

Fascist Youth Gangs Plague West Coast

Fifth Estate Collective

In the last few years there has been a rapid increase of right-wing white gangs in Southern California's white, middle-class suburbs. Known as "white-boy gangs," they are not as territorial as the traditional cultural gangs in black or Mexican urban areas which Los Angeles authorities estimate at 50,000 members. Rather, the new gangs push their weight around at youth culture events anywhere in the area, mostly at punk and metal music gigs.

Some of the new white gangs do claim "turf" and "home" areas, but are prohibited from a high visibility because of heavier security in the suburbs. These gangs embrace neo-fascist ideologies and are overtly racist as well as heavily patriotic. In many ways, their views are only a somewhat twisted extension of those of the middle- and upper-class homes from which the gang members come where racism and hedonistic selfishness are the dominant values.

The gangs sport names like The SS, The Gestapo, Insane Punks, Manson Youth, Suicidal Boyz, Lords of Destruction and the Family. The media has quickly picked up on the sensational aspects of the issue by featuring headlines like "Anarchy and Paganism to Blame" (for gang violence). The media's willingness to repeat state lies about the gangs' ideology appeases parents and school authority, but also sets the stage for a modern witch hunt against all unconventional youth.

The gangs have been responsible for several recent killings and make violence a predictable feature of concerts and other youth events. A recent anti-war benefit was plagued by skinhead instigated fights including an attack on a female speaker. Even with all of the trappings of rebellion these gangs affect against society, parents and the government (usually because it's too liberal), their ultra-nihilism is not true rebellion. Ultimately, they are unwilling to give up their class and race privileges and wind up as stooges for the political right just as the nazi brownshirts were.

The Creative Anarchists Networks (CAN) and other youth activists have been attempting to reach gang kids by confronting them and talking about what they are doing to the youth scene. They have been distributing anti-gang mentality leaflets and working with anarchist youth activists in the Los Angeles/Orange County area to coordinate actions and propaganda. At benefit concerts, gang attacks are swiftly resisted by mass defense and as a protest, the shows are immediately closed upon the outbreak of violence.

CAN has been attacked at two recent benefits for the Big Mountain defense effort, and the Concrete Underground Free Center was attacked on New Year's Eve by the White Ontario Skins, an LA skinhead gang. Damage to the center was so extensive after the assault that it was forced to close and has not re-opened.

The positive news is that the kids are beginning to realize that they must join together to fight off these attacks. CAN called an anti-gang conference on Jan. 26 which was attended by several bands, youth groups and many individuals. The participants agreed to combine energies for future propaganda work and for collective security at alternative youth events. The bands agreed to make statements condemning gangs and violence at their shows and to urge the audience to chase out troublemakers.

Although there have been stabbings, threats, sabotage and continued violence, CAN continues its activity of prison concerts, support work for native people and prisoners, publication of The New Iron Column as well as radical youth street work. CAN writes us that they live in a "nazi occupation zone behind the Orange Curtain—Reagan Country—home of Wally George and the John Birch Society."

When CAN writes us they often sign their letters, "Under Siege." They want contact, support and publicity about their situation from anti-authoritarian papers and zines across the world. They are glad to send their publication. Write them at CAN, 1728 W. Ball, No. 4, Anaheim CA 92804.

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