

**[Of the three 1990's groups mentioned only ANA now exist. The others were infiltrated, set up and shut down. Only Michael Brander's wise leadership spared us the same fate. STEVE, 19.2.2006]**

## The Skinhead International: Australia

"Romper Stomper," an Australian motion picture that depicts savage violence by Skinhead toughs, has brought worldwide attention to Australia's Skinheads. Although the story on which the film is based is imaginary, there are indeed racist Skins Down Under and some of them actually liked the film. One such Skinhead has been quoted thus: "Up to a point it's against Skinheads ... but it's good publicity for our cause. With unemployment like it is, they're asking for trouble letting all these Asians into the country."

According to the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, Skinhead numbers have fluctuated over the past decade from a relative few to 300 to 400. There are Skinheads in most state capitals, some affiliated with such neo-Nazi groups as the Australian Nationalist Movement, Australian National Action, and the Australian National Socialist Movement. Both the Australian Nationalist Movement and Australian National Action succeeded in recruiting Skinheads in 1993 and 1994. As many as one-third to one-half of the participants in National Action rallies have been Skins.

### White Australian Resistance

Two new racist Skinhead groups have made their appearance of late. One, a Sydney group calling itself Southern Cross Hammer Skinheads, has adopted the motto: "We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children." (This expression, common among far-right activists in the United States, is known as "the 14 words," and was originally coined by David Lane, an American neo-Nazi terrorist serving a long prison term. It is noteworthy that the expression is now being used by an Australian Skinhead group which has also borrowed from its American cousins the term "Hammer Skinheads.") The other Skinhead gang, White Australian Resistance (WAR), located in Melbourne, apparently adapted its name from the California-based White Aryan Resistance (WAR). The head of the latter group, Tom Metzger, has boasted on his telephone hotline about the formation of the Australian organization.[1]

Aussie Skinheads have a record of violence similar to that of their counterparts the world over. From 1987 to 1989, National Action members in Sydney - some of them Skinheads - actively harassed anti-apartheid activists and members of homosexual organizations. On January 27, 1989, two National Action Skins fired bullets into the residence of the Sydney-based representative of the African National Congress.

In 1990, Special Branch detectives in Sydney concluded that Australian National Action had been encouraging Skinheads to mount "a campaign of terror" to distract attention from the Action group's own violent activities. The annual report of Australia's Security Intelligence Organization, released in May 1990, indicated that extreme right-wing groups had shown "a clear potential to cause distress to sections of the Australian community, and perhaps threaten life."

More recently, there have been further reports of sporadic Skinhead harassment of Asians and Jews. In Brisbane in May 1993, Skinheads of the Australian National Socialist Movement plastered the synagogue of the Brisbane Hebrew Congregation with posters and graffiti. In February 1994, four Skinhead females, chanting "Romper Stomper," attacked four Asian girls with a knife and table-leg clubs at a Melbourne railway station. Train passengers were also reportedly harassed.

On March 26, 1994, some 20 neo-Nazi Skins in full regalia goose-stepped single file into a mall in downtown Adelaide shouting, "Seig Heil" and "Heil Hitler." Their march soon turned into a rampage, resulting in at least 15 injuries and four Skinhead arrests. A passer-by said "It was like a neo-Nazi riot in Europe you see on TV."

## "Asian Invasion"

Several weeks later, Adelaide, still reeling from the Skinhead riot, was the scene of Australia's biggest neo-Nazi demonstration in several decades. The rally, sponsored by Australian National Action, included many Skinheads, along with bikers and other neo-Nazis. The 80 to 100 demonstrators gathered to denounce proposed anti-racist legislation. A nearby crowd of opponents hooted down National Action leader Michael Brander, as he railed against "the Asian invasion" and the "threat of Australia losing its identity to the Asian capitalists." Another National Action street demonstration, in an Adelaide suburb in December 1994, featured anti-Asian and other bigoted chants.

Australia's bloodiest Skinhead violence of the 1990's has pitted neo-Nazi Skins against each other (a common occurrence in other countries as well). In 1991, Skinhead Colin Irvine, whose bedroom was adorned with swastika flags and pictures of Hitler, allegedly murdered a fellow Skinhead, before being shot dead by police. On April 21, 1990, a National Action member in Sydney murdered a fellow Skinhead at a Hitler's birthday party. The victim, David Noble, of Adelaide, was killed by Skinhead Dave Sweetman, with the aid of fellow neo-Nazis Martin Bayston and Sean Shilling. During Sweetman's trial he shouted at journalists, "You Zionist maggots are going to get what you deserve. Sieg Heil!" Sweetman was convicted and is presently serving 20 years in Pentridge prison.

There is a limited Skinhead music scene in Australia. One band, Fortress, has produced a recording entitled "Seize The Day," according to the British skinzine *Last Chance*. Asked by *Last Chance* to describe the aims of Fortress, its spokesman replied, "The band follows a white racial/nationalist stance ... The songs are about being a Skinhead today, the plight of the white man ... heros like Rudolf Hess." Other Australian bands mentioned from time to time in British and American zines have been Open Season and White Noise. (Anti-Defamation League, 10-12)

1. A Skinhead gang in Sweden has also adopted as its name the Swedish translation of White Aryan Resistance (Vitt Ariskt Motstånd).

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## Work Cited

Anti-Defamation League. The Skinhead International: A Worldwide Survey of Neo-Nazi Skinheads. New York: Anti-Defamation League, 1995. Anti-Defamation League, 823 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017.

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*Disclaimer:* not all skinheads are neo-nazis or white supremacists. There are many skinheads who are non- or anti-racist, and who come from a variety of different religious and cultural backgrounds. Nizkor recognizes their achievements in anti-racism: they are part of the traditional, non-racist skinhead subculture and are not the perpetrators of the hate crimes discussed here.

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<http://www.nizkor.vex.net/hweb/orgs/american/adl/skinhead-international/skins-australia.html> 4/01/99

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