

= Hedwig Potthast =

Hedwig Potthast (5 February 1912 ? 1997) was the private secretary and mistress of Reichsführer @-@ SS Heinrich Himmler with whom she had two children .

Born in 1912 , Potthast began as Himmler 's secretary in 1936 and by 1938 she was his lover . She resigned from her duties in 1941 , and subsequently had two children with Himmler , a boy and a girl . After the war , Potthast married and lived out the rest of her life outside the public eye . In post @-@ war interviews , she refrained from answering questions about Himmler 's involvement in war crimes committed by the Nazis and her own knowledge of them . She died in 1997 .

= = Biography = =

= = = Early life = = =

Hedwig Potthast was born on 5 February 1912 in Cologne , North Rhine @-@ Westphalia as the daughter of a local businessman . After her final Abitur exams at secondary school , she trained as a secretary qualified in foreign languages . At the end of her training in 1928 , Potthast worked in Koblenz .

= = = Relationship with Himmler = = =

Through Kurt Baron von Schröder , one of the founders of the Freundeskreis der Wirtschaft (" Circle of Friends of the Economy ") , she met Reichsführer @-@ SS Heinrich Himmler . In 1934 , she was employed at Gestapo headquarters at Prinz @-@ Albrecht @-@ Straße in Berlin . Then from early 1936 to early 1941 , Potthast was Himmler 's private secretary , and in this function was particularly responsible for Himmler 's sponsorship and giving of awards .

Himmler and Potthast confessed their love for each other at Christmastime in 1938 . At first they tried to keep it platonic , but they fell into an adulterous relationship . Himmler 's wife since 1928 and mother of their daughter , Margarete Himmler , found out about Himmler 's relationship with Potthast at some time in February 1941 . She felt humiliated and bitter , and Potthast 's parents rejected the extramarital relationship . Potthast first took up residence in Grunewald and from 1943 she lived in Brückentin , near the estate of Oswald Pohl , because she was a friend of his wife , Eleonore . Lina Heydrich , wife of Himmler 's right @-@ hand man Reinhard Heydrich , and Gerda Bormann , spouse of Martin Bormann , were also counted among her friends . Later she lived in Berchtesgaden , Bavaria .

Potthast had two children with Himmler . Helge , a son born 15 February 1942 in the Hohenlychen Sanatorium , and Nanette @-@ Dorothea , a daughter born 20 July 1944 in Berchtesgaden . That same year , Himmler borrowed 80 @,@ 000 Reichmarks from the Nazi Party Chancellery and had a house built for Potthast near Berchtesgaden .

Little is known about the overall relationship between Himmler and Potthast . The couple most likely saw each other only rarely due to Himmler 's activity in his numerous offices . Presumably , neither Potthast nor Himmler 's wife were informed of his " secret work " . Potthast 's relationship with Himmler ended during the spring of 1945 , ? they met for the last time in mid @-@ March 1945 , after which they shared daily telephone calls up until 19 April 1945 .

= = = Post @-@ war = = =

When World War II in Europe ended , Potthast was in Achensee , Austria and , after learning of the death of Himmler on the radio on 23 May 1945 , went into hiding , living temporarily with Eleonore Pohl in Rosenheim , Upper Bavaria . In June / July 1945 , she was arrested there by members of the U.S. Army and interrogated for several days in Munich . Margarete and Himmler 's daughter , Gudrun Burwitz , did not learn of her half @-@ siblings until after the war . When she tried to make

contact with them , Potthast refused . She lived in Theissendorf and kept in contact with the family of Himmler 's older brother , Gebhard , as well as Himmler 's former close confidant , Karl Wolff , until the 1950s .

= = = Final years = = =

Potthast later remarried and took on her new husband 's name . Her son struggled with ailments throughout his life and stayed with her ; her daughter became a physician . In a 1987 interview with former Der Spiegel editor Peter @-@ Ferdinand Koch , Potthast remained silent about Himmler 's responsibility for Nazi war crimes . She died in 1997 , aged 85 , in Baden @-@ Baden , Baden @-@ Württemberg .

= = = Printed = = =

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