



“We Go Where They Go.” A History of Anti-Racist Action

Douglas Wood Nagie (Robert Goldberg, PhD)

Department of History

Anti-Racist Action was a radical network of militant youth activists who counter-organized racists and far-right extremists between the late 1980s and 2013. It began in Minneapolis when a multi-racial skinhead crew named the Baldies mobilized in response to a new breed of neo-Nazi skinheads. Anti-Racist Action spread through skinhead and punk youth culture and chapters were soon established in American and Canadian cities. Organizing formalized after a 1995 conference solidified a framework for communication between chapters. The network became a major force in radical political organizing. It created a decentralized model that advocated progressive political change, primarily through militant and direct action against neo-Nazis, the Ku Klux Klansman, white supremacists, and radical anti-abortion organizations.

This paper seeks to recreate the history of Anti-Racist Action from its beginning and ascension to its decline and dissolution. It is guided primarily by oral histories conducted with long-term organizers of the network and supplemented by contemporary media accounts and primary sources. It attempts to establish a chronology of events, analyze the context that made ARA’s mobilization possible, and recreate the culture and politics of the group and its participants.