A COMPLICATED INDIVIDUAL, MARTIN BORMANN planned shrewdly for the future, keeping six secretaries busy. During the final six months of World War II he sorted his records, shipping them with other historical documents to South America: by truck to Munich, by air to Spain in special Luftwaffe courier planes, then on freighters chartered for the transport of German SS men from their gathering place at the terminal of two principal escape routes, the Spanish port of Vigo. This small city, in the northeastern province of Galicia, was dictator Generalissimo Franco’s home region.

One of Bormann’s office ladies in Berlin described him as a “fiend for organization and paperwork,” which was indeed his forte while he was rising through the ranks to become Hitler’s right-hand man. A master of intrigue, and therefore generally disdained by many in the inner circle around the Fuehrer, Bormann always had the unquestioning confidence of the Nazi leader; this was his wellspring of unlimited power.

In dismissing criticisms of Bormann, Hitler once explained: “I know that he is brutal. But there is a sense in everything he does, and I can absolutely rely on my orders being carried out by Bormann immediately and in spite of all obstacles. Bormann’s proposals are so precisely worked out that I have only to say yes or no. With him I deal in ten minutes with a pile of documents for which with another man I should need hours.”
If I say to him, remind me about such-and-such a matter in half a year’s time, I can be sure he will really do so.”

Albert Speer, an architect who began his professional life designing buildings for the Nazis, rose to become the highly competent minister of armaments and war production. In his book, Inside the Third Reich, he described how Bormann solidified his position as number one man to Hitler:

He alone, with Hitler’s compliance, drew up the appointments calendar, which meant that he decided which civilian members of the government or Party could see, or more important, could not see, the Fuehrer. Hardly any of the ministers, Reichsleiters, or Gauleiters could penetrate to Hitler. All had to ask Bormann or present their programs to him. Bormann was very efficient. Usually the official in question received an answer in writing within a few days, whereas in the past he would have had to wait for months. I was one of the exceptions to this rule. Since my sphere was military in nature, I had access to Hitler whenever I wished. Hitler’s military adjutants were the ones who set up my appointments.

After my conference with Hitler, it sometimes happened that the adjutant would announce Bormann, who would then come into the room carrying his files. In a few sentences, he would report on the memoranda sent to him. He spoke monotonously and with seeming objectivity and would then advance his own solution. Usually Hitler merely nodded and spoke his terse, “Agreed.” On the basis of this one word, or even a comment by Hitler, which was hardly meant as a directive, Bormann would often draft lengthy instructions. In this way ten or more important decisions were sometimes made within half an hour. De facto, Bormann was conducting the internal affairs of the Reich.

H. Trevor Roper has observed: “Bormann was a man of enormous power, for he controlled the whole party machine through which Germany was governed. . . . The more adventurous figures around Hitler despised Bormann as a plodding bureaucrat, an uncultured lout. The more colorful, more intellectual figures around Lenin despised Stalin on precisely the same grounds. But we know who won.”

Bormann was a classic embodiment of the dictator in the antechamber, a type now usual in governments around the world and in the multinational corporations, which usually tell governments what to do. Those who scorned him were typical stalwarts of every revolutionary movement, the old guard of faithful fighters, the populists, who assume their early success will endure unchangingly. Great individuals build up great corporations; but it is the second generation of professional managers to whom shareholders look to carry on the tradition of expansion and profits. Martin Bormann was a second-generation professional who consolidated for Hitler the power he had accumulated. He was at ease in the bureaucratic apparatus and mastered the mechanisms of government with the greatest skill. Behind his back he was referred to as “Hitler’s evil spirit.” One of the inner circle was said to burst out, “I am claiming for myself the privilege of personally killing the Fuehrer’s Mephistopheles.”

There he was, Martin Bormann, at Hitler’s side from daybreak until midnight, his stocky figure in Nazi uniform, his briefcase always at hand, listening, weighing situations, diligent, calculating, ever supportive of the Fuehrer, ever indispensable. Walter Schellenberg, chief of the SS Foreign Intelligence Service, described Bormann as “a thickset man, with square shoulders and a bull neck. His eyes were like those of a boxer advancing on his opponent. His appearance was conventional and unassuming. Those who were rivals and even enemies always underestimated his abilities.”

While the more conspicuous leaders of the Third Reich were strutting before the people of Germany and parading for the news media of the world, Bormann was unobtrusively gaining control of those points of power that count. He earned and kept to the last the total trust of Hitler.

Martin Bormann was born on June 17, 1900, in Halberstadt. He had a younger brother, Albert, born on September 2, 1902. Their father had served in the German army in World War I as a senior sergeant, and afterward became a civil servant in the German postal system. Both sons were baptized and raised as evangelical Lutherans. Martin attended the Science High School of Halberstadt, where his capabilities in mathematics were noted. Upon reaching the age of eighteen, he was called into the army during the last end days of World War I and found himself a cannoneer in the 55th Field Artillery Regiment. Discharged the following year, he attended agricultural college. Then appeared evidence of his interest in German nationalism;
he joined a Freikorps, a paramilitary group of right-wing activists. These had been formed in a loosely knit manner throughout Germany to counter communists and foreign interests.

The Freikorps that Bormann joined was directed by a Lieutenant Gerhard Rossbach. One of the lasting friendships Bormann made through this association was with Hermann von Treuenfels, scion of an important landowning family of Mecklenburg. In 1920 Bormann became goods inspector on the von Treuenfels estate near Parchin. It was a time of raging inflation. Before 1912 a billion marks would have been a Krupp-type fortune, but in 1921–22 it had the purchasing power of one cigarette or a small candy bar. The Freikorps dedicated itself to halting this destructive condition and the inroads of communists in government. By day Bormann worked on the estate; by night he carried out sabotage operations against the French occupation troops. The following year, 1923, during a skirmish in Mecklenburg, Bormann, as leader of the district unit of the Rossbach organization, was arrested for complicity in the murder of a communist said to have infiltrated the Freikorps. He was tried for what was termed a “political assassination of a traitor,” found guilty, and sent to Leipzig prison for one year. Released in 1925, he returned to Mecklenburg, and on July 4, 1926, joined the National Socialist German Workers Party, earlier formed by Adolf Hitler. Bormann’s party number, an early one, was 60,508.

Martin Bormann’s organizational abilities and financial acumen were soon recognized. In 1928 he was made district leader, business manager, and spokesman for the NSDAP’s district of Thuringia in Jena. Then, from 1928 until 1930 he was assigned to the headquarters staff of the Supreme Command of the SA, the “oberste SA,” which controlled the activities of the Storm Troopers, or Brown Shirts. On September 2, 1929, he married Gerda Buch, the daughter of Major Walter Buch, chairman of the party’s court for the determination of NSDAP legal matters and internal discipline.

These were heady days for Bormann. The communists, who threatened to seize control of Germany and indeed nearly did so, were being battled in the streets of German cities by the SA, and Bormann was part of the action. Most thoughtful, solid Germans had become frightened and were disenchanted with the vacillating government of the Weimar Republic, virtually powerless to stanch inflation and to stabilize the mark. Albert Speer, in his book Inside the Third Reich, describes how he was drawn to Hitler’s National Socialist German Workers Party:

It must have been during these months that my mother saw an SA parade in the streets of Heidelberg. The sight of discipline in a time of chaos, the impression of energy in an atmosphere of universal hopelessness, seems to have won her over also. She joined the Party. Both of us seem to have felt this decision to be a breach with a liberal family tradition. In any case, we concealed it from one another and from my father.

The crucial fact appeared to me to be that I personally had to choose between a future communist Germany or a future National Socialist Germany since the political center between these two antipodes had melted away.

Moreover, in 1931, I had some reason to feel that Hitler was moving in a moderate direction. The party at that time was confining itself to denouncing what it called the excessive influence of the Jews upon various spheres of cultural and economic life. It was demanding that Jewish participation in these various areas be reduced to a level consonant with their percentage of the population.

Funding was the overriding problem of the new political party. Bormann, working in the high echelons of the NSDAP, knew it would never become a dominant part of German political life until it had the support of German industry. Other parties were being funded with millions of marks annually, particularly “Deutsche Volkspartei,” “Deutschnationalen,” and “Demokraten.” The Social Democrats were largely supported by the banks and breweries. So it was that Bormann considered it a major breakthrough when, in 1931, Dr. Emil Kirdorf, a leading Ruhr coal producer, and Fritz Thyssen, a steel magnate, introduced Hitler into the influential Rheinisches-Westfälisches industrial circles. The NSDAP benefited with nearly a million marks, enough to whet the appetite but not quite enough for political success.

Turning points were at hand for Hitler and his group. In January Count Hans Rodo von Alvensleben, a Junker nobleman and landowner in Prussia, an important Ruhr industrialist and
board member of Deutsche Bank, attended a meeting at Hitler's house in company with such as Baron Kurt von Schroeder, partner of the Cologne banking firm of J.H. Stein Bankhaus. At this gathering, Count von Alvensleben spoke glowingly of Hitler to the other industrialists present, as he did to Paul von Hindenburg, the Reich president, and Franz von Papen, who were both there. The presence of these two revered figures was a tremendous coup for Hitler. When the evening ended, there were commitments all around to aid Hitler in his ambitions.

In the following month, February, twenty industrialists met in the home of the president of the Reichstag, Hermann Goering. Among those present were such luminaries as Dr. Georg von Schnitzler of I.G. Farben, representing the board of directors, and I.G.'s president, Hermann Schmitz. Hitler spoke about a new alliance he had made for his party to join forces with the Deutsche-Nationale Volkspartei, led by Franz von Papen, who was later to become vice chancellor of the Third Reich. Hitler stressed how important it was for the joined parties to gain a majority in the forthcoming Reichstag elections. Finishing speaking, he withdrew, and grandfather Krupp von Bohlen and others voted to contribute 3 million Reichsmarks to the two-party alliance.

With this encouragement, funds now poured in from industry in general. The elections in March were a breeze. Hitler went over the top, with the backing of industrialists, bankers, the middle class, the small tradesmen and craftsmen, and the World War I veterans, especially the former officers. All were convinced that Hitler must be voted into power if communism and civil war were to be avoided.

As chancellor, Hitler moved Germany forward. From a nation with the most jobless it became the nation with the fewest. This was achieved by permitting industry to have its head in free enterprise and open competition. He harnessed the people, not industry. He told the workers of Germany that full employment and prosperity depended on greater production and work at all levels. German mass production became the envy of Europe, not only in its volume but also in its quality. Trade generated with Western Europe and the Balkan countries doubled and tripled. Through this and a refreshed diplomacy, much of Europe was being drawn into the German orbit and away from France and Great Britain, a matter of increasing concern in Paris and London.

But as a political leader as well as head of government, Hitler was aware that his domestic machinery, the basis of his power, must run smoothly everywhere and at all times. On April 25, 1930, he had appointed Martin Bormann director of the NSDAP fund. Then, in July 1933, Hitler moved Bormann into a significant power control position—chief of staff to his deputy Rudolf Hess, a dedicated Nazi, but one who lacked the drive and organizational abilities necessary for continued control of an always expanding political apparatus. Bormann soon had things running smoothly—his way. Citing unity and efficiency, he reduced the influence of the old guard by rearranging areas of jurisdiction. He turned the NSDAP treasurer, Franz Schwarz, into a mere bookkeeper, and assumed the powers of the office for himself. Bormann had a natural money mind. He was precise in fiscal matters, exact in administrative procedures, cold, deliberate, Machiavellian, and would have made a fine banker had he not gotten into politics. In a manner of speaking, as the years went by, he came to be a banker, eventually controlling all the banks of Germany, and through them the banks of all occupied Europe.

In this era of the early thirties and the new prosperity of German industry and commerce, it followed naturally as day into night that Martin Bormann would devise a conduit to sluice funds on a regular basis to the NSDAP and Hitler. The Adolf Hitler Endowment Fund of German Industry was set up. All German industry was to subscribe to this; 60 million marks were collected annually to strengthen the party. Businesses didn't mind, for they were getting major government contracts as well as increasing commercial trade from abroad. Such a fund also did away with some of the incessant requests for money by offshoots of the party organization. Himmler, for example, had been tapping leading bankers and business leaders for contributions to his SS welfare fund, from which he did not personally benefit, oddly enough. The companies contributing comprised a list of important banks and industries: Deutsche Bank, Dresdner Bank, Commerzbank, the Reichstag Bank, the J.H. Stein Bankhaus, Norddeutscher Lloyd and Hamburg-Amerika shipping companies, the Dr. August Oetker Food Production Company,
and such giant firms as I.G. Farben, Mitteldeutsche Stahlwerke, Siemens-Schuckert-Werke A.G., Portland Cement, Rheinmetall-Borsig, and the Reichswerke Hermann Goering. The money designated to Himmler's fund was deposited into General Account S in the J.H. Stein Bankhaus of Cologne. Baron Kurt Freiherr von Schroeder was a board member and a partner in this bank, and Karl Wolff, Himmler's senior aide, was authorized to draw checks for SS welfare purposes on this account.

But the Himmler fund had shrunk below 1 million marks a year when Reichsleiter Bormann established his Adolf Hitler Endowment Fund of German Industry. Up he came with another inspiration: the Fuehrer's Winterhilfe, a fund to which all Germans, within the Third Reich and abroad, could contribute for the welfare of all troops and civilians impoverished by war. As a further source, industrialists and their wives were invited to the Reichschancellery in Berlin, where in the ballroom a concert was performed by noted German musicians. Walther Funk, minister of economics, commented: "It was there where the 'kick-in-some-dough' arias were sung. Every guest was compelled to subscribe to a contribution. Individual contributions ran as high as 100,000 marks. This 'winterfund' alone accumulated almost 3 billion marks, which drew handsome interest in the Reichsbank."

Bormann also collected royalty payments, on behalf of the Fuehrer, for all postage stamps sold that bore Hitler's picture.

With such monies under his control, Bormann now held power-of-the-purse over all the other Nazi leaders, including even the Gauleiters who ran the party machinery across Germany. All looked to Bormann for their annual funding. He set the housekeeping budgets for Hitler himself and his girlfriend Eva Braun, as well as for Goering, Goebbelis, and Himmler. Eva Braun received her monthly checks in Munich, where she worked as a secretary for Heinrich Hoffmann, Hitler's official photographer; Bormann also collected fees for the worldwide sales of Hoffmann's pictures of the Fuehrer.

It riled the top Nazis to have to ask Martin Bormann for money. It was like going to a banker, with reasons laid out for intended use of the funds, papers to be signed if the sum exceeded the individual's budget allowance, etc., etc. Even Heinrich Himmler, Reichsfuehrer of the SS and chief of the German police, had to petition Bormann for a personal loan from the party chancellery fund; he had a wife and was keeping a mistress, and was financially in over his head. Bormann granted him the loan from the fund, and later used the information against him with Hitler, who was prudish in such matters. Hitler, of course, kept his own mistress, but insisted that married Nazi leaders should maintain high moral standards.

Members of the Nazi inner circle referred to Martin Bormann with derision, calling him behind his back "the bookkeeper," or "the banker." But he knew what he was doing, and always landed on his feet. When he married, it was a wedding witnessed by the top-flight leaders of National Socialism. The wedding portrait shows the new Herr and Frau Bormann seated, and standing behind them six who attended, including Adolf Hitler and Rudolf Hess. Mrs. Bormann's father, Walter Buch, who was the high judge of National Socialism's legal tribunal, is also in the picture. As time went by he, too, developed a hearty dislike for Bormann; when he died in 1947, almost in his last breath, he declared to his family, "That damn Martin made it safely out of Germany."

Another photograph demonstrating Bormann's ascendancy is the group picture taken at Hitler's birthday party, on April 20, 1938, at Berchesgaden. Next to the Fuehrer and Eva Braun are Reichsleiter Bormann and Mrs. Bormann; he in white tie and tails reminds one of a young Rod Steiger. Albert Speer appears in the second row, obviously positioned there by Bormann, whom he referred to later that evening as "the man with the hedge clippers," because Bormann devoted himself to preventing anyone else from rising above a certain level. Speer was to complain later, "Things became so difficult for me that I often wanted to give up and resign my post." Noticeably not in this picture was Rudolf Hess, deputy to the Fuehrer and deputy of the party, an indication of his declining influence. Even in 1938 Bormann was the man to watch.

By this time, Martin Bormann had taken into his own hands all of Hitler's financial affairs, and the Fuehrer had no further personal concerns in this area. Bormann had also brought up tracts of land at Obersalzberg, built roads, barracks, concrete air
raid shelters, and an official Bavarian residence for Hitler at Berchtesgaden. On nearby hilltops he constructed modest châteaux for Goering, Goebbels, and himself. By building residences for these two he had kept them from being overnight guests of the Führer. He also constructed the Eagle’s Nest, a conference area atop a granite mountain, accessible only by elevator, and with a breathtaking view of Bavaria. Reichsmarsh- 
shal Goering, of course, had his own tremendous holding, Karinhall, in eastern Germany, and Goebbels, minister of propa- 
ganda, maintained a home and his large family in the Berlin 
suburb near the Wansee. Bormann went on, and purchased the 
house in Branau, Austria, where Hitler was born, and the house of Hitler’s parents in Leonding, for the Führer. Deeds for all 
this property in Obersalzberg were entered in the land register 
in Martin Bormann’s name.

Bormann’s growing scope of influence was out of the reach of 
other leading Nazis. He avoided publicity carefully, like many a 
financial mover and shaker of our day. In Bormann’s world 
there were two kinds of people: those he could win over and 
subordinate to his purposes and those he had to fear. Basically 
he distrusted everyone, and collected information constantly 
for his personal index-card files. Even Reinhard Heydrich, a 
chief plotter of the SS, was awed by Reichsleiter Bormann’s 
ingenuity. “There is a real master of intrigue and deceit,” he 
remarked at a dinner party in Berlin.

Joseph C. Fest, the German author, has described Bormann 
Germany’s secret ruler. . . . Apart from his indirect influence on 
Hitler’s person, he came increasingly to dominate the whole Party 
apparatus. He deprived Rosenberg of part of his ideological authority 
and Ley of his jurisdiction over political personnel, and Reich 
Minister Lammers, head of the Reich Chancellery, found himself 
relieved of important responsibilities. Bormann dismissed and ap- 
pointed Party officials (Gauleiters were subordinate to him per- 
sonally), made massive use of his rights to a voice in appointments 
and promotions in all state and even military departments, gave or 
withdrew his favor, praised, bullied, eliminated, but stayed in the 
background, and at all times kept up his sleeve one more suspicion, 
one more piece of flattery, than his opponent. His nebulous position 
has been fairly compared to Stalin’s power during Lenin’s last days.

Bormann’s closeness to the military leadership is shown in 
another photograph, taken on January 27, 1938. It was just after 
Hitler had shaken up the War Ministry and General Staff, and 
had assumed personal control of the High Command of the 
armed forces, the O.K.W. Standing between Hitler and Bormann is Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel, chief of staff of the 
armed forces. Behind, in three neat rows, are those who survived 
the political struggles. Hitler had said he was frustrated by the 
negative attitude of his generals; he retired sixteen of them and 
posted forty-four others to field positions. Traditionally, strong 
national leaders have objected to the undue caution of generals. 
President Lincoln fired his share before he got Ulysses S. Grant; 
it was the procedure followed by Winston Churchill when he 
took power the night of May 10, 1940. After assuming the 
duties of both chief of state and minister of defense, he shook 
up his military command in no uncertain manner.

May 10, 1941, was a date to remember in Martin Bormann’s 
life. That night Rudolf Hess, deputy Führer, had removed 
himself from all competition for Hitler’s favor by flying to Scot- 
land and parachuting to the Duke of Hamilton’s estate, as an 
unofficial emissary to Hamilton, to arrange peace with Britain 
so that his Führer would have freedom of action to invade 
Russia. It was a mission undertaken presumably without Hitler’s 
knowledge, and it was an embarrassment to the German leader. 
Commenting on the astonishing development at the time, Prime 
Minister Churchill had said, “It was as if my trusted colleague, 
Anthony Eden, the foreign secretary, who was only a little 
younger than Hess, had parachuted from a stolen Spitfire into 
the grounds of Berchtesgaden.”

Hitler was puzzled and enraged over Hess’s deed; Martin 
Bormann was not—at least he sensed the motivation behind it. 
Hess had found himself in political eclipse, superseded by Bormann, 
now merely a party functionary to be used for speeches 
and other public appearances. Even when it came to jobs, the 
party rank and file went no more to Hess, but to Bormann, who 
was “the” man to see for patronage. Luncheon or tea with 
Hitler was no longer an intimate occasion for Hess; the guest 
lists had been expanded to include generals and many more. 
Bormann controlled this, too, but the incident that put Rudolf 
Hess in the social deep freeze occurred the day he arrived at
Berchtesgaden accompanied by his own cook. He didn't care for the food Hitler served and brought his own chef to prepare his lunch. It was not until the meal was half over that Hitler realized Hess was eating food different from the others. He shouted at Hess that if he did not like the food served at Berchtesgaden he could eat elsewhere. Hess left and Hitler cooled off, but their relationship was never the same again. Hess, however, continued to idolize the Fuehrer. He reasoned that if he could arrange peace between Britain and Germany, where so many others had failed, it would provide him with a special niche in German history and in Hitler's affection.

Hess's flight to Scotland was a remarkable feat. He had practiced his night flying skills over Munich and Augsburg. On May 10 he climbed into his personal Messerschmitt-110 fighter, took off, and soared toward the British Isles. He had memorized the correct identification signals which would see him through the German fighter command defensive network. But once over the North Sea he was on his own. He headed for west Scotland and bailed out, descending almost on target. Wearing a Luftwaffe uniform, he told his farmer captors that his name was Lieutenant Horn. He asked to be taken to the Duke of Hamilton, commanding a fighter sector in the east of Scotland, who drove rapidly home. The duke interviewed Hess alone at first, then had his secretary telephone Winston Churchill, who was spending the weekend outside London at Ditchley. Churchill knew the duke, but could think of no reason why he should receive a call from him. He was watching a Marx Brothers film, the hour was late, and his confidant, Brendan Bracken, took the call. Bracken rushed back into the room with the news that Rudolf Hess was in Scotland, hoping for a peace meeting with King George VI, to be arranged through the duke.

If Hess's arrival was a surprise, his desire for an audience with the King of England was pure Marx Brothers. He had met the Duke of Hamilton in Germany during the peacetime years, and knew him to be Lord Steward, a personage, he reasoned, who would probably be dining every night with the King and have his private ear. Here was his channel of direct access to the top, and he looked to the duke to provide it. But, of course, the duke telephoned Churchill at Ditchley outside of London. The prime minister wandered outside the room where "the merry film clacked on," to learn the extent of damage being done by German bombers on this night. It was bad. He reentered the room where his hosts were sitting, and had Brendan Bracken ask that the duke travel to London the following day to tell him all about it. Hess was placed in the local jail, the first of many stops which were to take him to the Tower of London, and ultimately to life-long imprisonment in Berlin's Spandau prison. Churchill later termed Hess's mission a "completely devoted and frantic deed of lunatic benevolence. He came to us of his own free will, and, though without authority, had something of the quality of an envoy. He was a medical and not a criminal case, and should be so regarded."

On the night Rudolf Hess landed in Scotland, London was suffering the most deadly firebombing of the war. I was at the time an American war correspondent, based in London following the British Expeditionary Force's retreat from Dunkirk. Each night, from September 7 to November 3, German aircraft dropped bombs; in the twelve-month period from June 1940 to June 1941, civilian casualties in the city were 43,381 killed and 50,856 grievously injured. Sleepless nights were followed by dreadful mornings, with familiar streets transformed into jagged ruins. Everywhere was the smell of pulverized brick and mortar, as rescue squads dug for any who might yet be alive in the rubble. For me, daily broadcasts had to be made and regular copy had to be filed.

On this night, the Luftwaffe waited until nearly midnight to firebomb, the hour of low tide in the Thames, when fire hoses would suck nothing but mud. The first dreaded planes roared over the city about ten in the evening, carrying the high explosives that would rip up even more streets and destroy water mains; then came the aircraft to firebomb and set afire what they could. That night 3,000 Londoners died in their air raid shelters. The City of London was afire. The House of Commons was hit, and the docks along the Thames and three railway stations blazed until dawn.

The evening started languidly. I was at Number 10 Downing Street, a guest of the Churchill family. Mrs. Churchill, the three girls, Diana, Sarah, and Mary, and I feasted on a special treat, caviar sent to the prime minister from Josef Stalin. The pleasantly furnished drawing room looked out on a garden,
where recently there had dropped a German one-ton land mine, expedited by parachute so as to ensure maximum surface damage. Almost whimsically, the parachute had caught in a tree. The mine swung in the breeze until removed by the bomb disposal squad. On an earlier evening, in the winter, during dinner, Mr. Churchill had suddenly jumped up and shepherded everyone outside, across the street, to the bomb shelter—a premonition. Within minutes, a 500-pounder landed in the back garden, destroying the dining room. Had Winston Churchill been killed that night, and he certainly could have been, Hitler might well have won his struggle with Britain—with just one bomb. Churchill was indeed Mr. England; it was his foresight and determination that was holding the nation together until the United States could gear up and make up its mind to come to Britain’s assistance.

On this evening, as I visited with the family, the general tenor of the conversation was “When will the Yanks come?” It was not to be until after December 7, when the Japanese made their attack on Pearl Harbor. Still, the prime minister had talked on the telephone with President Roosevelt earlier, and the Churchill ladies reflected the optimism that their father exuded. I remember one of them remarking, “With the Yanks to back us up, we will make it all right.”

The drawing and dining rooms had been restored by that night of May 10, and back in its place on the mantelpiece was the miniature porcelain fish, touched for good luck by everyone entering the room. After a while the first wave of German planes approaching London was audible; then the terrifying crescendo of high explosives, followed by geyers of water shooting up from wrecked pipes in the streets, then a long silence. Mary and Sarah Churchill and I decided to leave Downing Street for the City of London. Both of the young ladies were in military uniform. We went to the Savoy Hotel, and while we were there firebombs came down. We went outside and walked up Fleet Street to within sight of St. Paul’s Cathedral, where we were stopped by police barricades. I made my own way, taking pictures, and interviewing some of those fighting the biggest fire to hit London since 1666.

Walking right into St. Paul’s, looking for the dean, I found him below ground in the crypt, reading Greek poetry by lamp-light, alongside the tomb of Admiral Lord Nelson. This elderly clergyman explained to me that he had descended there at the insistence of his staff. “It was different in World War I,” he sighed. “I was more agile then, and they had me kicking firebombs from the roof of St. Paul’s. They were being dropped from Zeppelins, don’t you know.”

When reports of Hess’s adventure reached Berlin, there was not much that Hitler and Bormann could do about it. Goebbels issued a statement that the deputy Fuehrer had been ill at the time. Then, days later, from headquarters came the announcement:

The former post of Deputy to the Fuehrer will henceforth bear the title of Party Chancellery. It is directly subordinate to me. It will be directed as heretofore by Party Comrade Martin Bormann.

(signed) Adolf Hitler

The wording was brief and low key, but it marked a giant leap forward for Martin Bormann. Henceforth, the entire party ministry would be under him. Every Nazi within Germany, in occupied Europe, and overseas was answerable directly to him. Within the year Hitler added to Bormann’s titles those of Secretary to the Fuehrer and Lieutenant General of the SS. Bormann’s power base was complete.

The Auslands-Organisation (A-O) of the NSDAP was a vast network of German nationals living in other countries. It was founded on May 1, 1931, in Hamburg, and according to its charter was to be a means of keeping Germans abroad abreast of the philosophy and political programs of Hitler's National Socialist Party. As war drew near, it became an intelligence network for the Third Reich. Its nominal leader in the late thirties and throughout the war was Ernst Wilhelm Bohle, state secretary of the Foreign Office. In reply to a question put to him concerning the identity of his immediate superior, Bohle replied, “Rudolf Hess, until 1941 when he went to England.” And, answering the logical follow-up question as to who had succeeded Hess, “Martin Bormann. Martin Bormann automatically succeeded Hess.”

Bohle denied that the A-O was ever used for intelligence
gathering, but all evidence was to the contrary. The speed with which information was obtained and sent back to the Foreign Office in Berlin exceeded even that of Himmler's overseas SS operation. In Holland, as one example, the chief A-O representative shared offices in The Hague with a German military intelligence unit, which consisted of a mere dozen professionals who knew their trade. When specific information about any town or hamlet in Holland was required, they asked a man named Bütting, the A-O leader of the German Citizens' Association in Holland, who got it for them quickly. This association filled two functions: espionage, along with its primary function of being a fifth-column agency.

The Auslands-Organisation published the *Year Book of the Foreign Organization*. In 1942 it wrote about "the enlargement and extension of the German Legation in Oslo and of the consulates at Bergen, Trondheim, Stavanger, Kristiansand, Hammerfest, Narvik and Kirkenes." This also meant "enlargement

German ambassador in Madrid, to the Foreign Office in Berlin, asked for permission to rent "a suitable isolated house for the possible installation of a second secret radio transmitter." Added on was, "Please submit to Gauleiter Bohle." All information gathered abroad by the Auslands-Organisation went to the SS, the Gestapo, the Abwehr, and the Foreign Office, for which it served as branches of the Foreign Intelligence Department in both hemispheres, including North and South America.

In the United States the German-American Bund received financial and other support from the Auslands-Organisation. The bund received instructions from the NSDAP on how to build their political organizations, how and where to hold mass meetings, and how to handle their propaganda. In 1938 the order was issued by Hitler prohibiting members of the German embassies and consulates from having further relations with the bund. Hitler felt that overt activities by this German-American organization would be detrimental to the future interests of the Third Reich in the United States. Regardless, embassies and
mented that the relationship between the leading manager of
the bank and the German Embassy and consulates was very
close: "The two leading men of the A.O, Lehman and Sieber,
headed individuals in the Dresdner Bank." Hence,
method of warfare would be unthinkable. The fact that since
the beginning of the war we could produce lead-tetraethyl is
entirely due to the circumstances that shortly before, the Ameri-
cans had presented us with the production plans complete with
new plants, mines, and power installations, with other millions going into new research facilities. Albert Speer was to become minister of armaments and war production in 1942, but it was the money largely supplied to Farben during these preparatory years, at Martin Bormann's suggestion to Hitler, that fueled the German war machine. So close had Farben become to the government that I.G. always knew in advance all invasions planned by Hitler. It was to supply the materials necessary to each conquest, and when a land had been overrun and subjugated, the Farben experts would handle the consolidation and organization of the industrial facilities as additional supply sources for the German armed forces.

As German troops swept across Europe and Hitler proclaimed his vision of a thousand-year Third Reich, I.G. Farben also dreamed of world empire. This was outlined with clarity in a document called *Neuordnung*, or "New Order," that was accompanied by a letter of transmittal to the Ministry of Economics. It declared that a new order for the chemical industry of the world should supplement Hitler's New Order. Therefore, the document stated, Farben was fitting future industrial plans into such a framework. It projected that the chemical industries of Europe, including those of Great Britain, should work for the Third Reich, and that the United States competition should be eliminated from world markets. The plan became effective only in Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Romania—western and southeastern Europe—where German armies were on hand to enforce it.

Still, this market was vast for the times. I.G. Farben was the major chemical firm on the Continent, and as each country fell to Germany its acquisitions of chemical and dyestuff companies were enormous. I.G. also increased its investments in these by RM 7 billion.

The close relationship of Farben to the Third Reich leadership was underscored in other ways. I.G.'s leading officials assisted in formulation and execution of economic policies of government; its president was a member of the Reichstag; its leading scientist was a chief assistant to Hermann Goering under the Four-Year Plan; its statisticians and economists prepared intelligence for the Nazi High Command; scores of its technicians were at any given time on loan to the air and war ministries. The importance placed by the Third Reich government on such industrial information is reflected in a letter dated August 3, 1940, to the German minister of economics from Dr. Max Ilgner, director of N.W.7, which stated:

Extensive information which we receive continuously from Chemnycos is indispensable for our observations of American conditions, especially with a view to the technical development, the possibilities for export, and the competition of foreign countries and companies, especially England. Moreover, this material is, since the beginning of the war, an important source of information for governmental, economic and military offices.

The contact men of N.W.7 throughout the world were called the I.G. Verbindungsmänner, the liaison officers between Farben back in Germany and the branches elsewhere. These I.G. Verbindungsmänner, as well as all other key Farben representatives working beyond the borders of the Third Reich, were members of the National Socialist German Workers Party. Their loyalty to Hitler and to the New Order was uncompromising, and on September 10, 1937, the commercial committee of the board of directors of I.G. Farben passed a resolution spelling out the importance placed on loyalty to the nation in selection of employees:

It is hereby understood that in no case will men be sent to our foreign companies who do not belong to the German Labor Front and who do not possess a positive attitude toward the New Order. The men who are to be sent should make it their special duty to represent National Socialist Germanhood. Especially are they to be instructed that upon entering our companies they are to make contact with the Ortsgruppe of the respective Landesgruppen [organizations of the Nazi Party within the various countries] and participate in their meetings as well as in the Labor Front. The sales departments should also see to it that an appropriate amount of National Socialist literature is given to them. The cooperation with the A.O. to work out a uniform plan for the purpose of detecting defects still existing in our foreign companies to the end that they can be eliminated.

So now Martin Bormann had at his command not only the Auslands-Organisation but also the I.G. Verbindungsmänner of
Farben, which could be counted on to heed his orders when it was time to disperse the commercial assets of the Third Reich. Farben, Krupp, Bayer, and other major German firms outside of Europe had long been accustomed to complying with orders from the Fuehrer’s headquarters—that is, Bormann—in Berlin. In Brazil, the agencies of the Bayer division furnished the equivalent of RM 3,639,343 to the German Embassy and to representatives of NSDAP traveling from Berlin to Brazil for espionage and propaganda purposes. In Spain, when the German Embassy wanted Spanish pesetas, I.G. Farben supplied them, being repaid by the home government in Berlin, a bookkeeping transaction. In Mexico City, the relationship between Farben and the German government was emphasized by a telegram dated September 2, 1939, to I.G. from the Cia. General de Anilinas, S.A., Mexico City. It read:

IN CASE OF WAR LEGATION ASKS FIRMS MEXICO TO LET THEM HAVE MONEY ON A LOAN BASIS Amounts shall be refunded by German government please authorize monthly payments pesos 10,000 on behalf of all I.G. agencies. Mexico press must be influenced.

A notation on the bottom of this telegram, once in Germany, read: “Board agreeable. Dr. Overhoff informed.” Such payments abroad before and during World War II were of importance to the German government in the acquisition of raw materials and in the financing of sabotage, espionage, and propaganda.

I.G. Latin American firms all maintained, unrecorded in their books, secret cash accounts in banks in the names of their top officials. These were used to receive and to disburse confidential payments; firms dealing with Farben wanted this business but certainly did not wish it known to British and United States economic authorities. Georg Wilhelm Marty, a German auditor, traveled with some frequency between Germany and South America during these war years to audit the books of the various branches of the Deutsche Sudamerikanische Bank. He was “on loan” from the Dresdner Bank, and explained in a sworn statement to investigators at the Nuremberg Trials (I took this from a document on record in the National Archives in Washington, D.C.) how this and other secret accounts were handled:

The Buenos Aires branch of the Deutsche Sudamerikanische Bank held an account for the German Embassy in that city, and also an account for the Buenos Aires Ortsgruppe of the NSDAP. Similar accounts were also held by the Deutsche Uberseeische Bank, the South American affiliate of the Deutsche Bank. With respect to the Ortsgruppe account, most South American branches of German firms made contributions three or four times a year of approximately 100,000 Argentine pesos. These payments involved transfers from the accounts of the various firms held with the Deutsche Sudamerikanische Bank to the Ortsgruppe account. The occasions were such events as the Winterhilfe Drive, Hitler’s birthday, etc. Among the most important clients of the bank were I.G. Farben, Schering, Vereinigte Stahlwerke, Merck, Siemens, A.E.G., Weiss, and Freitag. Among the uses made of the Ortsgruppe account were the transfer of portions of the monies contained therein to Germany for Winterhilfe and payments to the local NSDAP staff.

Payments into the Embassy account in the Buenos Aires branch were made from deposits of the Foreign Office in the Berlin office of the Deutsche Sudamerikanische Bank. Money to the Embassy account were also transferred from Germany to Argentina indirectly via Mexico or Switzerland.

Between 30 and 40 percent of the German employees of the Deutsche Sudamerikanische Bank branch in Buenos Aires were members of the NSDAP.

Martin Bormann now had a vast overseas financial and commercial network to do his bidding. It was a sturdy beginning, and it was to grow in strength and numbers in the next two years as he organized all German corporations and banks into his safe haven program of flight capital.