

Racist buttons on a backpack worn by Patrick Sharp, a Georgia State University student in Atlanta, Georgia.



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How to Recognize White Supremacist Symbology

by Jeremy G.

Many white supremacists have recently taken up traditionally progressive leftist causes like environmentalism, veganism, animal rights, and even (only very recently, and only very rarely) support of gay rights. They also have a history or attempting to infiltrate leftist political groups or adopt elements of leftism or socialism into their own movements, the National Anarchist Movement being one of the most notable examples.

White supremacists, especially neo-Nazis and neo-fascists (as well as the original Nazi Party) have a history of co-opting ancient folk symbols, especially Indo-European, Scandanavian, or Celtic symbols. This does not mean the symbols are inherently racist, but they can serve as a warning flag. The swastika, an ancient symbol used by many cultures, is the most notorious example of this pattern. There are many others included below, although this is not a comprehensive list. If you see someone displaying these symbols, that doesn't necessarily mean they're a fascist or white supremacist, but these symbols are frequently used by members of these groups. As neo-Nazis and neo-fascists have gained political power in parts of Europe and have

made multiple attempts to infiltrate mainstream US politics, trade unions, and leftist (anarchist/socialist/communist) political groups.

White supremacist hate groups prey on the ambivalence of young white Americans, especially poor/working class whites in rural or urban areas, caused by racial tension in their region. They also recruit heavily in prisons, where gangs like the Aryan Brotherhood provide protection or a sense of community to whites who often find themselves in the minority. Many of the symbols here, and others are used by white supremacist prison gangs.

Recently, “European Heritage” or “White Heritage” groups, which clothe their hatred in business suits and strongly coded language have emerged and are overtaking traditional hate groups like the KKK, National Socialist Movement, and Aryan Nation. Several right-wing politicians, including US House of Representatives member Steven Scalise of Louisiana, have been tied to these groups. American Renaissance is one of the most notorious of this new breed of hate groups.

White supremacist groups, especially neo-Nazis and neo-Fascists use a variety of symbols to reflect their beliefs, many of which are unknown to the general public some of the most common are the following:

14 or 14 words: Code for the white supremacist slogan: “We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children.”

88: Commonly understood to represent “HH” or “Heil Hitler” (H being the 8th letter of the English alphabet)

RAC: Rock Against Communism, represents a white power musical genre opposed to communism, socialism, and other leftist (or anti-racist) political views and music

Hate Edge: An offshoot of the straight edge punk movement, which generally swears of drugs, alcohol, promiscuous sex, and sometimes animal products



The Life (also Elhaz or Algis) rune is an ancient runic symbol appropriated by the Nazis to help create an idealized “Aryan/Norse” heritage, which led to its adoption by later white supremacists. Because the life rune is also used by many non-racists, it should carefully be judged in context.



This is a white supremacist version of the Celtic Cross, which consists of a square cross interlocking with or surrounded by a circle. It’s one of the most common white supremacist symbols, especially in the US and England. Other variations of the Celtic cross are not necessarily tied to hate groups and are commonly used by non-racist and anti-racist Christians and people of Celtic heritage. Hate groups have, however, attempted to co-opt these symbols as well.



The Iron Cross, a famous German military medal, became a common white supremacist symbol after World War II, though today it is used in many non-racist/extremist situations and cannot be assumed to be used as a hate symbol without other contextual clues.



The Confederate Battle Flag has a long history of association with white supremacists, but was most notably adopted by segregationists during resistance to racial integration in the US South from the late 1940s to the 1960s. It has since been a symbol of controversy and is generally viewed as

being tied to white supremacist sympathies, although not all people who use the flag consider themselves racist. This particular image incorporates the Nazi SS logo, which undeniably ties it to white supremacist and neo-Nazi sympathies.



The Valknut or “knot of the slain” is an old Norse symbol that often represented the afterlife in carvings and designs. It is often considered a symbol of the Norse god Odin. Some white supremacists, particularly racist Odinists, have appropriated the Valknut to use as a racist symbol. Often they use it as a sign that they are willing to give their life to Odin, generally in battle.

Nonracist pagans may also use this symbol, so one should carefully examine it in context rather than assume that a particular use of the symbol is racist.



The sonnenrad or sunwheel is an ancient Indo-European symbol appropriated by Nazi Germany, which has led modern day white supremacists to use it as a hate symbol.

WP of WPWW: White Pride or White Power and “White Pride World Wide”, commonly used by Stormfront, a white supremacist web forum

Stormfront: A white supremacist web forum and news site — <http://stormfront.org>

Love Your Race: Commonly used by white supremacists to either signify white pride or indicate “victimization” or “oppression” of the white race by other groups or the government. White supremacist groups, especially neo-Nazi skinheads and neo-fascist groups commonly co-opt symbols and musical styles from the punk rock and heavy metal genres. Skinheads were originally part of a non-racist musical movement which united white British youth and Jamaican immigrants and was popular within the ska and reggae genres of the 1960s. When ska and reggae were re-popularized by the punk movement of the late 1970s and early 1980s, Nazis attempted to infiltrate the punk scene and adopted symbols from the original skinhead movement. It’s important to note there are many non-racist (generally apolitical) and anti-racist (SHARP: Skinheads Against Racial Prejudice) around the world.



SS bolts are a common white supremacist symbol derived from the Nazi-era symbol for the Schutzstaffel (SS), whose members ranged from Gestapo agents to Waffen SS soldiers to concentration camp guards.



Thor's Hammer, displayed in this manner or associated with Bound for Glory, a longstanding white power music band (dating back to 1989) from Minneapolis. It is popular among white supremacists. The main symbol associated with the band is a Thor's Hammer containing the band's initials. Also common are the band's initials in or superimposed over an Iron Cross. Both images derive from albums released by the group. The phrase "bound for

glory" is a relatively common phrase that can be used in non-racist contexts, so the phrase should always be analyzed in its particular context.

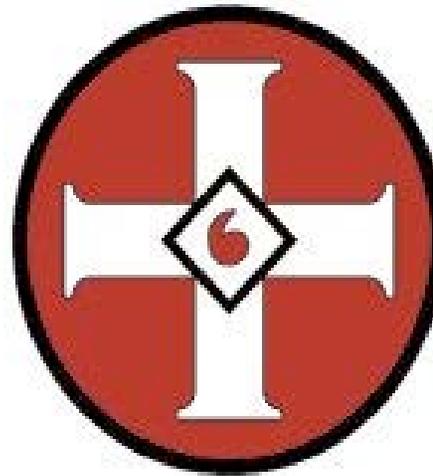


The Totenkopf, or Death's Head, is a symbol used by Hitler's SS that has been adopted by neo-Nazis and white supremacists since World War II. This symbol is commonly used by the neo-folk band "Death in June" which has been accused of having white supremacist ties and sympathies. They use other imagery associated with the ideology known as "National Bolshevism" which is essentially a socialist

offshoot of the Nazi Party's fascist ideology. The band's name is a reference to "The Night of the Long Knives" when several influential members of this sect were assassinated.



The Sturmabteilung (or SA) emblem was used by Hitler's so-called "Brownshirts," paramilitary formations utilized by Hitler to intimidate political opponents before and after his rise to power in Germany. Now it is used by neo-Nazis and other modern-day white supremacists.



The primary insignia of Ku Klux Klan groups is the MIO-AK (or "Mystic Insignia of a Klansman"), commonly referred to as the "blood drop" cross.



The triskele is another ancient symbol, generally used in Celtic art or religious symbolism, with three curved or jointed segments emanating from a single point that has been adopted by white supremacists.