

From Outcast to Martyr:**The Memory of Rudolf Hess in Skinhead Culture****Ryan Shaffer¹**

Abstract: This article explores neo-Nazi skinhead culture by reviewing how the memory of Rudolf Hess is employed by extremists as a transnational icon. It highlights how Hess, an outcast in the Nazi party and imprisoned by the British, became a “martyr” to post-war fascists in Britain and Germany. This article reviews skinhead music, video and rare literature to show how diverse skinhead groups in many different countries emulated skinhead leaders in resurrecting Hess’ memory and propagating conspiracy. In offering a rare glimpse into skinhead culture, it draws from magazines that were illegally produced and circulated in Europe, which violate race relations laws, deny the Holocaust or contain fascist images or symbols that are banned. The illegal and clandestine nature of the fascist songs and literature reinforced the power of icons like Hess, which in turn fostered a special bond between skinheads in other countries.

¹ Ryan Shaffer is currently a postdoctoral fellow at the Institute for Global Studies at Stony Brook University in New York.

Skinhead music developed connections between young extremists throughout Europe in the 1980s and 1990s.² The music gave youth a common language to develop transnational icons and build friendships between movements in other countries. No longer isolated in their countries, youth found support beyond their own borders, which reinforced their beliefs and saw the establishment of international concerts where bands drew “nationalists” from neighbouring countries. The result of this activity was similar icons, which represented vastly different ideas in the respective countries, had common meaning. In particular, former enemies of the Second World War began seeing historical figures in similar ways as extremist organizations and music groups co-opted the imagery and icons of Nazi Germany.

This article focuses on the memory of Rudolf Hess in skinhead culture and shows how he became a transnational figure for neo-Nazi skinhead groups. It specifically looks at the role Hess had in British skinhead culture in the 1980s and 1990s, and how his image emerged as a conduit that helped unite British and German skinheads by bridging the ideological space between Allied and Axis powers. This article surveys music and rare skinhead publications to examine how skinheads remember Hess and used his imagery in songs and literature. It first explores the history of Hess and the origins of skinhead culture. Then it examines the imagery and icons in skinhead music and magazines.

During the Second World War, Rudolf Hess was an outcast of the Nazi Party for flying to Scotland and trying to make peace with the United Kingdom. On 10 May 1941, Rudolf Hess, Deputy Führer of Nazi Germany, flew alone to Britain and landed by parachuting from his airplane over Scotland. Rather than negotiate, Britain arrested Hess and made Adolf Hitler’s deputy a prisoner of war. When Hess landed in Scotland his goal was to make peace, but his self-appointed mission and capture caused Nazi leaders much embarrassment.³ Hitler abolished the deputy post and told his staff Hess was mentally ill, while other Nazi leaders

² Special thanks to Dr. Cristobal Zuniga-Espinoza and Dr. Bernd Schaefer for helping with the translations, and to Bart (who does not want his surname public) as well as several other unnamed people for access to the rare documents used here.

³ Jo Fox explained that “[f]or the Nazi elite, this was ‘dreadful news, a hard, almost unbearable blow’; [Joseph] Goebbels found the Führer ‘crushed’ and in ‘tears.’” Jo Fox, “Flight of Rudolf Hess, 1941–45,” *The Journal of Modern History* 83, no. 1 (March 2011): 82.

wanted Hess executed for treason.⁴ After the defeat of Nazi Germany, Hess was sentenced to life in prison and was transferred to Spandau Prison in Berlin, where he was under guard by the Allied Control Council until his suicide by hanging at ninety-three years old on 17 August 1987. In March 1988, he was buried in a family plot in Wunsiedel, a small town in Bavaria. Even before his death and burial, segments of the German public after the war shifted their opinion on Hess, who was not part of major German offensives, with some people sympathetic that he sought peace and spent decades in prison.

With the victory of the Allies over the Axis powers in 1945, fascists struggled to remain relevant in British politics. The British Union of Fascists was disbanded and Oswald Mosley attempted to resurrect his career by founding the Union Movement, but this proved unsuccessful. A.K. Chesterton (1899–1973), a member of the British Union of Fascists in the 1930s, emerged as the leader of the largest British fascist party in 1967. That year Chesterton formed the National Front by merging several extremist groups, including his own League of Empire Loyalists, but sought to disassociate the group from “those with neo-Nazi associations.”⁵ The National Front’s objectives included the preservation of “British native stock,” work with non-communist European nations and ensure “a fair partnership between employers and employees.”⁶ Meanwhile its membership was restricted to “natural British/European descent.”⁷ Several months later, activists with “neo-Nazi associations” became members, and one became the leader of the National Front and went on to found the British National Party.

In 1967, John Tyndall (1934–2005) joined the National Front and quickly emerged as a dedicated leader. Tyndall was a self-proclaimed National Socialist, who previously was a member of the National Socialist Movement under Colin Jordan’s leadership and after a falling out with Jordan, Tyndall formed the Greater Britain Movement. In 1966, Tyndall began editing *Spearhead*, a magazine devoted to National Socialism, until his death. Throughout its long history, Tyndall featured Hess in the magazine. For example in 1986,

⁴ Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich at War* (New York: Penguin, 2010), 169, 170, 741.

⁵ A.K. Chesterton, “National Front,” *Candour* XVIII, no. 460 (January 1967): 3.

⁶ *The National Front Objectives* (London: National Front, 1967).

⁷ “National Front Formed,” *Candour* XVIII, no. 461 (February 1967): 10.

Hess appeared on the cover of *Spearhead* with an article by Colin Jordan, describing him as “a man who made more sacrifices for world peace in our century than the rest of mankind put together.”⁸ In 2003, a review of a book about Hess led the reviewer to conclude that his story caused “a feeling of terrible sadness for a lost opportunity for the British people.”⁹

Besides publishing a monthly magazine, Tyndall wrote several policy tracts, including *The Authoritarian State* and *Six Principles of Nationalism* that expressed his distrust of democracy and support for ethno-nationalism. Though Tyndall respected Oswald Mosley for his inter-war fascist activism, one major difference between Mosley and Tyndall was Mosley’s “inclination [as] a European internationalist rather than a British nationalist.”¹⁰ Having joined the National Front in 1967, Tyndall rose to several leadership positions before becoming the chair of the party in 1972.¹¹ It turned out that his political leadership would have more impact than Mosley’s post-war politics.

The National Front (NF) became involved in fascist skinhead music in a conscious grassroots effort to brand a genre of music that represented its views on race and politics.¹² In 1977, the senior NF leadership created the Young National Front, which engaged in outreach efforts geared towards youth. The first consisted of creating a football league with teams from larger English cities in 1978.¹³ However, the most lasting and effective recruitment program the National Front had was the Rock Against Communism (RAC) concerts launched in August 1979. The National Front hosted bands, which sang about racist and fascist themes and began a music publication titled *Rocking the Reds*.¹⁴ In late 1979 Tyndall resigned as leader of the party in the face of mounting opposition and went on to create the British National Party in 1982.

The National Front refocused its efforts on music outreach in the early 1980s after recruiting Skrewdriver, a skinhead band with a minor following. Skrewdriver’s main

⁸ Colin Jordan, “Rudolf Hess: Prisoner of Vengeance,” *Spearhead* no. 213 (July 1986): 7.

⁹ Nigel Jackson, “The Flight that Failed,” *Spearhead* no. 411 (May 2003): 16.

¹⁰ John Tyndall, “More About Mosley,” *Spearhead* no. 22 (January/February 1969): 12.

¹¹ John Tyndall, *The Eleventh Hour* (second edition) (Welling: Albion Press, n.d., circa 1998), 199.

¹² For further details, see Ryan Shaffer, “The Soundtrack of Neo-Fascism: Youth and Music in the National Front,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 47, nos. 5/6 (2013): 458–482.

¹³ “YNF Soccer League Set To Go,” *Bulldog* no. 5 (February 1978): 4.

¹⁴ “RAC News,” *Bulldog* no. 15 (1979): 3.

songwriter and vocalist was Ian Stuart, born Ian Stuart Donaldson (1957–1993), who had joined the Young National Front in 1979. With Skrewdriver officially becoming a Rock Against Communism band in 1982, the National Front ventured into the record business by establishing White Noise Records and released Skrewdriver's 1983 *White Power* EP.¹⁵ Within a year, the National Front reported that people from Europe and the United States were buying Skrewdriver records, telling its young readers: "[a]ll over the world, more and more white music fans are turning to the world's number one racist rock band [Skrewdriver]."¹⁶ In fact, the National Front reported, "[t]he first pressing of the EP sold out within months and the second pressing has nearly sold out too. And with another order for a further several hundred being received from Germany, it is obvious that a third pressing is now on the cards."¹⁷

The 1980s saw an evolution of skinhead music in terms of growth in bands and improved organization. Besides hosting local concerts and pressing albums, the National Front began hosting music festivals in 1984. After "tirelessly" building links with European youth, "[i]n 1984 Skrewdriver signed a recording contract with Rock-O-Rama Records in Germany."¹⁸ Meanwhile, the National Front began harnessing the power of youth throughout Europe by starting the White Noise Club, which organized concerts, sold records and published *White Noise* magazine. Among the many concerts it produced, the White Noise Club hosted a White Noise festival, which in 1986 had ten bands, including Skrewdriver, performing in front of six hundred fans.¹⁹ In *White Noise's* first issue, it ran an image of "Ian Stuart at a 'Free Hess' Demo" and its third issue took a more European view with "Euro-White Noise interviews."²⁰ Whereas, the 1987 White Noise festival was described as an "international event" with fans from Austria, Belgium, France and Germany.²¹

Skinhead music began spreading internationally and American fascist organizations adopted the culture. One of the first to become involved was the White Aryan Resistance

¹⁵ "White Music Fights Back," *Bulldog* no. 37 (1983): 5.

¹⁶ "A World-Wide Following," *Bulldog* no. 38 (1984): 4.

¹⁷ "Skrewdriver News," *Bulldog* no. 39 (1984): 5.

¹⁸ "Skrewdriver News," *New Dawn* no. 2 (1986): 5.

¹⁹ "White Noise," *New Dawn* no. 2 (1986): 3.

²⁰ "The Ian Stuart Interview," *White Noise* no. 1 (1986): 2; Cover of *White Noise* no. 3 (1986).

²¹ "St. George's Day," *White Noise* no. 4 (1987): 4.

(WAR) led by Tom Metzger, who was previously a member of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). Metzger's WAR newspaper contained racist and extremist commentary on political events, drawing from Nazi Germany history. In 1985, the publication from the White American Resistance, which became White Aryan Resistance, described Hess as having "the stuff to become a saviour for mankind. The same forces which stopped Jesus Christ from changing the world for the better have also crucified Rudolf Hess."²² Two years later, Metzger began selling a video of Skrewdriver's 1987 White Noise festival and was an American contact for neo-Nazis due to his fame of hosting a cable access television show.²³ The following year, he organized the annual "Aryan Fest" with the Midtown Boot Boys, a local skinhead band, in rural Oklahoma.²⁴ This marked the first significant and publicized skinhead concert hosted by an American neo-Nazi organization.

Though skinhead activity was becoming more organized in the United States, the skinhead British subculture was undergoing turmoil. In 1987, Hess died and Ian Stuart started Blood & Honour, which cemented a formal neo-Nazi network that eventually stretched from London to Belgrade to Dallas. In the first issue of the self-titled magazine, the group denounced the National Front and the White Noise Club, claiming it "stole" money, and Blood & Honour would not push party politics, but just focus on "nationalist music."²⁵ To the right of that description was a picture of Hess in his Nazi uniform with the text, "his pride was his loyalty" and "always remembered."²⁶

Without any major press or corporate backing, Blood & Honour spread by word of mouth in Europe and North America. Through crude publications, common culture bonded young Blood & Honour supporters in different countries with similar ideas, images and music. Within a few issues, the magazine claimed "international success" and reported the top ten countries who bought the magazine in descending order: England, Holland, America,

²² "Rudolf Hess: Is Already Immortal," *White American Resistance* 4, no. 3 (1985): 3.

²³ Shaffer, 476.

²⁴ "Aryan Festival '88," *White Aryan Resistance* 7, no. 4 (1988): 1.

²⁵ "Editorial," *Blood & Honour* no. 1 (1987): 2.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

Ulster, West Germany, Sweden, Wales, Belgium, Scotland and France.²⁷ The bulk of the magazine contained concert reports, interviews and advertised records and merchandise, but also featured Nazi politics. In the sixth issue, *Blood & Honour* alleged: "Information has reached us that the murder of Rudolf Hess was part of a cowardly plan to silence the truth about World War II," claiming he was killed by British soldiers to prevent him from being released.²⁸ Though the magazine offered no evidence or references to support its accusation, many impressionable youth accepted this as fact. In believing Hess was killed, the claim perpetuated an image of Hess as a Nazi martyr unjustly murdered and served as an icon for the neo-Nazi skinhead culture.

In the next few years, Skrewdriver and *Blood & Honour* took more interest in Nazism. In 1988, Skrewdriver's album included a song titled "46 Years" about Hess' flight and incarceration.²⁹ Historical Nazi imagery, such as swastikas and photos of Hitler, appeared in *Blood & Honour* and in Skrewdriver song books. Meanwhile, other pages of *Blood & Honour* featured photographs of skinheads co-opting the memory of Hess. For example, one page was simply photographs of a Rudolf Hess demonstration that showed skinheads, including at least one wearing a Skrewdriver shirt, at a march with a banner that read "Rudolf Hess Märtyrer für Deutschland."³⁰ In addition, the magazine featured two pages of German language news, titled "Blut und Ehre."³¹ The magazine later reported, "thousands of national socialists came from all over Germany and Europe to gather at Rudolstadt, northern Bavaria, to pay tribute to Hitler's deputy, Rudolf Hess."³²

News about fascist skinhead music and political commentary were spread through these underground publications. The difficulty to obtain the magazines and the controversial images added to the prestige of being a supporter. This is because some countries, such as Germany, banned the publications and in other countries the organization was so marginal it received no media attention. The German division of *Blood & Honour* had a German

²⁷ "Sales League," *Blood & Honour* no. 5 (n.d., circa 1987): 10.

²⁸ "Blood on Their Hands," *Blood & Honour* no. 6 (n.d., circa 1988): unpaginated 12.

²⁹ "Skrewdriver," *Blood & Honour* no. 8 (n.d., circa 1988): 3.

³⁰ "Special Notices," *Blood & Honour* no. 12 (n.d., circa 1990): unpaginated 8.

³¹ "Blut und Ehre," *Blood & Honour* no. 13 (n.d., circa 1992): unpaginated 13.

³² "Remember Rudolf Hess," *Blood & Honour* no. 14 (n.d., circa 1992): 11.

language publication with a mailing address in Denmark and devoted page space to concert reports and interviews with bands.³³ A later glossy magazine ran articles about soldiers and youth in Nazi Germany.³⁴ In *Unsere Welt*, a German skinhead magazine, the publisher promoted American and British skinhead bands, but also featured a full page about the tenth anniversary of Rudolf Hess' death and claimed he was murdered.³⁵ The next issue discussed several different Hess marches in Germany and described large crowds in 1997.³⁶ The following year, the magazine reported on Hess memorial marches in Germany and Denmark, showing photos of the marches and Hess' grave marker.³⁷

Blood & Honour supporters in other countries produced their own magazines, which also promoted Nazism and focused on Hess. In 1993 an American *Blood & Honour* magazine that originally consisted of several photocopied pages and then expanded to a glossy magazine format promoted Nazi symbols and neo-Nazi music.³⁸ In the Spanish branch's magazine, it discussed Portuguese and Spanish activists gathering for a 2000 Hess demonstration. The two groups met at a cemetery of German soldiers in Spain with flags and posters in tribute to the "hero of peace" Hess.³⁹ The Serbian edition published a translated excerpt of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*.⁴⁰ The Blood & Honour Scandinavia division had a more consistent publishing record with activists from Norway, Finland and Sweden, and issued its magazine in English.⁴¹ In 1998, the magazine reported, "132 national revolutionaries from Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Germany, Holland and Poland" were part of the "Rudolf

³³ "Konzertbericht," *Blood & Honour Division Deutschland* no. 2 (1996): 9.

³⁴ "Jugend im 3. Reich," *Blood & Honour Division Deutschland* no. 8 (1999): 24.

³⁵ "Mord," *Unsere Welt* no. 1 (1997): 34.

³⁶ "Rudolf Hess Gedenkaktion auf Helgoland," and "Braunschweig, Wolfenbüttel, Königslutter," *Unsere Welt* no. 2 (1997): 14, 15.

³⁷ "Rudolf Hess Marsch 98 Deutschland" and "Rudolf Hess Marsch 98 Dänemark," *Unsere Welt* no. 4 (1999): 18, 19. In 2001, *Feuer & Sturm* also featured a story about that year's Hess demonstration and claimed he was murdered. "Gedenkmarsch zu Ehren Rudolf Hess," *Feuer & Sturm* no. 10 (2001): 12.

³⁸ Untitled, *Blood & Honour California* no. 1 (1993): unpaginated 2; "Race, Rock & Revolution," *Blood & Honour USA* no. 2 (1993): 2.

³⁹ "Homenaje Rudolf Hess," *Blood & Honour Espana* no. 2 (February 2001): 7.

⁴⁰ "Mein Kampf," *Blood & Honour Serbia* no. 6 (2002): 19.

⁴¹ "Why Blood & Honour," *Blood & Honour Scandinavia* 1, no. 1 (Summer 1997): 2; Jäsä, "Redaktionellt," *Blood & Honour* no. 2 (November 2002): 2.

Hess march” organized in Copenhagen.⁴² In addition, Blood & Honour in Denmark reported on a collaborative march with Swedish extremists in memory of Hess.⁴³ Whereas, the Hungarian edition discussed Budapest’s Second World War history with a nostalgic slant.⁴⁴ While the words and images were important, music provided extremists with slogans that could be repeated alone or chanted in large groups.

By the early 1990s, Ian Stuart was the leader of fascist music in Britain and Skrewdriver concerts drew more youth than any other band in the Rock Against Communism genre. As the founder of Blood & Honour and singer in Skrewdriver, his words and music were spread internationally more than any other fascist musician. The themes, icons and imagery were absorbed, sang along with and repeated at home and in concerts. Unlike the magazines, live concerts served as a social gathering where fans travelled great distances and met with people from other countries. In September 1992, Skrewdriver performed in London with Swedish band Dirlewanger (named after Nazi SS officer Oskar Paul Dirlewanger), which had about a thousand concertgoers from around Europe that attended.⁴⁵ Prior to the concert, the international skinheads and opponents clashed at a rendezvous point near the Waterloo Tube station in a bloody fight known as the “Battle of Waterloo.” During the concert, Ian Stuart dedicated songs to the international support and specifically told his audience that the song “46 Years” is “for Rudolf Hess,” and described him as “the hero of the white race” because while “Adolf Hitler died in 1945, his ideals never died and the one man who kept those ideals alive more than anybody else” was Hess.⁴⁶

In addition to publications and music recordings, British skinheads made their way to Germany with songs praising Hess and Nazi Germany. In 1992, Skrewdriver performed in Bremen, Germany to chants of “Rudolf Hess” and Ian Stuart expressed the importance of Germany, saying that “as far as I am concerned the greatest man who ever existed came

⁴² Max Hammer, “Rudolf Hess Honoured and Celebrated Again,” *Blood & Honour Scandinavia* 1, no. 4 (August 1998): 12. The cover of the magazine featured images of the march with the headline “Rudolf Hess March 1998.”

⁴³ “Rudolf Hess March 1 Stockholm,” *Blood & Honour Danmark* no. 9 (November 2000): 4.

⁴⁴ “A Budapesti Csata,” *Vér & Becsület* (Spring 2001): 25.

⁴⁵ “Saturday 12th September,” *Blood & Honour* no. 14 (n.d., circa 1992): 6.

⁴⁶ Skrewdriver, *Waterloo Live '92* (N.p.: ISD Records, 1994) (CD Recording).

from Deutschland. The only man I would follow to death came from Germany.”⁴⁷ He further explained, “without national socialism Skrewdriver never would have existed” and dedicated a song to the audience and Hess.⁴⁸ That same year, Ian Stuart and guitarist Stigger performed a set of “patriotic ballads” in Stuttgart, Germany, promoting an album of acoustic music. Singing an unplugged version of “46 Years,” Ian Stuart again spoke about Hess saying, “next week in Germany is one of the most important dates that ever existed on the German calendar” and “a lot of people from all over the world come to Germany next week to honour a man who was murdered by the British.”⁴⁹

The following year Ian Stuart returned to Germany. On 10 July 1993 Skrewdriver performed on a makeshift stage in rural Waiblingen, Germany where Ian Stuart, wearing a shirt that read “fucking racist” on the back, praised Nazi Germany, including the Waffen-SS as “the greatest soldiers that ever existed.”⁵⁰ Stuart, however, expressed special appreciation for Rudolf Hess saying he was a “hero of the white race,” but “was taken and put in jail for 46 years trying to unite the British and German people,” provoking the German audience to chant “Rudolf Hess.”⁵¹ Skrewdriver then performed the song “46 Years,” proclaiming “Rudolf Hess is free” and “he’s paid the price for his loyalty.” While Hess flew from Nazi Germany to Scotland in 1941 to meet with British officials, Ian Stuart travelled from England to Germany in 1993 to meet with German neo-Nazis, in part, to proclaim Hess was a hero. This concert turned out to be Skrewdriver’s last performance in Germany as Ian Stuart died in a September 1993 car crash in Derbyshire, England. As the final Skrewdriver concert in Germany, the video remains popular for fans and immortalized his words about Hess to Skrewdriver’s fans throughout the world.

After Ian Stuart’s death, a more violent group named Combat 18 (C18) took over Blood & Honour that more explicitly referred to itself as National Socialist and established a record company named ISD Records (Ian Stuart Donaldson’s initials).⁵² The new magazine

⁴⁷ *Skrewdriver German British Friendship* (Denison, TX: NS88 Videos, 2005) (DVD Recording).

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ian Stuart & Stigger Patriotic Ballads* (N.p.: HC64 Productions, 2003) (DVD Recording).

⁵⁰ *Skrewdriver Live in Germany* (Denison, TX: NS88 Videos, 2005) (DVD Recording).

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² M. Cross, “The Necessity for Change in Blood & Honour,” *The Order* no. 9 (n.d., circa 1994): unpaginated 8.

described itself as “National Socialist,” telling readers a “racial holy war” is “necessary” because “our enemies are ruthlessly trying to destroy us.”⁵³ *Blood & Honour* continued praising Hess by publishing his picture with text telling readers “on August 17th remember him” and labelled him a “martyr.”⁵⁴ Another issue contained an article by a German that discussed German activists attending a war memorial and anti-immigrant protests.⁵⁵ Additionally, other magazine issues included invitations for the British to join the Germans in marches, and build closer political links. For example, it announced a protest against a Holocaust monument in Berlin, telling readers to join them in Germany and where to meet.⁵⁶

In addition to the *Blood & Honour* magazine, Combat 18 members began producing magazines titled *The Order* and *Pustch*, which also focused on Hess. For example, *The Order* explained that the National Socialist Movement of Denmark (DNSB) held a meeting in Copenhagen with English, Norwegian and Swedish National Socialists to unite and organize “common demonstrations” at embassies for Hess and demand the release of other “political prisoners,” such as Holocaust deniers.⁵⁷ Another issue in 1995 described, “[o]n the 19th August, 150 national socialists” from England, Germany, Norway and Sweden “joined the DNSB of Denmark to march in memory of Rudolf Hess and call for the release of G. Lauck.”⁵⁸ At this meeting, C18 leader Charlie Sargent and National Socialist Movement of Denmark chair Jonni Hansen met in Roskilde for the Hess memorial march.⁵⁹

Working with German radicals had special meaning for British fascists. A Scottish branch of *Blood & Honour*, led by Steve Cartwright, published *Highlander* magazine, focusing on Scottish history and skinhead music. Like previous *Blood & Honour* publications, it highlighted a Hess march, which described how “[a] *Highlander* delegation joined 5600 racial

⁵³ “Racial Holy War Now,” *Blood & Honour* unnumbered (n.d., circa 1996): unpaginated 6. The magazine featured Razors Edge’s “Whatever It Takes” album on the cover.

⁵⁴ “On August 17th Remember Him,” *Blood & Honour* no. 13 (n.d., circa 1998): 24.

⁵⁵ “Germany Calling,” *Blood & Honour* no. 16 (n.d., circa 1998): 24.

⁵⁶ “Demonstration in Berlin,” *Blood & Honour* no. 19 (n.d., circa 2000): 17.

⁵⁷ “N.S. Meeting Held in Copenhagen: First Step,” *The Order* no. 11 (n.d., circa 1994): unpaginated 8.

⁵⁸ “Battle of Roskilde,” *The Order* unnumbered (n.d., circa 1995): unpaginated 8. The magazine featured Ian Stuart on the cover with heading “Heil Our Fuhrer.”

⁵⁹ A photograph of the two men at the event is available in “C18 Pair Head for Old Bailey,” *Searchlight* no. 248 (February 1996): 3.

nationalists and national socialists from all over Europe and the white world in Wundsiedl [sic], Bavaria" which was "to honour the memory of the 'Martyr for Peace' Rudolf Hess."⁶⁰ It ended the article by telling readers, the 2004 march will be held the following August and the author "hopes to see more of our readers and comrades there."⁶¹ In 2004, *Blood & Honour* described the Hess memorial march in detail with photographs, claiming more than 7,000 supporters attended and it was "magnificent" in memory of "a real hero who tried to unite white people and paid the price of 46 years in prison."⁶² By 2005, German law enforcement prevented further marches. In response, the extremists focused on memorializing other events. For example, *Blood & Honour* described a march with speeches in memory of the bombing of Dresden in 2007.⁶³ The following year it ran a similar article, describing German and British speakers, including Cartwright, at the Dresden memorial.⁶⁴

Even with the Hess demonstrations blocked in Germany, the marches and memorials continued to live on and be celebrated by neo-Nazi skinheads around the world. Video of the memorial marches in Wunsiedel between 1990 to 1997 was sold to extremists throughout the world, including some that have Holocaust denier Ernst Zündel's Samisdat publisher logo.⁶⁵ The DVD includes footage of fascists and anti-fascists clashing with law enforcement, the chartered bus trip to the town, marchers waving the Imperial German flag, and speeches in English and German. Even with efforts to block Skrewdriver's music and the memorializing of Hess, the music and videos continue to be purchased online from American and British fascist organizations.

Conclusion

British neo-Nazis helped resurrect Rudolf Hess through extremist music and portrayed him as a martyr. In doing so, those who listened to the music and accepted the song lyrics at face value saw Hess' journey as an olive branch that would have prevented the Second World War and the defeat of Nazi Germany. If there was no war and no defeat of

⁶⁰ "Rudolf Hess March," *Highlander* no. 3 (2003):3.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁶² "Rudolf Hess Memorial March," *Blood & Honour* no. 30 (2004): 34.

⁶³ "Dresden Memorial 2007," *Blood & Honour* no. 36 (2007): 7.

⁶⁴ "Dresden 2008," *Blood & Honour* no. 39 (2008): 6.

⁶⁵ *Rudolf Hess: The Memorial Marches, 1990-97* (Denison, TX: NS88 Videos, 2005) (DVD Recording).

Germany, the thinking goes, then Hitler and Nazism would have continued and not have been discredited. While Hess was a major figure praised in skinhead music and at concerts, there were several other people who were discussed in skinhead songs, such as Bob Matthews (1953–1984), an American who died in a shoot-out with law enforcement after attempting to fund a white separatist paramilitary. Yet, what made Hess unique from the others was the iconography of a man who was repudiated by Nazi officials and captured as an enemy by the Allies, while post-war neo-Nazis in both Britain and Germany interpreted his actions positively.

In response to neo-Nazis celebrating Hess' memory in Wunsiedel, the marches were forbidden after a large demonstration in 2004 saw more than one hundred extremists arrested.⁶⁶ In July 2011, the local government received permission to exhume Hess' body and cremated the remains as well as destroyed his tombstone to prevent it from being used as an extremist shrine.⁶⁷ Meanwhile, fascists and even Hess' son still contend he was murdered by the British government rather than accept the official conclusion that his death was a suicide. In 2013, a British investigation of Hess' death was finally released to the public in response to a Freedom of Information Act request. The 1989 report concluded, "[t]he inquiries carried out by Detective Chief Superintendent Jones have produced no cogent evidence to suggest that Rudolf Hess was murdered; nor, on the view of the Director of Public Prosecutions, is there any basis for further investigation."⁶⁸ Such conclusions will have no impact on extremists who choose ideological conspiracy. Indeed, the skinheads who adopted Hess as a martyr did so in the context of imagery, music and extremist publications, which are self-reinforcing. Without the culture, the skinhead memory and conspiracy surrounding Hess makes little sense. Indeed, to understand skinhead ideology one must examine the culture, including icons, music, text and photos, in conjunction with the ideas

⁶⁶ "Neo-Nazis Arrested at Hess March," BBC, 21 August 2004. Online at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3587340.stm>

⁶⁷ "Top Nazi Rudolf Hess Exhumed from 'Pilgrimage' Grave," BBC, 21 July 2011. Online at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-14232768>

⁶⁸ Cahal Milmo, "Adolf Hitler's Nazi Deputy Rudolf Hess 'Murdered by British Agents' to Stop Him Spilling Wartime Secrets," *The Independent*, 6 September 2013. Online at <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/adolf-hitlers-nazi-deputy-rudolf-hess-murdered-by-british-agents-to-stop-him-spilling-wartime-secrets-8802603.html>

and politics. The songs, photographs and tributes to Hess served as a bridge that connected German and British skinheads, which in turn perpetuated transnational fascism by giving extremists a figure to commemorate together.