

Hess: The Missing Years.

The International Campaign for Real History



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David Irving's famous biography:

Hess: The Missing Years

[never published in the United States]

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[Reviews] [History of the writing of the book] [Jacket blurb] [[How to order Mr Irving's Books](#)] [[Help pay for these downloads](#)] [[inform us of any problems with this download](#)]

Right: The German edition is now also available as a free download, fully illustrated. The German documents are reproduced in the original German, not re-translated from the English. The download file ([Hess_deutsch.zip](#)) is a compressed PDF file (2.6MB). Again, thanks are due to Linda Nelson of Chicago for preparing this edition for the Internet.

David Irving recalls something of the history of this book: □

WHILE researching in the Federal Records Center in Suitland, Maryland, in the early 1980s with a highly capable English assistant, **Susanna Scott-Gall**, I took to trawling "from left to right" through hundreds of boxes of US intelligence papers. This took me to the Intelligence files collected for the Nuremberg Trials of Major War Criminals, and in one of these boxes of documents we came across anonymous notebooks, of British Army origin (all printed "HMSO" on the cover) but with no other identification.

They contained the medical records on some unidentified individual, referred to only as "Z", commencing in June 1941 and ending in October 1945. It did not take much brainwork to deduce that Z was none other than Hitler's deputy, **Rudolf Hess**, who had flown to Scotland in May 1941 on an abortive peace mission. Mr **Winston Churchill** had ordered him detained as his own personal prisoner, and he was held in a number of different locations, including the Tower of London and a mental hospital in Wales, until he was flown to Nuremberg to be put on trial in 1945.

These diaries became the backbone of this book project. Susanna shortly found in the Imperial War Museum's archives the private handwritten diary kept by the commandant of Mytchett Place, the first secret mansion in which Hess was held, near Aldershot -- every room was bugged with highly sensitive microphones, and the recordings minutely transcribed for Intelligence purposes.

The story that emerged from these and other papers that I collected over the next two years was a tragic one: Hess had made his brave lone flight to Scotland, armed only with a photo of his four year old boy **Wolf-Rüdiger Hess**, whom he would not see again for the next 25 years, and a letter to HM **King George VI** setting out the very generous peace offer that Hitler wished to bring to the attention of the British people. Churchill, probably aware of the impending flight, had Hess intercepted and it is not known whether the letter ever reached the King (there are grounds to believe that it did).

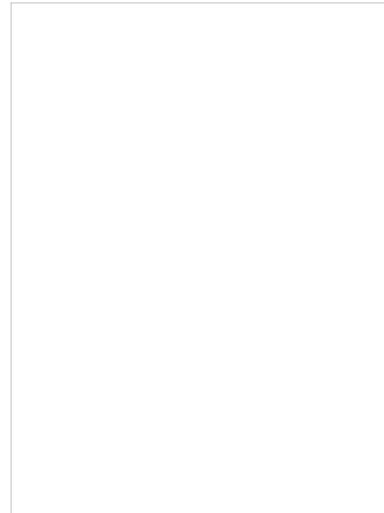
Disturbed by the failure of his peace mission, Hess became a victim of his deep, latent schizophrenia, particularly after a botched attempt at interrogating him with truth drugs in 1944.

THE history of the book is scarcely less adventurous. I completed it in March 1987 in Key West, Florida, and flew to New York with the manuscript the next day. When I checked out of the Algonquin Hotel the following morning, the driver of a cab standing outside the hotel volunteered to carry us to La Guardia airport. I carried the cases outside, and left the cabby to load the car.

When I came out the cabby was scratching his head -- one case had just vanished into thin air. "That way," shouted a helpful bystander who had been leaning against the wall: "He ran off with it that way," I charged off in the direction that he pointed, westwards, down the street. But the thief had vanished, and so had my case; and so too, when I returned, had the "bystander" who had been his accomplice.

The completed *Hess* manuscript was in the stolen bag: I would never rewrite it, that I knew. It was my lost masterpiece.

My despair was short-lived. Susanna, the perfect personal assistant in every way, announced that she had made a Xerox copy only two days earlier, and had already mailed it safely to the Austrian publisher in Graz who was to publish a German-language edition (*right*).



For commercial reasons, my editor at Macmillan Ltd **Adam Sisman**, elected to hold back the book's release until whenever Hess died in Spandau jail: "We will have it typeset and ready to launch by then," he promised.

Hess died, strangled, a few weeks later, in August 1987, after serving forty-six years of his life sentence -- the last twenty-two of them in solitary confinement. I heard the news of the prisoner's death on a Black cab's radio as I returned from Heathrow.

For days the British newspaper headlines were full of the mystery of how Hitler's deputy had died.

It now turned out that Macmillan had forgotten to have the book edited or typeset. Days passed, then weeks. The precious moment was lost, as too were the twelve proof copies of the book that Macmillan's meanwhile sent over to publishers in America. Penny-pinching like the worst of their kind, these canny publishers had made a habit of shipping heavy packages over to Hilversum, Holland, in a monthly container for onward mailing to the USA, since their accountants had learned that mailing parcels from Holland was marginally cheaper.

The container was lost, and Macmillan never found out until a year later. For twelve months they -- and I -- pondered the mystery of why no US publisher had offered for my *Hess: The Missing Years*. They kept the secret from me.

Adam Sisman confessed the truth to me years later. By the time Macmillan's realized their blunder, the hour had passed and Rudolf Hess was, well, history. *Hess: The Missing Years* became (like [Uprising](#)) one of my only books which did not appear in the United States: and of course *Goebbels. Mastermind of the Third Reich* , but that is [another story](#). □

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□ [Our Rudolf Hess index](#)

Jacket text (the "blurb")

text follows

David Irving has been called 'one of Britain's foremost historians' by *The Times*. He is the author of *The Trail of the Fox*, *The Destruction of Dresden*, and other works of contemporary history. □

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