

REAL SKINHEADS AREN'T RACIST!

These days, it seems everyone thinks all skinheads are racist. Thanks to the mass-media (looking for a sensationalized story to sell papers and air-time), and the increased growth of the racist right's organizing efforts in North America, our subculture has been stolen and demonized.

THE ORIGINAL SKINS

The original skinheads first appeared in England in the late 1960's, growing out of the "rude-boy" and "hard-mod" movements. White, working-class culture united with that brought to the UK by Jamaican immigrants, and skinheads were the result. The original skins were black and white, and listened to ska music (a speeded up, more danceable form of reggae), as well as soul and blue beat.

These skins had a very tough, clean style which expressed their working-class backgrounds, wearing Doc Marten workboots, Levi's jeans, donkey jackets and suspenders (called "braces"). At dances they would wear flashy suits, and mixed freely with West Indian youth, whose music and culture they admired. Racial violence by skinheads

was near non-existent at this point. How could there be when the skinhead style grew out of black culture, and skins listened to black music?! (For this reason, we call neo-nazis "boneheads" because they are an abomination to where real skinheads come from)

It is true that skinheads were often linked to violence (which was frequently mindless). Skinheads frequently got into scraps with other subcultures, the police, and towards the end, other skinheads. This eventually led to their downfall, and by 1972 the original skins were a rare breed.



THE Oi! YEARS

Out of the punk rock explosion of the late 70's grew Oi!, a street level movement of kids dedicated to bringing punk back to its angry roots. Oi! bands sung about real issues faced by youth in the UK, such as unemployment, prison, authority, etc., and many bands had an obvious left-wing slant (such as SHAM 69, THE BUSINESS, & the ANGELIC UPSTARTS).

Unfortunately, other people sought to cash in on the new skinhead revival. Garry Bushell, a writer for SOUNDS music magazine (the SPIN or ROLLING



STONE of the UK) frequently played up Oi!'s negative image of violence and aggressiveness, while at the same time making a hefty amount of money by promoting records of bonehead bands. This attracted a lot of thugs to what was once a positive, working class movement.

At the same time, due to outreach by the NATIONAL FRONT (a fascist political party which at that time was at its height in Britain), racist and neo-nazi skinheads also began to appear. A mutation of the original racially-mixed skinhead movement, they sought easy scapegoats to the problems of unemployment and recession, blaming immigrants, blacks and other minorities instead of the conservative British government (then under Margaret "the Vampire" Thatcher). Nazi skinhead bands such as SKREWDRIVER and BRUTAL ATTACK, and organizations like BLOOD & HONOUR (a racist skinhead network) made the message popular and accepted in the skinhead subculture.

Of course, the mass media helped the nazis along by giving them exposure without debate. Interested only in selling papers, the media refused to allow anti-racist skins a voice, effectively silencing those who directly fought this nazi-resurgence on the streets & flooding the skin scene with right-wing scum. Despite this setback, real anti-racist skins continued to fight on for their tradition by organizing Oi! Against Racism concerts, and physically fighting nazis out of the streets and shows.



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A SKIN?

Real skinheads hold certain ideals in common. We are all working and lower-middle class. We believe in unity, pride in our class and in ourselves. We enjoy music, dancing and a good night out. Many of us like beer (though some don't). We seem to get in a lot of fights (though many of us do not start them). We are militant in standing up for what

we believe in. And WE HATE RACISM, and fight it where ever it rears its ugly head.



FIGHT FASCISM

People ask why we don't just give up being skins, since we get attacked both by the right for being anti-racist, and the left and general public who think all skins are racists. To this, we answer that skinhead is our identity. We believe in it. It's who we are, and we could no more give it up than change where we were born or the color of our skin. We are proud of what being a skin really stands for (and not the racist shit preached by the right and the media), and we want to create a culture that expresses our ideals. In short, being a skin is our life and we won't let anyone take that away from us.

THE NEW BREED

There is a growing section of the skinhead movement who are not only anti-racist, but also strongly left-wing. Many of us are anarchists, socialists, communists and anti-fascists. In addition to fighting racism, we fight against sexism & homophobia (the verbal, physical and psychological attacks on gays and lesbians). We fight against war, against attacks on the poor and working class (such as strike breaking, cutbacks, etc.), against imperialist intervention, police brutality and prisons. We fight for a better world based on our beliefs.

FIGHT FOR YOUR CLASS, NOT YOUR COUNTRY!

While many skins are nationalists, and proudly display the flag of their country, we are against this. Being nationalist goes against what being a skin means to us. Patriotism is a tool of the politicians and the rich of all nations to make the working class fight one another, instead of fighting their real enemies. Nationalism has poor kids killing each other in wars, and blaming foreigners and immigrants for the lack of jobs (instead of the corporations who exploit us all). Patriotism has been responsible for slavery and the massacre of millions of indigenous people. Instead of nationalism, we promote pride in our class and culture. We believe in uniting the international working class against the rich bastard rulers who screw us over every day.



Skinheads in protest of U.S. interference in Nicaragua
Minneapolis, MN-1988

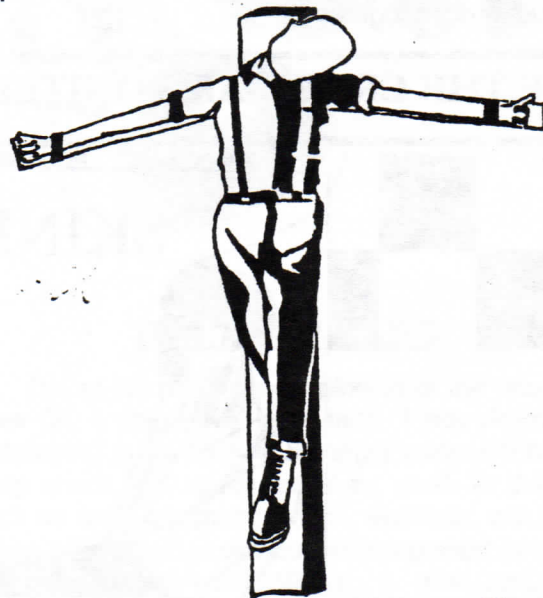
FENCEWALKERS

Many skins argue we should keep our beliefs out of the scene. To this we argue that being a skin means standing up for what you believe in, and having pride in it. We hate the rich, the police, the nazis and the politicians. We want change because

we're tired of being screwed over, and we want a better world. Politics affects our lives, and we're sick of letting others "crucify" us without a fight. We're proud of our beliefs because they are part of who we are. So our politics reflect who we are, where we're from and where we want to go. And we're working-class skins who want a change, so our beliefs belong at the shows, clubs and dancehalls.

Also, the nazis offer something to angry kids. These kids often do not start out as white supremacists, but they are in a process of rebelling against authority. The nazis offer scapegoats, "revolutionary solutions" (though we think the wrong ones) and a strong movement to be part of. If we want to stop the nazis and get our subculture back, we have to offer a strong movement as well, preferably one which offers REAL revolutionary solutions beyond patriotism and nationalism.

"Fencewalkers" are skins who refuse to take sides, but claim to be into "unity". We argue there can be no "unity" with boneheads. In the coming battle you have to choose sides-the nazis or us. And you'd better know which side of the fence you stand on!



CRUCIFIED BY CAPITALISM!

UNITY IS STRENGTH

Being isolated sucks. Only if we unite can we make a difference in our lives, and this world. If we want to change the media's and general public's view of skins, we have to make our voices heard. If we want to stomp out nazis, and reclaim the skinhead tradition we have to get organized. A better world based on our ideals must be fought for-No one can make it for us!

We are hoping to set up a network of red, anarchist, anti-fascist and anti-nationalist skins. Through this network, we hope to increase correspondence, trade tapes and scene info., organize against racism and have a laugh. We will hopefully one day put together zines, a distribution, a record label, concerts and other things to reclaim our working-class, anti-racist history.

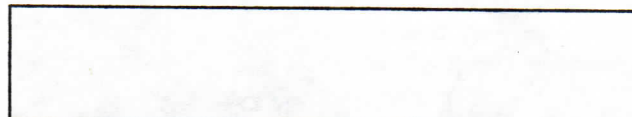
If you're a skinhead interested in getting involved, write us and send a Self-Addressed Stamped Envelope, and we'll help you get in touch with folks in your area. Tell us what's going on with you, your ideas, criticisms, info. from your area, and anything else you think would be of interest. Change starts with us working together!



RED & ANARCHIST SKINHEADS

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LOCAL CONTACT:



IF THE CREWS ARE UNITED, WE'LL NEVER BE DEFEATED!

SKINHEADS



COPY AND DISTRIBUTE AT WILL-PLEASE PASS ALONG TO COOL FRIENDS!