

THE FACTS ABOUT RUDOLF HESS

Hess flew to Great Britain in a Me. 110, from which he landed by parachute in the evening of the 10th May, 1941, at Eaglesham in Scotland. He was wearing the uniform of a captain in the German Air Force. He gave his name as Alfred Horn and stated to the Home Guard and the Police that he was on a "special mission" to see the Duke of Hamilton, and that he had intended to land at Dungavel, 12 miles distant from the spot where he landed.

The prisoner was taken to Maryhill Barracks and amongst his possessions were found photographs of himself and of a small boy, also the visiting cards of Dr. Karl Haushofer and Dr. Albrecht Haushofer, his son. No other documents or identifications were found on the prisoner.

On Sunday, the 11th May, at 10 a.m., Wing-Commander the Duke of Hamilton arrived at Maryhill Barracks and visited the prisoner with the interrogating officer and the Military Officer on guard.

At the prisoner's request the latter two officers withdrew. He then stated to the Wing-Commander that the latter had lunched in his house in Berlin at the time of the Olympic games in 1936 and added: "I am Rudolf Hess". The Wing-Commander had no recollection of the prisoner and was not aware that he had ever seen or met Rudolf Hess.

The prisoner then proceeded: "I am on a mission of humanity. The Führer does not want to defeat England and wants to stop fighting". His friend Haushofer, he stated, had told him that the Wing-Commander was an Englishman who would understand his point of view. He had tried to arrange a meeting in Lisbon. He had three times before tried to fly to Dungavel, the first time being in December 1940, but had been turned back by weather or various other reasons.

He did not want to come during the time of British successes in Libya lest it should appear that it was the weakness of Germany which prompted the flight, but that now Germany had had some success there he was glad to come.

He stressed that his presence showed his sincerity and the German willingness for peace.

His main theme was that Hitler was convinced that Germany would win sooner or later; that he (the prisoner) wanted to stop the unnecessary slaughter. He asked the Wing-Commander to get together the leading members of his party to talk over things with a view to making peace proposals. He then stated that he could tell him what the Führer's peace terms would be. The Wing-Commander pointed out that there was now only one party in Great Britain.

The Wing-Commander immediately flew to London and reported this conversation, stating that, though he could not be sure, he believed the prisoner was, in fact, Rudolf Hess.

Mr. Kirkpatrick of the Foreign Office, who had during the period of his official duties in Berlin before the war become acquainted with Hess, was at once flown up to Scotland to identify the prisoner. He had three interviews, on the 13th, 14th and 15th May. At the first of these he confirmed that the prisoner was Rudolf Hess.

During these interviews Hess further elaborated the object of his visit. He stressed the enormous power of Germany in the air and in U-boats, which latter, he stated, would grow much greater. He affirmed the certainty of England's defeat by blockade, if not very quickly, in the course of two or three years.

He expressed his horror at the prospect of the prolongation of the struggle. He had come, he said, without the knowledge of the Führer to convince responsible persons that, since England could not win, the wisest course was to make peace at once.

He gave his word of honour that the Führer had never entertained any designs against the British Empire, nor had he ever aspired to world domination. The Führer would sincerely

regret the collapse of the British Empire. Hitler had declared to him as recently as the 3rd May that he had no oppressive demands to make on England.

The solution which Hess put forward was as follows:-

- (i) That Germany should be given a free hand in Europe.
- (ii) That England should have a free hand in the British Empire, except that the ex-German colonies should be returned to Germany.
- (iii) That Russia should be included in Asia, but that Germany had certain demands to make of Russia which would have to be satisfied either by negotiation or as the result of war. There was, however, no truth in the rumours that the Führer contemplated an early attack on Russia.
- (iv) That the British should evacuate Iraq.
- (v) The peace agreement would have to contain a provision for the reciprocal indemnification of British and German Nationals, whose property had been expropriated as the result of war.
- (vi) The proposal could only be considered on the understanding that it was negotiated by Germany with an English Government other than the present British Government. Mr. Churchill, who had planned the war since 1936, and his colleagues, who had lent themselves to his war policy, were not persons with whom the Führer would negotiate.

Hess concluded by emphasising that the Führer really wanted a permanent understanding with Great Britain on a basis which preserved the British Empire intact. His own flight was intended to give Great Britain a chance of opening conversations without loss of prestige. If this chance were to be rejected it would be the Führer's duty to destroy Great Britain utterly and to keep the country after the war in a state of permanent subjection.

These so-called "terms" were restated by Hess in a signed document dated the 10th June. The only new point made in this document was the provision that a simultaneous armistice and peace must be concluded with Italy.

It was, throughout, made clear to Hess that there was no question whatever of any talks or negotiations of any kind taking place with Hitler or his Government.

Hess has been dealt with as a prisoner of war since his arrival in this country and will so continue to be treated till the end of the war.