

# PORTLAND OBSERVER

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The Eyes and Ears of the community

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## Skinheads: Racism, Terrorism and Murder

On March 23, 1988, after reviewing the Town Hall program, the **Portland Observer** issued the following warning in an Editorial: "We hope the Youth Gang Task Force was listening when members of the Eastside Skinheads expressed their brand of racism. We hope Mayor Bud Clark and Governor Neil Goldschmidt were listening. We hope the Portland Police were listening. We hope they heard what we heard: that the Skinheads are neo-Nazis and are determined to keep African-Americans out of East Portland and elsewhere. Their brand of racism is meant to injure, hurt, and even kill. And if that's not serious, then chicken ain't poultry."

Apparently, the guardians of our civil rights were not listening. When Black Oregonians expressed outrage at the low-keyed, no action attitude of City, State and Governmental officials toward the Skinheads, very few seem to hear or want to hear.

Now, a Black man, Mulugeta Seraw, has been beaten to death, in Southeast Portland, (possibly by Skinheads) everyone seems willing to listen and take action.

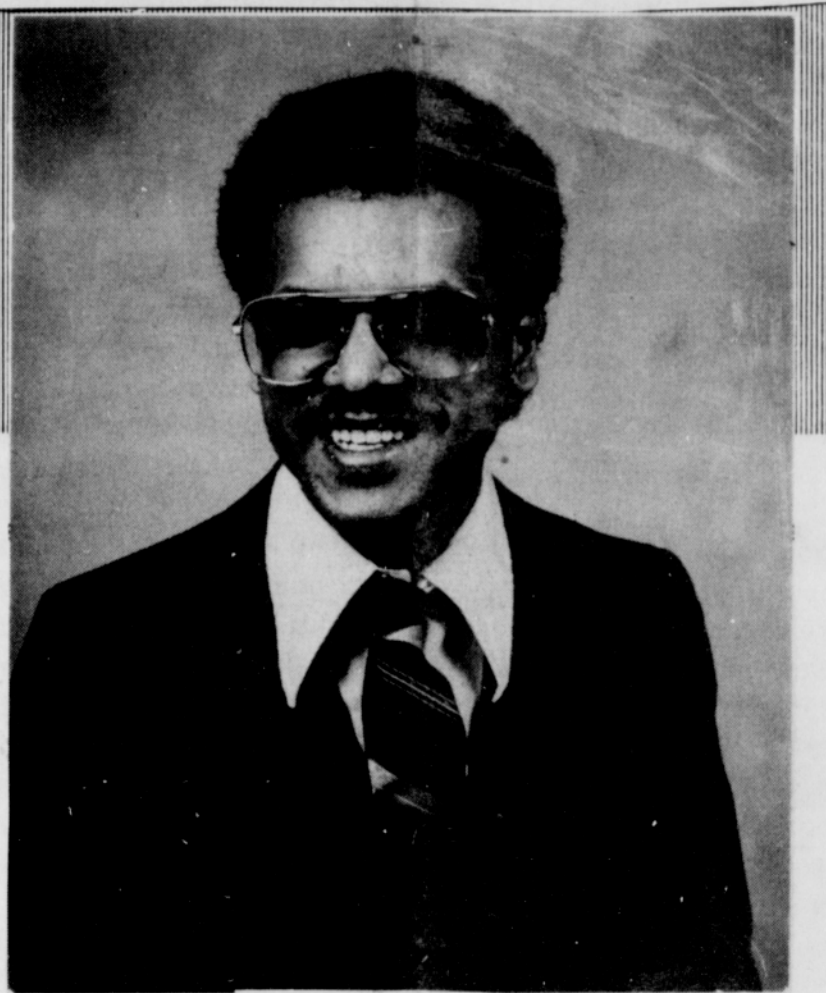
The death of Mulugeta Seraw was senseless, brutal, and symbolic of the growing violence against African-Americans, Jews and people of color. Mr. Seraw's death also speaks to the serious and dangerous problem of racism in the City of Portland and the State of Oregon.

It is tragic that it took the death of Mr. Seraw before the city was willing to take action. Even after Commissioner Dick Bogle successfully pushed to have neo-Nazi gangs included in the City/County "Gang Resolution", very little was done to make sure that hate groups did not violate the rights of African-Americans, Jews and people of color. Instead there was a relentless focus on gang activity in the Black community. This happened despite the Black community's insistence that the gang problem was not merely a Black problem.

Black Oregonians and many white citizens are outraged at Mr. Seraw's death.

Throughout the African-American community, Black Oregonians are angry and demanding that justice be served upon those responsible for this brutal murder. It is obvious that

### In Memory Of ...



MULUGETA SERAW

the anger is going to remain long after the murderers have been caught - that is, if they ever are.

The State of Oregon must pay closer attention to what Black Oregonians are saying about Oregon's race problem.

The State of Oregon and the City of Portland must do much more to stem the tide of racism within its borders.

Having fought racism for more than 400 years, in America and abroad, Black

Oregonians are not about to turn and run away from the problem. They are going to meet the challenge head on and in most cases, without compromise. The death of Mr. Seraw has pulled the community closer together. The meaning of his life and the way it was taken from him will live in our hearts forever.

We implore the Black community to continue to demand justice be served the killers of Mr. Seraw. We implore the Black community to continue to fight racism wherever it confronts them. But more importantly, we implore all citizens of Oregon to stand up and be counted. We implore the white leadership of this State and the City of Portland to let it be known that racism has no place within the borders of any community.

We urge the Black community to continue to seek ways to eliminate racism without resorting to violence. But, we urge Black Oregonians to take caution. Watch your back. Watch each others' backs. Safeguard your homes, your children and your community from those who are determined to injure, hurt and even kill any Black Oregonian merely

That's one of the lessons of Mr. Seraw's death. We don't need another one.

### Statement From Portland's Ethiopian Community

We are shocked and dismayed at the senseless beating death of Mulugeta Seraw, our relative, friend and countryman.

We have asked U.S. Attorney, Charles Turner, to request that the FBI join in the investigation of this murder. We think it is very possible that Mulugeta's murders are connected with other white supremacist groups in America.

We wish to thank all of those who have offered condolences and friendships. Many have asked where to send money to help the family. All checks should be made out to Mulugeta Seraw Memorial Fund, C/O Ethiopian Community Organization, P.O. Box 8307, Portland, Oregon 97207.

### "SHAVED FOR BATTLE"

Skinheads Target America's Youth

Special Report by Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith

Gangs of shaven-headed youth sporting neo-Nazi insignia and preaching violence against Blacks, Jews, and other minorities have become a menacing presence in several U.S. cities. The most active of these white supremacist "skinhead" groups operates in the Chicago area and goes by the name "Romantic Violence."

The number of skinhead activists at present is small - no more than several hundred across the country - but they are growing, and their glorification of violence and potential for attracting alienated youngsters merits the attention of community leaders as well as law enforcement officials. One of the major attractions of the skinheads for young people is their close association with a type of hard-driving rock music called "white power" music. The music - as well as the movement itself - originated in Great Britain, where skinheads are more numerous and have been linked to neo-fascist groups.

The ideology of the American skinhead gangs is similar to that of the British variety: a brew of xenophobia, racial and religious bigotry and an affinity for Nazism. In the United States, hardcore skinhead doctrine is more openly anti-Semitic than it is in Britain. A leaflet distributed in Cincinnati states: "We

would prefer to smash the present anti-white, Zionist (Jew), puppet-run government with a healthy, new white man's order!" Another in Chicago asserts: "Skinheads of America, like the dynamic skinheads in Europe, are working class Aryan youth. We oppose the capitalist and communist scum that are destroying our Aryan race ... the parasitic Jewish race is at the heart of our problem." The leaflet proclaims: "Our heads are shaved for battle."

#### British Origins

The skinhead phenomenon originated in England, where gangs of menacing-looking, shaven-headed and tattooed youths wearing combat boots began to be seen in the streets in the early 1970's. The style was meant to symbolize tough, patriotic, anti-immigrant, working class attitudes in contrast to the supposedly sissyish, pacifist, liberal, middle-class views of the long-hairs.

Before long several British neo-Nazi groups realized the skinheads were recruitable and began to enroll them. The tactic met with a good deal of success and the public has increasingly come to view skinheads as neo-Nazis.

An additional ingredient in British-style skinheadism has been "football hooliganism." Violence frequently seen at soccer matches in the U.K. is perpetrated by young toughs who the skins have targeted for recruitment. Skinheads were reported to have been involved in the riot at the 1985 Brussels football match between Britain and Belgium, where 38 fans were killed.

Skinheads have also provoked violent street battles in London and other cities against minority groups. So-called "Paki-bashing" (beating up the Pakistanis and other Asians) as well as fire bombings of homes and shops have led on occasion to the arrest and imprisonment of skinhead activists.

#### Skinhead Music

The rock groups with which skinheads in the United States identify are mostly British, although there are a few American bands whose music they favor. The leading British skinhead band (which American skins are hoping to tour in the U.S.) is Skrewdriver, led by Ian Stuart, a National Front organizer who was once sentenced to a year in prison for racist violence. Stuart's group publishes a magazine, *White Noise*, owns a small recording company, and periodically sponsors a *White Noise* festival where hundreds of skinhead gather to hear bands from several European countries. Stuart's views are set forth in the March 19, 1984 issue of *The Spotlight*, published by the Washington, D.C. - based anti-Jewish Liberty Lobby:

*"I am not the type of person to creep and crawl to a bunch of weak-kneed, pacifist lefties and two-faced Zionists. One must be honest to people about one's beliefs and especially when the survival of our race is at stake."*

Among the group's recordings are singles with titles such as "White Power," "Nigger, Nigger," and "Prisoner of Peace (Rudolph Hess)." A flyer circulated by Romantic Violence

describes Skrewdriver as "an institution, a stance of courage, determination, loyalty, honor and a will to win." Other British skinhead bands are: Brutal Attack, Skullhead, Prime Suspects, Sudden Impact, and the Scottish group British Standard. Skinhead bands elsewhere in Europe are the Swedish group Ultimathule, France's Brutal Combat, and the German group Bohse Onkelz.

#### Chicago's Skinheads

The Chicago area skinheads first surfaced in 1984, when Romantic Violence, then operating from a post office box in Cicero, began promoting its "Death's Head Muscle T-Shirt." (Chicago's skinheads also operate under the acronym CASH, for "Chicago Area Skinheads.") Promotional flyers included pictures of jack-booted Nazi-youth. The group's leader, 27-year-old Clark Reid Martell, was arrested that September in Oak Park for painting swastikas on village property. At the time, Martell was also active in local neo-Nazi activities and did cartoon work for the publication of the Chicago-based American Nazi Party. Previously, in 1979, he was convicted and sentenced to four years in prison for attempting to commit aggravated arson against a Hispanic victim.

Criminal charges are currently pending against Martell for a long series of personal crimes. In 1986, Martell told an assembly of white racist leaders from around the country that his group "stands for ware," adding: "I am a violent person. I

love the white race, and if you love something, you're the most vicious person on earth."

Martell was arrested by Ann Arbor police in March, 1987 at a rally in which youthful neo-Nazis belonging primarily to Detroit's small self-styled SS-Action Group brandished swastika shields. As the group marched and shouted "white power" slogans on the steps of the Federal Building, Martell reportedly bloodied the face of a counter demonstrator with his shield.

Romantic Violence has offered for sale cassettes of England's skinhead band Skrewdriver, along with U.S. groups called White Pride and U.S. Chaos. It has also promoted a home-grown band which calls itself - unabashedly - "the Final Solution," described as "a new breed of heroes (who) have sprung from the midwestern soil, brave skinhead patriots ready to fight for race and nation."

Emphasizing its English connection, Romantic Violence touts a form of white power rock known as "Oi" (a Cockney greeting), which it describes as "nothing like Punk-Rock, Hardcore or Heavy Metal. Oi is for Warriors." Another flyer circulated by the group describes "Oi" as "music to riot by." Martell is reported to be working to promote a midwestern tour by an American Oi group called Doc Marten.

#### Other Midwest Gangs

Two other skinhead groups with a semblance of organized structure are located in the Cincinnati

and Detroit metropolitan areas. The Cincinnati-based White American Skin Heads (WASH) is led by 19-year-old Mike Lewis. Lewis, who was active with the Chicago skinheads before moving to Cincinnati last spring, has gained a measure of publicity for his group by running a recruiting advertisement on the bulletin board of a local public access television channel.

#### "We Are Racial"

More loosely-organized skinhead groups with neo-Nazi leanings are also operating in the San Francisco Bay area, and in central Florida, Portland, Los Angeles, Dallas, and Denver. Dave Mazella, a young San Francisco skinhead affiliated with WAR's youth arm, the Aryan Youth Movement, describes skinheads as the group's "front-line warriors." The Bay area was the scene in July, 1987 of an ugly racial incident in which a 54-year-old black woman was accosted by four skinheads near a San Jose park. According to the woman, one told her "niggers pay toll" and another added "we're going to string you up in that tree." Kenneth Lamar Allen, 20, was charged with attempted robbery and false imprisonment. From his jail cell Allen, a self-described neo-Nazi, told reporters, "We are racial and she was black ... We're into white supremacy."

Members of another Bay area skinhead group known as BASH operate in the Haight-Ashbury district and are led by Terry Sargent. They have distributed flyers promoting Chi-

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