

City/suburbs

Protesters fight paint with paint

By Jess Bravin

With paint rollers, protest signs, construction helmets and an occasional Cubs cap in their armory, nearly 150 anti-Ku Klux Klan and anti-neo-Nazi ralliers wound their way through Lake View Saturday, protesting what they said was a growing extremist presence in Chicago.

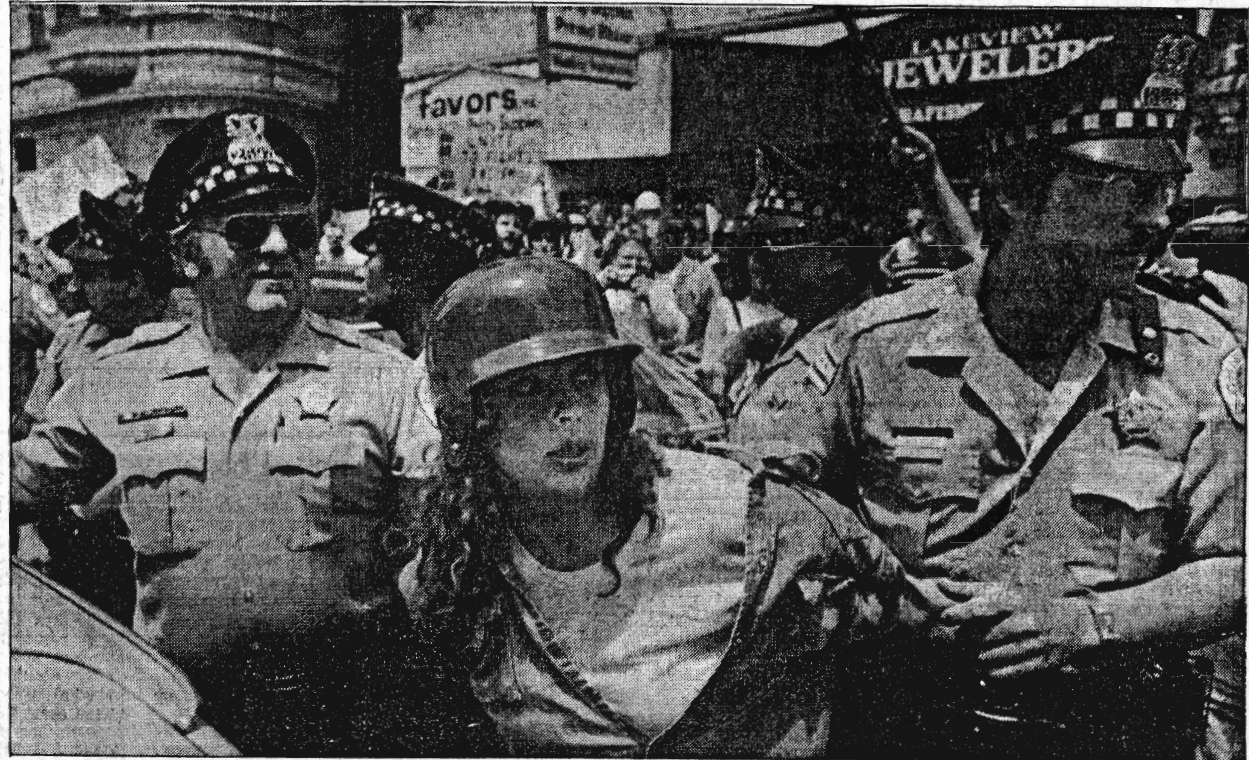
But though the proclaimed target of the marchers was the racist graffiti marring many of the North Side neighborhood's alleyways, the group spent more time scrawling epithets on the walls it passed than painting over the offensive markings.

By the time the 90-minute march had ended at 1 p.m., five people were arrested and charged with assault, mob action and criminal damage to property.

"These people are the trouble, not the Nazis," said Officer Donald Eichler.

The protest was organized by the John Brown Anti-Klan Committee, a citizens group that claims to have a nationwide following, but the marchers soon expanded the targets of their chants to South African apartheid and U.S. policy in Central America.

"We see the racism of the Klan and the Nazis as connected to these other issues," said Jean



Tribune photo by David Butow

A helmeted member of the John Brown Anti-Klan Committee is taken into custody by police officers Saturday after the group's anti-racist rally in the Lake View neighborhood got out of hand.

Stein, a rally organizer.

The protesters, most of them in their 30s, began their march in a parking lot at Clark and School Streets. They chanted, "No Nazis, No KKK, No fascist U.S.A."

Many of the anti-racist activists sported helmets and goggles. Dozens held signs mounted on broom handles, while others carried shields bearing slogans. "We're ready to defend ourselves," Stein said.

Organizers carrying walkie-

talkies scouted for neo-Nazis in all directions, and when suspected Klansmen were sighted, the march changed course to approach them.

Eight men in army costumes and swastika armbands did make a brief appearance across the street from the protesters, but quickly departed in a waiting station wagon.

The protesters paid them almost no heed. Just as the neo-Nazis appeared, police made their first arrests.

Those arrested were Dawn Kennedy, 24, charged with criminal damage to property; Thomas Shoard, 31, mob action and criminal damage to property; Donald Hamerquist, 45, resisting arrest, mob action and assault; and Janeen Porter, 35, resisting arrest, assaulting a police officer and mob action.

"They had no permit to be in the street," said Lt. John Ritnower. "They wouldn't get off the street."