



Rudolf Hess's daring, although fruitless, flight for peace to Britain in May 1941 was one of the most dramatic episodes of World War II. Hess was a courageous and genuine idealist, buoyed with hope for a last-minute reconciliation between Great Britain and Germany. Hess is shown, head in hand, in a 1946 photo at the Nuremberg International War Crimes Tribunal, as the verdict is read. Hess, a prisoner of peace, was held in solitary confinement for much of the remainder of his life, until his murder by one of his guards, at the age of 93, on August 17, 1987.

THE TRAGEDY OF RUDOLF HESS

WHAT MANNER OF MAN WAS HE?

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The life of Rudolf Hess constitutes one of the glaring examples of myth within the study of World War II and beyond. In the orgy of demonization that brought on and sustained World War I and its aftermath, Rudolf Hess's memory needed to be effaced from the earth. His mission to Britain for peace, according to the Nuremberg Trials, was a "war crime" for which Hess needed to be punished. Hess was sentenced on October 1, 1946 to life imprisonment. He was, without question, a sympathetic character, repelled by war and violence and, most famously, sought a just and lasting peace with Great Britain. As a result, he landed in prison for the rest of his long life, and was murdered in the end.

The purpose of this essay is to explore the personality of Hess in relation to his famous mission to Britain. His letters to his wife are available to the public, and many of them have been published in a book, *Prisoner of Peace* (abbreviated PP, Britons Publishing, London, 1954), edited by George Pile with commentary by Meyrick Booth, Ph.D. The very fact that a National Socialist could ever be a sympathetic character is a thought of the utmost subversiveness. Another useful book is that by his son, Wolf Rudiger Hess, *My Father Rudolf Hess* (Star, 1984, abbreviated by FRH), as well as James Leasor's *Uninvited Envoy* (McGraw-Hill, 1962) and David Irving's *Hess: The Missing Years 1941-1945* (Macmillan, 1987).

As war clouds loomed over Europe in the late 1930s and into the 1940s, Adolf Hitler was the last man who wanted war. A war with Britain¹ would harm a great fellow Germanic empire (at least in Hitler's eyes), not to mention divert attention from the true enemy of Europe, Stalin's Soviet Union. Germany had refrained from destroying the British at Dunkirk around the same time, betraying a solidly conciliatory line toward the United Kingdom.

Wolf Hess, Rudolf's son, is vacillating when it comes to the relation of Hitler to Hess on peace with Britain. He believes that Hitler knew of Hess's famous flight to meet with Britain's government over the situation in Europe; but Hess the younger makes it clear that Hitler had his misgivings about the probability of Hess's flight being a success (FRH 66-67). Rudolf Hess, himself, writes, however, on May 8, 1947, that, concerning his planned flight to Scotland to meet with the British, Hitler "replied that he knew me, and when I got

my teeth into anything of this sort I brought to bear such devotion and concentration that in this case—with all the technical and mathematical knowledge I had—he was convinced that I would get there all right" (PP 71). The mission being a success, of course, was another matter.

Upon landing on Scottish soil, Hess was promptly arrested and was eventually visited by major players in British politics, Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick (who once worked at the English embassy in Berlin) and the duke of Hamilton (a Conservative member of the House of Lords), the latter having informed Prime Minister Winston Churchill that Hess had landed in Britain, while Churchill himself made it clear that he would rather watch the Marx brothers in the prime minister's movie theater (FRH 98). Upon meeting these two, Hess launched into the purpose of his mission, to spell out Germany's case for peace between the two countries. Hess explained Germany's position with regard to Austria, going as far back as World War I. Then, Hess made his

case that only by German assistance against the Soviets could Britain hold on to its empire; and that war between the two countries would be destructive for European culture as a whole (FRH 112). Finally, Hess proposed a peace plan that divided up the world into spheres of interest between Germany and Britain.

Churchill remarked in response to Hess's visit: "[L]ike other Nazi leaders, this man is potentially a war criminal, and he and his confederates may well be declared outlaws at the close of the war. In this case his repentance would stand him in good stead." Churchill wrote this in his *The Second World War* (quoted from *Prisoner of Peace*, pg. 117). Kirkpatrick summed up Hess's position thus:

1. The Germans were reckoning on American intervention and were not afraid of this. They know everything about American aircraft production and the quality of the aircraft. Germany, the German leaders felt, could produce more than Britain and America together.
2. Germany had no designs on Ameri-

ca. The so-called German menace was a ridiculous invention of the imagination. Hitler's interests were European.

3. If we were to make peace now, America would be furious. In fact, America wanted to inherit the British empire.

(Quoted in FRH 123, originally in the form of a Nuremberg document, entitled "Record of a Conversation with Herr Hess on May 15th 1941.")

Generally speaking, the British view of the matter was that Hess, though acting alone, acted through the authority of Hitler and represented his fundamental ideas. A war with Russia would take all the energy of the Reich, and with the possibility of American intervention, war with Britain would be suicidal for Germany. Hess was viewed as rather naive, and Churchill did not believe him to represent any significant set of opinions of the German leadership. The notion of the "spheres of influence" idea was already dealt with and rejected before the outbreak of hostilities, i.e., it was nothing new. Hess was viewed, in general, as a desperate character who wished, against all hope, to save both the Reich and Britain, but also as one who did not understand the British (FRH 125).

There is little doubt today that the British were expecting Hess's arrival. Previously it had been merely speculation. Recently a group of researchers published some preliminary findings that prove the British purposely sent officers to Scotland previous to the flight specifically to arrest

Hess. Thanks to scholars, published by the Jeffery Simmons Literary Agency, who maintain the rudolphhess.com site, the contents of a 1941 BBC memorandum have been disclosed, to a young soldier, that claims, among other things: "payment of expenses incurred by you on your visit to Broadcasting House, Glasgow, on Tuesday, May 13th, when you gave an interview to us on the capture of Rudolf Hess."

Previously, it was thought that a local farm family had alerted the Home Guard concerning Hess's arrival (or someone who they thought looked an awful lot like Hess); now, however, it is clear that Hess's visit was well known previous to the flight. Home Guard units did not meet Hess until he was sitting in a farmhouse nearby, already guarded by regular infantry.

In spite of Hess's occasional warnings that German military power was capable of starving out a surrounded island of Britain, Churchill counted on American involvement to enable Britain to win any war against Germany. The famous British belief of their inherent right to rule the world made it impossible that Britain could ever share that right with the upstart Germans. To demonstrate the attitude of the British at this time, the former chief editor of *The Times* had made this comment about elite British opinion in the early 1940s: "No peace with the German people until it throws out and punishes the Nazis. . . . [a division of the country] either into the former states or into province[s]

made up of the former states" (quoted in Hess, 132). Britain wanted war because they believed they could win it, with American help, of course.

The reality of the Hess case is that he flew to Britain with the intention of opening up peace talks with the British. Of course, there were sound economic and political reasons for this. He hoped that his contact, the duke of Hamilton, would assist him in setting up negotiations with the British government. But, as already discussed, the British were uninterested in sharing any power with the Germans. The result was that Hess never experienced freedom again, and, importantly, that such a sympathetic character such as Hess could never be allowed to disrupt the endless torrent of anti-German propaganda that poured from London. That Hess was a clear peacemaker was no doubt a living threat to the entire British propaganda effort, an effort that was vital to any conduct of war with Germany.

The purpose of this essay is not to provide the details of Hess's flight, but rather to explore the character of the man who was condemned for "war crimes" committed while sitting in prison for the duration of the war. His letters in the 1940s (from England, before Nuremberg) show a jovial countenance, one almost without worry concerning his condition. Indeed, Hess really did not understand the British. It is questionable if Hess himself was aware of what had happened. His amnesia, as David Irving has written, was faked for tactical reasons. He admits this in his 1947 account of what happened to him on the flight: "When I was in England, playing the part of a man who had lost his memory, I learned many things by heart as a means of saving myself from the fate which I was carefully pretending to have suffered. . . ." (PP 38.) He told his wife that he had lost his memory in a letter dated January 15, 1944, knowing full well the censors would see it.

Hess remained optimistic. He viewed the coming defeat of Germany with some hope for the future: "History is not ended. It will sooner or later take up the threads apparently broken off forever and knit them together in a new pattern." (PP 49, letter dated June 18, 1945.) Hess was simply glad to have been a part of the early days of German resurgence after the humiliations of Versailles. Immediately after his capture, Hess had written on the fate of mankind: "Nevertheless, I am convinced that God will sometime really come to us, conquer Lucifer and bring peace to tortured



Above, Hess in France in 1940. Always respectful of any nation's military sacrifices, Hess here visits a French soldiers' cemetery.

humanity.” (July 1947, PP 38.) Here, Hess clearly shows his faith in history and the eventual victory of peace over war.

As the Nuremberg trials heated up, Hess was clearly becoming more anxious. Mostly, he was worried about the propaganda in the world’s major media more than anything else. He worried quite a bit about his son. Near the end of the trials, Hess was thinking quite clearly:

I do not propose to argue about charges that are concerned with the internal affairs of Germany, with which foreigners have no right to interfere. I make no complaints about statements, the aim of which is to discredit and dishonor myself and the entire German people. I regard such statements coming from enemies as confirmations of our honor. It has been my privilege to serve for many years under the greatest son to whom my people has given birth in its thousand years of history. Even if it were possible for me to do so, I would never wish to wipe this period of service out of my life. It fills me with happiness to know that I did my duty toward my people. . . . I regret nothing. Whatever men may do to me, the day will come when I will stand before the judgment seat of the Eternal: to Him I will give an account of my actions, and I know that He will pronounce me innocent. (Dated August 31, 1946, PP 58.)

To a great degree, this statement shows Hess’s refusal to adjust to the new conditions after the war. Hess’s wife had written previously to him: “. . . [M]any of our men are lacking in a background of concrete knowledge of the conditions which exist in the world of today, and thus live in a world which no longer exists and will never again exist in that form.” (Dated May 7, 1946, PP 54.) The whole idea of World War II, the destruction of Germany and the coming New World Order (which National Socialism knew quite a bit about) all seem to be lost on Hess. Indeed, he reiterates, in no uncertain terms, his commitment to National Socialism and the justice of his actions, but the British purpose in World War II was to eliminate Germany from the earth as a power of any significance. This is why they believed themselves to be able to judge Germany’s “internal affairs.” Germany had no right to any internal affairs at all. She was a property of the New World Order. Hess was from a different world; to adjust to a completely reversed global political universe, where Josef Stalin can stand in moral judgment of anyone, is a task indeed beyond even great men.

The judgment of Nuremberg defies the imagination. To allow Hess to go free would have meant to allow him to speak publicly about National Socialism and Germany’s



This is Rudolf Hess during World War I, wherein he was a fighter pilot.

role in the war. Hess was convicted of “crimes” which are familiar to nationalists and Revisionists today. Basically, the kangaroo court of Nuremberg convicted Hess of something like knowing that Hitler was aggressive, and thus Hess is guilty of aggression against Poland, Austria and Czechoslovakia. Because Hess gave “public approval” of Hitler’s invasion of these countries (especially Austria), Hess was found guilty by the court and sentenced to life in prison.

The destruction of the German nation was far from merely an attempt to destroy a possible rival, but to destroy the only threat the left ever had in Europe in the 20th century; a barrier to the creation of a world superstate under British ruling class domination. Nuremberg, particularly in

“Monumental hypocrisy” is far too weak a term to describe the crass and criminal aggressiveness of the American/Zionist ruling plutocracy since Nuremberg. If American intervention into the domestic affairs of more than 100 sovereign nations, not to mention military invasions of Korea, Vietnam, Iraq and Serbia, does not convict American leaders of “waging aggressive war” far more than German leaders ever dreamt, we live with Alice behind the looking-glass.—Ed.

the Hess case, is the real United Nations Charter. Interestingly, Hess was painfully aware of what the reorganization of Germany would, ideologically speaking, have in store when he wrote on May 26, 1947: “. . . I assume that as part of the ‘reeducation program,’ the German woman will be liberated from masculine tyranny, and her situation in life brought into line with that of American women[.]” In other words, the reorganization of Germany was to be totalitarian, affecting all aspects of German life. At the end of December in 1946, Hess wrote that “from the crucible of these years we shall all emerge purified by fire.”

To show the condescending nature of the treatment of Germany after the war, one need look no farther than I.R. Rees’s *The Case of Rudolf Hess*, where he writes in typical disdain for Hess (in this case, concerning his marriage) and, by extension, all Germany:

The relationship between Hess and his wife—a simple girl belonging to a social stratum somewhat lower than his own—was typical. She seems, on principle, to have been excluded from all public and even party offices. . . . She was an unessential portion of his private life, within the limits of which he could be amiable and considerate. It was the marriage of a completely egocentric person—it was typically German.

Even the most cursory analysis of Hess's letters to his wife disprove this typical view of Germans after World War II; and, like Churchill's comment earlier, show the world's view of things German and German people. Hess writes to his wife, Ilse, on June 26, 1947: "Your last letter made me more concerned for your plight—especially because of the vast assortment of the all-too-feminine which crowds in upon my little wife, herself so capable and preferring men's serious conversation!" This "irrelevant" woman was arrested in 1947 for the horrific crime of being Hess's wife.

As he was being transferred to Spandau Prison in Germany, Hess wrote on July 15, 1947:

I must admit, however, that this is very difficult for you, since your belief in the inevitability of fate is not so absolute and unshakable as mine, and thus your attitude toward the question of my removal must be fundamentally different. But, believe me, neither ministers with special powers, arbitrary judges, nor Allied courts of Russian commissars can make our fate. That belongs solely to ourselves—to accept it for what it is, and through acceptance shape it." (PP 91.)

Philosophically, Hess's thinking of Frederick the Great might well apply to him: "[W]hen things went well, he was an Epi-

curian; but when misfortune threatened, he became a Stoic, as once he smilingly admitted to his sister, the countess of Bayreuth. Not a bad system! Myself, I am a Stoic in the first place. (November 23, 1947, PP 96.)

Throughout Hess's prison correspondence he grapples with questions of religion, however briefly. In his letter of October 3, 1948, Hess struggles between orthodox Christian theology and gnosticism. First, he writes that,

I find it impossible to avoid the belief that, side by side with God, there must exist something that is an opposite pole, such as is commonly called the devil. This seems all the more likely when one reflects that throughout the whole of existence we find polarity. . . . Every now and then the devil gets the better of things—or let us say God allows him to do so—as with Mephistopheles in *Faust*.

Of course, if God allows the devil to do things, then he does not exist "side by side" with God, but beneath Him. Clearly, Hess wrestled with such questions while living out a life sentence, the emotional nature of the issue coming to the fore with him writing such things as: "Is this so in order to purify human beings, to cause them to develop inward life?"

His humor was always maintained, however, as seen in this comment concern-

ing the censoring and intercepting of the mail by the occupation authorities in Germany: "Somewhere, somebody must be really ill. For not only did your letter of March 22 reach me all right, but also it got here before the end of the month. This is the first time that two letters have reached me, one after the other, but I am quite sure that the responsible person will soon be better again." (Dated April 10, 1949.)

This is just a brief sample of some of Hess's thoughts during the early years of his imprisonment, an imprisonment that cannot be justified with even the most tortured use of human reasoning and language. It reveals a troubled but still optimistic personality, one grasping for meaning behind what had happened to him and to Germany generally. It shows a tremendous ability to get to the root of the matters before him, understanding, with a bit of trouble, the future for Europe and Germany specifically. Hess, at least during this period, never lost his hope for a resurrected Europe and his belief that these sorts of things happen for a reason.

What is particularly amazing is that, even when Hess reached his old age in the 1970s, he was still not released, though amnesty at that age was not uncommon. Other "lifers" from the Third Reich such as Neurath, Raeder and Funk had been released in the late 1950s. Speer and Schirach were released in 1966. Somehow, however, this sort of clemency did not apply to Hess. After 1966, Hess languished alone in prison. Even after his stroke in 1978, and his partial blindness, the Allied powers still refused to release Hess from his solitary confinement. Outside of sheer cruelty, it would seem that there would have to be some quite powerful political reason why Hess needed to rot in jail. One simple notion is that Hess could be used to put a sympathetic face on National Socialism. The very existence of Hess is a reminder that Britain, not Germany, wanted a global war and massive loss of life. Hess reminds the world that peace overtures came from National Socialists, not the English ruling class. The entire 20th-century mythology of World War II might come crumbling down with the release of Hess and any sort of popular interest in his story. For, most certainly, politics in the early 21st century are still highly conditioned by the myths of World War II. Without them, the system loses its legitimacy. Hess's son writes: "The only reason that Hess could think of to account for his not being released, in spite of serious state of health, was that the custodial powers



Hess here displays one of his many interests. Homeopathy was a major thrust of the Third Reich's health policies, rejecting the pharmaceutically based drug culture of modern Europe and America. Hess is pictured delivering an address at the International Conference on Homeopathy in Berlin, 1938.



Rudolf Hess flew to Britain, crash-landing his Messerschmitt 110 fighter in Scotland in 1941 (he bailed out with a parachute). Seen here is the crashed plane. He wanted to discuss peace with British leaders on behalf of Adolf Hitler, but instead was treated like a criminal, immediately arrested and held incommunicado for 46 years.

feared he knew things which should not be revealed to the public.” (FRH 327.) Scholars at the aforementioned Hess web site have also published their theory that Hess was imprisoned for so long (partially due to the insistence of the USSR), because Germany had learned about the true perpetrators of the massacre at Katyn as early as 1940. The question the authors ask is, “Did Rudolph [*sic*] Hess bring absolute evidence on the Katyn massacres with him on his flight to Scotland on [May 10,] 1941?”

There is no definitive proof as yet, but this theory does explain why Hess was treated differently from the other prisoners, why he was forbidden to read anything pertaining to Germany and why the Soviets were so adamant about Hess remaining in prison even as they permitted other Nazi officials to be set free from the 1960s to the 1980s. Of course, the Allies could not maintain the charade that they were fighting for truth and justice against the evil Nazis while they themselves were active in either perpetrating or covering up undeniable war crimes. This might well have made Hess somewhat inconvenient for them.

By 1982 Hess had had two heart attacks

and was suffering from severe circulatory problems; yet he was not admitted to any hospital. In Spandau, Hess was not permitted to read anything having to do with Germany or the Third Reich, and no historical material, of any sort, was permitted to reach Hess that had anything to do with German politics whatsoever, especially anything pertaining to National Socialism. No visitors were permitted to broach the subject either, though Hess was only permitted to receive one or two visitors a year. This seems a strange policy to maintain in the early 1980s, when Hess was reaching the age of 90.

In his 90s, Hess lived out his last years reading occasionally (but the guard, after a certain time, would take his glasses away so he could no longer be the subversive he was by reading too much). A coffin awaited him in the basement of the prison. Hess’s personal attendant testified that Hess was brutally murdered this late in life, shortly before Spandau Prison was closed and torn down in 1987 and a shopping mall erected in its place. Inexplicably, the corpse of the prisoner identified as “Rudolf Hess” did not show several scars Hess had received in World War I, suggesting that the prisoner

was not Hess after all—though that is hard to believe, for both his wife and son were easily able to identify him and had no suspicions that the man was an impostor. Also it is difficult to imagine any possible reason for such a substitution, so we can only conclude that the mystery of the missing scars is an unsolved one.

Rudolf Hess was found strangled in his cell—though, given the position in which he was found, and other incongruous facts of the death, it is clear Hess could not have committed suicide, as is claimed by the establishment. Hess remains a great tragedy, a victim of Allied cover-ups and communist hatred. He will always be remembered by men of decency as an example for patriots and lovers of peace around the world. ♦

FOOTNOTES

¹(Britain being a Germanic nation, if one disregards the Kelts, who are themselves closely related to the Germanic peoples. The English language is classified as a Germanic tongue, although a large part of the vocabulary is derived from French, Latin and other non-Germanic languages.—Ed.)