MELANI ANAE

At 6am on Tuesday, 17 February 1976, police and immigration officials swooped on the home of Mrs Telesia Topping, of Onehunga. Mrs Topping, a Tongan who is married to a New Zealander and had lived here for ten years, was almost in tears as she told her story to the Auckland Star:

A young policeman, about 22 years old, came into my room . . . lasked him what he was doing in my bedroom. He did not answer. I was really frightened. He went to the bathroom, inspected it, came back and pulled the covers off my bed . . . He pulled open the wardrobe, fiddled with the clothing, checked everything. The same policeman went into the adjoining room where my two nephews, aged 19 and 20 years, were asleep. The policeman shone the light into their eyes, saying 'get up and get out'. . . My nephews were very frightened. The police then started dragging them out to their van. .

The revolution we openly rap about is one of total change. The revolution is one to liberate us from racism, oppression and capitalism. We see many of our problems of oppression and racism are tools of this

society's outlook based on capitalism; hence for total change one must change society altogether.'2

stereotype was reinforced in the media and exploited cynically by politicians. her visa). During the early years of the decade, this Pacific Islander as an 'overstayer' (an individual who to the economic downturn also identified the typical that saw Pacific Island immigrants as contributors welfare and education.3 The same distorted perspective and adding strain to public resources such as housing, threatening cultural homogeneity, boosting crime rates groups perceived to be taking employment from locals, expression of racism and general resentment towards circumstances provided fertile ground for the public onset of recession in the New Zealand economy. The postwar demand for unskilled labour) coincided with victimised Pacific Islanders whom they suspected of remained in New Zealand past the limit of his or the collapse of the global commodity boom and the levels of immigration from the Islands (largely to fuel abusing the terms of their visas, evolved after record 1970s, in which police and immigration authorities Zealand's social and political climate during the early The racial tension and unrest that marked New

e logo of the Polynesian Panthers, 1970s.

Rhetoric escalated into direct action in the form of random checks and dawn raids, conducted mainly in Auckland, when police taskforces targeted individuals who looked like Pacific Islanders or potential overstayers, regardless of their status as citizens. The police swooped on households in the early hours of the morning, often employing aggressive or intimidatory tactics. It was in response to this hostility that the Polynesian roots and governmental level to expose and eradicate injustice, inequality and racism. This essay explores the emergence of the Panthers.

1970s was the Immigration Act 1964; this was an update Act (section 32).4 The criteria under which the ministry The law controlling entry to New Zealand in the could grant or reject immigration applications derived [1]), extend the period permits applied (section 14 [4]) of the 1920 Act, which conferred on the immigration minister the absolute power to refuse or permit entry and pardon or exempt people from application of the those races deemed most able to assimilate - in effect, allowed the deportation of those overstaying their work permits: section 33a empowered police to ask people to to any person not a New Zealand citizen (section 14 enter the country. From 1964, a quota of visitors from as documentary or other evidence of identity. In short, were northern Europeans (especially Britons), white typically of three months' duration,6 and from 1967, a it outlined procedure for the random checks and those produce not only a valid passport, but also a permit to quota of Fijians received work permits valid up to six down,⁵ although residents of the Cook Islands, Niue enter and remain temporarily in New Zealand, as well who did not comply on the spot could be arrested and months. A 1968 amendment to the Immigration Act from a policy that for many decades had favoured Pacific Islanders, Indians and Chinese came lower kept in a holding cell without a warrant and in some to 'fit in' with New Zealand society. Top of the list Americans and Australians; southern Europeans, and Tokelau were, as New Zealand citizens, free to Western Sāmoa received short-term work permits, cases deported back to Sāmoa or Tonga.⁷

Much Pacific Island migration was of a temporary and shifting nature, with many Islanders

important function of visiting labourers was to provide who worked illegally on non-working visas. Historically, such remittances.) Instead of returning, however, many Pacific Island economies came to depend heavily on as well as Pacific Islanders) was tolerated by successive governments and encouraged by employers for as long New Zealand's high demand for labour, coupled with loosely enforced: overstaying (by plenty of Europeans financial support for their families back home and overstayed their working visas and there were others entering New Zealand as visitors, seeking work on government's willingness to support its neighbours in arrival and then returning home with money. (An the convenience of this under-the-table labour pool, meant that the immigration quotas had been only as excess labour demand continued.8 Additionally, a post-colonial sense of responsibility underlay the

When Norman Kirk's Labour government came to assimilationist policy with one of cultural pluralism disadvantage that they sought to both rally themselves encouraged government departments to help Pacific which provided the police with a convenient avenue for dealing with situations where no particular crime could and during 1973 and 1974 Kirk effected this change unemployment rates, received substandard education above all else was police oppression under the rhetoric of 'random checks' and the 'idle and disorderly' charge, be proved to have been committed. to Sick of continuous through the process of a policy review that actively three years before the first officially recognised series of however, old-school policy and practice prevailed, organisations and protest groups. Communities of troublemakers, a generation of young people became unscrupulous landlords. The issue that irked them Schmidt), Nooroa Taevae, Eddie Williams, Ta Iuli and Islanders settle. At the beginning of the decade, receptive to the idea of retaliation. On 16 June 1971, Islanders living in enclaves such as Auckland's and form alliances with like-minded support power in 1972, it would seek to replace the Placing Pacific Island immigrants at such a Ponsonby had disproportionate poverty and Police harassment and of being stereotyped as and health care and were being exploited by dawn raids, Will ('Ilolahia), 'The Captain' (Fred

others – a mixture of gang members and youth from a wide range of Polynesian cultures - founded the Polynesian Panther Movement in Keppel Street, gang, 'Ilolahia would head the Polynesian Panthers as chairman – after a short strint by Schmidt – and help to Pacific Island history, politics and race relations in

days was just to make life better for people...
cause people were constantly being hassled
bad tenants [landlords]...throwing people out
the streets for no reason.

up, held in custody overnight, appearing at the magistrates' court the next day and eithing sent away to borstals and that ... what's happened to this person what did they actually do?' And a lot of people were fliding out that these people were actually do? And a lot of people were finding away for minor offences.

—Vaughan Sanftu

To many young Polynesians like myself the was 'self help'. We would have to stand up for ourselves and our people, and not wait for others to do it for us... The Panthers provided the platform for us to do just that.

—Wayne Toleafoa!

The Panthers were remarkable in many ways. The core leadership comprised a group of Samoans, Tongans, Niueans, Cook Islanders, Máori and one New Zealandborn Indian, aged between seventeen and nineteen associates of the Panthers included traditional community leaders such as church ministers and community workers – among them the Reverend Leuatea Sio, Betty Wark and Agnes Tuisamoa – who

DAWN RAIDS THE UGLY REALITY



and Selatis, see a middle-speed Troppo couple who live with that two own Testimosi (20) and Massis (9).

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onow wo are to the dark batter policemen in the bedfoots and fold them to grad out of the betwee but his wife held him back, not wanting to make revisib. The police held them to get dressed and one were styred with them while they did so. The other two checked every room, unling everyons there for their passports, and arrested two of them.

On section I to be the we sho upon English half the police that filters and finish had good to regard, but for your first the policy of the po

mar sense and treats were to the police colls that through the to get help. They thatly connected to severe a boost 10 person Gooden's right. It is subploaded interpretation and was tool that the police has the receipt register. So he may the police who and that they had no life and dryway there was no send to have the police who and that they had no life and dryway there was no send to have the police who and that they had no life and dryway there was no send to have the police and had then no level that the police and the p

wan raids - the ugly reality. An information sheet detailing a police raid on a ngan couple and their two sons living in Grey Lynn, Auckland, October 1976,

rules were simple and strict: no possession of narcotics or being under the influence of alcohol during movement time; no possession of weapons or other harmful devices; no using the name of the movement in public for self-glory; equality of the sexes.¹⁷

and other Polynesians. dominant European culture was trying to divide Māori the Māori land march of 1975), arguing that the Rights) and Te Roopu o te Matakite (which spearheaded such as MOOHR (Maori Organisation on Human worked with nascent Māori nationalist movements, Committee on Racism and Discrimination). They also group Nga Tamatoa, HART (Halt All Racist Tours), Māori and community groups such as Māori activist people.18 They worked with the mayor (Sir Dove-Myer and by lobbying for much-needed resources for the exposing and challenging racist policies and activities mindsets of both white and Polynesian communities by in Auckland in the 1970s. They sought to change the Panthers set out to portray the realities of being brown the Ponsonby People's Union and ACORD (Auckland Robinson) and the Auckland City Council and with Under the rallying cry of 'power to the people', the

groups. 19 With the help of lawyer (and future prime minister) David Lange, they printed 1500 copies of media and for the publications of other protest prepared their own press statements for broadcast their own newspaper, Panther Rapp, from 1975, and Polynesian communities. The Panthers also published concerts for the elderly and street parties. In Ponsonby and set up homework centres, community meetings, 'Your Rights', a legal aid booklet.20 Niuean as a way of meeting the needs of its growing was translated into Sāmoan, Cook Islands Māori and The local paper City © Westend News, for example, they galvanised a truly multicultural community spirit with Panthers on their release. They spoke at schools also given advice, assistance and often accommodation where they also had a chapter. Former inmates were shuttle families and visitors to Paremoremo Prison, in anti-Vietnam protests and organised transport to to set up a food cooperative. They raised money for causes with which they sympathised, were prominent and they linked with the Ponsonby Peoples' Union Equality), the Panthers established homework centres With CARE (Citizens Association for Racial

> in 1973 from the National Council of Churches. on 19 September 1972 and presented with a \$1000 grant including the Governor General's Youth Award (\$250) they were made the recipients of several youth awards, homes. Formal recognition came to the Panthers when Polynesian tenants deal with illegal eviction from their the Tenants Aid Brigade (TAB) was created to help International Youth Festival in Berlin and in November Norman Tuiasau represented the Panthers at the 10th time community worker in 1973. In July of that year, Ama Rauhihi, became the organisation's first full-Aboriginal embassy. The Panthers' minister of culture, arrested in Canberra in July 1972 for trying to set up an Sydney caused world headlines when 'Ilolahia was and Christchurch. The establishment of a chapter in Panther Party were set up in South Auckland, Dunedin grew in the early 1970s. Chapters of the Polynesian The Panthers expanded and their influence

In the face of such advances, however, immigration aggravated by the onset of a recession, would intensify economic pressures and to the 1975 general election. In response to violence on Auckland's inner-city streets, the Labour policy. One of Kirk's moves in 1973 was to commission and uckland police taskforce. He also sanctioned the place intermittently and unofficially since 1972, but would enter a more disturbing phase in 1974.

On the night of 13 March 1974, police and immigration officials carried out a series of raids on Tongan households in Onehunga and by 3am thirteen Tongans had been arrested on charges of being illegal immigrants and/or failing to produce a passport. On after raids on another twenty-one Tongans were arrested were also interrupted, as one participant recalled:

I can think of one instance, at a church service at 64 Crummer Road, all of a sudden, the doors were knocked in and the place was swarming with police, officials, and dogs. They asked for passports. There were 18 that didn't have them including the priest. They were taken to Mt Eden. There was great



- AWHINA A TE TURE
 FESOANI FA'A LE TULAFONO
 T AUTURU NO TE PAE TURU
 L'AGAOMATAI HE FAKATUFONO
 T OKONI FAKALAO
- The cover of the Polynesian Panther's legal aid booklet. "Your Rights", c. 1973-74,

AUSTRALIAN BLACK PANTHERS

DENIS WALKER

SUE CHILLY

"BLACK
POWER

AUSTRALIA"

AUSTRALIA"

A poster advertising talks by Australian Black Panthers. Denis Walker and Sue Chilly, c. 1972.