

Demons in the City of Angeles: Gay Neo-Nazis in Southern California

Emma Bianco

University of California, Santa Barbara

An Unexpected Source of Hate

Night descended upon the mission-style apartment building in West Hollywood, letting the dim lights from a solitary apartment fall upon the hacienda-style courtyard. A beach-blonde, blue-eyed young man followed the slow stream of stragglers up to the apartment steps, presenting his invitation to a flannel-clad bouncer who stood tall in cowboy boots. Climbing through the threshold, he immediately felt the eyes of dozens of men upon him: those mingling at the wet bar, standing next to the fruit and meat platters, or seated near the projection screen on the front wall. The boy awkwardly retreated to the corner of the room, taking shelter under a stretched banner that read “A New Order, A New Image.”

A man in a knockoff SS Stormtrooper uniform eagerly approached the young man, seemingly delighted at his presence. With unabashed animation, he ushered him into the prepared seats lining the cramped apartment. The leader then began adjusting the film reel in the rear, twiddling and fiddling until the booming voice of Adolf Hitler emanated from the speakers and columns of Nazi troops stretched across the white screen. Waves of light fell upon those in the crowd, from those dressed in business suits to faded Levis and motorcycle gear. The images glistened off the small black and white swastika buttons that decorated some of their collars.

Yet the film failed to hold the attention of the crowd, who began rising from their seats, mingling, and chatting among themselves. A scene of young white men wrestling on the ground briefly drew eyes to the screen, but

in the end, even Leni Riefenstahl's work did not promise enough thrill. The event's organizer, now starting to sweat under his uniform, scolded the men, shouting at them to "Come on you bastards, salute!" But almost no one paid him any heed, and others shushed him. Defeated, he fell back upon his chair, throwing looks of contempt at the guests for the next three hours.

Some exchanged pleasantries and laughter, while a select few eyed the latter with scorn, viewing the attendees in leather jackets and cycle caps with an air of repugnance. The young blonde, now unsure of his place or whom to approach, found himself face to face with a burly man: "Why not come up to my place and talk? It's too noisy here, too many distractions." The blonde declined and walked down the shallow steps back into the courtyard, annoyed at the evening's turn of events and his still unanswered questions.

Bearing more resemblance to a soirée rather than a right-wing meeting, this private screening of the infamous *Triumph of the Will* on a 1974 night seems unorthodox for a hardline neo-Nazi group; however, that is exactly what this welcome event was.¹ This young man had just borne witness to a typical recruiting event of the Los Angeles National Socialist League (NSL). A white power, neo-Nazi association in a cloistered LA community that lasted from the 1970s to the mid-1980s, this group obeyed many political precedents set by former white power actors. Their racist xenophobia and their conspiratorial ramblings of a Jewish plot within the United States government made them archetypes of racial extremist groups of the era. Yet they set themselves apart in one unique way: all members of the National Socialist League were gay.

¹ "Hardsell: Why Don't We Go To My Place And Talk?," *Entertainment West*, 1974, National Socialist League Collection, Box 1, Folder 2, ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives. (Hereinafter referred to as the "ONE National Socialist League Collection.")

Upon my first exposure, the phrase “gay Nazis” was quite oxymoronic. A fascist movement, obsessed with building a superior “Aryan” race via eugenics and a community of those that reject the conservative heterosexual model seems an odd pairing. When I stumbled upon the only records left by this furtive group in the USC ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, this perplexing fusion immediately piqued my historical curiosity.² How could those of a gay community embrace the abhorrent credos of a regime that systematically eliminated their predecessors in the horrors of the Holocaust? Yet such was the enigma that was the National Socialist League. Only receiving fleeting mentions in the media or derogatory slander by other white power and LGBTQ groups, the NSL never incurred much public recognition.³ But this rouses perhaps even more intrigue for these Los Angeles “Aryan homophiles.”⁴ Riding the wave of gay liberation in LA, the NSL’s brief and unheard story comprises a critical chapter in the history of white power in the Southland. Believing to represent the “conservative and right-wing view” in the gay community, this young crew led by Russel Veh established headquarters in West LA and Hollywood, where they committed themselves to cultivating a community for white

² Save for a few issues of the *NS Kampfruf* at the University of Michigan, I could not locate any other archival sources left behind by the NSL except for those at the ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives. Furthermore, based on my research, I have yet to find any scholarly work that mentions the National Socialist League, besides a single footnote referencing a *Los Angeles Times* article. This analysis may possibly be the first historical inquiry into this organization.

³ Al Martinez, “Storm Trooper Footsteps Echo Louder,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 4, 1977; HWC, “Corresponding with the Editor,” *NS Kampfruf*, April 1, 1974, ONE National Socialist League Collection, Box 1, Folder 7.

⁴ HWC, “Corresponding with the Editor.”

separatists and homosexuals.⁵ In unraveling the confounding existence of the NSL, I was presented with an unheard perspective into pivotal moments within Southern California's history particularly regarding the resurgence of white power and gender dynamics within racial extremism. Although not a well-known participant in the racial hate movement, the National Socialist League still illuminates a critical dimension of 20th century Los Angeles's racial topography.⁶

⁵ "The Gay Nazis," *NS Mobilizer*, Winter 1978, ONE National Socialist League Collection, Box 1, Folder 8; Bjarne Skrydstrup, "The Fuehrer of Echo Park," *Entertainment West*, 1974, ONE National Socialist League Collection, Box 1, Folder 2. A note on the terminology used: the classification "white supremacist" can be applied to this neo-Nazi group, for they believed in the hierarchy of the white race. However, the term "white nationalist" and "white separatist," can also be applied, for they believed in creating a nation that should be designated for and ruled by the white race. However, the term "neo-Nazi" and "white power" are perhaps the most applicable and broad, for it describes a general movement. The terms "hate groups", "the extreme right" "far right" and "racial extremist" can also apply. While "radical right" can technically apply, I avoid using it for it usually pertains to organizations that are not openly violent and attempt to sway conventional politics in a less extreme manner.

⁶ Few pieces of academic scholarship exclusively focus on neo-Nazis in Southern California. Ultimately, most historical works avoid the topic, and much of the new research is conducted by sociologists, journalists, psychologists. However, there are exceptions. Leonard Zeskind's *Blood and Politics* lends a meticulous account of the white nationalist movement from the 1950s to the 1980s and argues that while this movement contains diverse motivations and groups, racialists worked together to "mainstream their vanguardism" and "win over" fellow white people. Chip Berlet's and Matthew Lyons's collaborative *Right-Wing Populism in America* also explores the phenomenon of the political right from the 18th to the early 21st century. They contend that scholars should avoid reducing these groups down to "marginal extremism" because "these people may be our neighbors, our coworkers, and our relatives," for right-wing politics do not emerge unannounced but originate from conventional, populist issues. Additionally, Kathleen Blee's critically acclaimed *Bring the War Home* presents a glimpse into the 1970s white power movement, which she

Yet before beginning a historical inquiry of the NSL, one must puzzle together the jigsaw pieces of evidence to answer the obvious: what was the National Socialist League? In responding to this very question, founder Russell Veh claimed it “[was] an organization for white sexual nonconformists” who earned “the right to stand alongside our White racial kind” (see Figure 1).⁷ In their manifesto, the NSL decreed that “loyalty to one’s race is a man’s highest duty,” requiring a patriotism that will fight against “leftist politicians, Jews, communists, and non-white persons.”⁸ Although initially created by Jim Cherry, Veh assumed leadership on January 1, 1974, and the League adopted the proper name of “National Socialist League.”⁹ A former inmate who initiated the failed American White Nationalist Party in Ohio, Veh took up residence in Echo Park, spearheaded member recruitment, hosted social get-togethers, and published the NSL’s official newsletter *The Mobilizer* (which he claimed to have 12,000 copies in print by 1983).¹⁰ Letters, copies of the aforementioned magazine, and the few remaining newspaper reports suggest that the Los Angeles National Socialist League conducted the bulk of its activities from 1974 to 1979, allegedly opening branches in 29 states,

argues began with the failure of the Vietnam War. Her work affords a necessary basis for the transition between the older white power groups like the American Nazi Party and the chaotic, unstructured violence of the 1980s White Aryan Resistance and Racist Skinhead movement.

⁷ National Socialist League, “National Socialism: What We Stand For,” *NS Mobilizer*, 1975, 11 edition, ONE National Socialist League Collection, Box 1, Folder 8.

⁸ Robert Leighton, “Gay Nazis of LA,” *Los Angeles Fact Finder*, April 15, 1974, ONE National Socialist League Collection, Box 1, Folder 2.

⁹ “Gay Nazis of LA.”

¹⁰ National Socialist League, “Special Issue! 5,000 Copies in Print!,” *NS Mobilizer*, Summer-Fall 1983, ONE National Socialist League Collection, Box 1, Folder 7.

within the cities of Greensboro, Dallas, and San Diego.¹¹ However, they hardly appeared in public, choosing to conduct their nefarious hate-filled diatribes at galas and film screenings in the privacy of apartments and club back rooms. Besides the occasional efforts to ingratiate themselves in the larger gay community and to petition against discriminatory federal policies, the NSL remained a close-knit, highly localized against discriminatory federal policies, the NSL remained a close-knit, highly localized group.¹²

Within the discourse of white power in the 1970s, the National Socialist League exemplified the liminal phase between hierarchical, politically motivated groups like the American Nazi Party, and the violent and leaderless resistance of the White Aryan Resistance and Racist Skinheads of the 1980s and 1990s. Whereas much of their hateful language simply regurgitated credos that came before them, the NSL formed when neo-Nazi groups were focusing their efforts on building cohesive societies of like-minded racialists and were not overly concerned with participating in existing political structures. This signified an era of white power when those like the NSL splintered off to form specialized societies that advocated diverging

¹¹ National Socialist League, “Progress Spotlight,” 1974, ONE National Socialist League Collection, Box 1, Folder 4; Russel Veh, “Letter to Members and Friends,” July 4, 1978, ONE National Socialist League Collection, Box 1, Folder 6.

¹² Russel Veh, “For Immediate Release,” June 25, 1978, ONE National Socialist League Collection, Box 1, Folder 3. Within the archival materials, the only evidence I found of the NSL sharing a similar platform with the gay community was with calls to “Fight the Briggs Initiative.” The Briggs Initiative—known as California Proposition 6 on the 1978 State Ballot—would ban homosexuals from being public school employees or public servants, as their outing by employers, students, or parents would result in their immediate dismissal. This proposition allowed disparate gay rights groups to band together to overturn Prop 6, although no evidence exists that the NSL participated in this collaboration.



Figure 1. “Build a New World Order.” (Entertainment West, no. 119, November 1974. ONE National Socialist League Collection, Box 1, Folder 2).

aims. The 1970s served as the “rebirth” of the white power movement, for it oversaw the surge of violent paramilitary societies and the growth of the “intellectual” white power movement under William Pierce and think tanks like the Cato Institution. This period witnessed Richard Spencer form the largest neo-Nazi group (Aryan Nations) in 1977, James Warner establish the pseudo-theological, antisemitic Christian Identity Church, and the “mainstreaming” of the KKK under David Duke.¹³ These organizations and scores of others established the foundational principles for future white nationalists: namely, the preservation of “the white Christian republic,” the violent manifestation of masculinity, and the mass mobilization of working-class

¹³ Barry J Balleck, *Hate Groups and Extremist Organizations in America: An Encyclopedia* (ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2019), 22, 182.

white men.¹⁴

And while attractive for politicians and citizens to distance themselves as much as possible from these societies, particular Southern California events and preexisting xenophobic and racist attitudes only fed the National Socialist League diatribes. Yet, this begs the question: did these groups truly lie on the “fringe” of mainstream society? Or does evidence suggest that these agents acted rationally, and therefore should not be categorized by Leonard Hofstadter’s outdated “paranoid style” lens? And lastly—what does the presence of this group unveil about Southern California politics and society in the late 20th century?

Centralized to Los Angeles, the NSL’s perplexing story becomes a distinctly Southern California chronicle, not just in the greater tale of gendered white power movements, but of how extremism matured from distinct conditions. Situating the NSL within their local area provides an idiosyncratic perspective into Los Angeles’s political, social, and racial scene throughout the 1970s. In examining the NSL’s contention with African American activism, non-white immigration, and the politically liberal gay community, one finds that their battles were not of inane creation, but deliberately designed radical reactions to transformative social, political, and demographic events in Southern California. Accordingly, the National Socialists League’s conspiracies and hate-fueled speech may outwardly appear “paranoid,” but it was anything but. In researching the NSL, Southern California itself is reflected back: although it might be a slightly distorted mirror, warped by the ideologies of white power and racial extremism.

But to fully uncover how the NSL cemented

¹⁴ Kathleen Belew, *Bring the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2018), 7.

themselves within Southern California society, it would be apt to employ a gendered lens in this analysis. As common among the majority of neo-Nazi and white power groups, National Socialist League members practiced an elevated form of hyper-masculinity, which influenced their language, actions, and imagery. The NSL's masculinity departed from that created by neo-Nazis of the 1960s. Hoping to cast off the label of "perverse provocateurs," these men emphasized their raw sexuality, hoping to become dominant men who would stand over the submissive liberal "faggot."¹⁵ It is within this masculine background that NSL members forged a "homosocial" environment, which stressed the social bonds between persons of the same sex.¹⁶ Through facilitating romantic and sexual relationships, the NSL created a singular way to uphold hegemonic masculinity by enabling "closer, and more horizontal relationships with other men."¹⁷ These gender structures undoubtedly informed their organizational make-up, for it compelled them to build an egalitarian network. This method was their way of maintaining what Ferber calls "the restoration of rural American masculinity," as brought forth by concurrent right-wing militants, anti-federalists, and anti-corporate groups. However, this crusade speaks to significant aspects of national liberal and conservative policies, as argued by Robert O. Self, who evaluates how politicians from Richard Nixon to Bill Clinton prioritized the reinstallation of white-

¹⁵ National Socialist League, "Brother Against Brother," 1974, ONE National Socialist League Collection, Box 1, Folder 4.

¹⁶ Christer Mattsson and Thomas Johansson, "'We Are the White Aryan Warriors': Violence, Homosociality, and the Construction of Masculinity in the National Socialist Movement in Sweden," *Men and Masculinities* 24, no. 3 (August 1, 2021): 397.

¹⁷ Mattsson and Johansson, 397; National Socialist League, "National Socialism: What We Stand For," *NS Mobilizer*, 1975, 11 edition, ONE National Socialist League Collection, Box 1, Folder 8.

working class machismo.¹⁸ It does not take a stretch of the imagination to see how white power groups reimagined their racism as a mission to re-establish their rugged masculinity and political supremacy; after all, the foundations for this practice were already being laid in the mainstream environment.¹⁹ Therefore, a gendered viewing of National Socialist League ideologies offers a holistic interpretation of how the NSL regarded itself, and how its masculine fantasies impacted its violent rhetoric.

Given the lack of archival materials on this group—and their absence in records of Los Angeles history—one may reasonably presume that these men did not amass a public presence. But this query fundamentally rests on detecting how even the most innocuous societies expose the prevalence of white nationalist ideas in Southern California. The NSL's gendered response to the African American, budding immigrant, and leftist gay community stemmed from a particular subset of historical events tied to 1970s LA. In considering how these incidents fueled their machoism and repulsion toward non-whites and liberal gay society, one learns not only the history of Southern California but the narrative of the National Socialist League; an individualistic and private group whose obsession with nurturing a society built on racial hatred and male attachment symbolized a transitional period in the white power saga.

This episode of California history deserves acknowledgment for it tells of how white nationalist and racist philosophies arise from a specific time, place, and set of perceived threats to white male supremacy. These neo-Nazis did not live on the boundaries of contemporary Southern California society, but right at its heart.

¹⁸ Robert O. Self, *All in the Family: The Realignment of American Democracy Since the 1960s* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2012), 2.

¹⁹ Ferber, *Home-Grown Hate: Gender and Organized Racism*, 31; Belew, *Bring the War Home*, 1–5.

Old and New Foes: African Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Preservation of white Masculinity

For all the unexpected philosophies that made the NSL an exception among other white power actors, their core values stayed quite consistent with contemporary white nationalists. One need look no further than their characterizations of a major societal crisis: the eradication of “all-white” spaces via the proliferation of non-white persons, especially African Americans and Mexican immigrants. In the wake of affirmative action programs, school integration, and reduced barriers to non-white economic participation, the National Socialist League vehemently reacted to the perceived advancement of people of color in the Southland. While the modest strides made by these communities in no way truly threatened the white hegemonic patriarchal structure, the NSL fell back on foreseeable eugenicist and pseudoscience racial theories to “prove” the existential threat Blacks and Latinos posed to the white race. Yet their egregious antics did not stray too far off the beaten path, concerning mainstream policies. During these crucial demographic and social changes within Los Angeles, politicians (on both sides of the aisle) began employing color-blind politics to discuss ethnic groups’ abuse of welfare policies, their detrimental effect on children’s education, and criminal tendencies. Whereas the NSL employed blatant racial profiling, their fears mirrored those of many whites in the region. These fears—and an accompanying white nationalist rhetoric—emerged during a very particular period in California history: a time when the superiority of white persons was *slightly* challenged, and therefore, in their eyes, required defending.

Despite the African American community only comprising 10% of Los Angeles’s seven million-strong 1970 population, the National Socialist League made them

a primary target in their Aryan crusade.²⁰ In first evaluating how the NSL specifically characterized the African American community and its danger to white privilege, one truly does not need an extensive study to understand the basis of their beliefs. Like a majority of white nationalists, the National Socialist League toed the line in presenting racist—yet predictable—accusations against non-whites. Their false belief in the essentialist ideology (that Black and white persons were genetically different and thus evolved divergently) underlines the basis of their credos.²¹ They subscribed to pseudo-psychological studies that African American brains and IQs “were minuscule in comparison to whites,” and therefore could not risk intermixing with the white population. In fact, the NSL members took pride in their homosexuality, as they claimed that their sexual orientation did a great service to the white race, for they were physically unable to procreate children with non-white people, and were not responsible for bringing mixed-race children into the world.²² In blaming genetic defections and a predisposition towards violence, NSL literature warned of the “acts of terror” non-whites would impose on residential areas and businesses in the 1970s and 1980s; they even described how prominent civil rights leaders would specifically “pretend” to be passive protestors to hide a violent agenda to eradicate all white persons.²³ Overtly suspicious of Black Power and civil rights leaders (like Malcolm X and Martin Luther King),

²⁰ US Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census, “Los Angeles-Long Beach, Calif. Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area” (Washington D.C.: US Department of Commerce, May 1972).

²¹ Ferber, *Home-Grown Hate: Gender and Organized Racism*, 108.

²² Skrydstrup, “The Fuehrer of Echo Park.”; National Socialist League, “News and Facts,” *NS Kampfruf*, n.d., ONE National Socialist League Collection.

²³ “The Zebra: Special Report,” *NS Mobilizer*, Winter -Spring 1982 1981, National Socialist League Collection, Box 1, Folder 8, ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives.

the NSL admonished segregationists like George Wallace and the KKK for not fully demolishing Black Pride movements, which would eclipse the “Aryan white culture.”²⁴ Witnessing public and media support for these Black activists, the National Socialist League attempted to limit Black influence and “save America” in their immediate area by supporting measures to stop the federal busing of schools under integration mandates.²⁵ In response to government-sanctioned racial equality programs, the NSL concluded that “whites have been run out of Los Angeles County,” and imitated past white nationalist rambling by petitioning the complete removal of African Americans (and immigrants) from American shores.²⁶

Although abhorrent, these men’s reactions to the African American community should not come as a surprise. And whereas criticism of African Americans and Jews constituted the bulk of their racial prejudice, the NSL also alluded to the threat of Mexican immigration into the Southland (which would play a central role in the 1980s and 1990s white power epoch). These fears arose from the fast-growing Latino populace. During the 1970s, the Latino community—now the largest minority group in Los Angeles—began making a name for themselves, climbing up the economic ladder where they neither fit into the lower Black rung nor upper white rung of society.²⁷ By 1980,

²⁴ National Socialist League, “News and Facts,” *NS Kampfruf*, n.d., ONE National Socialist League Collection.

²⁵ National Socialist League, “White Race Unity,” n.d., ONE National Socialist League Collection.

²⁶ Lt. Roland Stryker, “Corresponding with the Editor,” *NS Mobilizer*, Spring-Summer 1978, National Socialist League Collection, Box 1, Folder 7, ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives; National Socialist League, “Vantage Point,” *Race & Nation*, Fall-Winter 1985, National Socialist League Collection, Box 1, Folder 10, ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives.

²⁷ Laura Pulido, *Black, Brown, Yellow and Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles* (University of California Press, 2006), 2.

“Hispanics” made up an estimated 28% of Los Angeles County, and by 1982, the County Board of Supervisors estimated 1.1 million undocumented persons in the county.²⁸ Though only briefly mentioned in NSL writings, the pressing issue of undocumented immigrants “subverting public trust” and Mexicans abusing the welfare system pushed the NSL to draft a petition to President Jimmy Carter, imploring him to spend taxpayer money to send immigrants back to Mexico and create “home free zones” in Los Angeles.²⁹ Crucially, this evidence evokes a burgeoning xenophobic attitude directed toward non-Black immigrants, which foreshadowed the white power movement’s focus away from African American hatred to a broader intolerance for all non-whites.

Loathing for non-white members of society certainly did not make the National Socialist League extraordinary within the confines of the national white power movement. However, their heightened anxiety alluded to a critical point in California racial relations. As a city of continual racial pluralism, Los Angeles served as a

²⁸ Wayne A. Corneilus, Leo R Chávez, and Jorge G. Castro, “Mexican Immigrants and Southern California: A Summary of Current Knowledge,” Research Report Series, 36 (Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, University of California, San Diego, 1982), 11,15. The “Hispanic” category (separate from the racial category) was placed in a more prominent position in the 1980 census and sent to all households. This was because the category “Spanish origin” performed poorly and was not comparable to the amount of Spanish-speakers, for many self-described “Hispanics” did not describe themselves as “Spanish-origin.” This categorization would change in 2000, when Latino was added to the race category. Due to the fallacies in census reporting and the difficulty of government agencies in securing an accurate number of undocumented immigrants, it is realistic to assume that the Hispanic population and undocumented immigration was higher than reported; Skrydstrup, “The Fuehrer of Echo Park.”

²⁹ Skrydstrup, “The Fuehrer of Echo Park;” Lynn Mie Itagaki, *Civil Racism: The 1992 Los Angeles Rebellion and the Crisis of Racial Burnout* (University of Minnesota Press, 2016), 10.

foundational center for Civil Rights groups in the 1960s, but also in 1970s “third world politics,” which celebrated ethnicity and leftist philosophies. In response to subtler attempts to undermine racial equality, civil rights advocates in the Los Angeles region forwarded radical activism that would seek to benefit one specific minority group.³⁰ Seen primarily with the Chicano/Chicana, Black Power, and Japanese American activists, the 1970s witnessed a transitory reign of third-world politics, as seen with the Black Panther Party, the Center for Autonomous Social Action (CASA), and the East Wind Japanese American Collective.³¹ But akin to the other white power groups’ revulsion to the Civil Rights movement, the NSL saw these campaigners as a threat to their racial authority.

The growing mobilization of ethnic minorities and Los Angeles politicians’ endeavors to champion multiculturalism and present LA as a racially tolerant, globalized city spurred a revival in “Aryan” vanguard movements.³² The NSL followed the lead of other white nationalist extremists like the Aryan Nations and the National Alliance, who envisioned new waves of non-whites as a drain on the sacred Aryan civilization.³³ In their eyes, minority culture and white culture could never coexist: the triumph of one meant the destruction of the other. In the midst of increased non-white agency, and the public backlash to the growing African American and Latino presence, the National Socialist League weaponized fanatical language in their racial crusade to reclaim a white

³⁰ Shana Bernstein, *Bridges of Reform: Interracial Civil Rights Activism in Twentieth-Century Los Angeles* (Oxford University Press, 2011), 204.

³¹ Pulido, *Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left*, xviii.

³² Zeskind, *Blood and Politics*, 28; Scott Kurashige, “Between ‘White Spot’ and ‘World City’: Racial Integration and the Roots of Multiculturalism,” in *A Companion to Los Angeles* (John Wiley & Sons Inc., 2010), 64, 73.

³³ Zeskind, *Blood and Politics*, 30.

world they felt was slipping farther and farther away.

There is no doubt that the National Socialist League displayed extreme reactions to ethnic minorities. However, their ramblings did not stray far from conventional political idioms. The NSL was not the only one to express intolerance for non-whites: it was an endemic issue in Southern California, especially during the 1970s “Post-Civil Rights Era.” This era exposed how the federal government’s “benign neglect” of fair housing policies, equal opportunity measures, and non-discriminatory mandates resulted in a white acceptance of “color blindness” and prejudice devoid of explicitly racist rhetoric.³⁴ Calls for “law and order,” and appeals to the Silent Majority of the Nixon and Reagan administrations masked the overtly racist assaults levied against minority groups: what Ian Haney refers to as “dog-whistle politics.” A central component of middle-class politics through the 20th century, Haney states that “dog-whistle politics” refers to conservatives (such as Reagan, Nixon, Wallace, and Goldwater) “speaking in a code to a targeted audience” to forward xenophobic creeds without actually labeling any racial groups in particular.³⁵ Dog whistle politics utilize “thinly veiled references” to attack non-whites by referring to them as “hoodlums, welfare cheats, or aliens”, whereas the term “Mexican” or “Black” may never actually appear. These tactics allowed whites to discriminate against people of color by hiding behind a “neutral” concern for “social problems.”³⁶ In the LA basin, such policies exhibited themselves within mounting opposition to bilingual

³⁴ Lynn Mie Itagaki, *Civil Racism: The 1992 Los Angeles Rebellion and the Crisis of Racial Burnout* (University of Minnesota Press, 2016), 10.

³⁵ Ian López Haney, *Dog Whistle Politics: How Coded Racial Appeals Have Reinvented Racism and Wrecked the Middle Class* (Oxford University Press Inc., 2014), 4.

³⁶ Haney, 4, 35-36.

educational programs, school busing, affirmative action agendas, and expanding welfare benefits.³⁷ Whereas these political actors used more discrete methods of discrimination than the NSL, both sects addressed parallel concerns: the arrival of racial minorities and the dismantling of white hierarchy.

But the NSL's hatred for non-white persons arose from a deeper recess, not just from the Southland's racist antics.³⁸ Within the NSL, hatred for minorities and people of color developed from gendered anxieties. By loudly proclaiming their pledge to sexual liberation and a "non-conformist lifestyle" via homosexuality, the NSL had become ostracized among other white power groups such as the American Nazi Party and the KKK.³⁹ To combat this shunning, the NSL sought to "justify" their existence by doubling down on their racial rhetoric. Like the subset of gay skinheads of the 1990s, the NSL aimed to minimize their gay stigma by "appealing to the master status." By shifting attention away from their sexual orientation to their rank as "white men, united by their faith [and] their race," they tried to ingratiate themselves in right-wing inner circles.⁴⁰ Appeals to higher racial loyalty saturated the NSL's campaigns, for their writings frequently referenced how they must "remove the issue of sex from politics," for divisions over sexual conformity undermined a united

³⁷ Natalia Mehlman Petrzela, *Classroom Wars: Language, Sex, and the Making of Modern Political Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 5.

³⁸ Skrydstrup, "The Fuehrer of Echo Park."

³⁹ Lillian Faderman and Stuart Timmons, *Gay L.A.: History of Sexual Outlaws, Power Politics, and Lipstick Lesbians* (New York, New York: Basic Books, 2006), 80; Leighton, "Gay Nazis of LA.," "Robert Shelton's KKK: Gay Klansmen Sets Record 'Straight,'" *NS Mobilizer*, September 1976.

⁴⁰ "Ideology of Gay Racist Skinheads and Stigma Making," *Journal of Political & Military Sociology* 34, no. 1 (2006): 168, 177.

alliance of white persons.⁴¹ NSL members optimistically hoped that their dedication to Aryan superiority would result in the “mainstream radical right [dropping] anti-gay” viewpoints.⁴² Subsequently, they pursued alliances with the KKK and other neo-Nazi affiliations like the National Socialist White Worker’s Party, the National State’s Right Party, and the Nationalist Social Party (although no real proof of a robust partnership exists).⁴³ Their unfettering obligation to defend white purity to avoid rejection demonstrates not only a new era of race relations in 1970s Los Angeles but also how the NSL utilized racist attitudes to deflect interest away from their homosexual identity.

However, once it became apparent that other white power groups did not wish to align themselves with the National Socialist League, NSL members no longer hid their homosexuality: in fact, they made it their defining feature. But this does not mean they rejected the hypermasculine gender dynamics of other white power players. Herein lies the befuddling contradiction within this organization. Although these men recognized that other white power groups would discriminate against them due to their homosexual image, these men presented an even more aggressively masculine image of themselves *based* on their homosexual desires and raw sexuality. Flouncing their sexual orientation—and refusing to mask their preferences under a false heterosexual label—the National Socialist League members altered the hypermasculinity of the previous neo-Nazis. Affirming that “if homosexuals can be capitalists... why can’t we be national socialists?,” images

⁴¹ National Socialist League, “Brother Against Brother.”; HWC, “Corresponding with the Editor.”

⁴² National Socialist League, “Progress Spotlight,” 1974.

⁴³ Lt. Roland Stryker, “Corresponding with the Editor,” *NS Mobilizer*, Spring-Summer 1978, ONE National Socialist League Collection, Box 1, Folder 7; “Personal Questionnaire,” *NS Mobilizer*, Spring and Summer 1979.

of sculpted, shirtless stormtroopers with broad shoulders and bulging muscles dotted many of the *NS Mobilizer's* pages and NS member letters (see Figure 2).⁴⁴ Discrediting the claims of other white nationalist groups who “have no use for Gays at all,” Veh and his devotees presented themselves as suave—but capable—macho men.⁴⁵ This starkly contrasted with the other paramilitary groups of the time, which described gay men as “sexually voracious and carnal...all they like to do is have sex” and were therefore useless in white nationalist pursuits.⁴⁶ Bragging about their rubbing shoulders with local motorcycle gangs and providing muscle and security to movie screenings, the NSL men welded sexually charged imagery to white masculinity.⁴⁷ This was especially prevalent within their “classified ad” sections, which frequently published letters from men in LA and the wider white power world, that solicited sex and relationships with other men. However, a majority of these ads expose members’ efforts to present an ideal masculine picture of themselves: “bodybuilder seeks strong-minded mate for a groovy way out scenes,” “British guy into leather and denim,” or “groovy young slave wanted by imaginative, levelheaded and Levi master.”⁴⁸ Given that the NSL’s manifesto decried gay men’s right to “pursue sexual fulfillment,” the appearance of such

⁴⁴ NS Mobilizer, “NS Mobilizer Subscription Advertisement,” n.d., ONE National Socialist League Collection, Box 1, Folder 4.

⁴⁵ “Robert Shelton’s KKK: Gay Klansmen Sets Record ‘Straight.’”

⁴⁶ Michael Kimmel, *Healing from Hate: How Young Men Get Into-And Out of-Violent Extremism* (University of California Press, 2018), 145.

⁴⁷ “Homebodies,” *Entertainment West*, November 29, 1974, ONE National Socialist League Collection, Box 1, Folder 2; Matt Weir, “Invitation to a White American,” 1979, ONE National Socialist League Collection, Box 1, Folder 6.

⁴⁸ National Socialist League Classified Ad Department, “Classified Ads” (NS Mobilizer, 1980), ONE National Socialist League Collection, Box 1, Folder 8; National Socialist League, “Pen Pals,” *NS Kampfgruf*, May 1974, ONE National Socialist League Collection, Box 1, Folder 9.

advertisement seems rather unremarkable.⁴⁹ Looking at these gendered dimensions of the NSL explains how these men simultaneously reconciled a white power *and* a homosexual identity.



Figure 2. “Classified Ads.” (*NS Kampfruf* 1, no. 3-4, May/June 1974. ONE National Socialist League Collection, Box 1, Folder 7).

This blatant promotion of sexual desires within a masculine environment would seem an unwise move on the part of the NSL, especially given that a sizable portion of members expressed interest in allying with other heterosexual white nationalists.⁵⁰ In rationalizing this curious emphasis on sexuality, sociological work on gay skinhead groups in the 1990s and 2000s provides a possible explanation. While the organizational structure and racial goals of these groups differed, studies found that like the NSL, these gay racialists “experienced greater gender role stress” emanating from their gay status, which threatened to label them as “feminine.”⁵¹ In keeping up with the essentialist ideologies that run throughout white power

⁴⁹ N.S. Mobilizer Editorial Staff, “NS Mobilizer Subscription Notice,” n.d., ONE National Socialist League Collection, Box 1, Folder 4.

⁵⁰ “Personal Questionnaire.”

⁵¹ Kevin Borgeson and Robin Valeri, “Gay Skinheads: Negotiating a Gay Identity in a Culture of Traditional Masculinity,” *Journal of Men’s Studies* 23, no. 1 (March 2015): 48.

philosophies, these men understood the necessity of mimicking the emblems associated with US masculinity. Similar to the skinheads, the NSL attempted to engage their masculinity via demonstrations of their raw sexual power, and to disabuse others of their undesirable gay stereotypes, confirming that “real Nazis don’t eat quiche.”⁵²

Savory egg dishes aside, the men of the NSL continued to spew a venomous resentment towards people of color. The NSL rarely displayed their intense hatred out in public, but their explicit aversion toward minorities exposes the shift towards ethnic plurality and minority rights that began to take hold in Southern California. And whereas the NSL’s employment of homosexual tendencies to prove their masculinity is distinctive, they still paralleled the majority of white nationalist and white separatist groups of the 20th century. To avoid becoming the stereotypical gay men “with a sequined top,” these neo-Nazis exercised sexual language that would underscore their masculinity: a perplexing rhetorical strategy for a group who contended that sexual orientation and sexual exploits mattered little in a white nationalist world.⁵³

Jewish Subterfuge Within Gay Rights and the Need for a Homosocial Environment

The NSL’s regime chiefly concentrated on the impending demise of white purity via African Americans’ and immigrants’ presence. But they also saw enemies in those thought to be their allies: specifically in the gay liberation movement. The NSL’s aversion to liberal politics and LGBTQ rights commented on the broader gay scene within 1970s Los Angeles and informs the reader how these men conceived of themselves within the homosexual

⁵² “The Hammer,” n.d., ONE National Socialist League Collection, Box 1, Folder 2.

⁵³ HWC, “Corresponding with the Editor”; National Socialist League, “Brother Against Brother.”

environment. The National Socialist's League's confusing animosity toward the gay community reveals just how impactful this sexual liberation movement was to the Southland. Akin to New York and San Francisco, the gay rights movement played a central role in the area, becoming a defining component of Southern Californian history. Although this analysis examines the rationalization behind these men's hatred towards other homosexuals, it also reveals the prominence of the gay liberation movement within the Los Angeles area. Although this city became a nucleus of gay rights before the famed Stonewall and Haight and Ashbury events, the NSL still took exception to the "gay liberation" of the day.⁵⁴ But wouldn't this prove a self-sabotaging move? What would compel the NSL to explicitly advocate against those whose sole aim was to initiate gay men and women's acceptance into mainstream culture? The NSL's disgust toward the gay rights agenda requires careful analysis of their underlying belief system. The men of this neo-Nazi group opposed the gay rights groups for two reasons: 1) it painted a public picture of gay men as effeminate and 2) these identity politics—like all other liberal movements—had been supposedly infiltrated by the greater Jewish conspiracy which now worked to destroy "non-conformists."

The National Socialist League's first point—that the contemporary gay rights crusade reduced them down to emasculated men—found its way into their newsletters, personal correspondence, and letters to the editors. Members indicated that "as a result [of the liberal left], the straight world now pictures us with a pink Afro and a sequined top."⁵⁵ Furthermore, they strove to debunk this unfavorable image by consistently referencing false historical research which suggested that men of the highest moral caliber and masculinity—Alexander the Great,

⁵⁴ NS Mobilizer, "NS Mobilizer Subscription Advertisement."

⁵⁵ HWC, "Corresponding with the Editor."

Frederick the Great, Charles XII of Sweden, Nietzsche, and “thousands of Aryan homophiles” of the Third Reich—were homosexuals.⁵⁶ To legitimize their butch masculinity, the NSL took offense to any negative, weak depictions of gay men. Specifically, their abhorrence of the “vulgarity” and licentious nature of the LA gay scene even compelled them to engage in a rare instance of public showing. Enraged by the scenes of openly (and partially nude) gay men parading down the street with “sex devices” and strolling alongside “a cock walking down the street,” the NSL attempted to march in the 1977 Christopher Street West Association gay pride parade in LA.⁵⁷ Veh planned to showcase his men in their uniforms to present a stark contrast to the more ostentatious displays of sexual autonomy, and to remind others that “we [right-wing homosexual men] were there too!”⁵⁸ When the CSW committee denied the NSL’s petition to join the parade in June 1978, NSL leadership retorted that their banishment “[was] an affront to freedom of thought and speech,” and threatened to march regardless.⁵⁹ While Veh’s threats rang hollow, the mere fact that the NSL emerged out of their introverted setting to rebuff their image of homosexual men speaks volumes.

However, the NSL’s overarching issue with the liberal gay community boiled down to a typical culprit among extreme right-wing ideology: antisemitism. Although the American Nazi Party and other white power groups frequently resorted to sponsoring theories of Jewish

⁵⁶ Satya, “Gay Nazis,” *The Gay Community News*, November 2, 1974, 2nd edition, ONE National Socialist League Collection, Box 1, Folder 7; HWC, “Corresponding with the Editor.”

⁵⁷ Jim Kepner, “Off Your Knees, Pharisees,” *Newsweek*, April 14, 1977, ONE National Socialist League Collection, Box 1, Folder 1.

⁵⁸ Russell Veh, “Letter to C.S.W.,” May 3, 1977, ONE National Socialist League Collection, Box 1, Folder 1.

⁵⁹ Russel Veh, “Letter to C.S.W. Committee,” May 25, 1977, ONE National Socialist League Collection, Box 1, Folder 1.

conspiracies within the communist movement or racial equality drives, the NSL pointed to a Zionist agenda inside the “left” gay political movement. In their words “gay liberation is meaningless in a land enslaved by Black terror and Jewish liberalism,” and charged Jews as the puppet masters behind anti-gay government discriminatory policies.⁶⁰ These neo-Nazis asserted that any negative depictions of gay persons directly correlated to the size of the Jewish presence in the media, which supplied misinformation about the plagues of a homosexual lifestyle.⁶¹ They accused Jewish persons of posing as allies to homosexuals while simultaneously feeding the mainstream culture with false images of gay men as effeminate weaklings. Therefore, if the Jewish conspiracy to undermine gay freedom rested within the gay liberation movement, the “sexual non-conformists” of the NSL felt a responsibility to combat it.⁶² In their twisted logic, true liberation for gay men could only arise from the destruction of gay liberation itself.

The NSL’s mental gymnastics aside, their antics hinged on the cultural and social climate of Southern California in the 1970s and early 1980s. Specifically, the history of the liberal (and radical) gay community. Lillian Faderman’s and Stuart Timmons’s *Gay LA* proves invaluable for understanding Southern California’s central role in LGBTQ history. Whereas 1940s LA already possessed the reputation as a “liberal city” that became the scene for civil rights radicals, the City of Angels became pivotal to the gay rights struggle of the 1960s and 1970s.⁶³ Although the Hollywood industry and influx of young

⁶⁰ NS Mobilizer, “NS Mobilizer Subscription Advertisement.”

⁶¹ National Socialist League, “What Kind of Gutless Creep Are You Whitey?,” *NS Kampfruf*, June 1974, ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives.

⁶² National Socialist League.

⁶³ Bernstein, *Bridges of Reform*, 130.

migrants made the gay lifestyle more visible in LA than in other metropolises, not until the 1960s did organizers begin to push back against police harassment and state discrimination. No longer willing to silently endure the label of “molesters and troublemakers,” political protestors organized “gay-ins” and “be-ins” at renowned areas like Griffith Park. A pivotal moment arrived when the community fought to oust prejudicial City Councilman Paul Lampton in 1969 and elected gay-friendly member Bob Stevenson.⁶⁴ After achieving measurable results in their pursuit for equality (like LA’s first gay pride parade in June of 1970), a growing sector of the gay community became “radicalized,” and rejected “what they saw as the overly cautious approach of the homophile generation that went before them.”⁶⁵ In the 1960s and 1970s gay rights activists hailed from the political and social left-wing, carrying tactics they previously employed in the Vietnam War and civil rights protests.⁶⁶ These new players quickly came to the forefront of the NSL’s agenda, for they took the LA Gay Liberation Front’s “guerrilla tactics” and “Power to the People slogan” as incontrovertible proof of a Jewish campaign to destroy the credibility of gay men.⁶⁷ Programs like PRIDE (Personal Rights in Defense and Education) and the LA Gay Liberation Front, which referred to themselves as “the militant arm of the gay movement,” only fueled the NSL’s cries of antisemitism and sabotage within the liberation movement.⁶⁸

Rejecting an association with Los Angeles’s political gay scene became a focal point of the NSL’s rhetoric, compelled by antisemitic theories of a Zionist

⁶⁴ Faderman and Timmons, *Gay L.A.*, 165–66.

⁶⁵ Faderman and Timmons, 166.

⁶⁶ Faderman and Timmons, 167.

⁶⁷ Faderman and Timmons, 172, 174.

⁶⁸ Faderman and Timmons, 155, 172.

conspiracy and the “radical” agenda of the left-wing.⁶⁹ But denial of one gay community did not drive the NSL into self-imposed quarantine. Although never reaching the level of public involvement of their counterparts in the American Nazi Party or the White Aryan Resistance, the NSL aspired to “reach 15 million gays” by establishing a robust league of other Aryan homophiles.⁷⁰ In essence, The NSL’s version of masculinity was the capacity to connect with others of similar racial disposition and sexual preference.

Alleging that the KKK, Minute Men, Wallace, and Goldwater campaigns failed to carve out a space for right-wing gay activists, the NSL quickly descended upon the task of structuring an informal setting for gay racialists in the Los Angeles region (and eventually around the world).⁷¹ This setting hinged on the solidification of “homosocial bonds,” and establishing a “fratriarchal space:” that is a space created for men, by men (see Figure 3). The NSL benefitted from a community that catered to their racialized agenda and sexual identity, permitting them to associate with those excluded from neighboring white power institutions.⁷² Admittedly, generating a singularly male setting came with the territory of other white nationalist groups, for dismal recruiting events typically force organizations to expand their operations. However, the NSL proved distinctive. By throwing parties and presenting movie nights, the NSL ultimately became concerned with building a welcoming community rather than aggressively participating in public politics or racial combat. Therefore, one can take the absence of NSL

⁶⁹ National Socialist League, “Letters to the Editor,” June 1974, ONE National Socialist League Collection, Box 1, Folder 7.

⁷⁰ National Socialist League, “Progress Spotlight,” *NS Kampfruf*, June 1974, ONE National Socialist League Collection, Box 1, Folder 7.

⁷¹ “The Gay Nazis.”

⁷² “Hardsell: Why Don’t We Go To My Place And Talk?”; Mattsson and Johansson, ““We Are the White Aryan Warriors,”” 396.

participation in parades, picket lines, and media coverage not as evidence of their lack of willpower or belief in white separatism, but rather as an exemplification of their version of masculine expression: one that supported interdependent attachments with others outside of the public purview.

Recognizing the NSL's style of masculinity and the efforts to establish an intimate gay community calls for a reinterpretation of their archival remnants. Invitations to a lavish "Hitler's Birthday Cabaret" in the Hollywood hills, Oktoberfest celebrations, cocktail parties, and showings of Nazi films where viewers could see "young boys showering, tussling, shaving and relaxing" offer a glimpse into the atmosphere this organization sanctioned (see Figures 4 and 5).⁷³ NSL programs and magazines also encouraged followers to bring recruits and other amenable



Figure 3. "At the Convention." (NS Mobilizer 4, no. 38, Summer 1977. ONE National Socialist League Collection, Box 1, Folder 8).

⁷³ American Party, "Invitation to Hitler's Birthday Cabaret," 1974, ONE National Socialist League Collection, Box 1, Folder 10; American Party, "Oktoberfest Invitation," 1978, ONE National Socialist League Collection, Box 1, Folder 11; National Socialist League, "Invitation to Third Assembly," 1978, ONE National Socialist League Collection, Box 1, Folder 12; Russell Veh, "Invitation to World Service Film League Movie Screening," June 22, 1979, ONE National Socialist League Collection, Box 1, Folder 12.

men to these “upscale” fetes that one local journalist reported to “look like a fraternity rush” more than a political meeting.⁷⁴ Although publishing their alleged distaste for the thriving gay scene of West Hollywood—one of discoteces (clubs with a specific catering to disco music), dance halls, and public bathhouses—the NSL in some sense replicated their own West Hollywood. To rival the liberals, they tried to populate their parties and meetings by luring in young gay men from gay bars and restaurants, accomplished by the allegedly “largest distribution [of pamphlets] to the non-conformist community in the country.”⁷⁵ Antisemitic conspiracy theories and cries of Black savagery may have populated NSL meetings and pool parties, but their literature suggests that political discourse took a backseat at these events, for fratisocial bonding became the chief priority.

The Southern California gay liberation movement and radical politics loomed large in the NSL’s brief lifespan, for it hinted at Los Angeles’s growing acceptance of liberal social policies. Although detesting the gay liberation movement, which according to the NSL, suffered the apparent infiltration of Zionists overlords, the National Socialist League attempted to construct their secluded gay community, which had become cut off from many other white power groups and other racialsists. NSL members cultivated a very specific form of masculinity, one that emanated from personal and romantic relationships, but still abided by white power’s hypermasculinity.

⁷⁴ “Hardsell: Why Don’t We Go To My Place And Talk?”

⁷⁵ Faderman and Timmons, *Gay L.A.*, 232, 238; National Socialist League, “NSL Opens Fall Membership Drive,” *NS Mobilizer*, Spring and Summer 1978, ONE National Socialist League Collection, Box 1, Folder 6.



Figure 4. The front side of the invitation to Hitler's birthday party, 1974. (ONE National Socialist League Collection, Box 1, Folder 6).

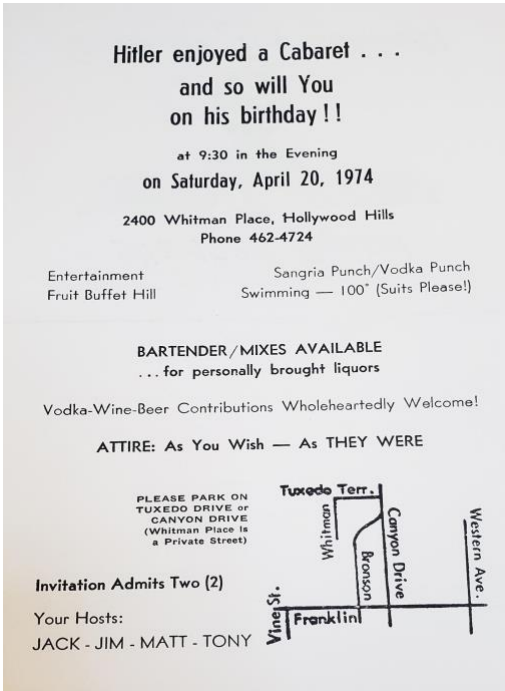


Figure 5. The back side of the invitation to Hitler's birthday party, 1974. (ONE National Socialist League Collection, Box 1, Folder 6).

A Sign of Things to Come

Until the 1980s, the National Socialist League continued to endorse a masculine environment fortified by a hatred for African Americans, Mexican immigrants, and neighboring gay communities. Yet like many southern California neo-Nazis, they eventually faded into oblivion. Never accruing much media attention, the group's records end in 1985, when the NSL last reported spreading pamphlets and copies of the *NS Mobilizer* in Northridge, California (even though Russel Veh assured members that

“we are still alive!).”⁷⁶ But this should not come as a surprise. The NSL balked at becoming a full-scale revolutionary force and merely fostered a masculine, white supremacist ideology within their closely guarded ranks. Promoting messages of machismo, vigorous sex drives, and racial superiority, these neo-Nazis exemplified the diversification of white power groups in the 1970s and 1980s, which did not coalesce under one unifying purpose. But their reclusive nature and smaller membership numbers should not disabuse one of their important roles in Southern California. While relatively minuscule in stature, the NSL contributed to the California narrative, for their rhetoric and dogma emerged in reaction to ethnic politics, southern immigration, and gay liberation that were indicative of 1970s Los Angeles.

Only the interlude in the grander tale of white power movements within the Southland, the NSL set up ideological dominos that future groups—such as the White Aryan Resistance and the Racist Skinhead movement—would later topple. The hatred against immigrant communities in the Southwest as well as the worship of white working-class masculinity would live on. As the NSL exhaled its final breath a more revolutionary, more violent, and more destructive white power organizations would take its place, wreaking havoc in the region and allowing white nationalists to fully emerge from the shadows.

NSL extremism proved indicative of a particular time and place. Expectedly, Los Angeles’s shifting demographics and political foci would call for new forms of white nationalism and white supremacy. Whereas this region no longer plays home to this organization, it certainly houses new white supremacist and white

⁷⁶ National Socialist League, “Action Report,” *Race & Nation*, Fall-Winter 1985, ONE National Socialist League Collection, Box 1, Folder 8.

nationalist philosophies. Political watchdog agencies and news outlets continue to witness the proliferation of racial extremists, expedited by the age of social media and Donald Trump’s successful 2016 presidential campaign. Instead of deriving their actions from conventional party lines, racial extremism is now *part* of mainstream politics. As put by Kevin Estep in his analysis of the resurgence of the KKK and Trump’s election,

Important structural changes were taking place in the United States that cut a path for a white nationalist agenda—an agenda that not only entered our political discourse but found a warm reception from Americans, most of whom did not think of themselves as political extremists.⁷⁷

White power groups like the Proud Boys, Oath Keepers and Qanon continue to make an appearance on the national stage, in such events as the Unite the Right Rally and the January 6th Insurrection. Predictably, white supremacist and racial violence continue to multiply in Los Angeles and Orange Counties (OC), displayed at events like the failed 2021 “White Lives Matter” Huntington Beach Rally (which protested COVID restrictions and Black Lives Matter initiatives), and the 2016 Ku Klux Klan rally in Anaheim, where Klan members beat and stabbed counter-protesters.⁷⁸ Both LA and OC also reported a perturbing rise in hate crimes—especially those targeting Jews, African Americans, and Asian Americans: the Los

⁷⁷ Rory McVeigh and Kevin Estep, *The Politics of Losing: Trump, the Klan, and the Mainstreaming of Resentment* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2019), 12.

⁷⁸ Martin Smith, Hannah Fry, and Anita Chabria, “‘White Lives Matter’ Rallies Fizzled. Hate Groups Still See Chance to ‘Fire Up the Base.’” *Los Angeles Times*, April 14, 2021; Jason Wilson, “‘Senseless Hate’: The Far Right’s Deep Roots in Southern California,” *The Guardian*, May 5, 2019.

Angeles 2020 hate crime report saw a 20% growth in hate crime (to 635 incidents), which they attributed to Trump's 2020 loss and the anti-Asian bias from the COVID-19 pandemic.⁷⁹ Orange County even originated the notable paramilitary group, the "Rise Above Movement," which participated in the Unite the Right Rally and violent protests from Huntington Beach to Berkeley.⁸⁰ Chapman University sociologist Peter Simi concluded that within the Southland "when Obama was elected, it was an opportunity for these folks to get organized...and when Trump came along, it was another opportunity for somebody on their side who was emboldening."⁸¹

Looking toward the future racial discourse and proliferation of racial extremists within the LA region and the nation, new sets of questions materialize: how will historians characterize this current epoch of white power? What roles do gender and constructions of masculinity play in racial hatred? What can we learn about these individuals, and how does this fit into the grander chronicle of white radical extremism? And lastly: what does the propagation of these groups mean for American democracy, racial liberty, and equality? To begin answering these questions, one must situate right-wing extremists within a historical context. This assessment of the National Socialist League of the 1970s and 1980s intends to do just that. It finds that one does a disservice when they ignore these extremists or move them to the back burner; now more than ever, we must accept that these groups resided right in the heart of conventional politics. To fathom how they got to this point—and to appreciate how to prevent the spread of their

⁷⁹"2020 Hate Crime Report" (Los Angeles, California: Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations, 2021), 8–10.

⁸⁰Wilson, "Senseless Hate."

⁸¹"Inside the Resurgence of Right-Wing Extremism in Orange County," *Los Angeles Times*, March 10, 2021.

heinous rhetoric—we may look to the past for answers. Ideally, this paper exhibits how racial extremists arise from the most unlikely of places, from those we may initially discount based on our preconceived notions of gender dynamics and political alliances. But making these assumptions would be a mistake. In doing so, we blind ourselves to those that remain a potential threat to racial pluralism and freedom for others.