

# UN had secret crime sheet on Hitler

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A charge sheet relating to Adolf Hitler was filed in December 1944 by the United Nations War Crimes CommissionCorbis/Getty Images

A criminal indictment of Adolf Hitler drawn up during secret meetings in wartime London will be made public for the first time this week.

The charge sheet was filed on December 15, 1944, by the United Nations War Crimes Commission, which was convened by the Allies to gather evidence against the Nazis.

Chaired by two distinguished British judges with representatives from 16 other nations, the commission sifted through evidence gathered by the Polish and French resistance and drew up a series of indictments as Luftwaffe bombs fell on London.

Hitler was dead by the time the allied powers were in a position to bring a prosecution and after the Nuremberg trials, as West Germany became a crucial ally against the Soviet Union, the archives were suppressed and remained under lock and key in New York.

Dan Plesch, director of the Centre for International Studies and Diplomacy at Soas, University of London, who gained permission to read them, said that the indictment of Hitler “had only ever been seen by a hundred people in the 1940s and by nobody since”.

Archives from the commission will be released this week by the Wiener Library for the Study of the Holocaust and Genocide in London. The front page of the indictment of the German leader for “murder and massacres — systematic terrorism” is published today in Dr Plesch’s book *Human Rights After Hitler: The Lost History of Prosecuting Axis War Crimes*.

Prosecuting citizens of a foreign nation for war crimes was controversial at the time, as was the idea of bringing to justice the leader of a foreign nation. “The whole point was to show that we were fighting for justice and they were fighting for tyranny,” Dr Plesch said.

The indictment of Hitler, which also listed Rudolf Hess and other members of his government, was produced “as Nazi bombs were falling on London. This was justice under Nazi bombardment.”

Dr Plesch said the files showed that the Allies were aware of the horrors of the Holocaust several years before the concentration camps were liberated by their soldiers.

After the war the fate of the commission’s work became the subject of a battle in the US State Department, in which “pro-German, anti-communist elements” won the day. “The coup de grace was delivered by Senator Joseph McCarthy, a role model for today’s incumbent of the White House,” he said.