



Reform councillor claims Swastika tattoo is a "Buddhist peace symbol"

Description

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Reform leader Nigel Farage, a Swastika, and Reform member Andy Arnold

Another Reform member [has been exposed for having an alleged link to Adolf Hitler's Nazi Party](#)

The latest is Barnsley councillor Andy Arnold who was photographed over multiple years with a Swastika tattoo. In response, Arnold's wife has claimed it was actually a Buddhist symbol of peace:

Swastika tattoo visible in public social media photos of Reform UK councillor Andy Arnold

<https://t.co/6i2H313usn>

The Star, Sheffield (@SheffieldStar) [May 23, 2026](#)

Reform "Symbolism"

Putting it mildly, [the Star reported](#)

The swastika is strongly associated with Nazi Germany and Adolf Hitler's regime and the Holocaust

[Although it's true the Swastika has existed for thousands of years](#) most people in Britain don't know that. As such, it's a strange thing for a white Brit to get tattooed on their forearm.

[Arnold's wife defended the tattoo as follows](#)

The only context I can provide is that, in his late teens, my husband briefly explored Buddhism and had a symbol tattooed on his arm during that period.

He has never been involved with, supported, or held views associated with Nazism or any extremist ideology.

The problem is heâ??s in Reform UK; a party which scapegoats migrants like Hitler scapegoated the Jews; a party pursuing mass-deportation policies reminiscent of 1930s Germany.

Speaking of deportations and Swastikas, members of the British far-right recently launched â??Operation Overlordâ?? which saw activists travelling to France to bother refugees. As the *Canary*â??s Joe Glenton wrote:

A far-right group that started going to Calais to hassle asylum seekers seems [to have fallen out](#). Theyâ??ve also managed to get banned by the [French](#) government after swastika graffiti started appearing everywhere. Incredible work, boys.

The group named itself Operation Overlord after the D-Day landings. An operation in which US and British troops spent a good few days in Normandy. People who shared virtually the exact political views of these chicken nugget-brained man-bats in its lot were â?? note, WERE â?? closely tied to Operation Raise the Colours. Yes, the flags-on-lamp-posts people. The Overlord group started up in 2024. Their modus operandi was to [strut around French beaches making macho content](#)

Misunderstandings

Mrs Arnold continued:

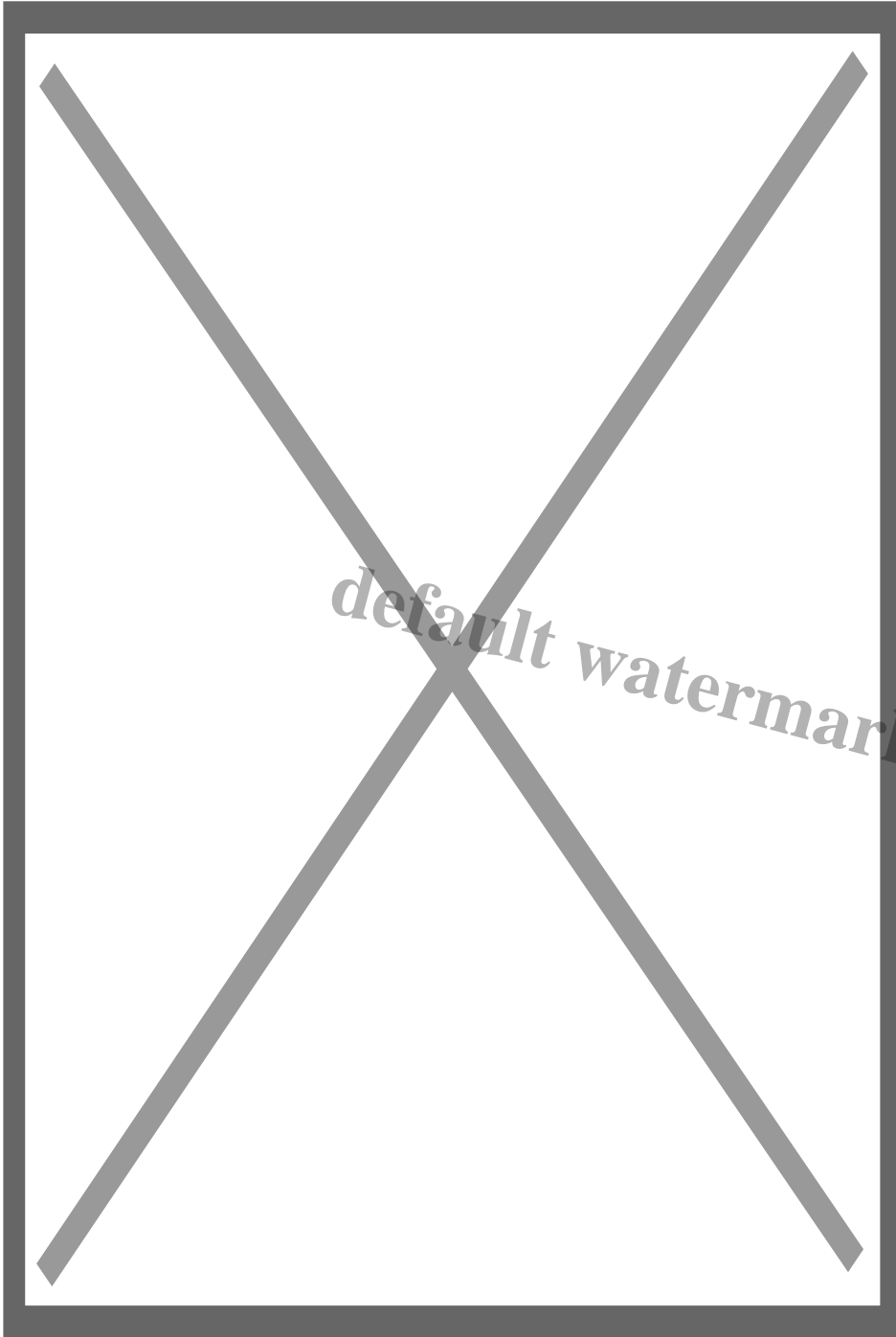
The tattoo was later covered because the symbol was frequently misunderstood and people incorrectly associated it with something entirely different from its original religious context.

Unfortunately, the meaning was often misinterpreted without understanding the background behind it.

Oh wow, who could have seen that coming?

While itâ??s not impossible to believe that a boneheaded teenager with an interest in tattoos and Eastern spirituality might get a Swastika tattoo, the problem is Arnold had his until at least 2024. Heâ??s no spring chicken, either, so he put up with several decades of â??misunderstandingsâ?? before making the change.

This is the tattoo in question by the way (see his left arm):



Given that Arnold is in fact himself a tattoo artist, itâ??s a problem he could easily have rid himself of if he wanted to.

Reformâ??s hippy to Hitler pipeline

If Arnold is telling the truth, he wouldnâ??t be the first white Brit to dabble with the Eastern swastika. He also wouldnâ??t be the most famous, with that award going to Kula Shaker frontman Crispian Mills. [As](#)

[Far Out magazine reported:](#)

The influence of Indian culture and raga rock was pertinent in all that Kula Shaker did, but this wound up landing Mills in some very hot water in 1997 when he claimed in interviews that the swastika was a "brilliant image" with respect to its traditional Indian origins. For those unaware, the swastika was originally a symbol used in the Hindu religion to denote wellbeing and prosperity before it was reappropriated by the Nazis. However, for obvious reasons, when Mills said this, the reaction wasn't exactly receptive.

Prompting a deluge from the British press, Mills and the rest of the band were exiled to the land of what we would now consider "cancel culture", with The Independent in particular running an especially bruising line that said the frontman "had dabbled with Nazism".

At a first glance, Arnold's tattoo does look more like the Buddhist version than the Nazi one, but as Reform Party UK Exposed highlighted:

Educate yourself. pic.twitter.com/aYHv8mDKnl

Reform Party UK Exposed  (@reformexposed) [May 22, 2026](#)

The thing is, it actually wouldn't be that surprising if Arnold went on a journey from hippy to fascist. This might be surprising to hear if you've never met or thought about hippies, but some of these people are inherently vulnerable to far-right propaganda.

[As Ossiana Tepfenhart wrote on Medium](#)

In order to radicalize someone, you need to hook them in and appeal to them. This tends to happen with people who have a lot of the traits found in crunchy/spiritual/rave groups, including:

- **You feel locked out or unheard by mainstream society.** This is basically spirituality groups and rave groups in a nutshell. Radicalization can only happen when you don't feel accepted by the people around you.
- **You don't trust society or conventional beliefs.** Crunchy people, for example, are very skeptical of processed foods and are more likely to lean on alternative medicine. This flies in the face of traditional wisdom which tells you to trust in science rather than "woo woo" stuff.
- **You are jaded with the shitty behavior you see in others.** A lot of people distrust doctors because they were treated badly by them. A lot of people also have severe trauma related to traditional religious organizations that they haven't unpacked.

- **You just want an answer to make the world make sense.** Many people in hippie-esque circles feel lost about their sense of the world. Radicalization is rough because it literally seeks out people who want an answer and a way to live and pretends to give them what they need.

So yeah. Radicalization towards the right wing happens when you take disaffected people, often with trauma, and claim to give them an easy-to-use solution to all their problems. Little do they know theyâ??re being sold a bad bag.

Traditionalism

Tepfenhart is far from the only one observing this pipeline. Getting away from the Eastern connection [Catherine Tebaldi of the Global Network on Extremism & Technology wrote](#)

Digital traditionalist women carefully cultivate winsome images on Instagram: harvesting fields of beets with **default watermark** of muslin dresses and aprons spilling around bare feet, canning and pickling them in vegetable brine, surrounded by laughing blonde children. In the winter, the family stamps sugar cookies with intricate patterns, or braid evergreen branches and holly to celebrate the festival of Yule. The **default watermark** text and videos celebrate health and wellness, but this goes beyond simply bodily health. To what they call â??reviving folk vitalityâ?*: celebrating northern European tradition, heroic men and women at home with a large white family; herbalism and natural health; paganism and occult mythology, and the belief in a white racial spirituality.

This ideology has can be traced through history to the â??fascist ecologyâ?? of the Third Reich; the Nazi Party had a â??green wingâ?? preoccupied with ecology, eugenics and esoteric racial essences. To describe the group with deep roots in the far-right and in contemporary practices of health and nature I use the term Granola Nazis. Their style is taken up by a broader anti-modern movement of digital traditionalism.

And now weâ??ve come full circle. [The Nazis also chose the Swastika for its ancient history](#) and while an interest in traditionalism and history isnâ??t itself an indicator that a person is far right, itâ??s certainly a contributing factor when presenting in someone with a tendency towards selfishness.

So yeah, the truth is we canâ??t definitively say that Arnoldâ??s tattoo is a Nazi symbol. At the same time, if Arnold was a councillor in 1930s Germany, we can guess which party he would have gravitated towards.

Featured image via [Getty Images \(Finnbarr Webster\)](#)

By [Willem Moore](#)

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