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Artists united in condemnation of 'Nazi' festival

Babyshambles, Billy Bragg and Dirty Pretty Things are among the acts to have signed a letter slamming a festival held in honour of a 'neo Nazi' singer

Sean Michaels

guardian.co.uk, Monday September 29 2008 10.39 BST

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A dozen artists including Babyshambles, Billy Bragg, Roll Deep and Dirty Pretty Things have signed a letter condemning a Somerset festival in honour of Skrewdriver singer Ian Donaldson.

Some 800 people descended on Redhill, Somerset last weekend for a festival organised by the "white supremacist" record label ISD. What was originally promoted as a "scooter and music festival" turned into a rally of drunk and swastika-waving fans.

"Anti-fascist musicians we were horrified to read that 800 fascists gathered in Somerset at the weekend for a rally and concert in memory of Ian Donaldson," reads the letter from the Love Music Hate Racism campaign group.

"Donaldson described himself as a 'Neo Nazi' and [his band] Skrewdriver, who raised funds for both the National Front and British National Party, were instrumental in setting up Blood And Honour, a network of bands promoting Nazi ideology through music.

"It will come as no surprise to anybody familiar with Skrewdriver that the footage of the weekend's rally shows Nazi flags and members of the audience seig heiling."

Among those artists who co-signed the letter are Dirty Pretty Things, Reverend and the Makers' Jon McClure, Billy Bragg, Babyshambles' Drew McConnell, Roll Deep, Get Cape. Wear Cape. Fly, the Specials' Jerry Dammers, Late of the Pier, and rapper Akala.

Although no one was arrested at the September 20 event, the police received dozens of complaints as Redhill was overrun. Ian Saunders, manager of the Bungalow Inn, where the festival took place, complained to the Sun that, "If I knew that this would happen I would never have allowed it".

The letter from Love Music Hate Racism concludes: "Rallies like the one that took place at the weekend stand for the ugly politics of racial violence and ultimately the politics of Hitler's holocaust and a desire for an all-white Britain. Events like this have no place in Britain."

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