

On the meaning of the flag (cont)

we need, or want, to be. The notion of New Zealand being a nation state is one most New Zealanders probably never even think of questioning. But are we. Are we a united nation state?

Before Ngā Tiriti and the Treaty of Waitangi, which led to the formation of the New Zealand government, there were only a handful of British government bureaucrats that few respected. There was also The New Zealand Company following the East India Company's land and labour exploits, several christian missionary envoys, several settler communities of varying races and levels of contact between them, and there were also what is thought to have been well over 500 major Māori communities with separate identities and varying established allegiances. In 1835 Māori in the north established New Zealand independence for all Māori just before the Waitangi treaties came but they had no agreement for this from other Māori across the motu. The treaties of Waitangi again were supposed to have expressed agreement by all Māori to accept a New Zealand government but most of those Māori signed a tiriti in Māori which ensured the continuation of their tino rangatiratanga (sovereignty) and even still about two thirds of Māori did not, were not allowed, or refused to sign. International law states that treaties in the indigenous language legally stand over treaties written in a foreign language, which would mean Māori still legally have their sovereignty, especially since the treaties were breached by the NZ government many times.

Which brings us back to the tino rangatiratanga flag. If we say this flag means all sorts of things such as the potential of new creations and the right to self-determination and, most importantly I think, sovereignty of Māori roopu over their lands, people and resources... then what does it mean if it replaces the national New Zealand flag or even flies beside it? I think we are dreaming if we think this will happen in the near future on this whenua. It would mean a complete u-turn on everything the New Zealand and British governments has been working towards since Captain Cook was sent out here, more than 239 years. Surely not.

Unless... the meaning of the flag is changed of course.

Consultation is a word that those who have tried time and again to be heard by governments, now use with much cynicism. Do not be surprised if, like with the Seabed and Foreshore Act and with current water ownership legislation, we see the tino rangatiratanga flag appropriated out from beneath us. How to stop it? Don't be deceived by cute and cuddly stories of the flag going to be used for 'unity' and 'representing all peoples of this land'... and don't wait to be 'consulted'. Let's tell the people what we think on our own terms. The tino rangatiratanga flag is important to Māori. It speaks a thousand words in one image and holds a huge history of struggle for our right to be. We shouldn't continue to let the mad insatiable desire for power and wealth by a few at the top, turn the rest of us into slaves of a corporate nation state. We can exist again as smaller independent communities each with our own ways of doing things. Humans lived this way for thousands of years quite well it would seem. I'm not saying we need to go back to living in caves but with climate change already happening and capitalism beginning to show it's destructive impossible need to perpetually grow, we need to start finding new ways of living. Sustainable ways based in self-sufficient, self-determined communities with good relationships with their neighbours and surroundings. Let's create and build on different ways of working together and making decisions that concern many people so that we all get a say, finally, on what kind of world we each want to live in.

Obviously, rushing this will not help but waiting too long won't either. We need to speak up to save our flag and everything it stands for from further colonial appropriation. E tu ō mātou reo e ngā iwi. Mō ngā uri. Mō te waonui ō Tāne, ō Tangaroa, ō Haumietiketike me ngā taonga katoa. Mō ngā tāngata katoa hoki.

Ka whawhai tonu matou... ake, ake, ake.

Kia ora,

This newsletter is from www.October15thSolidarity.info We send out irregular updates on the campaign to support the people arrested in the so-called 'anti-terror' raids in Aotearoa (New Zealand) on 15 October 2007, 19 February and 17 April 2008.

There are Solidarity crews working around the country. If you would like to get involved or start your own solidarity crew, email info@october15thsolidarity.info for more details. You can make a financial donation to the campaign by direct deposits or automatic payments at any Kiwibank, Account name: October 15 Solidarity, Account Number: 38-9007-0239672-000. Please specify if the money is for 'legal defence', for 'arrestee support' or for 'campaign work'. Cheques made out to 'October 15 Solidarity' can be posted to October 15 Solidarity, PO Box 9263, Wellington, New Zealand. If you would like to submit writing, photos, stories, or responses please get in touch!

info@october15thsolidarity.info

www.october15thsolidarity.info

Creating Resistance

The October 15th Solidarity crew in Wellington is organising an art exhibition and auction because art can be a voice for dissent. Art is a tool for advancing social justice. It is at the core of a revolutionary strategy and is a source of memory and future ways of knowing. A great injustice occurred in Aotearoa when the state invaded homes and lives with its so-called "terrorist raids" of October 15th 2007.

Those raids have had a great financial toll on those affected. People lost income while they were in jail; the police destroyed property during the raids; those in prison needed money; those outside needed to travel to Auckland. There are large on-going costs to cover legal fees and to travel to Auckland for court.

In an effort to reduce the financial burden, we are soliciting artworks for an art exhibition and auction. This will raise funds that will be used to support those affected by the raids, arrests and on-going court appearances. We are planning the exhibition (5 days) and auction to coincide with the 2nd anniversary of the raids – October 15th 2009. It is our view that artists not only docu-

ment social change; they promote, inform and shape it. It is with this view that we offer this invitation to you to participate by contributing a piece of your art work for auction.

If you are willing to contribute a piece of your work, we ask that it draws from any of the following:

- the October 15th raids
- commentary on the 'war on terrorism'
- surveillance/police/prisons
- colonisation
- kaupapa Māori
- resistance

We ask all artists to set a reserve price for their work.

Please indicate your interest via email or post, by 1 April 2009. (Your work does not need to be in then).

October 15th Solidarity

PO Box 9263, Wellington

info@October15thsolidarity.info



Radical Crafting Night: Sewing revolutionary ideas

You are invited to an evening of radical craft and really yummy baking! On Tues, 17 Feb at 7:30pm Freedom fighter and radical cross-stitcher Rayna Fahey will give a talk about radical craft. Crafting items and yummy baked goods will be on hand for sale to raise money for the October 15th Solidarity fund. Venue is the NEW Crossways on Brougham Street, Wellington. Entry by koha. If you have items to donate for the crafting/bake sale, please email info@october15thsolidarity.info

Find out more about radical craft from <http://radicalcrossstitch.com>

Seriously Seditious Stitching <http://craftcartel.com>

'Cause 'mall' is a four letter word <http://radicalrags.etsy.com>

Stuff for people who give a shit

If you think telling your kids there's no Santa is hard...

Try telling them there's no North Pole

Remember the State Terror Raids...

October 15th Solidarity newsletter

1 February 2009

Campaign update

Issue 10

On the meaning of the tino rangatiratanga flag



So the meaning of the tino rangatiratanga flag is up for debate and if the National Party like what they hear then the flag will fly. One can only imagine what will happen if they don't like what they hear. Then again, more importantly, who will they be listening to in the first place?

That is one of the things I've been wondering, ever since Te Ata Tino Toa activists finally got attention again on their plight to fly the TR flag on the Auckland Harbour Bridge this coming Waitangi Day. When the Māori Party's Pita Sharples took up the task of getting their new coalition govern-

ment to agree to fly the flag, new PM John Key's reply was that he had "no particular reason" to object to the Māori flag flying however he wanted full consultation with Māori around the meaning of the flag first.

Since then I have spotted several articles in NZ papers and the discussion is no doubt going on in other media too. There were a few comments in the paper which caught my eye: "One flag for one people... United we stand, divided we fall" by D.Shuker, letters Jan 21 2009, *NZ Herald*. Also "Consultation unnecessary as tino rangatiratanga ensign is easily the best... I'd ditch the tired old colonial relic of a national flag we currently use and hijack the Māori flag as its replacement." by Brian Rudman, 'National Affairs' article, same paper. Further still, some people in the papers have been arguing for the 'United Tribes' ('Hakituatahi o Aotearoa' or 'Independence') flag to fly instead.

The point I don't see being discussed yet is what does it mean to fly the tino rangatiratanga flag especially somewhere like on parliament buildings. Can it replace the nationalist New Zealand flag we know all too well or can it even fly beside it? Same again for the United Tribes flag. The answer for me then, lies more in the question: who are 'we'?

'United we stand, divided we fall' is an interesting concept. It all depends on how big

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The Struggle (and court case!) continues...

The next chapter of "Pascoe's Posse vs. Iti's gang" will take place in the Auckland High Court in March. Aaron Pascoe (Auckland Special Investigation Group - the officer in charge of the state-terror raids) and Ross Burns (the Crown Prosecutor) want to move the proceedings against 18 activists to the Auckland High Court. The arguments for and against will take place on 25th and 26th March 2009 in the Auckland High Court. It is our understanding that all defendants' attendance has been excused.

The next scheduled hearing in the District Court, which the defendants will have to attend, will take place on 28th April 2009. However, if the Crown is successful in their application to move the proceedings to the High

Court, that appearance will not go ahead. 18 people are facing charges under the Arms Act and 5 of them are also charged with being a member of an 'organised criminal group'. Rongomai Bailey, one of the 12 people the police wanted to charge under the Terrorism Suppression Act, was not committed to trial at the deposition hearing in September/October 2008. One further person, Tamara Asher, plead guilty to one charge of possession of a firearm. She was discharged without conviction.



One Struggle, One Fight Global Resistance to State Terrorism

Mumia Abu Jamal

Mumia Abu-Jamal, a former Black Panther and an outspoken critic of racist cop brutality in the US, has been on death-row in Pennsylvania since 1982. Framed by the Philadelphia cops for the killing of a Police officer, he was railroaded onto death-row by a bigoted judge and a nearly all-white jury.

Since then various appeals courts have consistently refused to hear all the evidence, including new evidence from 2001 from one Arnold Beverly, saying he was the real killer. In March 2008, a US federal appeals court rejected Mumia's application for a new trial, allowing a new trial only on the issue of the death penalty. Demonstrations were held in cities around the world in protest, including in Wellington.

Mumia's lawyer, Robert Bryan, issued a legal update on the case in December. Mumia currently has two battles going in the US Supreme Court. On the one hand, the Philadelphia prosecution is trying to overturn the 2008 order by the US federal Court of Appeals for a new trial on the issue of Mumia's death sentence. On the other hand, Mumia has petitioned the Supreme Court for a new trial on the basis of the prosecution's use of racism in selecting the jury in the original trial.

Bryan concluded with these words: "[Mumia] is in greater danger than at any time since being arrested. Your support and activism is needed. That Mumia remains in prison and on death row is an affront to basic human rights. We must aggressively continue this struggle until he is free."

For more information, visit -
www.freemumia.org
www.refuseandresist.org



A new constitution in Bolivia...

After 500 years of struggle and resistance against colonialism, discrimination and humiliation, the people of Bolivia have voted 60% in favour of the new political constitution which supporters say will empower the indigenous majority. Evo Morales, elected in 2005 as the first indigenous president, has been the driving force behind these changes including wide-ranging provisions which extend the rights of Bolivia's 36 indigenous groups and grant indigenous systems of justice the same status as conventional courts which are widely considered inefficient and corrupt. Indigenous leaders recognise the text is

imperfect and that fresh battles loom, but for them this is a moment to savour. "We are indigenous people that for the first time in history are in power. We will fight to keep this constitution, we will fight hard to make it work and be respected" said Eugenio Rojas of radical Aymara group the Red Ponchos.

There was a second question in the referendum which resulted in a 77% vote in favour of limiting land ownership to 5000 hectares. Unfortunately this is not retroactive but there will be a need for the people/families who own large estates to prove they are actually using it to be able to continue owning it.



Terror Arrests Continue

Crack-downs on activism continue all around the world. Last year a small village in France was raided, four men and five women now face terrorism charges. One of the men is still in custody, despite a judge's ruling that he be released. Local villagers speak highly of the people arrested, explaining how they helped establish a food co-op, community theatre, a restaurant and an informal library.

In January this year, two teenagers were arrested at a police check 30 minutes after attending a demo at the headquarters of the United Bank of Switzerland – both of them are still in custody. The police check was triggered by a paint-bomb attack on the headquarters of the United Bank of Switzerland (UBS) in Zurich, an action in response to the World Economic Forum (WEF) meeting held at Davos in Switzerland.

Last year, in Maryland, USA, police admitted to placing 53 so-called non-violent activists onto police and federal databases that track terrorism suspects. The police said they had no option as the software offered limited options for classifying entries. If the people had prior convictions they would have been easier to classify.

Meanwhile, in Russia over 40 people were arrested after demonstrations outside Putin's home on the first day of February '09. It will be interesting to see if any of them are charged with 'terror' offences.

Twenty years ago the GLC (Greater London City Council) published cards containing lawyers' numbers and information for activists on what to do if arrested under the then Prevention of Terrorism Act. Things have swung full-circle and it's time once again to be aware that attending a demo, or even writing a letter to the editor, can get someone labeled a threat to the State.

It didn't stop people being involved in activism in the '80s and it can't stop us now. Get involved today – find out what's happening in your community and make your voice count.

The spies are at it again

What 'intelligence' organisations such as the SIS or the Special Investigation Group (SIG) hate the most is publicity about their own activities. To the frustration of New Zealand's spies, their work - and their outrageous mess-ups - seem to get splattered across the country's major newspapers and broadcasted all over the 6pm news every other month. Rob Gilchrist was outed as a paid informant for the SIG and Threat Assessment Unit (TAU) for around 10 years in December 2008. He worked for the NZ Police and was sending information to Detective Peter Gilroy and Detective Sergeant John Sjoberg. They are both members of the Special Investigation Group (SIG). The SIG has groups in Auckland (headed by Aaron Lee Pascoe), Wellington (headed by Brian Woodcock) and Christchurch (where Gilroy and Sjoberg are based). This is the unit responsible for Operation 8.

Rob Gilchrist has not only participated in illegal activity, including breaking and entering buildings, but has incited others to do the same, all the while, being paid by Police to report on them. The Police then use this information to make a case to a court of law in order to obtain search warrants and interception warrants and to make arrests.

Gilchrist provided Police with information on at least three of the defendants in Operation 8 – the name for the State Terror raids of October 15th 2007. The police affidavit which was used as evidence to gain interception warrants against these people and many others is filled with 'informant information'.

Now, the surveillance of political activists by the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service (NZSIS) has once again been exposed.

Several activists and groups, including the Campaign Against Foreign Control of Aotearoa, Marie Leadbeater (Indonesia Human Rights Committee), Keith Locke (Green Party MP and former member of Socialist Action League), Tim Shadbolt (now Mayor of Invercargill) and others have recently received their SIS file. What they found is quite astonishing.

One of the more disturbing revelations is that Maire Leadbeater's file, which she received late last year, begins when she was 10 years old, with a note that she delivered the Communist Party newspaper, the People's Voice, to the mother of twins in Bangor St, in central Christchurch. Leadbeater, now 63, is a long-time activist on peace issues. She was an early SIS target because of her Christchurch parents, Elsie and Jack Locke, who were prominent members of the New Zealand Communist Party and community activists. Elsie Locke left the Communist Party in 1956 when the Soviet Union invaded Hungary, but her husband stayed.

Operation 8 defendants Urs Signer and Valerie Morse have both requested their own files from the SIS in mid-2008. The response from SIS director Warren Tucker was that he was "not prepared to confirm or deny whether or not the NZSIS holds any information about you."

This response was challenged through the Privacy Commissioner. As was expected, the response was that the Commissioner could not force the SIS to give anyone any information and secondly, that they were satisfied that the SIS was complying with the Privacy Act. As such, the Commission concluded, Signer's and Morse's privacy was not breached.

The so-called 'democratic accountability' of agencies such as the SIS and Police would be funny if they weren't routinely murdering innocent people, spying on the population and undermining political activity. As it is, these agencies have extraordinary powers that are out of control and are not accountable to anyone.

Keep the pressure on the Police and SIS by requesting your own file. Write now stating you want your file sent to you under the Privacy Act:

Warren Tucker
NZ Security Intelligence Service
PO Box 900
Wellington 6140

Privacy Officer
Police National Headquarters
PO Box 3017
Wellington 6140