

The PPP was very active for several years. They ran dances for youth, agitated for traffic lights at unsafe pedestrian crossings, ran food banks, organised prison visits and ran candidates for local high school boards.

More politically, in 1972, the PPP worked with Nga Tamatoa, the Stormtrooper and Headhunter gangs to form a "loose Polynesian Front"

In January 1974 the PPP participated in a meeting "amongst all Maori and Polynesian progressive organisations to form a united front".

Understandably the PPP focussed on exposing racism, particularly by the police. In 1974, the PPP, jointly with Nga Tamatoa, CARE, ACORD and the Peoples Union organised the Police Investigation Group, which mounted "P.I.G. patrols" to monitor police dealings with Polynesian youth.

The PPP's military wing also assisted in the Party's several campaigns against rack renters who allegedly preyed on the Polynesian communities at the time.

The PPP was active until the late '70s and never officially disbanded. Several cadres were arrested at Bastion Point in 1978 and some even played a role in the "Patu" squad during the 1981 Springbok Tour.

The legacy of the Panthers lives on in Aotearoa today. Younger generations have benefited from the struggle that our elders engaged in during the 60's 70's & 80's. Still however there is much to do and still much oppression felt by our brothers and sisters in the Pacific and world-wide. Status in white society and the material comfort of some of us does not negate the fact that the majority of Pacific peoples live lives of racism & poverty. The best legacy we can leave for the Polynesian Panthers is to rekindle the struggle and fight against oppression in our communities & our islands.

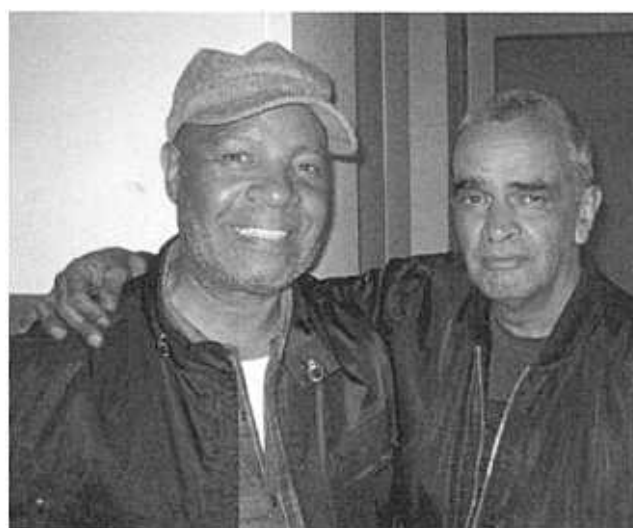
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Polynesian Panthers Ponsonby Auckland 1970



Patu squad from the 1981 Springbok tour



Emory Douglas & Gary Foley (long time Aboriginal Activist)



POLYNESIAN BLACK PANTHERS

Sina Brown-Davis



While Nga Tamatoa was the radical group for young Maori in the '70s, the Polynesian Panthers was the outlet for young Pacific Island agitators.

Originally formed in Auckland in June 1971 as the Polynesian Panther Movement, the organisation was a fusion of young Pacific Island stu-

dent radicals and their gang member cousins.

LOCALISED RACISM

— TAKE IT SLOW BROTHER!



A talk given by Wayne Toleafou-Peseta Minister of Information of the Polynesian Panther Movement.

Director of Pacific Island Studies at Auckland University, Dr Melanie Anae, quoted this passage from Panther material, in a 2004 "Anew" article to highlight the group's outlook.

"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."

Their Marxism was like that of their US based Black Panther heroes: Maoist oriented. The Panthers also reached out to variety of radical allies.

The PPM (known the Polynesian Panther Party, after November 1972) allied with the Maori radicals

of Nga Tamatoa and the Maoists of Roger Fowler's Peoples Union and the NZ Race Relations Council, HART and the Communist Party.

They also mixed with the Trotskyists from the Socialist Action League and with members of the Pro-Soviet, Socialist Unity Party.

The Panthers worked closely with the Marxist controlled Citizen's Association for Racial Equality and the Auckland Committee on Racial discrimination (ACORD).

In July 1973, PPP "Minister of Culture" Ama Rauhihi attended a Maoist "People's Forum" in Singapore and was selected to tour China with several Maori members of the Communist Party of NZ.

In July/August 1974, PPP member Norman Tuiasau attended the 10th International Youth Festival in East Berlin. The conference was convened by the Soviet front, World Federation of Democratic Youth and the trip was organised by the Socialist Unity Party.

Tuiasau heard US Communist Party leader, Angela Davis, speak in East Berlin and traveled on to Moscow where he saw Lenin's tomb.

The Panthers delegated a young Melanie Anae to make contact with the real Black Panthers, during a trip to Los Angeles to stay with relatives. In September 1974 an article on the PPP was published in "Black Panther" magazine in the USA.

In mid 1972, PPP leader Will 'Iloahia toured Australia where he met Aboriginal Black Power groups. On his return he announced plans for "solidarity and co-operation" between the PPP, Aboriginal groups and black power supporters in Papua-New Guinea.

At their peak, the Panthers had a busy HQ in Ponsonby, Auckland, several branches across the city, a shortlived branch in Dunedin and supporters in other centres.

