

Martin Bormann and Adolf Hitler on the Berghof Terrace (1942)

Abstract

As head of the Reich Chancellery, Martin Bormann (1900–1945) was one of the most influential figures in the Nazi regime, because he decided who had access to the increasingly reclusive Hitler. Bormann had joined the NSDAP back in 1927 and quickly rose through the ranks. In 1933, he was appointed Reich Leader and served as chief of staff to Rudolf Heß, Hitler's deputy. Bormann made himself indispensable, especially in financial matters. For example, it was he who had created the "Adolf Hitler Fund for German Business," which provided the NSDAP with a lucrative source of financing. The extent to which Bormann enjoyed Hitler's confidence is made clear, for example, by the fact that Hitler entrusted him with the management of his own private assets, including the Berghof on the Obersalzberg near Berchtesgaden, which can be seen in this photo. In May 1941, two days after Heß flew to Glasgow to negotiate a peace agreement with the British, Bormann succeeded him as head of the Party Chancellery. From then on, all party business passed through Bormann, who completely controlled access to Hitler and thus practically became the second most important man in the government. He was named "Secretary to the Führer" in 1943, but at that point his position was actually closer to Hitler's deputy. To the very end, Bormann ignored the hopeless military situation, mobilized the People's Militia [*Volkssturm*] as a last-ditch form of resistance, and remained at Hitler's side in the "Führerbunker" in Berlin until the latter committed suicide. Bormann then tried to flee Berlin and was considered missing for a long time. At the Nuremberg Trials, he was condemned to death in absentia. In 1973, his body was accidentally found during excavation work in Berlin and identified. The autopsy revealed that he and Hitler's last personal physician, Ludwig Stumpfegger, had committed suicide on May 2, 1945, by biting into cyanide capsules.

Source



Source: Adolf Hitler and Martin Bormann on the terrace of the Berghof.
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