

BRIEFING PAPER
National Socialist Movement - Butte

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National Socialist Movement

The National Socialist Movement formed in 1974. It grew out of the American Nazi Party of the 1960s, which was led by George Lincoln Rockwell. Following Rockwell's assassination in 1967, various neo-Nazi groups formed to continue the American Nazi Party's message. One of these was the National Socialist Movement (NSM).

Unlike some white supremacist groups, the National Socialist Movement openly embraces its racist and anti-Semitic ideology. It proudly proclaims its worship of Adolph Hitler and the Third Reich. It declares that "our logo is the Sacred Swastika," and one of the group's slogan is "Fighting for Race and Nation." At public events, party members frequently wear brown-shirt uniforms replicating Hitler's storm troopers. The National Socialist Movement believes citizenship should be denied to people of color, Jews, and gays and lesbians. It is openly anti-Semitic and racist.

The National Socialist Movement follows a paramilitary structure, with members and leaders receiving titles like commander, lieutenant and other military ranks. In 2000, its Ohio chapter offered weapons training at a farm, and group members from other states attended. NSM publications have advocated that white people receive weapons training and published recipes for explosives and fertilizer bombs.

With its national headquarters in Minnesota, the National Socialist Movement has chapters across the country. It is one of the premiere hate groups in America. Its status has increased in recent years as longtime stalwarts of the hate movement, such as Aryan Nations and the National Alliance, have faltered. NSM has staged numerous rallies across the country, in some cases turning out over 100 activists. The group actively recruits young people, specifically through its "Viking Youth Corps." The Corps promises to teach youth military skills and the history of the White Race.

Commander Jeff Schoep

Jeff Schoep took over leadership of the National Socialist Movement in 1994, and he is a frequent speaker at white supremacist rallies across the country. He claims to have begun reading the writings of Hitler in the fourth grade. He believes that Hitler was "definitely right" in carrying out the Holocaust.

Schoep writes approvingly that, during its history, the white race “nearly rid it [the world] of the pestilence of American Indians” and other people of color. He refers to these genocidal attempts as “glorious.” He also believes white supremacists are the “last vestiges of our Race who have refused to lie down and die in Multi-Racial, Internationalist, Jewish lead [sic] filth.”

While claiming to represent the hardworking and upstanding white population, Schoep’s personal history is full of petty crimes, which have been reported on by the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. In 1998 (four years after he took over leadership of NSM), authorities arrested him for felony theft and burglary for his role in stealing \$4,000 worth of computer equipment. Schoep isn’t the only NSM leader with a criminal past. Longtime Indiana NSM leader John Snyder is a registered sex offender.

National Socialist Movement – Butte

On December 23, 2005, Commander Jeff Schoep announced the National Socialist Movement had formed a new unit in Montana. He said the state contact person had set up shop in Butte, and anyone in Montana wishing to get involved with the group should inquire by sending a letter to a post office box or generic e-mail address [ATTACHMENT 2].

In January 2006, postings and interviews with Shawn Stuart began appearing on white supremacist websites. He discussed how he was the Butte contact point for the National Socialist Movement. One site featuring an interview with Stuart was the *Hal Turner Show*. Hal Turner hosts a shortwave radio program based out of New Jersey. A favorite of the white supremacist movement, Turner publicly says things that most racist might think but wouldn’t verbalize over the air. On one broadcast, Turner told listeners:

“If you want social change in this country, if you want the homos shoved back in the closet, if you want the border with Mexico sealed, if you want the illegal aliens rounded up and deported out of the country, if you want the niggers and spics to stop beating, raping, robbing white people...it’s going to take violence. That’s the reality. It is going to take violence.”

Turner has also advocated murdering federal judges. In defense of his statements, Turner says he only advocates “what I am willing to do.” He said he avoids arrest by conducting his actions alone and by not telling anyone about them.

Shawn Stuart’s appearance on white supremacist websites was not the first time the Montana Human Rights Network had run into him. Back in 2004, a Network staff member gave presentations to high school classes in Bozeman. The presentations focused on the dangers of the white supremacist movement and how hate groups tried to recruit youth. A teacher had invited the Network staff member to speak, because the National Alliance, a hate group, had a racist recruiter in Bozeman who was targeting youth. The morning after the presentations, a young man paid a visit to the teacher, grilling her about why she had allowed the presentation. The teacher, who was clearly

intimidated by the encounter, called the Network a few days later. She said the young man who confronted her was Shawn Stuart. She recognized him from his picture in a political advertisement that had run in the local newspaper [ATTACHMENT 1]. The National Alliance and the National Socialist Movement have worked together at the national level.

Shawn Stuart Runs for Office

On March 25, 2006, the *Montana Standard* reported that Shawn Stuart had filed for the Montana Legislature in House District 76 as a Republican. His profile confirmed what the Network already knew: he was born in Bozeman, served in the Marines, and is currently enrolled at Montana Tech. He told the paper that “Abortion and gay rights are things I will never support.”

Stuart is hardly the first white supremacist to use the strategy of running for public office. All across the country, white supremacists attempt to repackage their beliefs and gain access to the political mainstream by running for office. Frequently, they frame their beliefs in terms of “white pride” and an interest in European-American heritage. These word games are an attempt to sugarcoat their hardcore racism and anti-Semitism. The reality is they view people of color as subhuman and Jews as inherently evil.

Stuart is following the example pioneered by longtime Louisiana Klansman David Duke. Back in the 1980s, Duke stashed away his Klan robe, bought a business suit, and began calling himself a conservative Republican. With his initial comments to the press, Stuart is attempting the same trick. As he tries to wedge himself into the debate over abortion and gay rights, Stuart knows that a message echoing the Religious Right is more appealing in the political mainstream than a white supremacist with an anti-Semitic message.

In Montana, another recent example illustrates the “David Duke process.” The recruiter for the National Alliance in Bozeman, Kevin McGuire, ran for the Bozeman School Board in 2005. McGuire framed his message as “racial pride” and an interest in school reform. He also echoed the Religious Right’s themes of homophobia and family values. He characterized the National Alliance as a benign European-heritage group, despite the organization’s history of race-based violence. On Election Day, McGuire received 3.7% of the total vote.

Conclusion

The National Socialist Movement and Shawn Stuart are not the first white supremacists to target Montana. Hate groups and their activists have long dreamed of an “Aryan Homeland” in the Pacific Northwest. Places like Montana and Idaho have assumed an almost mythical quality for the hate movement. Also, our state’s overwhelmingly white population makes us an enticing option.

Stuart's choice of Butte is no doubt a product of his decision to attend Montana Tech. The National Socialist Movement's desire to have a Montana presence is understandable. Because of the factors mentioned above, an informal racist infrastructure has existed in Montana for years. As the groups and activists who have tapped into the structure fall away, others move in to fill the void. As groups like the World Church of the Creator and the Montana Front Working Class Skinheads have declined in Montana, the National Socialist Movement and the National Alliance have stepped up to take their place.

Stuart's decision to run for office is not surprising. It is a common technique used by white supremacists to repackage themselves in a community. Using rhetoric already used by conservatives, people like Stuart hope to wedge themselves into the mainstream debate and open up new avenues for recruitment. Winning the election isn't really the goal. Instead, the goal is to use the campaign season to gain a sense of political legitimacy and to test new recruitment propaganda.

As Butte faces the presence of the National Socialist Movement and the candidacy of Shawn Stuart, the Network hopes the community will take the problem seriously. The Network has worked with and observed many communities that have publicly condemned the existence of hate groups in their areas. It has also watched communities try to ignore the problem and hope it goes away. The first approach works better, as the second allows the problem to grow and expand.

Sources:

Montana Human Rights Network Archives
National Socialist Movement website
Montana Standard
Anti-Defamation League
Southern Poverty Law Center