

# Understanding the far right in Aotearoa New Zealand



This zine is a condensed overview to help readers understand the far right in Aotearoa. By looking at their methods and symbols, people can better protect themselves and their communities.

*Content warning: explicit discussion of fascism and fascist symbologies.*

*Understanding the Far Right in Aotearoa New Zealand* was developed and written in January and February 2021.

The authors are academics, activists, and tech experts. We have knowledge of and expertise in human rights issues, cybersecurity, mis- and dis-information, te ao Māori, public policy, and combating online and offline extremism.

We are choosing not to include our names in this publication in the interest of our safety and wellbeing, and the safety of our families and communities. Far right groups have a history of identifying (or “doxxing”), targeting, and harassing people with opposing views or those who speak out against them. The information in this booklet is well-researched, with references included as needed so you can verify the sources we use and learn more. We hope you will find it useful and trustworthy.

**Cover art from the website of nobonzo.com**

**You are welcome to make copies of this booklet and share with your communities.**

**Version 1, February 2021**

## About this booklet

On the far right of the political spectrum sits a range of views that are often explicitly racist, fascist, or otherwise prejudiced. We only need to think of the March 2019 Christchurch terrorist attack to understand what can happen when the adoption of these beliefs is paired with action.

Today, far right groups function in many different ways. They spread disinformation, dangerous ideas, and hostility towards oppressed and excluded people online. They attend meetings and protests to try to recruit new members. They share their ideas in the media and to friends and family. And they join political parties to try and influence their policies.

We want to give you some tools to help recognise far right ideas and symbols, and understand how they can be harmful. Once you know what to look out for, you will be better able to keep your families and communities safe. You will be able to warn your community when far right groups are acting in your area, or even report the activity to the authorities, especially if there is an active risk to your safety.

These tools will also help you and your community avoid getting sucked in by harmful ideas. Some of these ideas may seem ok on the surface, but lead to far right radicalisation and harmful ways of thinking about race, ethnicity, and culture. There are many recent examples where people who had concerns about the impacts of COVID-19 lockdowns were led towards conspiracy theories about the virus, and then into anti-Asian racism and other extremist views. This “pathway to radicalisation” is common and dangerous. With the right knowledge and tools, you can help keep your community safe and slow the spread of harmful ideas. You have power as a person, and as a member of your community, to reject the spread of these ideas. You have power as a person, and as a member of your community, to reject the spread of these ideas.

## What is fascism?

At the extreme far-right the political spectrum is a set of beliefs and political ideas known as fascism. Fascism is often most associated with the Hitler and the Nazi Party in Germany, and Mussolini's National Fascist Party in Italy, but fascist ideas and openly fascist groups continue to operate today.

To understand the range of far-right extremism in New Zealand and to get a sense of the dangerous end-point of these political ideas, it is useful to know a bit about fascism and its history.



### Defining fascism

Fascism is an extreme form of nationalism that promotes extreme devotion to one nation or people over all others. Fascist states are generally authoritarian and non-democratic.

Fascist states and groups are racist, believing that a strong state requires "racial purity" and a homogenous population. This can result in the persecution, deportation, or killing of people that are seen as "other," for example people of different races or religious backgrounds, or disabled people.

#### Some other common characteristics of fascism include:

- support for white supremacy
- opposition to multiculturalism and liberalism
- support for rigid hierarchies
- support for racism, misogyny, homophobia, ableism, antisemitism, Islamophobia, trans-hatred etc.

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## Fascism then and now

The first fascist movements started in the early 20th century, with Mussolini's National Fascist party (Partito Nazionale Fascista) founded in Italy in 1921, and the the Nazi Party (officially the National Socialist German Workers' Party/Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter partei or NSDAP) founded in Gemany in 1920.

After the regimes led by these parties were defeated in the Second World War, new fascist movements emerged. Some aimed to rehabilitate the ideas of the early 20th century fascists, others have little continuity with those movements and express their ideas in different forms, but still have many common characteristics.

Fascism and similar ideologies continue to the present day, and fascist groups continue to be a danger to people, communities, and national security. While there are specific terms that historians use to identify the different kinds of fascist groups,<sup>1</sup> in this booklet we use the term "fascism" to cover them all.

*Benito Mussolini, leader of Italy's National Fascist Party.*



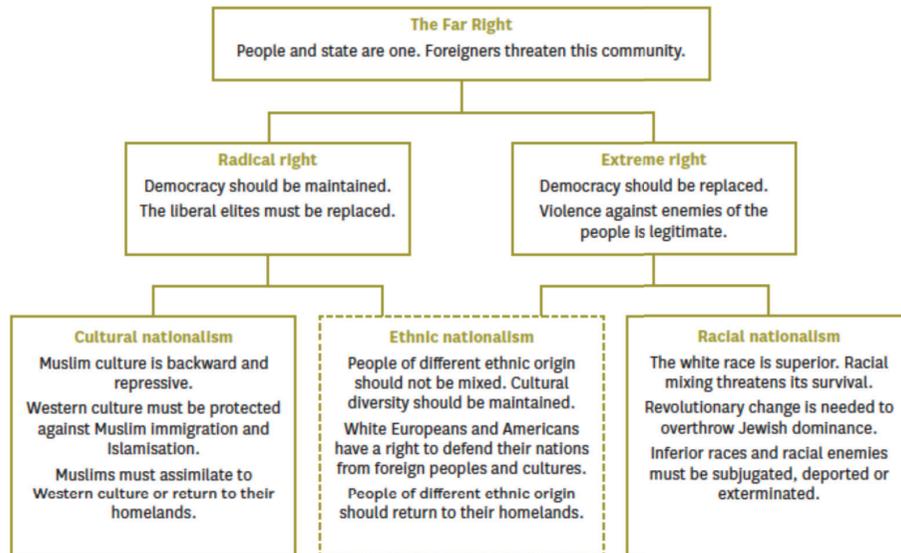
*Adolph Hitler, leader of Germany's Nazi Party, performing the customary Nazi salute.*



## Fascism and the far right

There are a range of ideologies that operate at the far right of the political spectrum. The Royal Commission into the Christchurch terrorist attack used the below taxonomy of far right ideas to analyse the politics of the Christchurch terrorist.<sup>2</sup> This diagram offers a framework to look at different aspects of the far right to understand more about other fascist and far-right groups operating in New Zealand.

The fascism of the Nazis would be classified as “racial nationalism,” which includes a belief that white people are superior, that racial mixing is a threat, and that non-white people should be eliminated. Not all fascist groups in Aotearoa New Zealand admit to being racial nationalists. For example, Action Zealanda like to portray themselves as “ethnic nationalists,” which means they discourage the mixing of different ethnic groups but don’t advocate for the elimination of non-white people, as ethnic nationalism has less stigma than racial nationalism does.



*Taxonomy of the nationalist far right*

## How we stop far-right violence

This booklet will help you recognise tactics and symbolism used by far right and fascist groups in New Zealand. With this knowledge, you will be able to understand whether friends and whānau are starting to engage with ideas shared by fascist groups and report problematic content when you see it.

However, addressing these surface level manifestations of fascism is only a first — albeit important — step.

If you’re looking for inspiration on how to organise to resist fascism and the broader far-right in your communities, we recommend the free pamphlet “40 Ways to Fight Fascists: Street-Legal Tactics for Community Activists” by American anti-fascist Spencer Sunshine and the Popular Resistance group. While this pamphlet was created in an American context, the highly similar social conditions between Aotearoa and America mean that almost all of the tactics outlined in this pamphlet can be used here

Find the booklet here: <https://spencersunshine.com/2020/08/27/fortyways/>

### **If we want to end fascism, the rest of the far right, and all other forms of white supremacy, we need to dismantle it.**

This is possible because white supremacy is a system that structures all social and economic relations in our society. Like all other systems, white supremacy is a human creation that is temporary and can be remade and unmade.

There were human societies before white supremacy existed and there can be human societies after white supremacy is gone. We can beat white supremacy together.



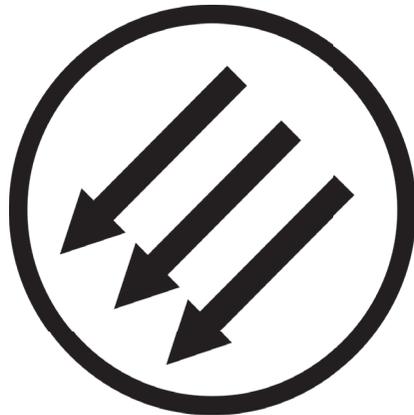
## A quick note on anti-fascist symbols

Antifascism is a broad-based movement with different tactics and values. It is mostly decentralised and politically diverse as a result of many different people thinking that fascists and fascist beliefs are bad for many different reasons.

Historically people associated with antifascism were often trade unionists or part of the left. Whatever the tactics or motivation, antifascists are generally committed to stopping the rise of fascism. In Aotearoa, most antifascists do research and inform communities through social media, with street level confrontations being extremely rare.

Some common symbols or aesthetics associated with antifascism are:

- Three arrows facing down and to the left in a larger circle was historically a symbol for resistance to fascism and other far-right ideas.
- Antifascists may employ the above symbol as well as other symbols and flags representing their various ideologies.
- Antifascists in New Zealand often use pseudonyms online to protect their identities from fascists and others on the far-right who try to expose, harass or inflict violence on them. In other countries like the US, antifascists are known to wear masks at protests as another method of protecting their identities.



## The history of colonisation and white supremacy in New Zealand

Fascism has deep roots in Aotearoa. These roots go back to the early days of colonisation, where settlers and officials came to the country with openly white supremacist views. While a lot has changed in the years since then, white supremacist ideas and a hatred of multiculturalism continue to this day.



*Edward Gibbon Wakefield*



*The New Zealand Company official coat of arms*

During the colonisation of Aotearoa by the British Empire, many settlers and officials aimed to establish an explicitly white society. Edward Wakefield, who established a presence in New Zealand in the 1820s, envisaged the creation of a new-model English society in Aotearoa. His New Zealand Company was formed to promote systematic emigration to New Zealand and attain rights to as much land as possible, often through dishonest deals or outright land theft from Māori.

Wakefield's colonisation scheme would involve white settlers "civilising a barbarous people,"<sup>3</sup> and imagined white settlers as natural landowners while Māori would be servants. His motto, "Possess yourself of the soil and you are secure," ties together land, ownership, and power — a sentiment that would come through in more explicitly racist slogans like the Nazi Party's slogan "Blood and Soil."

Though the New Zealand Company's plans were foiled by the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi/Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the British Empire soon launched a series of armed conflicts, known as the New Zealand Wars, to squash the growing movement for Māori independence and to take additional land from Māori by force. Following the New Zealand Wars, the British Crown passed a

series of laws including the Immigration Restriction Amendment Act of 1920. This law let officials prevent immigration from non-whites, as part of a general “White New Zealand policy.”<sup>4</sup>

The Prime Minister at the time, William Massey, admired the policy, saying “New Zealanders are probably the purest Anglo-Saxon population in the British Empire. Nature intended New Zealand to be a white man’s country, and it must be kept as such.”<sup>5</sup> The policy became less strict over the following decades, but it wasn’t until 1974 that a new less-racist immigration policy was put into effect.<sup>6</sup>

## White supremacy in the 20th Century and today

While the White New Zealand policy ended in the 1970s, the ideas that New Zealand should be a “white man’s country,” and that multiculturalism is detrimental and “race mixing” is undesirable, are still strongly held among white supremacists and fascist groups in Aotearoa. These ideas have led to racist violence and discrimination against non-white people which continues to today through specific acts of violence and through the operation of political institutions.

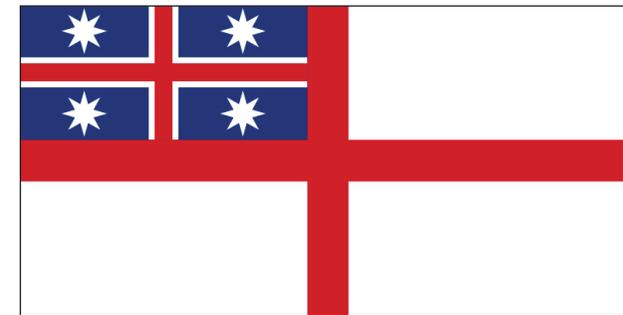
Fascists and others on the far-right believe that having a multicultural society would lead to the loss of whiteness in media representation and across society, and that measures should be taken to prevent this from happening. At the extreme end, some believe that this “loss of whiteness” would culminate in a “white genocide” through mass non-white immigration facilitated by a secretive group of wealthy elites who are mostly but not always portrayed as Jews.<sup>7</sup> Versions of this conspiracy theory have been around for a long time, but it has grown in popularity in the past decade after far-right author Renaud Camus wrote a book about these ideas called “The Great Replacement”. The Christchurch terrorist referred to the threat of the “Great Replacement,” and used it to justify his mass murder of 51 Muslims.<sup>8</sup>

White supremacist ideas and racist violence are a formative part of Aotearoa’s history. The bigger mission of stamping out white supremacy and racism will require many long-term, systemic changes. Still, there are things we can do in the short term to identify people and groups that are spreading fascist, racist, or far-right ideas that can lead to radicalisation and racist violence.

**The Tino Rangatiratanga/Māori sovereignty flag** and the **United Tribes of New Zealand flag** have also been seen at anti-lockdown rallies and other protests.<sup>21</sup> Over the course of the pandemic, there has been a spread of COVID-19 misinformation and conspiracy theories amongst Māori communities. This spread was possible due to well-founded distrust of government amongst some Māori, as well as the far-right combining their conspiracy theories with the political and environmental concerns that many Māori share.



*Tino  
Rangatiratanga  
flag*



*United Tribes of  
New Zealand flag*

This has led to some Māori being pulled into the far-right and supporting Advance NZ and anti-lockdown protests. Māori that have gone down the far-right pipeline have been using these flags to combine their pre-existing support for Māori sovereignty with their opposition to lockdowns and belief in conspiracy theories.<sup>22</sup> In addition, some white far-right protestors have co-opted the flags as symbol for New Zealand ‘sovereign citizens’, to spread the idea that people are ‘sovereign’ and thus not beholden to government laws.

The Tino Rangatiratanga flag and the United Tribes flag themselves are not far-right symbols. Instead, the far-right are co-opting these flags for their own purposes and undermining the anti-fascist and decolonisation work that is usually associated with these flags.

## Flags to look out for

**The Gadsden flag** (“Don’t Tread on Me”) was created during the American Revolution and is used by gun rights and libertarians in America as a protest symbol and has spread here and is used by local gun rights activists and libertarians, in particular supporters of the ACT Party. It is also used by so-called “free speech” activists, who try to portray any criticisms of their ideas as left-wing censorship.



*A Gadsden flag being displayed alongside the New Zealand flag and a “free speech” placard.*

**Pro-Trump flags** have been used by local Trump supporters at anti-lockdown rallies and other protests.



*A blue “Trump 2020” flag and two United Tribes of New Zealand flags held by protesters at an anti-lockdown rally in Wellington.*

## Far-right groups in New Zealand today

These are four of the most prominent far-right groups that are operating in Aotearoa today. They range from explicitly fascist groups to conspiracy theorists and cultural nationalists.



**Action Zealandia** is the only openly fascist organisation operating in Aotearoa. Action Zealandia members spread fascist ideology through their website, social media, podcasts, poster, sticker, banner drops, organising camps and doing bush walks.



**New Conservative Party** is the biggest far-right political party in Aotearoa. While they gained only 1.5% of party votes at the most recent election, they use their mainstream profile as a way to spread far-right ideas. The New Conservatives hold to a form of cultural nationalism, with members arguing that “Western culture is the greatest culture in the world”<sup>9</sup> and “Our civilisation is the greatest ever built.”<sup>10</sup>



**Advance NZ** is a political party that spread extensive COVID-19 disinformation and conspiracy theories and co-organised anti-lockdown protests with Billy Te Kahika’s Public Party. After splitting with the Public Party, which then disbanded, they are now focused on anti-lockdown protests. Billy Te Kahika has shared the QAnon conspiracy theory, which holds that a Satanic child sex trafficking ring rules the world and Donald Trump and his allies are struggling to end it.<sup>11</sup>



### Mothers Who Stand For Freedom

is part of a network of in-person and online groups that spread anti-vaccine, COVID-19 hoax, QAnon, Satanic child sexual abuse theories, and other misinformation during and after the 2020 general election. Mothers Who Stand For Freedom share many members and supporters with followers of the Public Party and Advance NZ.

## How do far right groups draw people in?

Radicalisation is a process that leads to people adopt extremist beliefs, ideologies and actions. In this section, we discuss four key tactics that the far right use to draw people into their groups and ideologies and shift the public discourse more generally. These four tactics are:

- Stretching the public discourse so that previously extreme ideas are more acceptable to discuss in the mainstream
- Using 'acceptable' topics of discussion as an entry to more extreme views
- Spreading disinformation and conspiracy theories, which can seed distrust
- Using humour and internet culture to appeal to new audiences.

## Other things to look out for

As well as symbols and imagery that have outwardly fascist and racist meanings, there are a number of other images and signs to look out for which are used by far right groups.

### Make Ardern Go Away

This slogan, which is found on hats and masks, were created by far right Christchurch figure Mike Allen. These hats and masks adapt the Make America Great Again (MAGA) merch created by the Trump campaign to local conditions by focusing on opposing Jacinda Ardern. The Make Ardern Go Away hats are now a mainstay at various far right protests.



### QAnon

QAnon ("Q") symbols have appeared on placards and on t-shirts in New Zealand anti-lockdown protests. The QAnon conspiracy theory claims that the United States of America is secretly ruled by a Satanic pedophile child trafficking ring that Trump was trying to overthrow. QAnon followers exist within Advance NZ, the New Conservatives, Mothers Who Stand for Freedom and other far-right groups.



*"Where we go one, we go all" is a popular QAnon slogan, often shortened to WWG1WGA. This Q poster is based on the Gadsden flag (see next page for info).*

### Captain Cook

Cook was the first British captain who came to Aotearoa. His image is used by fascist and far-right groups as a way to present themselves as patriotic New Zealanders and defenders of New Zealand history. Using Captain Cook as a symbol is a tactic to get wider support from mainstream conservatives by portraying themselves as defending New Zealand history against left-wing attacks.

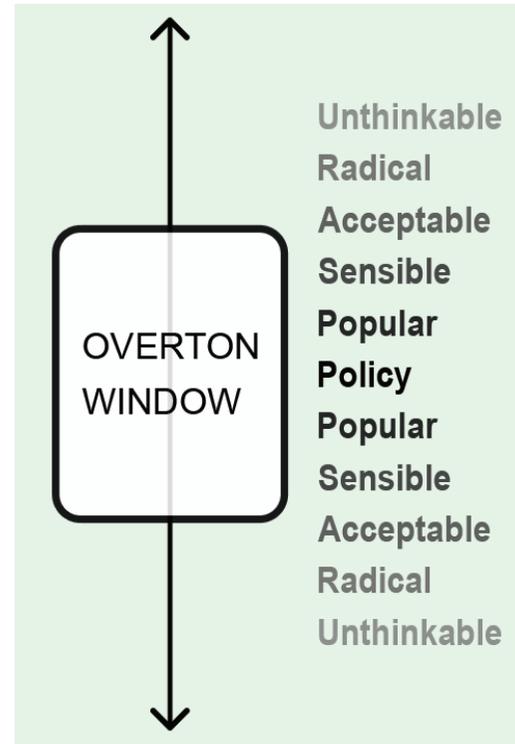
For example, the far-right-run Statue and Heritage Community Defence Facebook page claims to be focused on pushing back against recent calls to remove Captain Cook statues as symbols of colonialism. The New Zealand European Students Association also used Captain Cook to portray themselves merely as a group interested in European heritage and defending it from the left and ethnic minority communities.



### Tactic One: Shifting public discourse

In order to become a mass movement and realise the aim of gaining power in Aotearoa, fascist and other far-right groups focus on making the ideas they have accepted by the public. One way they do this is by working to shift the range of acceptable public discourse to the right. This is known as “shifting the Overton Window.”

The Overton Window, named after American policy analyst Joseph Overton, refers to the types of conversation topics that are considered acceptable political discourse — the kind of things you would see on the news and that you can comfortably discuss at the dinner table. For instance, the idea of cannabis legalisation has become a more commonly accepted political topic recently. On the other side of the spectrum, conspiracy theories about COVID-19’s origins have led to anti-Asian racist ideas becoming more commonplace — an example of the Overton Window shifting towards the far-right. As topics become more acceptable to the general public, they are seen as more acceptable for politicians to enact.



*An illustration of the Overton Window, along with the “six degrees of acceptance” of public ideas proposed by political commentator Joshua Treviño.*

## Tactic Two: Acceptable entry points into far-right ideas

One way that fascist and far-right groups draw people into their ideologies is by engaging with people about topics that are acceptable to the wider public, often by joining established communities or interest groups and then promoting their own ideas from within these groups. This is known as entryism. An example is using “patriotic” or anti-immigration rhetoric to connect with mainstream conservatives before moving to promotion of a white-only state.

Here are four examples of entryism used in New Zealand:

### COVID-19 conspiracies and anti-lockdown groups



Posters made and distributed by Action Zealandia that claim that Covid-19 was caused by multiculturalism.

Since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, some far-right groups, including Action Zealandia, New Conservatives, and Advance NZ have leveraged people’s anxiety around the pandemic, including anti-lockdown sentiment, to spread false racist messaging, raise their profile, and build support and their membership base.

For example, Action Zealandia members have been active participants in anti-lockdown protests, distributing anti-China flyers and openly discussing their political beliefs with other protesters.<sup>12</sup>

## Symbols to look out for

### Action Zealandia logo

The logo’s design is similar to the Odal/Othala rune, which is a Nordic rune used by Nazi Waffen SS divisions in Germany and the Netherlands during the Second World War. After the Second World War, the Odal rune has been used by Neo-Nazi and fascist groups in America, Germany, Italy, South Africa and Scandinavia, for example the terrorist Nordic Resistance Movement that Action Zealandia are affiliated with. Action Zealandia has made variations of the logo with the symbols of the Spanish Fascist Falange and the Romanian Fascist Iron Guard.

Using this symbol is part of a symbolic strategy that’s used by Action Zealandia where they combine local symbols like the Southern Cross with international fascist symbols that are known by fascists globally but little known to most New Zealanders. This allows them to publicly communicate their affiliations to others with similar beliefs without immediately causing suspicion, which would not be possible with classical Nazi symbols like swastikas.

### Black Sun

This symbol is a sun wheel that Nazi SS leader Heinrich Himmler created in Wewelsburg castle during the Second World War. After the Second World War, the Black Sun was used by Nazis globally as an alternative to the Swastika. In New Zealand, the Black Sun has been used by the Christchurch fascist terrorist, the Christchurch Neo-Nazi Phil Arps, the fascist Dominion Movement and the fascist terror cell the Southern Order that Action Zealandia member Max Newsome tried to start.

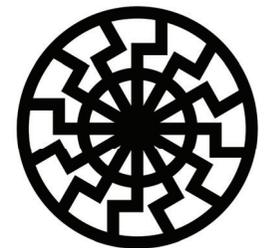
We expect it to be the main symbol used by overt Neo-Nazi’s alongside the swastika going forward due to the infamy it’s gained through its links to the Christchurch massacre.



The Odal rune



The Action Zealandia logo with the Odal rune overlaid



## Islam is right about women

This slogan created by fascist American 4chan users as a trolling phrase that was designed to highlight a supposed contradiction between feminism and Islam. This was done to create confusion and divisions between the left and Muslims. The slogan uses the Islamophobic idea that Islam is inherently misogynistic. It acts as a “gotcha” slogan to and portrays leftists who voice support for the phrase as misogynists, and then portray them as anti-Muslim if they opposed the phrase.



The phrase was chalked by a far-right figure in Christchurch in January this year in front of Al Noor Mosque. The person who did this is currently on trial and has name suppression.<sup>19</sup>

## Globalism

“Globalist” is a term that arose amongst the American far right to refer to their conspiracy theory that a shadow elite secretly rules the world and wants to destroy America. It is now used by fascists around the world, including by Action Zealandia, as an anti-semitic dog whistle. Using the term “globalists” as a synonym for Jews refers to the conspiracy theory that a Jewish elite secretly rules the world and is plotting to exterminate whites.

The broader far-right uses the term to refer to Ardern and the rest of the Labour government, as they believe in the conspiracy theory that she’s a Marxist secretly working with the United Nations to spread socialism globally.<sup>20</sup>



*Notorious far-right racist activist Laura Southern using “globalists” in one of her videos, as a reference to anti-Semitic conspiracy theories.*

## Environmentalism

The far right have used the broad banner of environmentalism — a popular topic often associated with the left wing — as a way to share fascist ideas and form a pipeline to radicalise people.



*Eco-fascist propoganda from Action Zealandia, connecting protection of forests — a common environmentalist idea — with the protection of “your people” (meaning white people).*

Specifically, some far-right groups argue the root cause of environmental problems is mass migration, claiming it leads to overpopulation and negative environmental impacts like pollution and climate change. In particular, these groups argue that millions of Muslims and Jews need to die to free up resources for the rest of the world and take off the strain on the environment.<sup>13</sup> This ideology is often known as “eco-fascism”.

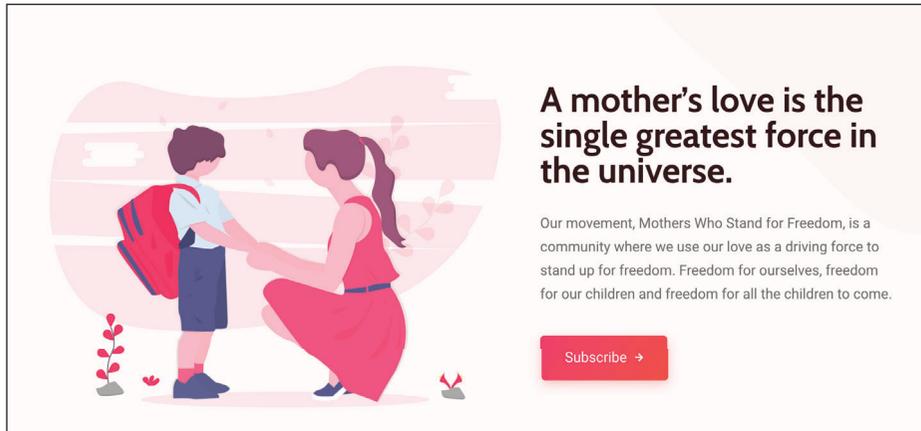
The Christchurch massacre terrorist referred to himself as an eco-fascist in his manifesto, and justified his actions along eco-fascist lines. He justified his mass murder as a single event that could cause a chain reaction that would accelerate the mass extermination of Muslims to save the environment. Action Zealandia has also made eco-fascist arguments and used tools like beach clean ups to portray themselves as defenders of the environment in Aotearoa.



*The NZ Outdoors Party uses the language of a “Kiwi way of life” to connect the idea of protecting the outdoors with protecting a “traditional” white culture from the threat of multiculturalism.*

## Women's issues

Far right groups try to appeal specifically to women through narratives about nurturing the health and freedom of themselves and their children. For example, Mothers Who Stand For Freedom use narratives that play on legitimate concerns mothers have for the safety of their children, like concerns about an unjust medical system and fears of sexual predation, while also spreading the false conspiracy theory that a secret Satanic elite is engaging in mass child sexual abuse and trafficking.<sup>14</sup>



Home page of the Mothers Who Stand for Freedom website, which connects their mission to “a mother’s love.” They exploit the desire of parents to protect their children to convince people that Covid lockdowns are restricting freedom, that vaccines are not to be trusted, and to promote other conspiracy theories.



Protesters with signs that demand “freedom” and promote other conspiracy theories.

## All Lives Matter

This slogan was created by the American right-wing to criticise the Black Lives Matter movement for being in favour of black people to the detriment of whites. The slogan is designed to have broad appeal and hide the racist underpinnings of existing power structures.

The far right in New Zealand has used the phrase in its original context as graffiti and on placards at anti-lockdown protests. They have also used it in the context of anti-abortion activism. For example, the New Conservatives use the phrase “All Lives Matter” in anti-abortion propaganda to imply that pro-choice proponents don’t care about “all lives”.



## It's okay to be white

This slogan was devised by fascists on the image board 4chan. It is designed to sneak racist ideas into conversation, and it is intended to spread the conspiracy theory that multicultural societies have pursued policies that are detrimental to white people.

Canadian fascist Lauren Southern wore a “It’s Okay To Be White” t-shirt during her Australian tour in 2018 before she tried and failed to tour in New Zealand. Local far-right website VJM Publishing also sold It’s “Okay To Be White” t-shirts on their website and TradeMe in 2019 and posts memes with the phrase on social media.



## How can you spot fascism and the far-right ideas in the wild?

The far right use a combination of phrases and imagery to share their ideas, and to indicate to other far-right supporters that they are part of the same 'club'.

This section looks at:

- Phrases to look out for
- Logos and symbols to look out for
- Flags to look out for

### Phrases to look out for

#### White Lives Matter

This phrase emerged from American fascists in response to the Black Lives Matter movement. It seeks to portray whites as an ethnic group who are the real ones facing discrimination and violence, rather than Black people. Fascists connect this phrase to their white genocide/Great Replacement conspiracy theory, which argues that a secret, usually Jewish, elite is imposing mass non-white immigration on majority-white countries to make whites a minority, before making them eventually extinct.

The White Lives Matter phrase is used by Action Zealandia, and was also previously used by the fascist group Western Guard when they did a mass poster run of the University of Auckland in May 2017 before they quickly disbanded.



### Political parties

A well-established form of entryism that the far right have used is infiltrating political parties to try and shift their ideology to the right.

In the 1970s, directors of the Neo-Nazi organisation New Zealand National Front Kerry Bolton and David Crawford, along with group member George Moira, managed to reach the executive level of the Mt Roskill branch of the National Party before being expelled.<sup>15</sup> On an Action Zealandia podcast, Kerry Bolton has also talked about how he has more recently been part of the Orakei Committee of New Zealand First.

Far-right activists commonly use online message boards like 4chan as a place to discuss their ideas for infiltrating political parties. In 2017, posters on 4chan indicated interest in shifting New Zealand's youth wing to the right, with the aim of winning the 2017 general election. Members of the New Zealand First Youth wing had links to the Trumpist far-right group Make New Zealand Great Again Party.<sup>16</sup> Action Zealandia members have boasted that National Party staffers are sympathetic to their cause.<sup>17</sup>

### Tactic Three: Dissemination of disinformation and conspiracy theories

Far right groups disseminate false conspiracy theories that play on peoples' fears and lack of trust in the government and other groups with power. As people come to believe these theories, they may build strong links to the groups spreading them and may become estranged from their families and friend groups.

Some of the conspiracy theories spread by the far-right include:

- Portraying COVID-19 as a hoax spread by governments to establish a totalitarian society.
- Claiming that a secret and usually Jewish elite is promoting non-white immigration and communism into Western countries to exterminate whites.
- Spreading racist pseudoscience that claims that races are biological and that this research is being suppressed by a Marxist-controlled academia and government.
- The QAnon conspiracy, which holds that satanic, blood-sucking child abusers are running the United States. This theory used the popularity of

Trump to direct people to the white supremacist forum “8kun” (formerly known as 8chan), which is where footage of the Christchurch attack and the terrorist’s manifesto was widely shared.

- Believing Joe Biden won the US 2020 presidential election through election fraud, and claiming that liberals and left-wingers are committing similar election fraud around the world.



*Woman at a rally holding a Q sign, a reference to QAnon and related conspiracy theories.*

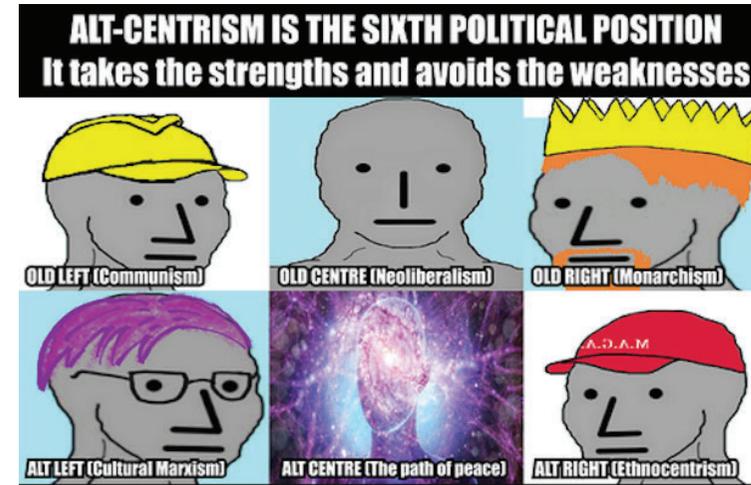


*A racist march with placards that claim that anti-racism is itself racist because it’s “anti white.” These ideas are often brought up in relation to conspiracy theories about “white genocide.”*

## Grey faces or NPC meme

The “grey faces” or “NPC” meme arose on 4chan in 2016. NPC refers to “non-playable characters,” the computer-controlled characters that players encounter in video games. The meme suggests that the majority of people are like these characters, and don’t think for themselves.

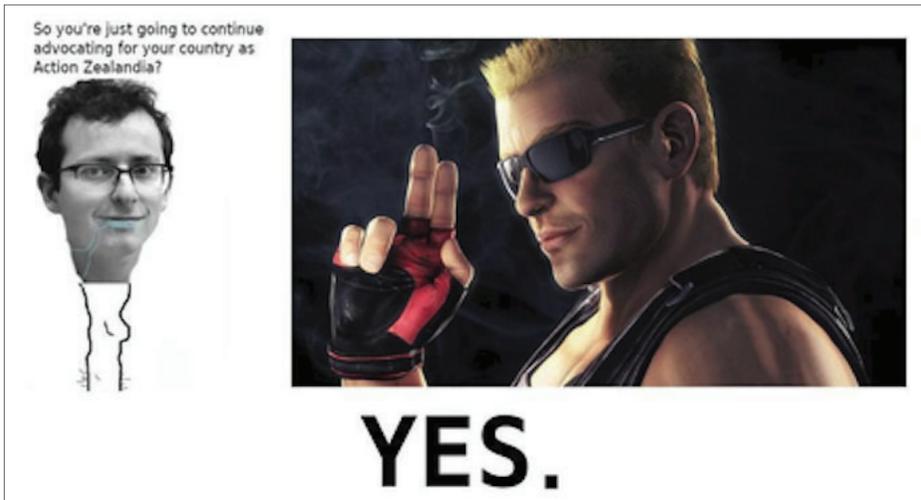
Appealing to the idea of “Alt Centrism” is a tactic used by far-right memes to re-brand their ideas to appear moderate and reasonable.



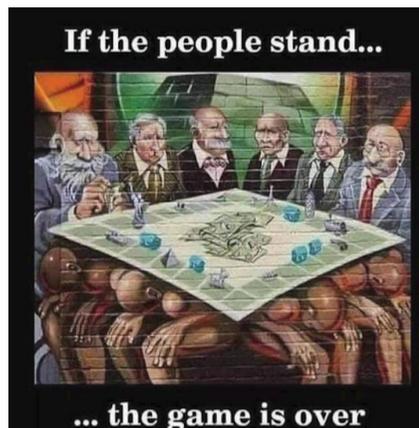
## Freedom for humanity

Freedom for Humanity was a mural created by American artist Mear One in London in 2012. It portrays suited men playing a Monopoly board that’s held in place on people’s backs. The mural is antisemitic, as it includes stereotypical depictions of Jews as secretly controlling the world through finance.

The image has been adopted by far right groups overseas and here like the South Island Independence Movement as a way to spread antisemitic conspiracy theories and encourage people to rise up against a secret elite.<sup>18</sup>



Adaptations of the Virgin Walk meme created by far-right groups in New Zealand.



Freedom for Humanity mural meme (described on next page)

### Tactic Four: Memes

The far right also uses memes extensively to spread their ideology.

Memes are pictures or videos that appropriate parts of popular culture and wider society and use them for humorous purposes, which are then spread across the internet. Memes are not inherently fascist or inherently political, and the vast majority of memes are not fascist or harmful in any way.



Examples of memes that are not fascist or political.



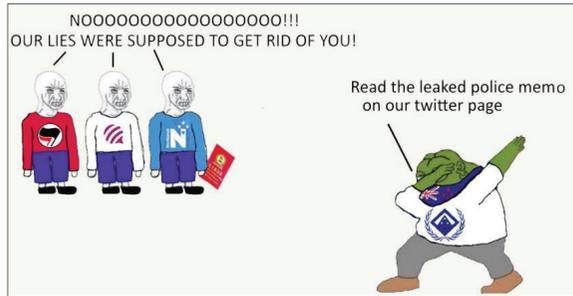
However, the often-humorous nature of memes and their massive popularity on the internet makes them an idea format for fascists and far-right activists to use to spread fascism online. The use of "meme warfare" is part of a broader effort to create a counter-culture that appeals to young people, so they're more easily radicalised.

Examples of popular memes used by far right groups include:

### Pepe

Pepe was created by Matt Furie as a character in his 2005 comic Boy's Club. It became very popular on 4chan by the early 2010s. By the mid-2010s the far right sought to take advantage of Pepe's popularity to spread white supremacy by creating their own Pepe memes.

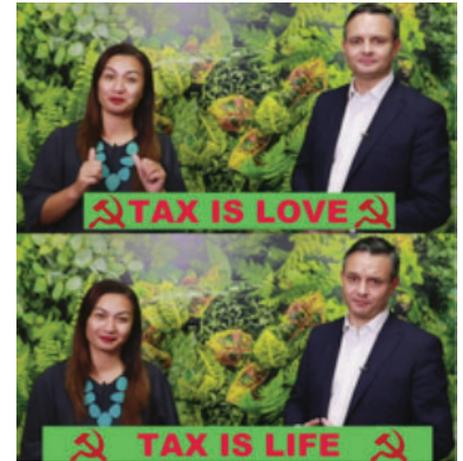
Action Zealandia has created its own Pepe memes to attempt to mock anti-fascists, as has their predecessor group the Dominion Movement. Local far right figures created a version of Pepe as New Zealand First leader Winston Peters, which they successfully requested Peters pose with in 2017.



### Communist Jacinda and Communist Greens memes

Groups like Action Zealandia, New Conservatives and Advance NZ spread a range of memes that show Jacinda Ardern, Labour and the Greens alongside communist imagery including like hammer and sickle and a red and yellow colour scheme.

Many people in the far right here believe the conspiracy that both Labour and the Greens are secretly Marxists, and are plotting to establish communism in New Zealand. This is connected to the "cultural Marxism" conspiracy theory that argues that Western governments are secretly controlled by a Marxist elite that is spreading socialism through popular culture.



### The Virgin vs Chad

The Virgin vs. Chad meme evolved from the Virgin Walk meme on 4chan in 2017. It seeks to portray one side as an effeminate pathetic "virgin" while portraying the other side as a 'Chad', a hyper-masculine man. In New Zealand, Action Zealandia has used this meme to portray themselves as the "Chad" and antifascists as the virgin.

This meme has an aspect of misogyny, as the makers seek to portray hyper-masculinity as something to be celebrated, and weakness or effeminacy as undesirable and pathetic.



The original "Virgin Walk" meme, which has been adapted by many groups including fascists and others on the far right.