

Nine killed, 170 arrested in Texas biker gang shootout

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The bloody shootout between rival biker gangs and police in Waco, Texas on May 17 is a symptom of an unhealthy society.

The shootout took place at a Twin Peaks sports bar and restaurant, and involved nearly 200 members of five different biker gangs. Biker gangs in attendance included the “Bandidos,” as well as a rival gang calling itself the “Cossacks.” A third “Scimitars” gang, affiliated with the Cossacks, was also present.

According to the latest reports, the gangs had chosen the restaurant as the site to mediate a dispute. A melee broke out in the restaurant and then spilled out into the parking lot, with bikers fighting with brass knuckles, chains, clubs, knives and firearms.

Heavily armed SWAT teams had been standing by in case a fight broke out, and one suspects that the police arrived with guns blazing. The result was a bloody free-for-all that left nine dead and at least 18 hospitalized. At one point, at least 30 armed bikers were shooting.

At least four of the dead have been confirmed to have been killed by police bullets. Meanwhile, no injuries have been reported among the police.

Nearly 100 weapons were recovered from the scene, and at least 170 bikers were arrested. Bail has been set at \$1 million each.

The crudely named Twin Peaks restaurant, like the rival Hooters franchise, employs only female waitresses and requires them to dress in revealing outfits. The police had apparently warned the Waco franchise not to host the bikers, but the revenue from so many customers apparently weighed more heavily in the eyes of management. To save face, the Twin Peaks parent company subsequently revoked the franchise’s license.

Biker gangs have flourished in the general atmosphere of social decay and hopelessness mixed with endless war and brutality. Many gangs are heavily

involved in methamphetamine, cocaine and marijuana production and distribution; as well as theft, extortion and other forms of gangsterism.

In addition to their criminal operations, biker gangs in the US are notorious hotbeds of white supremacy, xenophobia, misogyny, gun culture and other forms of backwardness. Many biker gangs conspicuously display Nazi symbols, such as the swastika or the SS death’s head, as well as the Confederate flag.

As they did in the period of the Vietnam War, biker gangs continue to recruit heavily from among military veterans recently returned from combat.

The Bandidos gang, formed in 1966 in Texas by a former US Marine and Vietnam veteran, encourages its members to wear patches that read, “Accept No Mercy.” The gang, which has an estimated 2,400 members, wears the same colors as the US Marine Corps: gold and red.

The name of the rival Cossacks gang is exactly what it sounds like—with motorcycles instead of horses—although it is doubtful that many bikers can actually claim Cossack descent. Both the Bandidos and Cossacks claim the state of Texas as their turf.

The city of Waco was made infamous by the military assault on the Branch Davidian cult complex in 1993. The assault left 86 people dead, including 25 children.



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