hitler’s secrets after May 1, 1945, in the Berlin bunker, Bormann continues to be the most controversial, perplexing figure of our times. There are those who wish him dead and continue to claim he is; for were he to emerge, it would embarrass the governments that assisted in his escape, the industrial and financial leaders who benefited from his acumen and transferred their capital to neutral nations in the closing days of World War II, and the businessmen of four continents who profited from the 750 corporations he established throughout the world as depositories of money, patents, bearer bonds, and shares in blue chip industries of the United States and Europe.

There are also those who know he is not dead, and I am among those who hold this belief. When I penetrated the silence cloaking this story, after countless interviews and laborious research in German and American archives for revealing documents of World War II, I knew that the Bormann saga of flight capital and his escape to South America was really true. It had been covered up by an unparalleled manipulation of public opinion and the media. The closer I got to the truth, the more quiet attention I received from the forces surrounding and protecting Martin Bormann, and also from those who had a direct interest in halting my investigation. Over the period of years it took to research this book, I was the object of diligent observation by squads of Gestapo agents dispatched from South America by General “Cestapo” Mueller, who directs all security matters for Martin Bormann, Nazi in exile, and his organization, the most remarkable business group anywhere in the secret world of today. Mueller’s interest in me, an American journalist, confirmed the truth of my many interviews and my on-
going investigation: Bormann is alive, they don’t want waves, so they have been willing to expend immense time and money in tracking me and my progress.

There are also those in international government and business who have attempted to stop my forward movement on this investigation. In Germany, France, England, and the United States, too many leaders in government and finance still adhere to Winston Churchill’s statement to his Cabinet in 1943: “In wartime, truth is so precious that she should always be attended by a bodyguard of lies.” For these leaders act as if the war is still on, especially when they are trying to protect their flanks, their wealth, and their influential peers in government, business, and banking. The West German government fears this story will emerge and will do harm to its growing prestige, which is really the one resounding victory the German nation can point to with pride. Yet because they are unsure how it will be received by their allies of today, and because many in the Federal Republic of Germany bear the burdens of war guilt, the prudent course, they believe, is silence, and, when necessary, the implied intimidation of publishers and literary agents who might be tempted to run with this story. But Martin Bormann, Nazi in Exile, is a great slice of true history whose time has come for publication.

Oddly, I encountered less resistance from Martin Bormann and his aging peers than I did from the cover-up groups in West Germany, Paris, London, Washington, and Wall Street. Bormann knows he is mortal, as are his cronies who have turned over the day-to-day direction of the Bormann organization to a younger leadership. The old guard want the story told, and the only point of friction is whether it should be before or after Führer Bormann’s demise.

The investigation into this historical account begins at the Nuremberg trials, when the Tribunal appointed H. Trevor Roper, the Oxford don and author of The Last Days of Hitler, to investigate the alleged death of Martin Bormann. Roper was to comment that giving in to death was not part of the Reichsleiter’s game plan: “There was at least one man in the bunker who thought only of living—Martin Bormann.”

In La Fin de Hitler, Gerhard Bolat, a French historian, described Bormann in those last days of downfall as “immune from the general hysteria; calm and undismayed in the midst of madmen, as though this ‘Twilight of the Gods’ was no affair of his, as though the sun would always rise for him, and intriguing up to the last.”

Martin Bormann was last seen for sure in a tank crossing the Weidendamm Bridge in Berlin, on the night of May 1, 1945. Then, for most of the world, he vanished.

Not are the Russians convinced that Bormann died in Berlin. The Soviet KGB assigned a Major L. Besymsenni, a Soviet KGB officer, to investigate the “death or escape” of Bormann. After two years of painstaking investigation, his report On the Trail of Martin Bormann concluded that there was a successful escape to South America.

The U.S. CIA, on the other hand, theorized that the Reichsleiter had succumbed to shellfire as he fled the bunker. Staunchly insisting this was so, the CIA, for some unexplained policy reason, advanced, promoted, and encouraged this belief. They intervened, for instance, when General Reinhard Gehlen was arranging to publish his memoirs. Gehlen had run the German espionage network in Russia during World War II, and later, under Chancellor Konrad Adenauer during the cold war years, had served as chief of the German Federal Intelligence Service. The CIA obliged him to include a statement that Martin Bormann had been a Kremlin spy, and had died in Russia in 1969! I am told that the general complied with reluctance, but was indebted to the CIA; during the cold war they had funded his Eastern Europe/Soviet spy operation of 4,000 men at an annual cost to the U.S. taxpayers of around $6 million. Back in 1953, his Bureau Gehlen had turned heaven and earth upside down for clues to Bormann’s whereabouts in the East, reporting officially: “Bormann is not in East Germany or the Soviet Union. The Bureau has been unable to discover what happened to him after he left the Reich Chancellery.” Gehlen’s credibility in knowledgeable West German political and espionage circles was damaged by this circumlocution. Called to Bonn to explain, he in essence retracted his statement.

My own West German sources have told me: “The CIA was behind the General Gehlen statement. It was a manipulation of public opinion by the CIA, immediately obvious to anyone who
knows anything about this subject. Bormann and his links to Germany today are a hidden but a very real political issue.” H. Trevor Roper commented about the Gehlen affair: “For this story there is neither evidence nor probability. Had it been true, it was Gehlen’s duty to report it long ago; and his belated ‘revelation’ has only damaged his own credibility.”

In U.S. academe, Professor Merle Fainsod, Harvard historian and author of How Russia Is Ruled, commented on the Gehlen statement: “There is no information available among Russian scholars, so far as I know, to support or deny the presence of Bormann in the Soviet Union.”

Grand Admiral Doenitz, at home in Kiel, was among those who doubted that Bormann had either considered being a Soviet agent or was making his way to Russia. Simon Wiesenthal, director of the Jewish Documentation Center in Vienna, likewise considers Gehlen’s statement “nonsense.” Wiesenthal has stated that his “last credible information confirms Bormann’s presence near the village of Ibiruba, near the Paraguayan border in the Brazilian province of Rio Grande do Sul.” Adolf Eichmann, captured by Israeli agents in Argentina in 1960, confirmed that Bormann is alive and dwelling in South America.

In the New York Times in March 1973, I wrote, in part:

Martin Bormann is the Reichsleiter in exile, a legally appointed head of state who does not consider himself a war criminal, according to spokesmen for him. Much has been written about Bormann in recent times; all of it incorrect except for the single fact he is alive and in South America. . . . When the true story of Martin Bormann is written it will reveal him to be the man largely responsible for West Germany’s postwar recovery. . . . If he is ever to come out into the open and live the life of a free man once again, he must refute the charges of Nuremberg, where he was tried in absentia in 1945–46 and found not guilty on the charge of crimes against peace, but guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity. In its decision, the International Military Tribunal left a loophole for Martin Bormann if he ever wishes to reopen the case. . . . “If Bormann is not dead,” the Tribunal stated, “and is later apprehended, I concluded my article:

Will Martin Bormann, an unquestioned genius of finance and administration, take the gamble, or continue to be the most hunted man in history?

At the Nuremberg Trials, Dr. Friedrich Bergold, the wily counsel for this defendant, thought to cut through all attempts to try the absent Reichsleiter with this statement:

Your Lordship, your Honors, the case of the defendant Martin Bormann, whose defense the Tribunal has commissioned me to undertake, is an unusual one. When the sun of the National Socialist Reich was still at its zenith, the defendant lived in the shade. Also during this Trial he has been a shadowy figure, and in all probability, he has gone down to the shades—that abode of departed spirits, according to the belief of the ancients. He alone of the defendants is not present, and Article 12 of the Charter applies only to him. It seems as though history wanted to preserve the continuity of the genius loci and have chosen the town of Nuremberg to be the scene of a discussion as to whether the fact that a defendant is allegedly no longer alive can obstruct his being tried in absentia. In Nuremberg, we have an adage which has come down to us from the Middle Ages, and which says: “The Nurembergers would never hang a man they did not hold.” Thus, even in former times they had an excellent way in Nuremberg of dealing with the question as to how proceedings can be taken against a person in his absence.

In 1972 the eighty-five-year-old bishop of Munich, Johannes Neuhausler, made public a document of the Roman Catholic Church, which stated that Bormann had escaped to Spain. The document said, in part: “Albert Bormann had awaited the return of his brother Martin to Munich, and they fled from Salzburg airport. The airport had not been destroyed and there were also at least ten flights from there of the Fuehrer’s messengers with official documents. All aircraft were suitable for night and long distance flights.” The bishop made the foregoing statement to prove that “Bormann had enough means and means to flee Germany, and that the Vatican had not done anything
collusion with the CIA, acted to end for all time the speculation that Bormann is still alive. It held a press conference in Frank-
"If anyone is arrested on suspicion that he is Bormann we will be dealing with an innocent man."

Has tranquility come to this man of the shadows? It is unlikely, for there are too many glory days to remember, along with the certainty that he dare not go home to Germany, despite the economic victory he achieved for the Fatherland.

His wife, Gerda, whom he married in 1929, opened a nursery home for Jewish orphans in Bavaria in 1945. U.S. Army intelligence officers who discovered this wanted to throw her in prison; she was spared this because she was terminally ill, and died in March 1946 in the infirmary of an Italian monastery at Merano. General Patton vetoed jailing her: "Let her be. She will meet her maker soon enough." She appointed a Roman Catholic priest as executor of her will and as guardian of her ten children. The eldest, Adolf Martin, named for his godfather, Adolf Hitler, became a Jesuit priest, serving the order for years in the Congo. He asked for reassignment to South America, and the request went to the Vatican because of his father's prominence in history; the request was denied, for Vatican officials felt that it was no coincidence. It was assumed that Martin Bormann in exile missed his children and had requested his eldest son to join him in South America. Approval would have cast a spotlight of disaffection on the Vatican. Denied, Adolf Bormann resigned from the priesthood, subsequently married a former nun, Cordula, and today they are working together as missionaries to the Indians of Brazil and Bolivia. Can it not be thought that he visits Bormann, Senior, in his last years?

The flame flickers low, but "Whatever became of Martin Bormann?" is unceasingly engrossing. My wartime CBS colleague, the late Edward R. Murrow, had talked at length with me about developing the Bormann saga as a solid and historically enlightening, valuable postwar story.

When Reichsleiter Martin Bormann, through an emissary, informed a gathering of Nazi industrialists in Strasbourg on August 10, 1944, "The war cannot be won by us; we must take steps in preparation for a postwar commercial campaign," he made just that possible by putting into action his new German state policy: the flight of capital—that is to say, money, patents, scientists, administrators—to neutral nations where this wealth would develop free of seizure by the Allies. This Bormann pro-