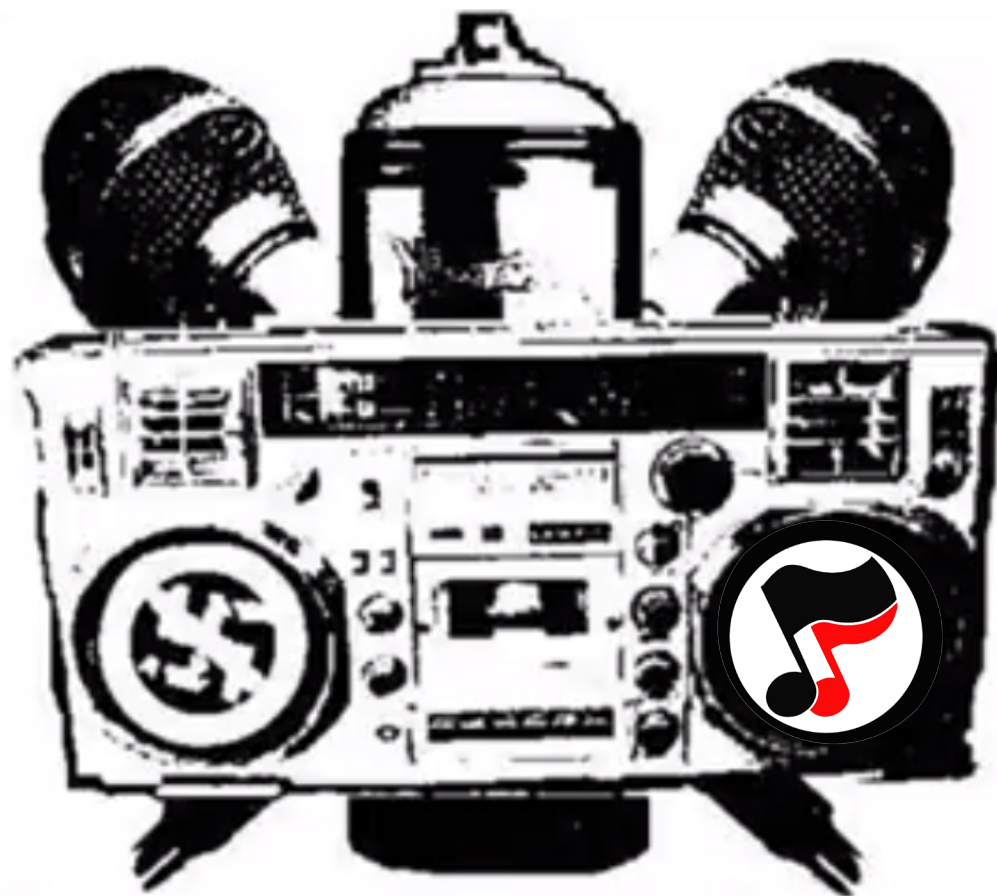


LOVE MUSIC, HATE RACISM!



*on fascists in music scenes
& how to kick them out!*

This zine has been compiled to offer an informative yet accessible introduction to the idea of fascist cultural infiltration into alternative subcultures. Fascists and Nazis have used music scenes as recruiting grounds for their crews and supporters, looking for fertile ground to plant their seeds of racism and bigotry. This is still particularly true in contemporary metal, black metal, noise (harsh-noise), neo-folk, the list of genres goes on. It is of dire importance to expose fascists in our music scenes, and then to remove them. In the first article in this zine, Alexander Reid Ross offers a broad reaching yet quick history of fascists in punk and metal scenes. The second article offers a large handful of stories and reflections on kicking Nazis out of punk shows, sometimes violently. The publisher of this zine does not particularly agree with everything stated in this zine, specifically the line from the singer of Camper Van Beethoven about how we should not give Nazis the seriousness they are hoping for... Regardless, the history is here, and let the lessons that you take from it be your own. It is the publisher's wishes that this be a tool to help wedge out the fascists in our music scenes everywhere.

Other articles worth reading on these topics include but are not limited to:

A Field Guide to Straw Men: Sade, Exile, Esoteric Fascism and Olympia's Little White Lies (available at pugetsoundanarchists.org)

The Undying Appeal of White Nationalism (available at anarchistnews.org)

Apoliteic Music: Neo-Folk, Martial Industrial and 'Metapolitical Fascism' by Anton Shekhovstov

*This zine designed & formatted in Occupied Duwamish Territory.
Cover image graciously borrowed from Hoods Up 495, aka Moscow Death Brigade.*

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interesting to often see how upset that made them, like they had no idea how much people hated them. I found this approach to be effective. It's not for me to instruct someone to go hit someone else, but if I can say something that makes everyone laugh at these guys, it empowers the right people and diminishes the right people.

Lowery: I can't say we specifically set out to strike a blow against fascist Nazi skinheads, but we were trolling the audience when we first started out, and that was specifically one group we were trolling. So yeah, the ridicule is one part of it. I posted something on Facebook after the Charlottesville thing that some people liked and some people didn't: "Don't give these people power by taking them so seriously."

Allen: Obviously, the situation in America is very different, with regards to weapons. That's something that isn't really so much of an issue, thankfully, in Europe. On the other hand, there are general principles that stand up: You've got to stand up to bullies.... Speaking personally, members of my family were killed and imprisoned by the Nazis. If you think you can just have a reasoned debate with them, you're going to be in for a nasty surprise.

Jenifer: One time, I was in Europe and this kid said, "Go home, you fuckin' Yankee n-----," and spit on me and spit on my locks. So I jumped off stage. When I stepped back to sock his ass, he was like, "No, mate!" Like, "Damn, my little punk ass is gonna get knocked out!" I can't say I'd ever see a real troupe of them. The good skins would beat their ass as often. I'll give you another example. I was going to the bathroom before the club opened. I saw a kid and he followed me. When I came out, he said, "Mr. Jenifer, I want you to know, I used to be a racist, and a skinhead and an asshole, and ever since I saw your band I'm different. I have a wife and kids." That alone was my platinum record.

Rollins: Now, people should avoid physical confrontation. When I was young, it was a bloody nose, the occasional stabbing. Now it's a gun under the car seat. When you hit someone, it's assault and you can go to jail and pay a ton in fines and lawyers. Protesters must realize that a lot of these guys come prepared to goad you into a fight. They're often more ready than you will ever be. If you start showing up with your helmet and all, then it escalates, and soon someone is going to empty a magazine of rounds into a crowd and it will go from there. I think that's going to happen anyway, but it shouldn't be you.

A Brief But Very Informative History of How Fascists Infiltrated Punk and Metal

published on Noisey-Vice on August 18th, 2017

by Alexander Reid Ross

Since the 1970s, fascists have been trying to push their ideology on punks and metalheads by cloaking it in esotericism and "free expression."

The fallout from the Unite the Right Rally in Charlottesville organized by open fascists has brought a renewed sense of urgency for the anti-racist and anti-fascist movement. Following the abortive rally, a neo-Nazi named James Alex Fields drove into a contingent of antifascists, murdering one and injuring 19. Fields was pictured at the rally among the fascist Vanguard America group, wearing their uniform of white polos and khaki pants and brandishing a shield with their logo of two fasces crossed in an X. This image appears to give us a clear understanding of what fascism looks like and where it can be opposed. However, fascist organizing is rarely so open or obvious. Fascist efforts to recruit and influence often take place under shades of ambiguity within subcultural spaces, for instance at shows, parties, in magazines, and online. There is a likelihood that many will either leave the alt-right or retreat back into such spaces to regain momentum.

For people who live across the country from Charlottesville, in Portland, Oregon, the August 12 slaying brought back sad memories of May 26, when a racially-motivated slashing by Jeremy Joseph Christian left two dead and one critically injured on public transit. News quickly emerged of Christian's associations with recent alt-right linked protests, but he did not fit the typical white supremacist profile—he was into heavy metal, anarchy, and nihilism.

While Fields gives us the image of the clean-cut fascist from the Midwest, eager to bully others whom he deems weaker and capable of extreme acts of violence, it is important to remember that the alt-right emerged through a longer history of ongoing efforts by fascists to manipulate different cultures and their values, from conservative anti-interventionism to leftist anti-imperialism and even rock subcultures. In order to stop fascists from continuing to organize, subcultures must stand against not just those wearing white polo shirts and khakis but those who are used to the cover of ambiguity often afforded by the insular subcultural dynamics of belonging and in-group formation.

In the wake of the May 26 murders in Portland and the Charlottesville slaying on August 12, the alt-right must have no safe space, no place to hide, and no capacity to organize.

Metapolitics, Skinheads, and Neofolk

A glance at the photographs and videos from Saturday's macabre display and the alt-right's torch lit march through the University of Virginia that took place the previous evening reveals not just a renegade country club aesthetic, but an assortment of styles, from hipster mustaches and haircuts to hate rock band shirts and open skinheads wearing Blood & Honour merch. The alt-right has not attempted to replace such counter-cultural scenes as add onto them with new sectors of the population. In fact, the punk attitude and metal subcultures remain vital to the modern fascist movement.

When the punk and metal scenes came to prominence first in the 1970s, they encapsulated the feelings of working class people betrayed by conditions out of their control. Exploiting an economic downturn in the UK under a left-wing Labour government, fascists began organizing for a political party called the National Front but faced violent opposition from the left. A group of National Front members agreed on a "metapolitical" approach, intervening in subcultural milieus like punk and metal to turn them into breeding grounds for fascism. This approach, gleaned from a group of fascist ideologues known as the European New Right, would later form the bedrock of the alt-right's ideology.

Taking inspiration from a network of "national revolutionary" terrorist cells structured like left-wing nuclei and inspired by the occult fascist, Julius Evola, this breakaway group founded the Official National Front and began actively working to recruit fascist skinheads as "political soldiers." Their seminal point person in this regard, Ian Stuart Donaldson, fronted a band called Skrewdriver, which emerged with the gritty rock 'n' roll of the Oi! punk scene in 1976. When leftists organized an annual concert called Rock Against Racism to build a grassroots movement against the National Front and fascist skinheads, Donaldson created a counter-event called Rock Against Communism and a distribution network called Blood & Honour, both of which continue to this day.

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Doug Kauffman (*longtime Denver concert promoter*): That whole movement was a frightening one to have at a show. The last [Denver punk band] Warlock Pinchers show at the Gothic Theatre, they all came and they were sieg-heiling, and the entire crowd on the main floor just suddenly turned on them. Everybody said, "We've had enough of this shit." All of a sudden, this phalanx of skinheads came running through the front doors and were never seen or heard from again. It was an amazing thing—the crowd just collectively decided, "There's 700 of us and there's 40 of you, and we've had it." They ran with their tied-up boots and their gray jackets and their shaved heads, and they ran out of that theater, and I swear to God, it ended the problem.

Rollins: When I had a bunch of overweight teenagers sieg-heiling me, I was unable to take it seriously. I told them that they wouldn't make it through a week of Army boot camp, much less the Third Reich. They got really mad.

Miraculously, fascist violence at punk shows rarely led to extreme injuries or death. Still, several were injured (and one stabbed) at a 2006 San Bernardino, California, concert in which neo-Nazis reportedly screamed racial epithets and caused a riot of 1,500 people.

Harris: It mostly got policed by the rest of us. We all had our eyes on [skinheads], and if they hurt someone in the mosh pit, quickly we would drag them out and kick them out of the show. If there were bouncers at the club, we definitely would have no trouble convincing them that this skinhead was hurting people. I never saw anybody get really hurt.

Tobin Bawinkel (*singer and guitarist, Flatfoot 56*): At the Crocodile Rock Café in Allentown, Pennsylvania, there was a skinhead crew there. It was prior to the alt-right thing. We were doing our set, [including a] cover of "We're Not Gonna Take It" by Twisted Sister as kind of a joke song. Three of the biggest skinheads I've ever seen stand in the middle of the pit and start sieg-heiling. I lost it. I started yelling at them and freaking out: "This is not a place you're welcome at, we don't want you here, you need to leave." They just stood there and stared at me. All the bands we were on tour with started to file in behind me with bats and anything they could find, and started glaring. "Hey, Tobin's faced off against the Nazis! Get up there!"

Brecht: We still get a lot of fights. It's usually not Nazi skinheads. It's random people. "You bumped into my girlfriend! And spilled her beer!"

Rollins: When I was able to get the audience to turn on them, it was

on stage, we're celebrating that we made it through another show, and the bouncers were laughing it off. And the owner said, "We're going to be here at least a couple of hours." I go and I crack the door open, and I look out in the parking lot, and it's all the skinheads, they're in their four or five cars, and they're driving in circles in the parking lot, waiting for us to come out. A couple hours later, they were gone.

Allen: We were on tour with some Finnish punk bands and we had a gig in Tallinn, the capital of Estonia. The Finns came up to us at the venue: "You're not going to believe this, there's this Nazi-bonehead band playing, and they had songs like 'N----- Get Back to the Jungle.'" And we were like, "What?"

Darryl Jenifer (*bassist, Bad Brains*): Out of my whole 40 years in Bad Brains, I probably faced racism or heard the word "n-----" maybe a handful of times. Back in the '80s, we were playing a show in Oklahoma. The little punk-rock kid came up and said, "I love your band, but my boyfriend and his friends are Nazis, they're going to come down and kick y'all's ass." But they never came. That seemed to happen with the Bad Brains. No one came up with us in that "n-----" shit. I'm thinking we're unique in that. I'd be all around white culture, and it's just something that didn't ring to me. And I jumped off tour buses and ran into the Klan's gas stations.

Allen: There have been gigs where Nazis have turned up and we've said, "We're not playing until these fuckers are out of here." In this instance, we said, "We're going to go and talk about this stuff." We went on, and the first songs we did were about fascism and racism. It wasn't going down very well.... They hit me and I hit them with a microphone stand, and it turned into a barroom brawl, like in a Western. Most of the locals sat there and watched as if it was entertainment. The only ones who lifted a finger to help were the Russian bar owners who came out from behind the bar with blocks of wood and laid into the boneheads.

David Lowery (*singer, Camper Van Beethoven*): What we would do was play these fast ska songs. They would kind of run around in circles and skank, and they were happy with us until we started playing something that offended them. I specifically remember playing a Veterans of Foreign Wars or Knights of Columbus hall. We probably had about 800 people in Chico, California, and the crowd kind of turned on us. We were hippies, we had long hair, we played "Wasted" and "White Riot" in this country style, and it just wasn't going well. We had to play a lot of these fast ska tunes to get them under control. I remember going, "I don't know if we're going to make it out of here. I don't know if we have enough of these fast ska tunes to last the 25 minutes."

The Would-Be National-Bolshevik "Avant-Garde"

In the early 1980s, two members of a left-wing band that had played at Rock Against Racism moved to Germany disillusioned by the left, and joined the "third positionist" tendency of fascism (neither capitalism nor state communism but national socialism). What they created was a kind of avant-garde fascist aesthetic that could draw in those who recoiled at the drunken, boisterous presence of skinheads.

Taking ideas from both left and right while adopting Evola's occult trappings "beyond" ideology, their new band, Death In June, produced a brooding, monotonous sound with often lugubrious lyrics evoking the ruins of civilization and the desire to rise, phoenix-like from the ashes. Soon, Death In June and associates developed a network of close-knit bands around the genre, "neofolk," which was loosely connected to the National Front, as well as fascist think tanks like the Islands of the North Atlantic (IONA) and Transeuropa.

While Donaldson's Blood & Honor distribution network helped spread the National Front and Nazi ideology through skinhead shows and parties around the world, neofolk bands and related noise and experimental artists like Boyd Rice and Michael Moynihan increasingly explored the counter-cultural allure of metapolitics, becoming involved in Satanism, paganism, and fascism. Dedicated musicians ensured that no milieu, excepting hate rock, could be exclusively claimed by fascists, but the struggle would be difficult and often violent.

In San Francisco, the fascist skinhead and avant-garde scenes converged with the American Front, which developed further ties to larger political assemblages from Australia to Belgium, Canada to Spain, France, and England in a new network that would take the name "European Liberation Front." Many of these groups organized under "national-Bolshevik" ideas that the world should be organized into ethno-states in a federated ultranationalist version of the Soviet Union. It was the earliest issuance of an international fascist syndicate that would later come under the influence of Russian fascist Alexander Dugin and his "Eurasianist" philosophy, both of which are currently associated with the alt-right. European Liberation Front organizers like Troy Southgate, formerly of the Official National Front, sought to exploit the anarchist ideology associated with punk and metal subcultures, as well as rebellious autonomous radical groups. Calling their syncretic ideological fusion "national-anarchism," these fascists commandeered a Trotskyist strategy known as "entryism," entering groups (particularly in the green movement) and either turning them toward their ideology or destroying

them from within. In a fashion later taken up by the alt-right, fascists deployed leftist ideas against the left in order to conceal itself while eroding egalitarian and anarchist tendencies within subcultures that remained superficially anarchic. Denying fascists such entry points cuts a large and important base off from their organizing.

National Socialist Black Metal

Through record labels like Resistance Records, Elegy Records, and Unholy Records, distribution enterprises like Rouge et Noir, and magazines like Requiem Gothique and Napalm Rock, fascists merged haterock and neofolk with anarchist and nihilist thought in order to convincingly carry their ideas and themes into subversive, though politically ambiguous, countercultures. Important themes included spiritual occultism and nihilism (as in, everything must be destroyed for truly nationalist life to begin anew), as well as a linking of localized ecology with the essence and spirit of the nation, often identified along “folkish” or tribal lines.

Fascists also fetishized the Aryan mythos and a return to paganism as naturally closer to the European folk—a tendency that became especially clear with their championing of Scandinavian black metal. Developed as a reaction to the glitzy hair metal and messy death metal bands of the 1980s, early Scandinavian black metal strove for brutality in music, emphasizing an austere aesthetic of blood, violence, and sacrificial rituals.

As black metal spread to the US and several groups aligned with Blood & Honour, a number of bands became increasingly open about white nationalism. After Burzum leader Varg Vikernes murdered a member of a rival band, Michael Moynihan co-authored *Lords of Chaos* to discuss black metal and satanism in what became the leading narrative of the black metal scene. Thus, many young people intrigued by the gruesome and brutal black metal scene found their introduction through a “heathen anarcho-fascist,” according to eminent scholar Mattias Gardell, feeding into a growing international network of specifically National Socialist Black Metal (NSBM) bands and fans.

Portland’s Ominous Warning

The consequences for cross-over between fascist and anarchist ideas in subcultures can be severe. In May 2010, antifascists campaigning against the violent fascist skinhead network, Volksfront, were shocked when an antifascist activist named Luke V. Querner was shot by a fascist, leaving him paralyzed. Following the shooting, Rose City Antifa released

10 or 12 people staring down at 30 people. An African-American friend of mine got his collarbone broken. I took a baseball bat and smashed the windshield. They all jumped into it and drove away. They were afraid of their vehicle getting hurt.

Brecht: I decided to let the worst Nazi of all get up on stage, and gave him the mike and let him say what he wanted to say. Of course, he wasn’t very intelligent and he started sieg-heiling and saying racist nonsense or whatever. Our tour manager grabbed a drum stand and walloped him on the back of the head. Once they saw we attacked the Nazi, then everybody else started attacking his buddies out in the audience.

Keith Morris (*frontman, Black Flag and Circle Jerks*): I witnessed this thing called the Wall of Death in Trenton, New Jersey, at the City Gardens. The skinheads would line up at the back bar and lock arms and run towards the front of the stage, and if you just happened to get in their way, you’d get knocked down, you’d get kicked, you’d get trampled. I leapt off the stage and got in the face of the biggest guy—he probably would have hit me a couple of times, and I would have been in traction in the hospital. I’m ready to get pulverized. I’m ready to just be a puddle, a broken and busted blob of humanity, lying in the middle of this dance floor.

And all of a sudden it’s like the trumpeteers going, “Da da da da da!” Here comes the cavalry. It’s all the bouncers saying, “This thing’s been going on for like six to eight months a year, we just let everybody do what they’re going to do, and people get hurt and leave early and people go to their cars and drive away. We don’t want them here anymore.” Now I’ve got like six bouncers—we’re the Avengers, the Hulk, and Thor and Iron Man.

Groups of Nazi skinheads began to coalesce in cities around the world, using clubs such as City Gardens, in Trenton, New Jersey, as bases for their operations. Performers began to identify the ringleaders who caused most of the violence in each city.

Steven DiLodovico (*co-author of No Slam Dancing, No Stage Diving, No Spikes: An Oral History of the Legendary City Gardens*): You know, half of the Circle Jerks are Jewish, so it’s really insulting. Keith Morris is like 5-foot-2. They’re not big, fighting dudes, but they just didn’t give a fuck. They weren’t going to be intimidated.

Morris: When the bouncers were at my side, the skinheads’ feelings were hurt, their toes had been stepped on. “Oh, woe is me! Poor little me!” At the end of the night, after everybody left, our equipment’s still

jackets and big boots and baldhead haircuts. With the sieg-heiling and the saluting. There must have been 20 of ‘em... They started giving us the cheers and synchronized maneuvers. And we just kept playing. The way the Minutemen played was just like one big song, so they didn’t really get stuff in there. We were kind of answering them with our songs.

Thor Harris (*percussionist, Swans; creator, “How to Punch a Nazi” video*): I remember being at shows like Scratch Acid, where skinheads would take over a mosh pit, which is generally a really friendly thing. If people fall down, other people will pick them up. And the skinheads would make it a not-friendly thing.

Rollins: Some of the punk rockers hit back, so that became a thing that went on for years. It was a mix of testosterone, Reagan, ignorance, anger, and youth. Some of these guys were just lightweight followers and would only attack in groups, but a lot of them were genuine bad guys who were into Clockwork Orange—scale violence. It was no joke.

By the mid-’80s, kids who wanted to play rock ‘n’ roll to their friends found themselves in the position of having to put up with crowd wars between Nazis and anti-fascists. To make things especially confusing, both groups shaved their heads, and it was only through a complicated code of color-coordinated shoelaces that anyone could tell them apart.

Rollins: In the Black Flag days, we had skinhead problems in the lower half of America. Florida, especially. One night in 1986, they mugged our soundman, kicked his head in and cut the lines to our PA. The cops came, shut the show down, and told us we were the problem and we had an hour to get over their county line. The skinheads were standing behind them, flipping us off.

Kurt Brecht (*singer, D.R.I. [Dirty Rotten Imbeciles]*): In Canberra, Australia, it was only a handful of them, but they were disrupting the show and standing in front of us. Everybody was kind of standing around, and that’s when I gave a little rant on stage: “Why aren’t you doing anything?” [People in the crowd responded:] “You guys can leave, but we have to see them around, and they’ll jump us later and scratch our cars.”

Dave Dictor (*singer, M.D.C.*): It happened on Gilman Street in Berkeley, California, in 1988. [Nazi skinheads] were charging in the club. We were able to push them outside the club. They’d come at you in different ways, with baseball bats, and they had clubs, and they had a Chevy Suburban they’d use like a tank. We literally had open clashes for an hour and a half. Nobody called the police. I was out there with about

an exposé of two NSBM bands, Immortal Pride and Fanisk, that eerily cautioned, “subcultural settings are also being contested ideologically, a reality that we ignore at our own risk.”

According to comments on the Indymedia page, the Volksfront-connected group, Immortal Pride, admitted their fascism proudly, while Fanisk argued that their “transcendent” art had been misunderstood by vulgar, witch-hunting antifascists. Fanisk’s attempts to deflect allegations ran parallel to fascists’ attempts to translate their ideas into uncontroversial themes like “the right to difference,” which means apartheid style ethno-states, or “simultaneously being in favor of White Power, Yellow Power[, Black Power], and Red Power.”

Amid the controversy and fallout from both the shooting and subsequent exposé, one Immortal Pride fan named Tom Christensen quietly announced on Stormfront his exploitation of the punk and black metal scene and gathering of information on antifascists:

“I used to be a big punk rocker in the music scene and there were some antis that ran around in the same scene. I was friends with a few... I kept my beliefs to myself and would shut down any opinions the[y] expressed that seemed to have holes in them. It’s been fairly useful to know some of these people. I now know who all the major players are in the anti and SHARP [Skinheads Against Racial Prejudice] scene.”

He later asked Stormfront whether or not he should snitch out his antifascist associates. Christensen was discovered by Rose City Antifa and outed in a May 2013 alert, only after a series of regional grand jury indictments of anarchists that some speculate might have used information he handed over to the police. He also came to identify as “Trigger” Tom, suggesting perhaps that he had shot Querner in 2010. Whether or not those speculations are accurate, Christensen’s position within radical subcultures opened antifascists to crucial vulnerabilities. As recently as Tuesday, August 8, Christensen was arrested for stabbing someone at a Rancid/Dropkick Murphys show in Chicago.

An End to Entryism?

To this day, fascist groups find shelter moving between politically ambiguous subcultures and fascist groups. Paul Waggner, the leader of a violent bioregionalist-fascist group, the Wolves of Vinland, which has chapters across the US, attempts to spread his ethno-separatist vision through both neofolk and black metal projects. Despite the fact that WoV Portland-area leader Jack Donovan calls himself an “anarcho-fascist” and

has spoken at alt-right conferences, efforts by Rose City Antifa to expose this group and their local workings have met with resistance from nihilist apologists.

It was significant to many that Jeremy Christian identified his idea of a bioregionalist, whites-only homeland in the Pacific Northwest as “Vinland,” a term used not just by WoV but also by the now-defunct US chapter of the NSBM-linked fascist group, Heathen Front, headed by infamous Nazi, James Mason, whose work is published by “anarcho-fascist” Michael Moynihan.

Christian’s mixture of bioregionalism, racism, and metal also resonated with the leader of the Nazi group Northwest Front, Harold Covington, whose experience as a Nazi includes participating in planning the 1979 Greensboro Massacre and creating the Blood & Honour-linked UK fascist skinhead group Combat 18. Currently dedicated to entering the popular Cascadian bioregional movement and turning it toward fascism, Covington declared, “it does look like [Jeremy Christian] was one of ‘our’ many fringe characters[.]” Similar white nationalist groups exist around the neo-Confederate movement in the South.

The metal scene, punk, bioregionalism, and other interlinked subcultural milieus continue to provide a sense of belonging for those who need it, but often become insular and defensive when criticized from the outside. That insularity opens a vulnerability to the persistent efforts of fascist entryists. Nevertheless, opposition continues to grow from within as people become increasingly wise to the dangers posed by creeping fascism.

In the last few years, protests have grown outside of venues that host metal and neofolk bands that have been proven to be or are allegedly associated with fascism. Protests against Death in June have emerged from Portland to South Florida; a large group of people demonstrated against Graveland in Montreal, while Satanic Warmaster had to play a secret show in Glasgow, Blood and Sun gigs were called off in the Midwest, and Marduk was cancelled in Oakland and protested in Austin. Meanwhile, antifascist black metal bands like Ancst and Dawn Ray’d are gaining notoriety for their rejection of sexism and racism.

Despite some fans and journalists complaining about the free speech of musicians, judging by the increasing demonstrations, the metal scene is becoming increasingly conscious not only of the safety of its own members, but its role in either fanning the flames of a global fascist revival or helping to put them out.

Nazi Punks Fk Off: How Black Flag, Bad Brains, and More Took Back Their Scene from White Supremacists**

published by GQ on January 16th, 2018

By Steve Knopper

An oral history of fighting back against Nazis.

Every hardcore band you loved in the ‘80s and beyond, from Black Flag to Minutemen to Fugazi, had one unfortunate thing in common: Nazi skinheads occasionally stormed their concerts, stomped their fans, gave Hitler salutes in lieu of applauding, and generally turned a communal experience into one full of hatred and conflict. Punk rockers had flirted with fascist imagery for shock value, with the Sex Pistols’ Sid Vicious and Siouxsie Sioux wearing swastikas in public, but, as early San Francisco scenester Howie Klein, later president of Reprise Records, recalls: “Suddenly, you had people who were part of the scene who didn’t understand ‘fascist bad.’”

By 1980, a more violent strain of punk fans was infecting punk shows. “Pogoing became slam-dancing, now known as moshing, and some of ‘em didn’t seem like they were there to enjoy the music, as much as they were there to beat up on people—sometimes in a really chickenshit way,” says Jello Biafra, whose band, Dead Kennedys, put out a classic song about it in 1981: “Nazi Punks Fuck Off.”

In the era of Trump and the alt-right, Charlottesville, and “very fine people on both sides,” fighting Nazis is sadly newly relevant, and veterans of the hardcore-vs.-skinheads battles of yore are happy to help with war stories and advice. (Spoiler alert: Most advocate punching Nazis in the face.) Here’s an oral history on how punks took back their scene.

Deek Allen (*singer, Oi Polloi*): We started in 1981. We had trouble with Nazis from fairly early on, sadly.

Henry Rollins (*singer, Black Flag*): Some skinheads thought the punk rockers were weak or whatever, so they went to the shows to show them who the real men were.

Mike Watt (*bassist, Minutemen*): The first time Minutemen went overseas, Black Flag brought us over on tour. We’re playing the Paradiso [in Amsterdam] in February 1983. These guys are all wearing green