

Anti-fascism and te tiriti



**PŌNEKE
ANTI-FASCIST
COALITION**

In Aotearoa, if you're not upholding te tiriti and you're not supporting tino rangatiratanga, you're not doing anti-fascism. Capitalism spawns both colonialism and fascism. Therefore, effective anti-fascism is both de-colonial and anti-capitalist. In Aotearoa, this means ensuring anti-fascist organising respects and upholds kaupapa laid down by mana whenua, and it means amplifying grassroots Māori voices. The tino rangatiratanga flag, as well as other indigenous flags such as the Palestine flag and the Kanaky flag, are anti-colonial and thus anti-fascist. We explicitly welcome these flags at every event we organise and we bring these flags to the events we support.

When we think of the term 'anti-fascism', we may conjure up mental images based on what we've seen in popular culture and media. These mental images may be appropriate for the specific time and place they originate from. For example, in the USA Antifa often wear masks and body armour at rallies - this may be appropriate for their safety in the context of that country's current internal tensions. We respect and we don't criticise anti-fascists' approach in their own countries, but anti-fascism in Aotearoa is different for numerous reasons.

Despite the many bigotries and structural oppressions here in Aotearoa, it is currently significantly safer for us to speak out publicly and to organise in the streets than it is in many other countries. As a result, anti-fascists in Aotearoa often choose not to anonymise ourselves, and speak and rally openly. We think it is important that where possible people loudly and proudly identify themselves as anti-facist, as this itself sends a message of resistance.

The relative safety of organising in Aotearoa is not experienced equally, however. Police and far Right bigots are more likely to target Māori and Pasifika than Pākehā. Anti-fascist and other leftist organisers in Aotearoa should always be considering how their actions might create backlash against Māori and Pasifika people, and should consider in advance what they will do to mitigate such backlash.

Just as 'anti-fascism' in Aotearoa doesn't look like black-bloody street fights, 'fascism' in Aotearoa doesn't look like the popular image of a Nazi SS officer. Explicitly fascist groups do exist, but these groups are tiny and pretty powerless. A more immediate threat is posed by bigoted proto-fascists such as Brian Tamaki and his Destiny Church and Man Up groups. Tamaki has, sadly, misled many vulnerable people into following him, and anti-fascists encounter whānau marching within Destiny Church's ranks. We use messaging of aroha and community to allow those who have been misled down a far Right pipeline to get away from toxic leaders like Tamaki and be welcomed back to their whānau.

Another immediate and significant threat in Aotearoa is the stirring of racist division and attacks on Māori rights by this far Right government. An example is David Seymour's Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi Bill, which sought to undermine te tiriti and tino rangatiratanga. Pōneke Anti-Fascist Coalition was proud to be active in the Tiriti Action Group which, led by mana whenua representatives, welcomed the Hīkoi Mō Te Tiriti through these city streets to protest the Bill. This battle was won - the Bill has been defeated - but Seymour continues to pose a threat through ACT and other linked groups including the Atlas Network and the Taxpayers' Union. In particular, anti-fascists have further work ahead supporting Māori against the upcoming Regulatory Standards Bill which similarly seeks to undermine te tiriti.

Key to anti-fascism is the recognition of intersectional oppression and shared struggle. It's no coincidence that this extremely racist government is also anti-transgender and anti-disability. Transphobia and white supremacy are linked - the Right obsesses similarly over the bodies of trans people and POC. Transphobia is rooted in enforcing a strict gender binary that most affects women of colour, for example the Right wing obsession with defining 'women' fixates on an imaginary white, thin womanhood, and the panic around trans women in sports reflects this. Anti-disability and racism are likewise linked, leveraging ideas of genetic hierarchy. The list could go on.

Almost everybody in Aotearoa has a shared interest in being anti-fascist, in uniting against fascism and against the far Right, in upholding te tiriti, and in defeating racism.

Fight fascism!

Toitū te tiriti!