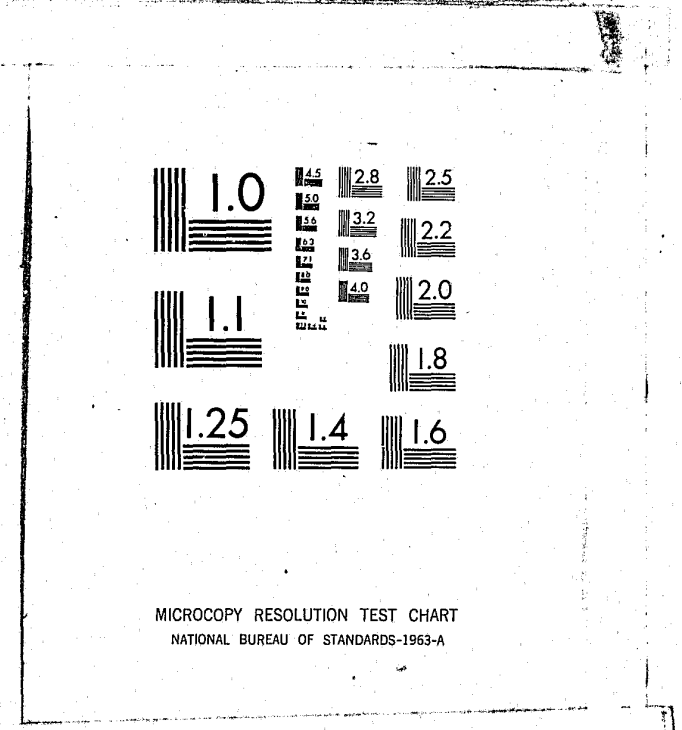


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ORGANIZED CRIME IN CALIFORNIA..1978

- PART 2
- PRISON GANGS
 - OUTLAW MOTORCYCLE GANGS

• Annual Report
to the California Legislature •

77299

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ORGANIZED CRIME IN
CALIFORNIA
1978

U.S. Department of Justice
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Annual Report To The
California Legislature

December 1979

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ACQUISITIONS

INTRODUCTION

This Assessment of Organized Crime in California is submitted in accordance with Government Code Section 15028 which requires that an annual report on organized crime be presented to the California Legislature.

The purpose of the report is to identify the characteristics, scope, and magnitude of organized criminal activity in California and the efforts of the California Department of Justice (DOJ) directed against this crime problem.

The annual report has been divided into four sections highlighting separate areas of organized criminal activities.

Part 1: Organized Crime - Special Programs

Part 2: Gang Activity

Part 3: Property, Fraudulent, and Narcotics Crimes

Part 4: Terrorism

Part 2 is the subject of this report and includes:

	<u>Page</u>
Prison Gangs	1
Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs	9

PRISON GANGS

PRISON GANGS

Update

Summaries of prison gang activity have been included in DOJ's annual assessment since 1973. Each year saw an increase in prison gang membership and violence. In 1977, the gangs were responsible for 96 homicides, 79 of which occurred in California communities. Gang-related homicides in 1978 declined to 56 from 96 in 1977, a reduction of about 40%. Incidents of gang-related robbery, assault, and narcotics activities were also reduced in 1978.

In 1978, law enforcement received some assistance in combating prison gangs. Funds were approved for the California Department of Corrections to set up a team of prison gang coordinators in prisons and parole regions. Membership in the California Prison Gang Task Force (a group of state, local, and federal agencies) rose to approximately 100 member agencies.

Through the task force, headquartered in Los Angeles, multi-jurisdictional prison gang investigations are conducted, regular exchanges of criminal intelligence data are made, and liaison is maintained with federal agencies including the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, the Drug Enforcement Agency, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, United States Customs, and the Bureau of Prisons.

In conjunction with these developments, communities hardest hit by the gangs acted aggressively in countering the local threat. The counties of Monterey and San Joaquin developed murder conspiracy cases against known Nuestra

Familia (NF) leaders. Numerous other counties, including Fresno, San Diego, and Alameda increased liaison on prison gang matters among the police departments, the district attorneys' office, and sheriffs' office. The Los Angeles Police Department and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Office are investigating prison gang members, especially Mexican Mafia (EME)* members, and successfully apprehended numerous gang suspects involved in various criminal activities.

Despite such successes on the part of California law enforcement, the prison gangs are still active. The major cause for the continuation of the problem is that gang members are most often career criminals. Studies conducted by the Department of Corrections and the California Department of Justice Bureau of Criminal Statistics have shown that approximately 56% of California Department of Corrections parolees are rearrested within one year of their parole date. A DOJ study of a sample of suspected prison gang members paroled between August 1977 and March 1978 found that 75 to 80% of this group were rearrested within one year. The majority of these were charged with crimes of violence and other felonies. A more extensive DOJ study of prison gang suspect arrest data is currently underway. Data being developed from this survey supports the contention that those individuals attracted to prison gangs are considerably more violent and are more likely to continue a career of criminal activity than other parolees.

Background

Formed along ethnic lines for power and protection, the major gangs in California today are the Mexican Mafia (EME), the Nuestra Familia (NF), the Aryan Brotherhood (AB), and the Black Guerrilla Family (BGF). The gangs are

* Spanish pronunciation of the letter M.

antagonistic toward one another; however, temporary alliances at times have been established out of mutual need. Although primarily apolitical in their efforts, some of the gangs have worked in concert with California terrorist organizations, such as the Symbionese Liberation Army and right-wing extremist groups, such as the Nazis. These groups have proselytized inmates in order to discredit the correctional process and in many instances, foment violence within the prisons. Membership in a gang entails a "blood oath;" the only sure manner in which a gang member can withdraw from his obligation is through death. This obligation appears to be enforced more often by the two Mexican groups than by the BGF or the AB.

The gangs maintain elaborate lists of enemy members and defectors, who are systematically eliminated, either while in prison or on the street. At least twice in 1977, when assassins could not find their intended victim, they killed a member of his family instead. In 1978, threats against gang family members and law enforcement personnel increased, culminating with a near fatal attack against an officer at the California Institute for Men at Chino in December 1978.

Mexican Mafia (EME)

Inside the institutions this group attempts to dominate such criminal activity as narcotics distribution, protection, and gambling. During the 1960's the EME, with its membership consisting primarily of East Los Angeles Chicanos, attempted to dominate the rural Chicanos, known as "Farmers." This led to the development of a rival gang, the Nuestra Familia. Fighting between these two gangs is vicious and, whenever possible, members of these two gangs are kept separated by correctional authorities. The EME currently has between 150 and 200 members and as many as 600 associates and sympathizers.

The EME has reached the highest level of sophistication of the four major gangs. In drug trafficking, it has been successful in making contacts with large-scale heroin smugglers. EME bank robbers bypass tellers and go directly to the vault. The gang successfully infiltrated at least one publicly funded drug rehabilitation program. This program was then used as a base of operations for EME activity in the East Los Angeles Area.

Nuestra Familia (NF)

This Chicano gang exceeded the EME in 1977 in both street and prison violence with involvement in 46 street homicides, 8 killings in jails and prisons, and numerous cases of assault, extortion, and narcotics trafficking. In response to this violent activity, California prison gang investigators developed cases against 7 of the top NF leaders for conspiracy-to-commit-homicide. The trials on two of these conspiracy cases are now in progress in Monterey County and San Joaquin County. An organized crime case using the federal Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organization (RICO) statute against known NF leaders and soldiers is being handled by the FBI. The result of this increased effort to solve NF-related crimes has led to a 70% reduction in NF homicide activity and more than a 50% reduction in such street crimes as narcotics trafficking, extortion, and assault. Also, several top NF members have defected rather than face conspiracy charges. Their loss has seriously shaken the NF leadership structure.

Despite such setbacks the NF is still involved in major crimes on the streets and recruitment in prison. Its membership has grown to equal that of the EME. Original members of the NF were rural Mexican-Americans from the central and coastal valleys of California. With the group's increased size, membership

is now diversified, consisting of Mexican-American felons throughout the state. The NF currently has between 150 and 200 highly committed members with as many as 500 associates and sympathizers.

In 1977, NF street regiments were active in Monterey, Fresno, San Joaquin, and San Bernardino counties. By the end of 1978, the only "street regiment" showing activity was the Pomona/Chino/Ontario regiment.

The NF is plagued by two problems. First, it lacks a high level of sophistication and as a result, has not been able to establish a lucrative criminal network. It has yet to establish a substantial narcotics trafficking network, and its robbery activity has been limited to small chain stores and bank tellers' cash drawers. Its second weakness concerns internal control. Members who fail to respond to orders are labeled "Hermits" and put on a "hit" list. Such a severe punitive measure causes a high level of desertion, even at the risk of death, and prevents the gang from achieving many of its goals. Despite these drawbacks, the NF is continually attracting new and highly committed members.

Black Guerrilla Family (BGF)

Members of the BGF are occasionally allied with the NF in both street and prison activity. They are well organized in the prisons, but have been unable to establish a strong street organization in recent years. In 1978, BGF members in the San Francisco Bay Area attempted to take over narcotics trafficking in the black communities. Profits from this endeavor were to promote revolutionary activity and personal gain. Lack of sophistication and internal dissension has prevented the BGF from achieving this goal. Its efforts are continuing however

both in the San Francisco Bay and the Los Angeles areas. This organization attracts exceptionally violent black convicts and could become a major problem in 1979 if it strengthens its street leadership and organization.

Aryan Brotherhood (AB)

The AB is allied with the EME in ongoing warfare with the BGF and NF. AB members have assisted EME members in prison "hits" and street robberies.

The AB was active at Folsom and San Quentin prisons in 1978, and members have frequently been involved in attacks against black inmates. Current membership is estimated at 150 members and associates.

This is the weakest of the four major gangs. Like the BGF, it is best organized in the prisons. When released, AB members tend to become involved in individual crimes or with local motorcycle gangs. Some members have attempted to take the organization to the streets, and cells of the AB have been involved in robbery and drug trafficking in the Los Angeles area. Other members have become independently associated with the EME street organization.

Multi-State Activities

As predicted in the 1977 assessment, 1978 saw an increasing prison gang influence outside the State of California. The EME and AB gangs provided the example and some of the leadership for prison gangs in Arizona. The AB and EME were involved in so much criminal activity in that state that special legislative hearings were held to determine the extent of the problem and to develop methods to combat the gangs. These hearings have resulted in legislation that provides for mandatory 15-year consecutive sentences for felons convicted of new violent crimes while incarcerated. Also, investigators

have been assigned by concerned Arizona law enforcement agencies to specifically investigate prison gang cases and maintain liaison with California Prison Gang Task Force members.

The Federal Corrections System has also experienced an increase in prison gang violence in the past year. Approximately 145 California prison gang members have been identified in federal prisons throughout the country. At least 90 of these suspects are EME. This influx of California prison gang members has brought with it an increase in violence, including assaults, homicides, and extortion.

Federal correctional officials are dealing with the problem by establishing liaison with Prison Gang Task Force members and by arranging training seminars for federal correctional staff on prison gang background, organization, and modus operandi. The EME is especially interested in expanding its sphere of influence outside of California and will most likely use contacts developed in federal prisons to expand street narcotics and extortion activities. The EME and the NF may also spread their operations to other states with a large Mexican-American population such as Oregon, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas.

The Black Guerrilla Family is now involved in a major effort to affiliate itself with nonprison-based revolutionary groups and to strengthen its organization within California prisons. Two former leaders of the BGF, James Holiday and Jeffrey Gauden, lost their bid for power. Gauden died accidentally while exercising at San Quentin in 1978, and Holiday failed to organize the BGF on the street in the same year. New leadership will emerge in 1979, and indications are that members will be directed to attack prison staff or other

law enforcement targets. The BGF will continue its ongoing warfare with white racist groups such as the Aryan Brotherhood.

The Nuestra Familia has responded to law enforcement pressure in 1978 by slowing down its criminal activity on the streets and by attempting to maintain its prison organization. Of particular interest is its recent series of jail escapes. As of January 1, 1979, six NF suspects had escaped from three California jails (Alameda, Kern, and Merced) in a six month period. All six are considered leaders in the gang. If the trend of escapes continues, a significant threat to county jail staff can be expected in 1979.

The success of the four dominant California prison gangs has had wide ranging effects in terms of providing stimulus for the growth of other gangs. Groups such as the Nazis, the National Socialist White People's Party, Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs, the Vanguard, Maravilla, Nueva Familia, La Cosa Nostra Mexicano are now present in California prisons. Violent youths from neighborhood street gangs spend time in the California Youth Authority facilities where they learn to emulate members of the prison gangs and continue their development as career criminals.

Department of Justice Efforts

The Department of Justice has been actively involved in prison gang investigations for the past several years. These efforts have included both tactical and analytical support to local agencies. The Department currently provides identification resources to law enforcement officers seeking information on suspected prison gang members. Periodic reports are prepared and disseminated to local agencies, thereby facilitating the flow of information to all concerned investigators.

OUTLAW MOTORCYCLE GANGS

OUTLAW MOTORCYCLE GANGS

Threat

In existence since the late 1940's, outlaw motorcycle gangs have been recently recognized by law enforcement as an organized crime threat. The five gangs which fall into this category are the Hell's Angels, the Vagos, the Hessians, the Mongols, and the Misfits. All but the Hell's Angels are local organizations, usually restricted to a one-or-two-county area. The Hell's Angels claim twelve charters, or chapters, in California (see chart), as well as eight national and eight international charters. The Hell's Angels have displayed a level of criminal sophistication marked by assassinations, narcotics trafficking, and infiltration of legitimate businesses that warrants increased statewide investigative efforts.

Hell's Angels Criminal Activities

Criminal areas in which Hell's Angels have posed the greatest threat are narcotics production and sales, homicide, witness intimidation, and infiltration of legitimate businesses. They have combined forces with other motorcycle gangs in the production of methamphetamine and now dominate clandestine methamphetamine laboratories in Northern California. It is believed they dominate this illegal market in Southern California as well. This activity has been documented in Livermore, Fremont, Oakland, Contra Costa, Vallejo, and Redding. Yearly profits realized from their production and distribution of narcotics cannot be estimated but it is believed to be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Infiltration of Legitimate Businesses

Some members of the Hell's Angels and other outlaw motorcycle gangs own and control legitimate businesses. Such businesses include motorcycle sales, repair, and parts shops, various mail order businesses, and a catering firm. Funds for the purchase and maintenance of these businesses come from illegal enterprises. The shops themselves are often used as fronts to sell stolen merchandise and narcotics.

An additional source of revenue is in the Hell's Angels controlled Modified Motorcycle Association (MMA) which was founded by Hell's Angels members in 1973. The MMA is an extensive organization with offices in Framingham, Massachusetts, and Sacramento. It has approximately 18,000 members, most of whom are not outlaw motorcyclists. Membership by legitimate motorcycle enthusiasts is encouraged and actively sought. The income being realized by the Hell's Angels from the MMA has not been determined, but may, in fact, be considerable.

Current Status

As a result of an estimated 15 Hell's Angels-related homicides over the past few years and two homicide attempts against investigating officers in 1978, there has been an increase in law enforcement efforts against Hell's Angels members involved in major crimes. Investigations have revealed that some gang members have developed extremely sophisticated means to counter law enforcement pressure. These include:

1. Lists of undercover police vehicles.
2. Surveillances of investigators and their residences.
3. Placement of friends and associates in positions to gather law enforcement information.

Despite on-going investigations, Hell's Angels' gang leaders continue to supervise the large-scale production and sale of narcotics. Many Hell's Angels-related crimes remain unsolved and their patterns of threats and intimidation of enemies persist.

Law Enforcement Efforts

For the past ten years, law enforcement efforts against outlaw motorcycle gang criminals have been locally based. Only recently have federal agencies made concerted efforts to apprehend outlaw motorcycle gang members involved in narcotics production, weapons violations, and conspiracy to commit homicide.

Periodic meetings are held by groups of local investigators in the Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay areas to exchange information on outlaw motorcycle gang investigations and crime potential.

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HELL'S ANGELS CHAPTERS - CALIFORNIA



END