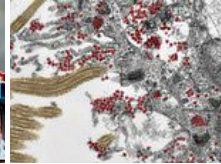


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Spen time

Was the Queen's uncle a NAZI? After shocking film of Edward VIII teaching his niece to salute comes disturbing evidence his fanaticism went FAR deeper

By [GUY WALTERS FOR THE DAILY MAIL](#)

PUBLISHED: 17:15 EST, 24 July 2015 | **UPDATED:** 19:28 EST, 24 July 2015

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There is no doubt that it is an extraordinary image. Just ten months before it was captured, the man at its centre was the King of Great Britain, Ireland and the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Defender of the Faith, and Emperor of India.

And yet here he is, the uncle of our present Queen, surrounded by beaming Nazi bigwigs, proudly giving a Heil Hitler salute, looking for all the world like some despicable Fascist puppet dictator.

The photograph emerged only this week when an auction house in Wales announced that it was up for sale, along with many similar photographs from the Duke of Windsor's trip to Germany in October 1937.

Coincidentally, it comes in the wake of the publication of a jaw-dropping home movie showing our Queen, then a seven-year-old princess, giving a Nazi salute in 1933, abetted by the Duke, who was then the Prince of Wales.

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Edward VIII, the uncle of our present Queen, is seen surrounded by beaming Nazi bigwigs in 1937, proudly giving a Heil Hitler salute, looking for all the world like some despicable Fascist puppet dictator



Coincidentally, the 1937 picture of Edward saluting comes in the wake of the publication of a jaw-dropping home movie showing our Queen, then a seven-year-old princess, giving a Nazi salute in 1933, abetted by the Duke, who was then the Prince of Wales

The emergence of the two sets of images poses troubling questions. It's long been known that the former Edward VIII had close contact with the Nazi regime. But were his sympathies for Hitler even stronger than previously thought? Was he, in fact, a Nazi?

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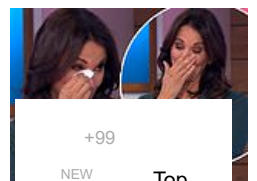
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In order to reach some sort of answers — for in the murky between-the-wars worlds of aristocracy and Fascism, there are few certainties — we first need to remind ourselves quite how German our Royal Family are.

Many of us are aware that until 1917 the family name of the royals was the very German Saxe-Coburg und Gotha. During World War I, such a name was clearly unsuitable, and the name 'Windsor' was ushered in instead. But despite the war and the change of name, the Germanic roots of the family ran deep.

Edward VIII's mother, Queen Mary, was almost entirely German and his father, George V, partly German.

Edward was born in 1894, and when he was growing up, he recalled how older members of his family would lapse into German as soon as any English-speaking courtiers left the room. Edward himself was so fluent in the language that he regarded it as his 'Muttersprache' — his mother tongue.



The Queen's uncle, who abdicated the previous year, is pictured making the distinctive 'Heil Hitler' sign while surrounded by uniformed high-ranking fascists on an unofficial visit to Germany in 1937. Edward VIII's mother, Queen Mary, was almost entirely German and his father, George V, partly German

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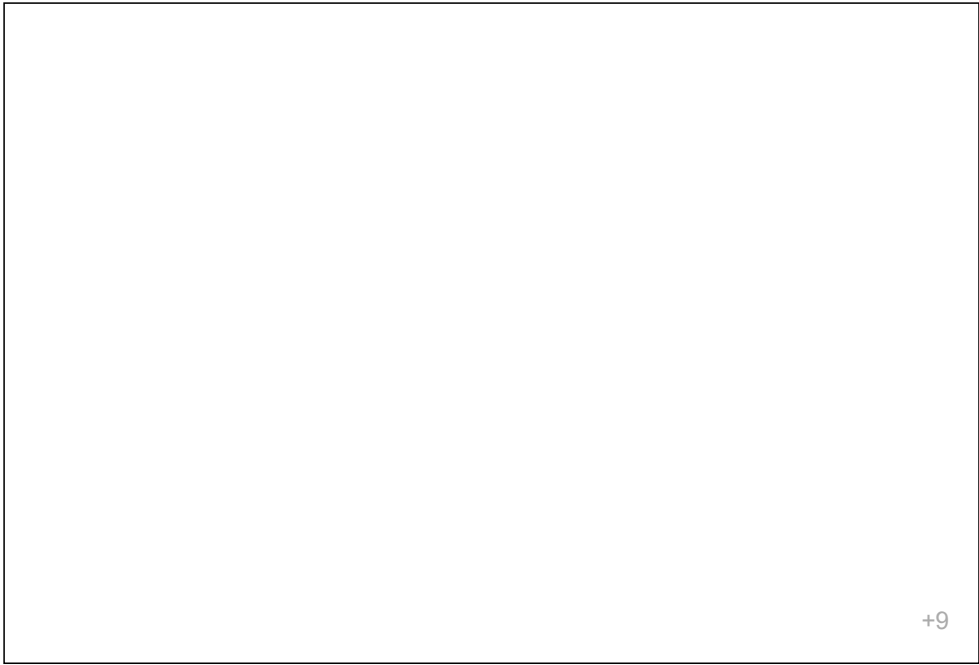
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Edward certainly felt at home in Germany and with all things German. It therefore comes as little surprise that he once told his great friend Diana Mosley, the wife of the British Fascist leader, Sir Oswald Mosley, that ‘every drop of blood in my veins is German’. Above, Edward visiting a Nazi-run mine in 1937

In addition, Edward — who was known as ‘David’ by his family — would often visit Germany, both immediately before and after World War I and throughout the Twenties and Thirties.

He would reside with family members, although when they came to stay with him in Britain, Edward ensured that their names did not appear on the public Court Circular.

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Edward certainly felt at home in Germany and with all things German. It therefore comes as little surprise that he once told his great friend Diana Mosley, the wife of the British Fascist leader, Sir Oswald Mosley, that ‘every drop of blood in my veins is German’.

Clearly, a fondness for Germany should not be equated with a fondness for Nazism.

Many sympathetic biographers of Edward are adamant that his love for the land of his forebears has been misinterpreted, and that he really was no closet Fascist.

Such biographers dismiss claims that he was a ‘fellow traveller’ as conspiracy theories and tittle-tattle.

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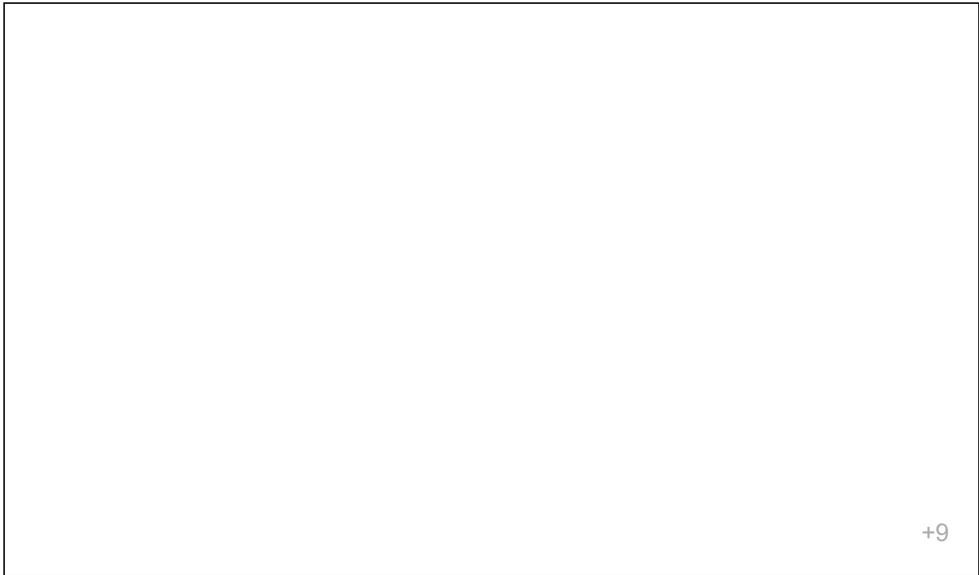
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When the Nazis came to power in 1933, Edward was delighted. As he revealed to a senior Austrian diplomat, he saw Nazism as necessary for Germany. ‘Of course, it is the only thing to do,’ he said. ‘We will have to come to it, as we are in great danger from the Communists, too.’ Above, the Duke in Germany in 1937

But thanks to much excellent digging by distinguished historians such as Jonathan Petropoulos and Karina Urbach — and indeed these new images of him giving a Nazi salute — it is now becoming clear that the man who would be King was far more sympathetic to Hitler’s twisted and evil creed than we had previously supposed.

Like many aristocrats of his generation, Edward loathed Communism. Despite his famous displays of solidarity with the poor when he was King, Edward saw what was happening in Russia as representing a very real threat not only to his country, but also his family.

According to one British diplomat who had served in Russia, Edward’s thinking ‘was dominated by sharp fear of the Communist threat from Russia’. It was this fear that made Edward look to Germany as a bulwark against the spread of the Reds.

When the Nazis came to power in 1933, Edward was delighted. As he revealed to a senior Austrian diplomat, he saw Nazism as necessary for Germany. ‘Of course, it is the only thing to do,’ he said. ‘We will have to come to it, as we are in great danger from the Communists, too.’

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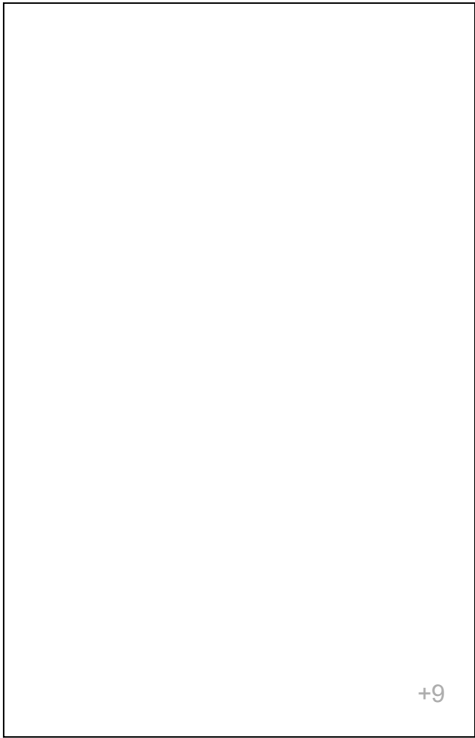
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The former king on his visit to a mine (left) and with his equerry Sir Dudley Forwood on another visit. Sir Dudley said: ‘We were none of us averse to Hitler politically. We felt that the Nazi regime was a more appropriate government than the Weimar Republic, which had been extremely socialist’

There can be no doubt what Edward meant by these words — he wanted Britain to be governed by some form of Fascism.

Even one of Edward’s equerries, Sir Dudley Forwood, was later to report: ‘We were none of us averse to Hitler politically. We felt that the Nazi regime was a more appropriate government than the Weimar Republic, which had been extremely socialist.’

Besides, there were many tenets of Nazism that sat easily on the then Prince’s shoulders. Although a loathsome form of ‘drawing-room’ anti-Semitism was common in Britain, it seems as though Edward had an especially virulent dislike of the Jews. When war eventually did break out, Edward revealed whom he thought lay behind it to a Spanish diplomat.

‘He throws all the blame on the Jews and the Reds, and [then foreign secretary Anthony] Eden with his people in the Foreign Office,’ the diplomat reported in June 1940, ‘and other politicians, all of whom he would have liked to put up against a wall.’

The Spaniard added in his report that this was by no means the first time Edward had spoken about Jews as warmongers. Such an absurd claim was, of course, identical to that often expressed by Nazis such as Joseph Goebbels, Nazi Germany’s minister of propaganda, who insisted that the Jews were responsible for the conflict — and indeed most of the world’s ills.

Back in 1936, when Edward became King, the Nazis were delighted. They had been in power for three years and now, finally, Britain was to be ruled by a man who understood not only Germany, but also had a penchant for Nazism.

‘I am convinced his friendly disposition towards Germany will have some influence on the formation of British foreign policy,’ observed the German ambassador to Britain.

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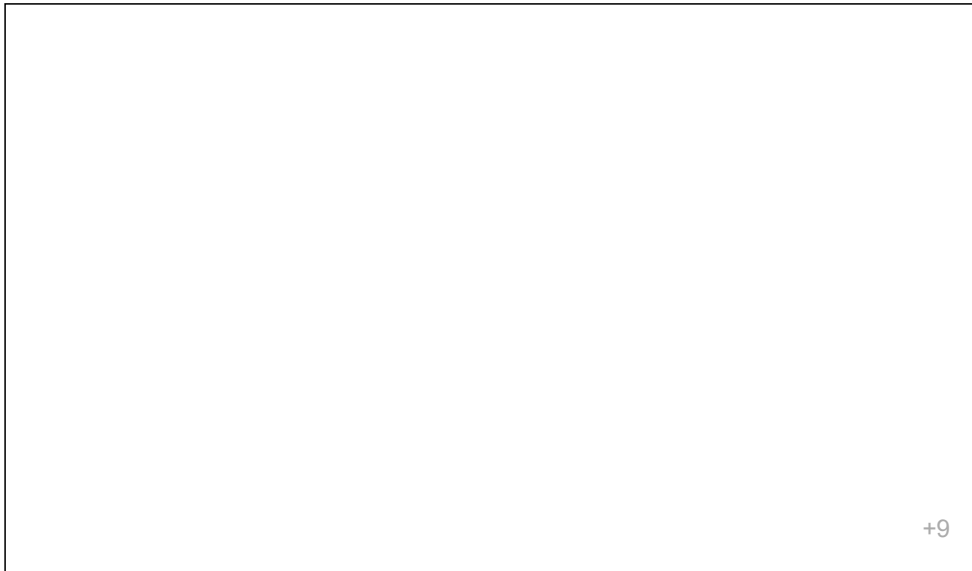
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And it was not just the Germans who suspected that Britain would become more pro-German. In early 1936, the U.S. State Department also believed that relations between Nazi Germany and Britain would become far more friendly. When this news was leaked to the Germans, Hitler was elated.



Although a loathsome form of 'drawing-room' anti-Semitism was common in Britain, it seems as though Edward had an especially virulent dislike of the Jews. Edward is pictured with Robert Ley, the Nazi leader of the German Labour Front (pictured in the black uniform to his left)

A key go-between was one of Edward's German cousins, Charles Edward, Duke of Saxe-Coburg und Gotha, who was ten years his senior. An avowed Nazi, the duke was a general in the brown-shirted Storm Troopers, and he had been sent by Hitler to London in 1935 to act as an unofficial diplomat and to use whatever leverage he could with the then Prince of Wales.

According to some historians, it was partly thanks to some behind-the-scenes skulduggery between the senior Nazi and Edward that helped to bring about the signing of the Anglo-German Naval Agreement.

This not only allowed Germany to increase the size of her Navy, but — more crucially — was also regarded by Hitler as a vital precursor to a future alliance between the two countries.

In addition, Edward is supposed to have told his cousin such an alliance was a political necessity, and that he wanted to meet Hitler as soon as possible.

That time would come, but not while he was King.

Whatever the truth behind the Naval Agreement, it is clear that when he came to the throne, Edward had direct links with the Nazis that circumvented formal diplomatic channels.

And, intriguingly, it was this cosyng up to the Nazis that some saw as the real reason behind Edward's abdication, and not because the King had fallen in love with a divorcee.

The Germans emphatically believed this. 'The whole marriage question was a false front that [Prime Minister] Baldwin has utilised to get rid of the king because of the latter's pro-German views,' Joachim von Ribbentrop — then the German ambassador in London, later the foreign minister — reported back to Hitler.

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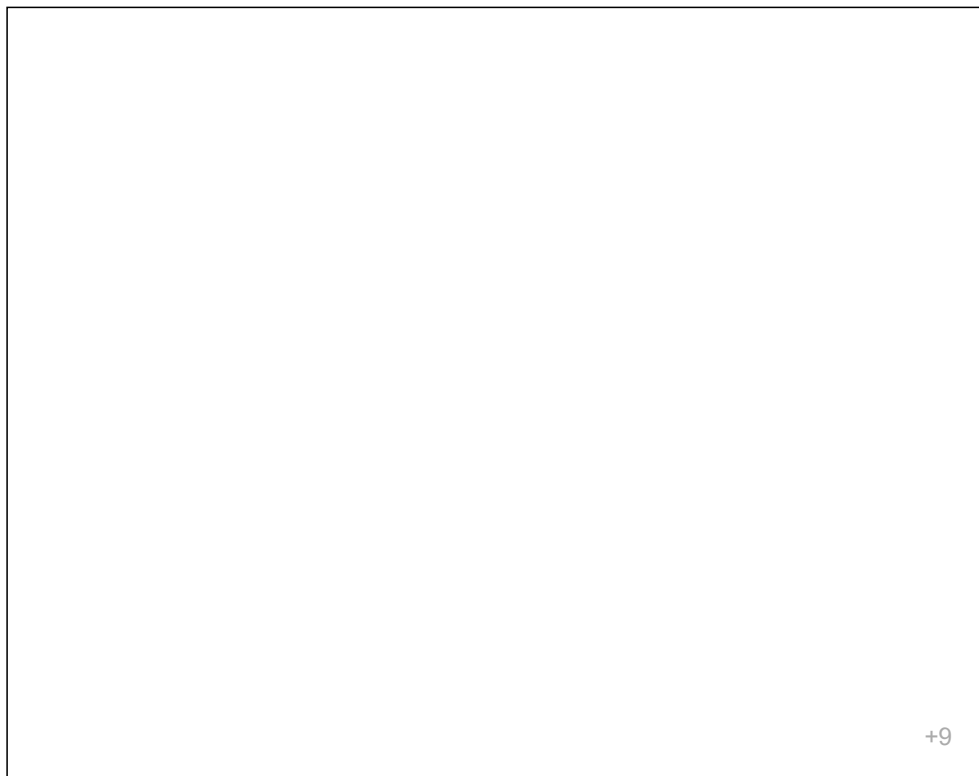
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Dastardly plot by Baldwin or not, the fact is that when Edward did abdicate in December 1936, the Nazis lost a friend.

The Americans recognised this, as did the Soviets, and doubtless, in private, so did senior British politicians and mandarins.

But although he was no longer on the throne, the Germans still regarded the now Duke of Windsor as being extremely powerful. The British Embassy in Berlin reported how von Ribbentrop believed that Edward 'will some day have a great influence over the British working man, and that every effort will be made . . . to make HRH [Edward] even more pro-German than he is already supposed in Germany to be.'

And it was this Nazi wooing of Edward that resulted in his being invited to tour Germany in October 1937, just ten months after he had relinquished his crown. News of the forthcoming trip was unofficially announced by this very newspaper in September that year, but it was not confirmed until October.



When Edward did abdicate in December 1936, the Nazis lost a friend. Above, the Duke of Windsor and Wallis Simpson pictured at Berchtesgaden after visiting Adolf Hitler in 1937. According to equerry Dudley Forwood, who accompanied the Duke on the tour, Edward said to Hitler: 'The Germans and the British races are one. They should always be one. They are of Hun origin'

The purpose of the visit, his office announced, was supposedly to study 'housing and working conditions . . . the Duke of Windsor has always interested himself in the well-being of the working man'.

As far as the Duke, his new bride and the Nazis were concerned, the 11-day trip was an unbridled success. While British diplomats and politicians fumed, the Nazis and the German people at large were spellbound by the couple. Wherever they went, they were greeted by roaring crowds, whose enthusiasm was clearly genuine and not the result of stage management by Goebbels.

Their guide was the sinister Robert Ley, the portly head of the German Labour Front, who would hang himself in October 1945 while awaiting trial for crimes against humanity and conspiracy to wage war.

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